



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

## SCHOOL POLICY

on

# TRANSPORTATION



### Introduction

Schools must ensure the safety of all students during their transport to and from school. This policy sets out the minimum obligations by schools regarding the provision of safe, high quality, and efficient school bus service.

### Purpose

- Outline the responsibility of schools to ensure the safety of students related to transportation.
- Establishment of roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders.

## Definitions

<p><b>Additional Learning Needs</b></p>	<p>Individual requirements for additional support, modifications, or accommodations within a school setting on a permanent or temporary basis in response to a specific context. This applies to any support required by students 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 student 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 student with hearing impairment may require adaptive and assistive technology to access content in class and may also require physical accommodations (e.g., sit in the front of the class to be able to lip read) to access learning.</p>
<p><b>Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council (QCC)</b></p>	<p>The authority responsible for ensuring the quality of training programs in accordance with international standards, and for accrediting training programs and certifying awards for school bus workers such as drivers and supervisors.</p>
<p><b>Bus Supervisor</b></p>	<p>The person appointed by the school or operator to supervise students on the school bus during the journey and issued a permit to do so by the ITC.</p>
<p><b>Driver</b></p>	<p>The person responsible for driving the school bus to transport students safely and issued a permit to do so by the ITC.</p>
<p><b>Drop-Off and Pick-Up Point</b></p>	<p>A designated location for the student’s drop-off or pick-up, agreed upon by the parent, the school, and the operator, in which the student’s safety is guaranteed until they are collected by the guardian or authorized person.</p>
<p><b>Integrated Transport Center (ITC)</b></p>	<p>The authority responsible for regulating the operation of transportation in Abu Dhabi, including school buses.</p>
<p><b>Journey</b></p>	<p>Process of transporting students from a pick-up point to a drop-off point using a school bus or other vehicles, regardless of whether it is a free or paid service. This includes journeys to and from schools, as well as to and from school-related events (such as excursions, inter-school competitions, etc.).</p>
<p><b>Non School Bus Transport</b></p>	<p>Any mode of transportation other than the school bus such as private vehicles, public transport, and micromobility, such as cycles, scooters, etc).</p>

<b>Operators</b>	Any entity authorized by the ITC to provide school bus services, whether through the school itself or an external entity appointed/contracted by it.
<b>Parent-Appointed Responsible Adult</b>	Adult(s) appointed by the parent(s) or guardian(s) to be responsible for their child(ren) in their absence, such as nannies, drivers, etc.
<b>School Bus</b>	A bus authorized by the ITC exclusively intended to transport students.
<b>School Bus Service</b>	Synonymous with “school transport service” as defined by the ITC, refers to the service of transporting students to and from school by school buses, whether for a fee or for free.
<b>School Transport Coordinator</b>	A school-based role coordinating between the operator, school, and parents to monitor the school bus services.
<b>UAE PASS</b>	A national digital identity and signature solution that enables users to identify themselves to government service providers in all emirates through a smartphone-based authentication.



## Policy

### 1. Scope of Policy

- 1.1 **Applicability of Policy:** This policy is applicable to all operators and school bus service staff. In case of any contradiction between ADEK and the ITC policies, ITC policies shall prevail.
  1. All operators and school bus service staff shall comply with ITC requirements listed in the Executive Regulation Concerning School Transport Service Regulation in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (DMT, 2017) and the *Abu Dhabi Guideline for School Bus Route Regularization* (QCC, 2023). Additionally, operators shall comply with the requirements of Federal Decree law No. (21) of 1995 on Traffic and its Executive Regulations and their amendments

### 2. Obligations of Schools

#### 2.1 Provision of School Bus Service and Rider Safety

1. **Mandatory Provision of School Bus Service:** Schools shall provide school bus service to their students in line with Article No. (2) of the Executive Regulation Concerning the School Transport Service Regulation in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. In addition, schools shall provide any required support or related aids and services for students with additional learning needs to avail of school bus services. In exceptional cases where it is not feasible to provide school bus service to individual students, the school shall request the ITC to grant an exemption.
2. **Rider Safety:** Schools are ultimately responsible for the safety of all students and individuals on school buses during the journey, even if schools rely on third-party operators.
3. **Training Students for School Bus Service:** Schools shall ensure that operators provide bus safety and pedestrian safety training for students in line with Section 9.3 of the *Abu Dhabi Guideline for School Bus Route Regularization*.
4. **Student Discipline:** Schools shall ensure that their Student Behavior Policy includes provisions for student behavior during the journey. Students are expected to treat the school bus environment as an extension of the school environment and to abide by the school rules on student behavior during the journey.
5. **Educating Parents about School Bus Service:** Schools are responsible for communicating with parents and providing educational information in line with Section 9.3 of the *Abu Dhabi Guideline for School Bus Route Regularization*.

## 2.2 Duration of Journey, and Associated Pick-up and Drop-off Points

1. **Maximum Journey Time:** The duration of a journey for a school bus shall not exceed the period specified by the Integrated Transport Center from the pick-up point to the final delivery point and vice versa.
2. **Designated Pick-Up and Drop-Off Points:** Students shall be picked up and dropped off at designated pick-up and drop-off points in accordance with Section 9.4 of the *Abu Dhabi Guideline for School Bus Route Regularization*.
  - a. The bus supervisor shall ensure that the parent/parent-appointed responsible adult of a student under the age of 11 is present to receive the student at the drop-off point. If the parent is not present, they shall inform the school and return the student to school after dropping off the rest of the students at their destinations.

## 2.3 Exclusive Use of School Buses

1. **Use of School Buses:** School buses shall not be used to transport passengers other than students in line with Article (10) of the Executive Regulation Concerning the School Transport Service Regulation in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

## 2.4 School Bus Fees

1. **School Bus Fees:** The school bus fees shall be proposed by operators based on the ITC School Bus Fee Framework and approved by ADEK.
2. **Exceptional Fee Increases:** Request for exceptional fee increases shall be coordinated with ITC before it is approved by ADEK.

## 2.5 School Buses Owned by Schools

1. **School-Owned Buses:** Schools shall adhere to all the ITC regulations and policies that apply, including school bus specifications, maintenance, and record-keeping requirements. The regulator of school bus requirements is the ITC and hence the ITC shall be the authority for related queries.

## 2.6 Picking Up of Younger Siblings by Elder Siblings

1. **Picking Up Younger Siblings:** Elder siblings (15 years or above) are permitted to pick up younger siblings (grade 1 and above) in place of a parent-appointed responsible adult only when parents provide a signed consent form to the school. The consent form shall state the following:
  - b. Parent(s) recognize that the elder sibling's maturity level is deemed sufficient for them to provide consent.
  - c. Parent(s) have explained the responsibility to the elder sibling and that the latter is aware of what it entails.
  - d. Schools shall not be liable in case of any incidents resulting as a consequence of this policy.

**2.7 School Transportation and Traffic Management:** Schools shall develop effective school transportation and traffic management, at a minimum:

- 1.** Develop, maintain, and update a traffic management plan, detailing internal/external traffic flow to ensure the safety of the school community, specifically during peak hours (drop-off/pick-up timings).
- 2.** Deploy a trained task force, composed of sufficient numbers of current staff that are assigned the task of directing traffic flow during pick-up and drop-off timings to effectively manage the daily traffic operations on or near the school grounds.
- 3.** Develop and maintain an updated transport emergency and communication plan which shall be communicated appropriately to all stakeholders.

**2.8 Grievances and Complaints**

- 1.** Handling Parent Concerns: Schools shall establish a process for handling parent concerns in line with Section 9.7 of the *Abu Dhabi Guideline for School Bus Route Regularization*. The final decision-making authority shall rest with the Principal or the Governing Board. Safety shall be the primary consideration when evaluating a complaint, and not personal circumstances or convenience.

**2.9 Parking in Schools and Speed Limits in School Zones**

- 1.** Designated Parking Lots: Schools shall have designated parking areas within school premises for school buses, as well as for staff vehicles, in line with the [ADEK School Buildings and Facilities Policy](#).
- 2.** Speed Limit of Other Vehicles: Vehicles shall adhere to the speed limit of the school zone as set out by the Federal Law No. (21) of 1995 on Traffic and its Executive Regulations and amendments.

**2.10 Bus Services for Field Trips**

- 1.** Vehicle Specification: Students shall be transported by school buses for field trips in accordance with the technical requirements outlined in the *Abu Dhabi Guideline for School Bus Route Regularization*, including for trips where the distance traveled exceeds 80 kilometers. Where it is necessary to use tourist buses, they shall meet the following technical requirements:
  - a. Seat belts
  - b. Fire extinguishers
  - c. Automatic system for extinguishing engine fires
  - d. First aid kits
  - e. Availability of emergency exits
  - f. Cameras, if available
  - g. Providing comprehensive insurance for the driver and passengers
  - h. Registering tourist buses in ITC's Asateel platform
  - i. Any other technical requirements requested in the future

2. The school shall inform the ITC when using tourist buses and shall bear responsibility for tracking such trips. Schools shall also inform parents of the type of bus that will be used on the field trip consent forms.
3. Duration of Journey: The maximum journey duration for school buses (as stipulated in Section 2.2.1) shall not apply to field trips.

### 2.11 Non-School Bus Transportation

1. Only students in Cycle 3 (not younger) are authorized to arrive at and depart from school unaccompanied without a parent/parent-appointed responsible adult using non-school bus transportation, in line with the requirements in the [ADEK School Safeguarding Policy](#).
2. School's Liability: Schools are not responsible for the use of non-school bus transportation by students since they do not have supervisory oversight over the journey. In such cases, the school's supervision begins the moment the student enters the school's premises, and the school has the right to regulate the admissibility, usage of appropriate pathways, and parking of such modes of transportation.
  - a. if the use of such vehicles on premises is accepted by the school, the school shall prepare the necessary infrastructure, including tracks and parking spaces.
3. Consent Form: Schools shall collect a consent form signed by parents stating that they shall uphold their roles and responsibilities, and schools shall not be liable in case of any incidents resulting from the use of non-school bus transportation. Additional aspects to be outlined in the consent form based on the type of non-school bus transportation are outlined below:
  - a. Parents understand the implications of distance traveled to school using other non-school bus transportation such as scooters, bicycles, etc.,
  - b. Parents shall ensure compliance with the relevant ITC regulations regarding permits, usage of pathways, etc.
4. Transportation Requirements: Schools shall inform parents that the use of non school-bus transportation is subject to ITC requirements.

## 3. School Bus Service Staff

### 3.1 Staffing Requirements

1. Driver: The requirements for Drivers are as per Article (6) of the Executive Regulation Concerning the School Transport Service Regulation in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Schools shall ensure the following:
  - a. Drivers have obtained an ITC permit to practice their profession.
  - b. Drivers sign off on acknowledging the [ADEK School Student Protection Policy](#).
  - c. Drivers are registered on PASS.
  - d. They have considered the long processing time for the licensing procedures and planned their school bus service accordingly.

2. **Bus Supervisor:** The requirements for Bus Supervisors are as per Article (7) of the Executive Regulation Concerning the School Transport Service Regulation in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and of the *Abu Dhabi Guideline for School Bus Route Regularization*. Schools shall ensure the following:
  - a. Appoint a Bus Supervisor for each bus used for transporting students aged 11 years or below.
  - b. Only female Bus Supervisors are employed, except for all-male school buses with Cycle 2 and 3 students where a male supervisor may be employed.
  - c. Bus supervisors shall have obtained a ITC permit to practice their profession.
  - d. Bus Supervisors sign off on acknowledging the [ADEK School Student Protection Policy](#).
  - e. Bus Supervisors are registered on PASS. Schools shall consider the long processing time for the licensing procedures and plan their school bus services accordingly.
  
3. **School Transport Coordinator:** Schools shall appoint one member of staff to be the School Transport Coordinator. Schools shall ensure that this person shall sign off on acknowledging the [ADEK School Student Protection Policy](#), and can adequately speak, read, and write in the language of instruction at the school.

### 3.2 Communication with Schools and Parents

1. Schools shall inform parents that the Salama application can be used to track their child's school bus.
  
2. **Bus Supervisor:** The role entails regular communication with the parent(s) and school regarding the following aspects:
  - a. Notifying the parent-appointed responsible adult regarding delays of the school bus for pick-up and drop-off.
  - b. Notifying the school and parent in case of the absence of the parent-appointed responsible adult at the drop-off point.
  - c. Notifying the School Transport Coordinator of any misconduct by students.
  - d. Other aspects related to the daily journey as required.
  
3. **Driver:** The role entails reporting to the School Transport Coordinator any incidents while driving the school bus and misconduct by students.
  
4. **School Transport Coordinator:** Schools shall provide operators and parents of students with the contact details of the School Transport Coordinator and ensure that he/she is the point of contact for parents on matters beyond the remit of the Bus Supervisor, such as an emergency or system-wide issues outlined as follows:
  - a. Delays related to fog or accidents.
  - b. Changes in the schedule of school buses.
  - c. Other emergency or system-wide issues that may arise.



## 4. Compliance

- 4.1 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).
- 4.2 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 school 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 (DMT). (2017). Decision of the Chairman of Department No. 259 of 2017 on the Issuance of Executive Regulation Concerning the School Transport Service Regulation in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- Federal Decree law No. (21) of 1995 on Traffic and its Executive Regulations and their amendments.
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law and its amendments.

## Publication

2024 (September) ADEK\_School\_Transportation Policy\_v.1.1

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:

2024 (January) ADEK\_School\_Transportation Policy\_v.1.0

