



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

SCHOOL POLICY

on

FEES



Introduction

In regulating the school sector in Abu Dhabi, ADEK aims to ensure that school fees are reasonable, transparent, and consistent with the quality of education provided, whilst also enabling the schools market to grow and meet the needs of a diverse population. This policy sets out the requirements for the setting of school fees and the establishment of fee payment schedules.

Purpose

- Adopt a clear, transparent, and accurate approach to the regulation of fees, for both schools and parents, to ensure that tuition fees are reasonable, value-adding, mirror the quality of education, and accommodate different sections of the population.
- Outline the schools' fee structure and reasons behind fee increase.
- Enable parents to pay the required school fees in a timely and convenient manner.
- Encourage the growth of the school market and create a favorable environment for investors.

Definitions

Board Examination Fees	Fees collected by schools to enable students to take board examinations.
Educational Resource Fees	Fees collected by schools to provide physical or digital resources to support a student's education (e.g., textbooks, school publications, tablets, laptops, subscriptions to software or applications).
Embassy School	A private school affiliated with an embassy or consulate.
Extracurricular Fees	Fees collected by schools to provide access to optional paid extracurricular activities, in compliance with the ADEK School Extracurricular Activities and Events Policy .
Governing Board	The governing body of a school, appointed by the school owners, and including qualified representatives and parents. The Governing Board is the senior authority of the school, with responsibility for the overall governance of its activities.
Integrated Transport Centre (ITC)	The authority responsible for regulating the operation of transportation in Abu Dhabi, including school buses.
One Month of Tuition Fees	Total tuition fees for the school year divided by ten months.
Other Fees	School fees that do not include tuition fees.
Registration Fees	Fees collected prior to the academic year for the purpose of confirming student enrollment.
School Fees	All fees that a school charges for each enrolled student in exchange for the educational services and activities (e.g., extracurricular fees) provided by the school.
Transportation Fees	Fees collected by schools to provide school bus service to students (in compliance with the ADEK School Transportation Policy).
Tuition Fees	Fees directly associated with educating students.
Uniform Fees	Fees collected by schools to provide school uniforms to students.

Policy

1. Fee Structure

- 1.1 Fee Components: Schools shall break down the ADEK-approved school fees into the specific components listed below. Schools are authorized to categorize and organize the fee components at their discretion and shall disclose them to parents during the registration process.
 1. Tuition fees
 2. Educational resource fees
 3. Uniform fees
 4. Transportation fees
 5. Extracurricular fees
 6. Others
- 1.2 Board Examination Fees: Schools may charge a separate fee for board exams.
 1. Additionally, schools may charge related board exam administration fees, with justification, to cover the processing of documents, invigilation, mailing, etc., if applicable.
 2. The school website shall clearly identify separate board exam fees charged, with the grade levels to which they are applicable, and any additional board exam administration fees in line with the [ADEK School Assessment Policy](#).
- 1.3 Schools shall adhere to the Value Added Tax (VAT) regulations, in line with the Federal Decree Law No. (8) of 2017 on Value Added Tax and its amendments.
- 1.4 Waivers: Schools shall waive, from parents, certain components of school fees for devices, textbooks, uniforms, etc., for students willing to use second-hand (e.g., resold or donated) items that meet the current requirements of the school (e.g. valid book editions, current uniform colors/design, etc.).

2. Fee Transparency

- 2.1 Schools shall announce and publish, on their website, their ADEK-approved school fees, payment schedules, and procedures to parents.
 1. Schools shall charge parents only within the ADEK-approved fee levels.
 2. New schools or branches shall include the proposed school tuition fees and other fees in their applications for a temporary license to ADEK.

3. Schools shall publish, on their website the stamped ADEK-approved fee schedule (effective from AY 2025/2026 (Fall term)).
4. When collecting tuition fees, schools shall record the source of the tuition fee payment (e.g., parents, relatives, charity, companies, scholarships) and report this information to ADEK.

2.2 New Schools and Branches: In evaluating the “appropriateness” of the fees of new schools or branches, ADEK will take into account the following:

1. Submission of a full financial study using ADEK's Financial Feasibility Plan template including information on proposed school fees and expected profitability, and operational and capital expenditures.
2. Compliance with ADEK's Financial Feasibility Plan template.

2.3 Fees and Increments:

1. Tuition Fee Increase: Schools shall submit clear and accurate applications for approval to increase their school fees, strictly as per the timelines announced by ADEK and any amendments.
 - a. Schools shall abide by the following pre-requisites for standard school fee increase (based on the education cost index:
 - 1) Have a valid school license at the start of the academic year.
 - 2) Be operating for a minimum of 3 years.
 - 3) Submit the financial audit reports on the licensing system for the past 2 academic years. The reports shall be approved and prepared according to the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).
 - 4) Submit the application during the fee increase window as approved by ADEK.
 - b. To be eligible for exceptional school fee increase schools shall abide by the following conditions, while submitting applications to ADEK:
 - 1) Adjusted operating losses for the last 2 consecutive academic years, endorsed by the school's auditor.
 - 2) Operate at an occupancy rate of not less than 80%.
 - 3) Have been in operations for at least 3 academic years.
 - 4) Have a valid school license at the start of the academic year.
 - 5) Submit audited financial reports for the last 2 academic years, prepared according to IFRS.
 - 6) Guarantee that no implementation, in whole or in part, of any exceptional increase has been granted in the same academic year.
 - c. Embassies' private schools may apply for an exceptional increase in tuition fees provided they meet the following conditions:
 - 1) Justification provided for the proposed fee increase.
 - 2) Have obtained the approval of the governing board.
 - 3) Have attached the approval of the embassy/consulate to which the school is affiliated, if applicable.
 - d. Rejection of Fee Increase Requests: Any request for standard tuition fee increases and/or any exceptional tuition fee increases may be rejected by ADEK in case the conditions of this policy are not met.

2. Other fees: Schools are authorized to charge book fees, uniform fees, and others based on actual expenses, as approved by ADEK.
 - a. Schools are authorized to charge transportation fees, in accordance with the [ADEK School Transportation Policy](#), with the required approvals from ADEK and the Integrated Transport Center (ITC).

3. Schedule

3.1 Tuition Fees: Schools shall develop and publicly share detailed fee payment schedules on their school website and are authorized to enter into agreements/contracts with parents on adhering to their fee payment schedules, in line with the following:

1. Schools shall enforce three or more equal tuition fee payment installments (e.g., 3, 4, or 10 installments) in each academic year.
2. Schools are authorized to collect the first installment up to 1 month before the beginning of the academic year.

3.2 Registration Fees (includes Re-Registration Fees):

1. Cap on Registration Fees: Schools are authorized to charge registration fees amounting to up to 5% of their ADEK-approved tuition fees.
2. Schools are authorized to collect registration fees only from enrolled students.
3. Schools are authorized to collect registration fees up to 4 months before the beginning of the academic year.
4. Schools shall deduct any charged registration fees from the student's final tuition fees.

4. Late Payment or Non-Payment of School Fees

4.1 School Policy on Late Payment or Non-Payment of School Fees: Schools shall publish a clear, transparent, responsible, and fair policy outlining their response to non-payment or late payment of school fees.

1. Schools shall honor the right of parents to a fair and reasonable payment system, without punitive sanctions.
2. Schools shall maintain confidentiality and discretion on late payment or non-payment issues to protect students from unnecessary attention and embarrassment.
3. Schools are not authorized to communicate non-payment of fees to students, even as a reason for their suspension.

4.2 Actions on Late Payment or Non-Payment of School Fees:

1. Schools shall issue parents with 3 consecutive warning notices, each being at least 1 week apart, in response to late or non-payment of school fees.
 - a. Schools are authorized to suspend a student for up to 3 days in response to late or non-payment of school fees, after issuing the 3 consecutive warning notices, and only at most once a school term.
2. Schools are authorized to withhold examination report cards, transfer certificates (or block a transfer on eSIS), and/or withhold re-enrolling a student until all outstanding dues on school fees are settled.
 - a. Schools shall inform parents in writing at least 3 months before the end of the academic year of the risk of their child not being re-enrolled in the next academic year unless outstanding fees are settled.
3. Schools shall not prevent students from sitting for any examinations in response to late or non-payment of school fees.

5. Protection of Fees

5.1 School Fee Refund: Schools shall disclose, in writing, complete information on fees, refund policies, deadlines for requesting refunds, and other related relevant information to parents during the registration process, in alignment with the following:

1. Refund/Retention of Registration Fees:
 - a. Schools shall refund the full registration fees if the school fails to enroll the student as a result of insufficient capacity or following an ADEK-approved “Inability to Accommodate” notification, in line with [ADEK School Inclusion Policy](#).
 - b. Schools shall refund the full registration fee for new students if the parents provide written notification to the school two weeks prior to the start of the new academic year.
 - c. Schools are authorized to retain the value of the registration fee for students enrolled in the previous academic year if they do not attend the school in the following academic year.
2. Refund of Tuition Fees: Schools are authorized to retain a proportion of the tuition fees paid on behalf of an enrolled student, as mentioned, if:
 - a. The student attends up to a part of the first week of the term and discontinues without written notification from parents. In such instances, the school is authorized to retain the full registration fee (capped at 5% of annual tuition fee).
 - b. The student attends at least 1 week and up to 3 weeks in a term. In this case, schools are authorized to retain the value of 1 full month of tuition fees.
 - c. The student attends at least 3 weeks and up to 6 weeks in a term. In this case, schools are authorized to retain the value of 2 full months of tuition fees.
 - d. The student attends more than 6 weeks in a term. In this case, schools are authorized to retain the value of the full-term fee.

3. Refund of Other Fees:
 - a. Schools shall refund transportation fees to parents if the bus services have not been used by the student.
 - b. Schools shall determine the refund of any other fees to parents, in cases where the items or services have not been used.
- 5.2 Prohibition of Collection of Additional Financial Securities: Schools shall not request or accept any financial guarantee from parents in lieu of payment for an outstanding fee balance.
 1. Schools shall not request or accept deposits, application fees, or first-time enrollment fees, refundable or otherwise, from parents, prior to student enrollment.
- 5.3 Special Fee Agreements with Staff: Schools that offer special fee arrangements for staff who enroll their children in the same school must include all details regarding amounts, times, refund mechanisms, etc., in their contracts.
- 5.4 Disclosure of Tuition Information: Schools shall report information regarding the source of tuition fee payments (e.g., parents, relatives, charity, companies), as well as any other payment-related information upon request, in line with the [ADEK School Reporting Policy](#).

6. Compliance

- 6.1 This policy shall be effective as of the start 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).
- 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 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

- Administration Decision No. (24) of 2019 Regarding the controls for increasing tuition fees in Private Schools
- Administrative Decision No. (32) of 2019 Regarding the controls for increasing the exceptional tuition fees in private schools
- Federal Decree Law No. (8) of 2017 on Value Added Tax and its amendments
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments

Publication

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Department of Knowledge and Education, Abu Dhabi (ADEK)

This policy applies to Private Schools in Abu Dhabi.

Past version:

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