



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

SCHOOL POLICY

on

COMPLIANCE



Introduction

The successful operation of the school sector relies on the full compliance of schools with ADEK’s regulations, policies, circulars, and other existing laws and regulations applicable within UAE. This policy sets out the obligation of schools to comply with ADEK’s requirements and the procedures by which ADEK shall address instances of non-compliance.

Purpose

- Require compliance with ADEK regulations, policies, circulars, other existing laws and regulations applicable within the UAE, and the mechanisms by which compliance will be determined.
- Outline the steps through which ADEK will address instances of complaints and non-compliance of schools with its regulations and policies.
- Describe the procedure by which a school may appeal ADEK’s decisions in relation to non-compliance.

Definitions

ADEK Requirements	For the purpose of this policy, “ADEK requirements” is used to refer to all of ADEK’s requirements for schools as set out in its regulations, policies, circulars, and other existing laws and regulations applicable within UAE.
Authorized Personnel	Personnel who are authorized by ADEK or other relevant government entities to visit a school and access its premises and resources for a specific purpose.
Complaint	Any expression of dissatisfaction concerning the school by an individual, either formally or informally, including any reports of non-compliance concerns.
Complainant	An individual who files a complaint to a school.
Compliance	A school’s adherence to ADEK’s requirements for schools, as set out in ADEK’s regulations, policies, guidelines, circulars, and other existing laws and regulations applicable within the UAE.
Compliance Visit	An evaluation, conducted by ADEK as per the compliance framework requirements, to determine whether a school is adhering fully and properly to ADEK’s requirements for schools, as set out in ADEK’s regulations, policies, circulars, and other existing laws and regulations applicable within the UAE.
Corrective Action	An action that a school must take within a given timeline to rectify any identified instances of non-compliance. Failure to take such corrective action may lead to additional enforcement actions, in line with the escalation procedure set out in this policy.
Corrective Action Plan	A plan drawn up by a school and submitted to ADEK, setting out the corrective actions and timeline it will take to address its areas of non-compliance, in line with the requirements of the enforcement action taken against the school.
Enforcement Action	Action taken against a school in response to an instance, or instances, of non-compliance. Enforcement actions are progressive and range from the issuance of a letter of concern to, in cases of extreme or repeated non-compliance with ADEK’s requirements, the closure of a school.
Escalation Procedure	The rules that define how and when an instance(s) of non-compliance with ADEK’s requirements are escalated through progressive levels of enforcement actions.

Financial, Administrative, and Technical Supervision	An enforcement action, wherein ADEK appoints a supervisory body to oversee and manage the school for a defined period of time (“supervision period”).
License Restriction	An enforcement action, where a school is not authorized to enroll any new students, nor to submit applications to renew, extend, or amend its license (e.g., to increase fees, increase capacity, or add curricula).
Non-Compliance	An instance or instances of a school failing to adhere to ADEK’s requirements, as set out in ADEK regulations, policies, guidelines, circulars, and other existing laws and regulations applicable within UAE.
Progress Monitoring Visit	An unannounced visit conducted at ADEK’s discretion to monitor the progress made by a school in taking corrective action.
Supervisory Body	A body appointed by ADEK to perform the oversight and management of a school.



Policy

1. Compliance

- 1.1 **Compliance Requirement:** Schools shall comply with all of their own school policies as well as ADEK regulations, school policies, circulars, and other existing laws and regulations applicable within the UAE.
- 1.2 **Complaints to the School:** Schools shall establish a School Complaints Committee to investigate any complaints or reports by stakeholders (e.g., parents, members of staff) and attempt to resolve these. The Principal shall chair the school complaints committee and can delegate this authority to others as deemed appropriate.
 1. Schools shall investigate and resolve any complaints internally and if necessary, with the help of the Principal.
 - a. In situations where parties are dissatisfied with the suggested solution, the complainant shall refer the complaint to the School Complaints Committee.
 - b. If a complaint has been made against the Principal, the Principal shall be excluded from the committee and be replaced by a member of the Governing Board.
 - c. Written complaints shall be acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt.
 - d. The school complaints committee shall review and respond to all complaints in writing within 10 working days.
 - e. Complaints and incidents shall be dealt with in a confidential and timely manner, as stipulated above.
 - f. If the complaint has not been properly handled, the complainant has the right to appeal to ADEK against the decision of the school's complaints committee and ADEK shall undertake its own investigation and an ad-hoc visit if deemed necessary (see [Section 1.3.1.c](#)).
 - g. Schools shall keep a record of all meetings held between the members of the committee and the complainant, in line with the [ADEK School Records Policy](#). Schools shall inform the Governing Board and ADEK if requested.
- 1.3 **Compliance Coordinator:** School shall appoint a member of staff to be a Compliance Coordinator to provide relevant administrative support. This includes supporting the Principal to complete the school self-evaluation, if required, coordinating compliance visits, and submitting any required corrective actions within stipulated timeframe (if applicable) to ensure the school's adherence to compliance requirements.
- 1.4 **Compliance Visits:**
 1. Schools shall undergo the following types of compliance visits conducted by ADEK, or by appropriate authorities, to assess their compliance with ADEK requirements. ADEK reserves the right to conduct compliance visits at its discretion.
 - a. **Annual Compliance Visits:** Visits conducted annually to determine the school's compliance with MoE and ADEK requirements and all health and safety requirements, in line with the [ADEK School Health and Safety Policy](#).
 - b. **School Readiness Visits:** Visits conducted to determine compliance prior to the issuance of a Temporary License, in line with the [ADEK School](#)

[Licensing Policy](#) for any addition or modification made to school buildings (e.g., new school building, expansion, relocation, re-opening of grade levels, etc.).

- c. Ad-Hoc Visits: Visits conducted at ADEK’s discretion for the following:
 - To assess compliance with specific ADEK requirements (e.g., assessments, leadership), or
 - To investigate adverse reports or concerns/complaints from parents, staff, divisions within ADEK, etc., regarding the school (e.g., capacity inspection, validation of school buildings, incident investigation, building condition, etc.).
2. Schools shall grant authorized personnel (e.g., compliance specialists) with unhindered access to school premises and relevant resources to conduct compliance visits, in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

2. Actions Against Non-Compliance

2.1 Enforcement Action: Schools found to be non-compliant with ADEK requirements shall be issued a penalty, known as enforcement action, by the ADEK Commitment Committee. The enforcement actions available to ADEK are progressive unless otherwise indicated by ADEK and are taken against schools in line with the escalation procedure set out in [Section 3. Escalation Procedure](#). They are as follows, in order of escalation:

1. Letter of concern: A letter of concern outlining the required corrective action(s) to be taken and the time period in which the action(s) must be taken.
2. Fines and Warnings:
 - a. Fine: A fine, or penalty in the form of payment due, imposed in line with the ADEK requirements.
 - b. Warnings: Three warnings, issued in subsequent order, outlining the required corrective action(s) to be taken, and the time period in which the action(s) must be taken. The second and third warnings shall be issued upon failure to take sufficient corrective action within the time period specified by ADEK in the previous warning.
 - c. ADEK reserves the right to issue a warning without issuing a letter of concern.
 - d. ADEK reserves the right to issue fines and warnings simultaneously.
3. Temporary Suspension of Activity: Suspension of the specific activity (e.g., conducting an activity, charging fees without relevant approval) that is non-compliant with ADEK requirements until the required corrective action has been taken.
4. License Restriction: A restriction on enrolling any new students, renewing a license, or amending any license terms (e.g., in relation to school fees, buildings, capacity, and curricula) until the required corrective action has been taken.

5. Financial, Administrative, and Technical Supervision: The appointment of a supervisory body to oversee and manage the school (see [Section 4. Financial, Administrative, and Technical Supervision](#)).
6. License Suspension: The suspension of the school's license (see [Section 5. License Suspension](#)).
7. License Cancellation and School Closure: The cancellation of the school's license and the closure of the school (see [Section 6. License Cancellation and School Closure](#)).

2.2 Legal Accountability and Penalties: Failure to comply with ADEK requirements shall be subject to legal accountability and any other penalties imposed by Federal Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments or any other relevant law.

3. Escalation Procedure

3.1 Escalation Procedure: Enforcement actions shall be taken in the order set out in [Section 2.2. Enforcement Action](#), starting with the issuance of a letter of concern, unless otherwise indicated by ADEK.

1. ADEK reserves the right to issue a warning without issuing a letter of concern.
2. Failure to create, submit, and/or implement a corrective action plan (where required) in response to the enforcement action taken against the school, failure to take corrective action or multiple instances of non-compliance of the same nature will lead to escalation from one level of enforcement action to the next level.
3. Escalation at each step will be at ADEK's discretion. In determining whether to escalate the enforcement action, ADEK will consider:
 - a. The risk posed to the school community as a result of non-compliance.
 - b. The school's history of non-compliance.
 - c. The extent to which the corrective action has been taken by the school, if at all.

3.2 Emergency License Suspension and Cancellation: ADEK reserves the right to suspend or cancel a school's license directly without following the escalation procedure in instances of serious non-compliance, including, but not limited to:

1. The attainment of the school license through false or fraudulent means.
2. Actions that severely impact or have the potential to severely impact the wellbeing or health and safety of students and/or staff.
3. Actions that severely violate UAE cultural values and national identity.

4. Financial, Administrative, and Technical Supervision

- 4.1 ADEK reserves the right to place a school under financial, administrative, and technical supervision (hereafter referred to as “supervision”) for a defined period (“supervision period”), as part of the escalation procedure.
- 4.2 Supervisory Body: Where a school has been placed under supervision, a supervisory body will be appointed to manage the school. This supervisory body may consist of ADEK officials or third parties or both. The school's Governing Board and senior leadership team shall not be involved in the management and oversight of the school, except as deemed appropriate by the supervisory body. The supervisory body shall carry out the following duties, in accordance with the decree issued by ADEK to the school, including, but not limited to:
1. Take custody of administrative and financial responsibilities.
 2. Submit a monthly report to ADEK on its managerial activities and report any additional instances of non-compliance identified from the school's documents and records, if the supervisory body is a third party.
 3. Take corrective action to address all instances of non-compliance, in line with the corrective action plan.
- 4.3 Supervision Period: At the end of the supervision period, the school shall be returned to the license holder for administrative, technical, and financial management at ADEK's discretion, once ADEK is satisfied that all areas of non-compliance have been corrected.
1. ADEK reserves the right to suspend or cancel the school's license where it determines that future compliance is not secure under the license holder's management (see [Section 5. License Suspension](#) and [Section 6 License Cancellation and School Closure](#)).
 2. At the end of the supervision period, the supervisory body shall submit to ADEK all documents and records that are in its custody as well as a report on the actions it undertook during the period of supervision.
- 4.4 Schools shall be aware that supervision shall not absolve the license owner, members of the Governing Board, or any other staff members of criminal liability, if any.

5. License Suspension

- 5.1 ADEK reserves the right to suspend a school's license as part of the escalation procedure.
1. Such schools shall suspend their operations at a date determined by ADEK.
 2. ADEK may appoint a supervisory body and place the school under supervision until the time of closure (see [Section 4. Financial, Administrative, and Technical Supervision](#)).

3. The license suspension period shall not exceed one academic year.
- 5.2 During the period of license suspension, the school or the supervisory body (if appointed) shall carry out the duties specified in the decree issued by ADEK to the school, including those outlined in [Section 7. Duties in Case of License Suspension or School Closure](#).
 - 5.3 Schools shall have their license reinstated for the remainder of its validity period once ADEK is satisfied that the relevant corrective actions have been taken. The license shall be subsequently renewed in line with its terms and the [ADEK School Licensing Policy](#).
 1. ADEK will inform parents and staff of the license suspension once the decision has been finalized (e.g., after the window for appeals has closed; see [Section 9. Appeals](#)).
 2. If ADEK determines that the corrective actions taken by the school, if any, do not justify the reinstatement of the license, the license shall be cancelled (see [Section 6. License Cancellation and School Closure](#)).

6. License Cancellation and School Closure

- 6.1 ADEK reserves the right to cancel or not renew a school's license at its discretion. Such schools shall discontinue their operations at a date determined by ADEK. ADEK may place the school under supervision until the time of closure (see [Section 4. Financial, Administrative, and Technical Supervision](#)).
 1. The school or the supervisory body (if appointed), shall carry out the duties specified in the decree issued by ADEK to the school, including those outlined in [Section 7. Duties in Case of License Suspension or School Closure](#).
 2. The license holder and the school's Governing Board shall:
 - a. Facilitate the supervisory body in carrying out its duties, as required.
 - b. Apply for the cancellation of licenses awarded by other government entities, in line with the [ADEK School Licensing Policy](#).
 - c. Obtain legal and financial clearances.
 - d. Obtain the approval of ADEK and the supervisory body prior to the sale of school assets.
 3. The school or the supervisory body (if appointed) shall inform parents and staff of the license cancellation once the decision has been finalized (e.g., after the window for appeals has closed; see [Section 10. Appeals](#)).

7. Duties in Case of License Suspension or School Closure

- 7.1 ADEK reserves the right to cancel or not renew a school's license at its discretion. Such schools shall discontinue their operations at a date determined by ADEK. ADEK

may place the school under supervision until the time of closure (see [Section 4. Financial, Administrative, and Technical Supervision](#)).

1. In case of license suspension or school closure due to license cancellation, the school or the supervisory body (where appointed) shall carry out the duties specified in the decree issued by ADEK to the school. This includes the following duties:
 - a. Informing parents and staff of the license suspension or school closure immediately, once the decision has been finalized by ADEK and communicated to the school.
 - b. Fulfilling the school's legal and contractual commitments towards staff, parents, students, and external parties.
 - c. Paying all staff in accordance with the terms of their contract and the laws of the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization.
 - d. Returning any undeserved fees that have been collected from parents, including registration or re-registration fees collected for the upcoming academic year.
 - e. Implementing measures to facilitate the transfer of students to other schools.
 - f. Unblocking student transfers on the Enterprise Student Information System (eSIS) and releasing all staff on the Private Schools Staff Information System (PASS) at least 20 working days prior to the suspension of operations.
 - g. Submitting all student records and files to ADEK within 20 working days of suspension of operations, where the supervisory body is a third party.
 - h. Providing relevant student reports and transfer certificates to parents, as required.

8. Corrective Action and Progress Monitoring

8.1 Corrective Action: Schools shall take corrective action against the enforcement action taken against them.

1. The enforcement action shall specify the details of non-compliance, the corrective action(s) that the school is required to take to address the non-compliance, and the required timeline to complete the corrective action(s).
2. In cases required by ADEK, schools shall create and submit to ADEK a plan outlining the corrective action(s) to be taken, and the time period in which it will be taken.

8.2 Progress Monitoring Visit: Schools shall be subject to unannounced progress monitoring visits by ADEK, conducted after the specified time period of the corrective action(s), to determine whether the non-compliance has been fully addressed, in accordance with the corrective action plan.

9. Actions Against Staff

9.1 Staff Violations:

1. Schools shall conduct investigations and suspend staff members who are suspected of engaging in prohibited professional conduct (e.g., discrimination against or harassment of students, behavior indicating political and/or religious extremism, violating the UAE's cultural values) as required until such time that an investigation is complete and the verdict is finalized in accordance with the Federal Law No. (33) of 2021 on Regulating Employment Relationship and the [ADEK School Employment Policy](#).
2. ADEK reserves the right to ban the staff members found to have engaged in prohibited professional conduct from all schools in the Emirate and communicate such information at a federal level.

9.2 Dismissal of the School Principal: The school's Governing Board shall dismiss the Principal if required by ADEK at any stage of the escalation procedure in the event of serious non-compliance or serious failure to address non-compliance. The school shall bear any costs of dismissal in accordance with Federal Law No. (33) of 2021 on Regulating Employment Relationship and the [ADEK School Employment Policy](#).

10. Appeals

10.1 Schools are authorized to appeal any enforcement action taken against them by ADEK due to non-compliance with ADEK requirements.

1. Appeals against supervision, license suspension, and license non-renewal or cancellation shall be raised within 5 working days of being notified of the enforcement action. In making any such appeal, schools shall include a detailed corrective action plan to rectify the relevant areas of non-compliance.
2. Appeals against other enforcement actions shall be raised within 60 calendar days of being notified of the enforcement action.

10.2 ADEK will acknowledge receipt of any appeal within 3 working days and accept or reject it within 90 calendar days of receipt. Where ADEK does not accept or reject the appeal within 90 calendar days, this shall be regarded as an acceptance of the appeal. Schools shall consider the decisions made by ADEK in this regard as final.

10.3 Schools shall implement the relevant corrective action(s) regardless of whether an appeal has been raised.

11. Compliance

- 11.1 This policy shall be effective as of the Academic Year 2024/25 (Fall term). Schools are expected to be fully compliant with this policy by the start of the Academic Year 2025/26 (Fall term).
- 11.2 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 and its amendments or any other relevant law. ADEK reserves the right to intervene if the school is found to be in violation of its obligations.



References

- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments
- Federal Decree-Law No. (33) of 2021 on Regulating Labour Relations and its amendments

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Department of Education and Knowledge, Abu Dhabi (ADEK)

This policy applies to Private and Charter Schools in Abu Dhabi. However, any circular issued prior to this policy or issued specifically for Charter Schools thereafter supersedes the requirements of this policy.

Past version:

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