



Effective From	AY 2024/25 (Fall term)
Compliance From	AY 2025/26 (Fall term)

## EARLY EDUCATION INSTITUTION **POLICY**

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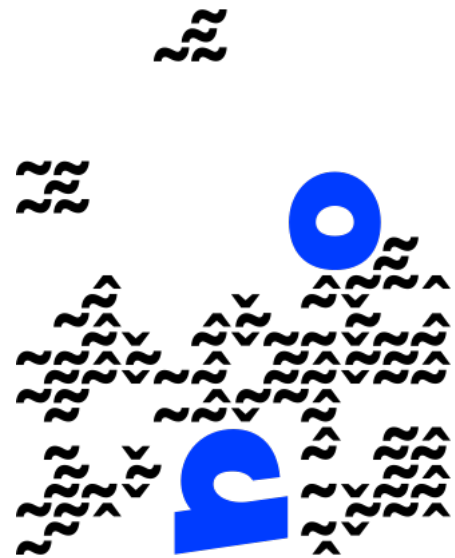
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# TRANSPORTATION

### Purpose

This policy sets out guidelines and procedures for the safe transportation management of children to and from Early Education Institutions (EEl). It standardizes transportation services and sets clear expectations for all stakeholders (EEl management and staff, parents, regulators, service providers, etc.).

This policy applies to all private EEIs operating in Abu Dhabi, regardless of whether the transportation service is being managed and operated in-house or externally.



## Definitions

<b>Additional Learning Needs</b>	<p>Individual requirements for additional support, modifications, or accommodations within an early years setting on a permanent or temporary basis in response to a specific context. This applies to any support required by children of determination and those who have special educational needs and/or additional barriers to learning, access, or interaction in that specific context (e.g., dyslexic, hearing or visually impaired, twice exceptional, or gifted and/or talented).</p> <p>For example, a child with restricted mobility may require lesson accommodations to participate in Physical Education and building accommodations to access facilities but may not require any accommodations in assessments. Equally, a child with hearing impairment may require additional support in class to access lesson content but may not require any physical accommodations to access learning.</p>
<b>Bus Safety Checklist</b>	<p>A document used by bus supervisors to ensure that all measures relating to children’s safety have been taken before departure.</p>
<b>Bus Supervisor</b>	<p>The person appointed by the EEI or operator to supervise children attending the EEI on the school bus during the journey and issued a permit to do so by the ITC.</p>
<b>Child</b>	<p>A person under the age of 4 years, as per Federal Decree Law No. (51) of 2022 Regulating Nurseries.</p>
<b>Driver</b>	<p>The person responsible for driving the school bus to transport children attending the EEI safely and issued a permit to do so by the ITC.</p>
<b>Early Education Institutions (EEIs)</b>	<p>All ADEK-licensed institutions that offer early years service (e.g., nurseries).</p>
<b>Integrated Transport Center (ITC)</b>	<p>The authority responsible for regulating the operation of transportation in Abu Dhabi, including school buses.</p>
<b>ITC Requirements</b>	<p>ITC regulations, policies, and other requirements for school transportation services. This includes the Decision of the Chairman of Department No. 259 of 2017 on the Issuance of the Executive Regulation Concerning School Transport Service Regulation in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (DMT, 2017) and the <i>Abu Dhabi Guideline for School Bus Route Regularization</i> (QCC, 2023), and any other legislative documents and all amendments.</p>
<b>Management</b>	<p>The staff responsible for overseeing the EEI-based staff and daily operations, such as the EE Director, their deputy, as well as any other member of staff to whom they have delegated specific authorities.</p>
<b>Parent</b>	<p>The person legally liable for a child or entrusted with their care, defined as the custodian of the child as per Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 on Child Rights (Wadeema).</p>

<b>Operators</b>	The entity/entities authorized by the ITC to provide transportation services to the EEI, whether through the EEI itself or an external entity appointed/contracted by it.
<b>Owner</b>	The person(s) who holds proprietary ownership of the EEI in the UAE.
<b>Registration</b>	The process by which a child is enrolled and assigned a spot on a school bus for transportation to and from the EEI.
<b>School Bus (also “Bus” or “Vehicle”)</b>	Every vehicle designated exclusively for transporting children attending EEIs and authorized by the ITC.
<b>Transport Registration Form</b>	A document used by parents to register their child for transportation services provided by the EEI. It typically includes information such as the child’s name, age, pick-up and drop-off locations, emergency contact information, and any additional learning needs or accommodations.
<b>Trip Log</b>	A document used by the bus supervisor to record information about the trips taken, including details such as the date and time of the trip, the number and names of children on board, and any incidents or problems that occurred during the trip. The trip should also be logged on the “Salama” application as per ITC requirements.



## Policy

All EEIs shall develop and implement a Transportation Policy, which as a minimum shall address:

1. Compliance with transportation authority regulations
2. Vehicle suitability and maintenance
3. Transportation procedures and onboard safety
4. On-site facilities
5. Registration

This policy applies regardless of whether the EEI is the owner of the vehicles providing transportation services or it is contracting these services through an external operator, who shall have a valid license for commercial operation in Abu Dhabi.

### 1. Compliance with Transportation Authority Regulations

#### 1.1 Compliance with ITC Regulations

EEIs shall establish and implement a Transportation Policy in line with the requirements of the Integrated Transport Centre (ITC) for school bus service, which also applies to EEIs. In case of any contradiction between ADEK and ITC requirements, ITC requirements shall prevail.

#### 1.2 Compliance with Law Enforcement Regulations

Owners and operators shall comply fully with any relevant local road safety and traffic law requirements set by law enforcement agencies in Abu Dhabi.

#### 1.3 Transportation of Children Below 2 Years

EEIs are prohibited from providing transportation services to children below 2 years of age, and this shall clearly be stated in their policy.

#### 1.4 Accommodation for Children with Additional Learning Needs

EEI shall coordinate with the transportation service providers to enable children with additional learning needs to access buses, making any appropriate and approved adjustments necessary, in line with ITC requirements.

### 2. Vehicle Suitability and Maintenance

#### 2.1 Vehicle Specification

EEIs shall ensure that any vehicles used for the transportation of children to and from the EEI are approved by the ITC, insured, licensed, registered under the EEI's name (if not through an operator), and fit for purpose. This includes ensuring that all vehicles are safe and suitable for use by children, and well-equipped in case of

emergency in line with the requirements set by the ITC in the *Abu Dhabi Guideline for School Bus Route Regularization* (QCC, 2023), including but not limited to the following:

- a) All seating inside the vehicle shall be adapted to the age of the children.
- b) As a minimum, all bus seats must be equipped with three-point safety belts to secure children in their seats.
- c) All arrangements for children of determination (e.g., harnesses) shall be provided and fitted appropriately.
- d) All safety belts shall be customizable in terms of length to ensure comfort while maintaining safety.
- e) There should be functional emergency equipment on board vehicles which includes: a fire extinguisher, first aid kits, and an automatic mechanism to detect engine fires and extinguish them. All such equipment shall be out of children's reach but accessible by the driver and any other supervising adult.
- f) All additional features related to emergency cases (e.g., emergency hammer to break windows) should always be in place, functional, and accessible by supervising adults and drivers only.
- g) Any vehicle used for the transportation of children shall not exceed a capacity of 20 children. It is the responsibility of both the EEI and the operator to ensure that this capacity is not exceeded.
- h) All vehicles used shall be comfortable, air-conditioned, and clean.
- i) All vehicles used for the transportation of children shall be fitted with surveillance cameras in line with ITC requirements as well as the [ADEK EEI Surveillance Policy](#).
- j) All vehicles used for the transportation of children shall be fitted with GPS trackers in line with ITC requirements.

## **2.2 Inspection and Maintenance of Vehicles**

In line with *Abu Dhabi Guideline for School Bus Route Regularization* (QCC, 2023) requirements, drivers shall conduct two mechanical and physical inspections for each trip: once before departure when the vehicle is empty, and again upon returning to the vehicle parking area.

All vehicles shall be subject to routine preventive maintenance to ensure physical and mechanical soundness.

### 3. Transportation Procedures and On-Board Safety

To ensure that children are safely transported to and from the premises, EEIs shall:

- a) Appoint a bus supervisor to accompany children during transportation to and from the EEI on each vehicle as per ITC requirements. The bus supervisor shall hold a valid ITC permit to practice their profession.
- b) Ensure that all drivers are insured, licensed, and trained and hold a valid ITC permit to practice their profession.
- c) Put in place and document comprehensive transportation procedures that uphold the health, safety, and wellbeing of children at all times in line with transportation regulations and standards set by the ITC. At a minimum, transportation procedures shall incorporate the following:
  - The presence of a parent or another authorized adult at pick-up and drop-off of children at/from their homes (see [ADEK EEI Child Pick-Up Authority Policy](#)).
  - A “check-in” sheet to record each child’s arrival on the bus (e.g., once during pick-up from home, and another during drop-off when they leave the EEI), in addition to recording this data through the Salama application.
  - A “check-out” sheet to record each child’s departure when they get off the bus (e.g., at drop-off when they reach home), in addition to recording this data through the Salama application.
  - A “check-out” sheet is maintained by the key group staff when children are collected from their key group, to be taken to the bus at the end of the day.
  - A safety checklist that covers all risk factors associated with children’s safety whilst traveling. This shall include, but is not solely restricted to, the following checks (in addition to any checks set by ITC requirements):
    - Seatbelts are securely fastened.
    - Any loose toys or objects in children’s hands, on seats, or on aisles are removed.
    - There is appropriate air circulation, cooling, and warming (where applicable).
    - There are no issues relating to the physical wellbeing of children (e.g., seatbelts being too tight, children looking unwell, etc.).
- d) Implement a process for organizing the queue of children as they get off the bus in the morning and are led to the EEI building, and another for when children are queuing to get on the bus at the end of the day.
- e) Specify instructions for the bus supervisor to accompany children when they get off the bus, handing them safely to the receiving adult.
- f) Establish a list of prohibited actions by children and staff (including drivers) while on the bus. The list shall be posted somewhere visible on the bus. EEIs shall also ensure they teach children these rules and regularly remind them to continue respecting them. These rules include, but are not restricted to, the following actions:

- Children leaving their seats after fastening seatbelts
  - Children or adults walking in the aisle while the vehicle is in motion
  - Eating or drinking on board, for both children and adults
- g) Put in place an emergency action plan for emergencies while on the road; the details for which can be found in the [ADEK EEI Emergency Management Policy](#).
- h) Establish and update a list with emergency contact information of all children and adults on the bus kept with the bus supervisor.
- i) Adhere to any limitation to total journey duration as per ITC requirements.
- j) Keep a trip log that documents information related to the trip, including:
- Drop-off and pick-up times for every child
  - Total number of children onboard
  - Total journey time
  - Any incidents faced while on the bus
  - Updates in the Salama application as per ITC requirements
- k) Communicate and share all transportation procedures and onboard safety measures (along with the EEI's Transportation Policy) with parents who have registered their children to use transportation services (see [Section 5. Registration Requirements](#)) and make them available on the EEI's website (if applicable). EEIs shall inform parents that the Salama system can be used to track their child's bus.

#### 4. Onsite Facilities

Onsite facilities play an important role in providing safe, efficient, and convenient transportation services for all stakeholders. EEIs therefore shall:

- a) Abide by the regulations for parking spaces as listed in the Abu Dhabi Capital Development Building Code (DMT, 2022).
- b) Have the appropriate space directly adjacent to the EEI's premises (the exits from which children leave the premises) for the loading and unloading of children.
- c) Ensure that the EEI's own parking facilities (if available) are clearly marked in line with the requirements of the Abu Dhabi Capital Development Building Code (DMT, 2022) and that they are solely used for parking vehicles belonging to the EEI.
- d) Equip any onsite facilities with the necessary emergency signage and equipment in line with the requirements of the *UAE Fire and Life Safety Code* (MoI, 2018).

#### 5. Registration Requirements

EEIs shall use a transport registration form to register the children who will use their transportation service and keep an up-to-date registry of all children using the service.

## 6. Compliance

- 6.1** This policy shall be effective as of the start of the Academic Year 2024/25 (Fall term). EEIs are expected to be fully compliant with this policy by the start of the Academic Year 2025/26 (Fall term).
- 6.2** Failure to comply with this policy shall be subject to legal accountability and the penalties stipulated in accordance with the ADEK’s regulations, policies, and requirements, notwithstanding any other penalties imposed by Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law and its amendments or any other relevant law. ADEK reserves the right to intervene if the EEI is found to be in violation of its obligations.

## References

- Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council (QCC). (2023). *Abu Dhabi Guideline for School Bus Route Regularization*. (ADG 37, 1<sup>st</sup> ed.)
- Department of Municipal Affairs and Transport (2017). Decision of the Chairman of Department (259) of 2017 on the Issuance of Executive Regulation Concerning the School Transport Service Regulation in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi
- Department of Municipality and Transport (2022). *Abu Dhabi Capital Development Code*.
- Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 on Child Rights (Wadeema)
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law and its amendments
- Ministry of Interior (Moi). (2018). *UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice*.

### Publication

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Department of Education and Knowledge, Abu Dhabi (ADEK)

This policy applies to Early Educational Institutions (EEI) in Abu Dhabi.

