



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

SCHOOL POLICY

on

STUDENT ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS



Introduction

Having effective, supportive, and smooth transitions and administrative processes when joining or leaving a school (admissions), when arriving at and departing from school (attendance), and when moving between grades or cycles (promotion) can have a significant impact on student academic, physical, social, and emotional wellbeing. This policy sets out the minimum requirement that schools must put in place with regard to student administrative affairs.

Purpose

- Ensure that schools make fair and transparent decisions related to admissions and grade placement.
- Ensure that students can transfer between schools with minimal course/grade repetition.
- Set out ADEK's expectations in relation to student attendance.
- Ensure that schools deal firmly and effectively with concerns related to student absence and punctuality.
- Outline exceptional circumstances under which students may not be promoted or accelerated beyond their age-appropriate grade.
- Ensure appropriate transition support is provided to students at key stages.

Definitions

Absence	The state of not being physically present in class/at school.
Absence rate	The proportion of absences to school days as per the approved school calendar. If the student was admitted mid-year, the absence rate is calculated from their joining date.
Additional Learning Needs	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). 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.
Admission	The process by which students are accepted to a school, up to and including enrollment and registration.
Academic Year	The period of the year during which students attend school, as defined by ADEK.
Attendance	The state of being physically present in class or at school. The attendance rate is recorded as the proportion of whole school days attended relative to the total number of school days as per the approved school calendar.
Clinical Assessment Report	A report arising from assessment of a student, conducted by a clinical psychologist, education psychologist, speech and language pathologist, doctor, or other suitably qualified professional.
Cycle	A stage in the primary and secondary educational process and is classified in Abu Dhabi as the following: Kindergarten (Pre-KG/FS1-KG2/Y1), Cycle 1 (G1/Y2-G5/Y6), Cycle 2 (G6/Y7- G8/Y9), and Cycle 3 (G9/Y10-G12/Y13). Private schools teaching UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum may follow MoE cycles: KG, Cycle 1 (G1-G4), Cycle 2 (G5-G8), and Cycle 3 (G9-G12).

Documented Learning Plan (DLP)	A plan which outlines any personalized learning targets, modifications to curriculum, additional support, or tools for learning which are agreed by school staff, parents, and students (where appropriate), including Individual Educational Plans (IEP), Individual Support Plans (ISP), Individual Learning Plans (ILP), Behavior Support Plans (BSP), Advanced Learning Plans (ALP), etc. This may be to address any specific identified academic, behavioral, language, or social and emotional need.
Equivalency	The process by which the UAE Ministry of Education officially endorses a secondary school certificate and declares it to be equivalent to the UAE General Education Certificate (Al Thanawiya), as per relevant ministerial decrees and their amendments.
Examination Leave	A period of absence authorized by the school for students to attend external examinations.
Enrollment	The process by which a child is included on a school's official list of students.
Lateness	Arrival later than the specified time for class.
Grade Placement	The process of placing a student in a grade/year, normally in accordance with their age group.
Maltreatment	Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Maltreatment includes neglect, exploitation, and/or bullying.
Parent	The person legally liable for a child or entrusted with their care, defined as the custodian of the child as per the Federal Decree Law No. 3 of 2016 Concerning Child Rights (Wadeema).
Present	The state of being physically available in class/at school.
Promotion	The sequential movement of a student from one grade/year to the next at the end of an academic year.
Punctuality	Arrival on time for school/class.
Receiving School	The school to which a student transfers.
Registration	The process by which a child's information is uploaded on eSIS and the school's management system.
Retention	An exceptional circumstance whereby a student is held back in their current grade/year rather than being promoted with their peers.
Sending School	The school from which a student transfers.

Student Behavior	The way in which a student acts or conduct themselves, especially towards others.
Student Transfer	The process of a student permanently leaving one educational institution to attend another.
Study Leave	A period of absence that is authorized by the school for students to study for examinations.



Policy

1. Admissions

1.1 School Admissions Policy: Schools shall develop and implement an Admissions Policy in line with this policy and make it available to prospective parents via their school website. Schools shall outline the following elements, at a minimum, in their admissions policy:

1. Non-Discrimination: Schools shall take a fair and transparent approach to admissions and shall not discriminate based on race, gender (excluding single-gendered schools), special educational needs, disabilities, religion or beliefs, language, or medical conditions.
2. Open Campus: Schools shall establish protocols to allow prospective parents and students to visit the school's premises.
3. Procedures: Schools shall communicate clear procedures and timelines for applications, offers, acceptances, and enrollment.
4. Documentation: Schools shall clarify the documentation that parents are required to submit to enable the admission of their children to the school.
5. Inclusive Admission Practices: Schools shall adopt practices for students with additional learning needs during the admissions process, in line with the [ADEK School Inclusion Policy](#).
 - a. Schools shall provide a statement in their policy that requires parents of students with additional learning needs to disclose all known information regarding their child's needs, as well as to submit any relevant documentation (e.g., clinical assessment reports).
 - b. Inability to Accommodate: Schools are not authorized to decline admissions for students with additional learning needs. However, in exceptional circumstances, where a school considers they are unable to meet the needs of any students with additional learning needs, the school shall submit an inability to accommodate notification to ADEK and the parents.

1.2 Admissions Assessments:

1. Use of Assessment: Schools are not authorized to use assessments as a basis for determining student admissions.
 - a. Schools are authorized to assess students through observation, interviews, and/or placement tests for students in KG, Cycle 1, and Cycle 2.
 - b. Admission tests are only authorized when schools can guarantee a grade placement for the child. The results of the assessments may only be used to inform the level of learning support required.
 - c. In the following exceptional circumstances, schools can additionally use formal assessments to determine grade placement:
 - 1) Students changing curricula in Cycle 3 (G9/Y10 to G12/Y13).

- 2) Students transitioning from alternative educational provision (e.g., homeschooling, coming from countries where grade/year equivalency cannot be established)
- 3) Students who have not attended school for more than two years.

1.3 **Waiting List:** Schools shall develop waiting list criteria where the school is oversubscribed and has more applicants than places available. These criteria shall be published on their website and should include the following:

1. A transparent selection process (including prioritization criteria) for determining who gets offered a place once it becomes available.
2. The maximum number of students that can be on a waiting list.
3. How long a waiting list is open. Waiting lists shall be refreshed every term, at a minimum.

1.4 **Offer and Withdrawal of a Place:** Schools shall issue an offer letter when a student's application is approved by their admissions committee. Schools shall outline the period of validity of the offer letter and not withdraw it unless:

1. The parent has not completed the enrollment or re-enrollment procedures outlined by the school within the stipulated deadline; or
2. It is established that admission was obtained fraudulently.

1.5 **Registration:**

1. **eSIS:** Schools shall register all their students on the ADEK Enterprise Student Information System (eSIS).
2. **Required Documents:** Schools shall seek the following valid documents from parents and ensure that they are up to date:
 - a. **Registration Form:** Schools shall require parents to complete a registration form.
 - 1) Child's contact information.
 - 2) Copy of child's birth certificate.
 - 3) Copy of child's passport.
 - 4) Copy of child's Emirates ID or diplomatic card with passport.
 - 5) Copy of parent's passports (both mother and father, if applicable) and evidence of UAE residency or copies of diplomatic cards with passports.
 - b. **Medical Records:** Schools shall submit medical records for their students in accordance with the Department of Health (DoH) requirements and collect signed consent forms from parents as per the [ADEK School Reporting Policy](#).
 - 1) Schools shall ensure that the nurse creates DoH-compliant medical files for new students from schools outside the UAE.
 - c. **Transfer Certificate:** When a student is transferring to a school in Abu Dhabi and is seeking admission to Grade 2/Year 3 or above (Including transferring mid-year Grade 1), the sending school must issue a student performance report and a Transfer Certificate (attested if applicable to the country of transfer).

- d. Documented Learning Plan (DLP): If applicable, schools shall plan, monitor, assess, and evaluate teaching and learning programs personalized for students with additional learning needs, as per the [ADEK School Inclusion Policy](#).
 - e. Clinical Assessment Report: If applicable, schools are authorized to ask parents to submit a clinical assessment report assessing their child's needs by a qualified professional, as per the [ADEK School Inclusion Policy](#).
 - f. Leaving Certificate: If a student is transferring from a government school to a private or charter school, a Leaving Certificate and a student performance report issued by the government school are required.
 - g. Other Documents: ADEK reserves the right to request any other documents.
3. Provision for Exceptions: Non-UAE transfer students are temporarily exempt from submitting their Emirates ID card during the registration period if it is not yet available to them; however, schools shall require parents to sign an undertaking to submit the card by the end of the term in which the student was enrolled.
 4. Update Student Profile: Schools shall update the student profile in eSIS with the new Emirates ID card (except for students with diplomatic cards).
 5. Record Maintenance: Schools shall maintain and store all student admission files in line with the [ADEK School Records Policy](#).

1.6 Enrollment and Re-enrollment:

1. Enrollment: Schools are authorized to enroll students at any time (subject to available space and fulfillment of admissions requirements) prior to the enrollment cut-off date stipulated by ADEK.
2. Re-enrollment: Schools shall re-enroll all existing students for the following academic year, provided that all conditions for re-enrollment, as defined by ADEK, have been met.
 - a. Schools shall publish a clear re-enrollment procedure, detailing the prerequisites and timelines for re-enrollment.
 - b. Schools shall ensure that existing students are automatically re-enrolled in the next academic year, subject to meeting fee payment requirements, as per the [ADEK School Fee Policy](#), unless parents actively choose to withdraw their child from the school.

1.7 Placement of New Students:

1. Grade Placement: Schools shall place all new students in a grade/year corresponding to their age as per [Table 1. Age Cut-Offs for Grades/Years](#), unless their placement in a different grade/year has been approved by ADEK.

Table 1. Age Cut-Offs for Grades/Years*

The age cut-off date (in the school year wherein the student is registered)	Schools whose academic year starts in September	Schools whose academic year starts in January	Schools whose academic year starts in April*
	31 August	30 April	31 March
Pre-KG / FS 1	3 years		
KG 1 / FS 2	4 years		
KG 2 / Year 1	5 years		
Grade 1 / Year 2	6 to 8 years		

*The cut-off date for schools teaching the Japanese curriculum is 1 April.

2. Grade Placement for Transferring Students: Schools shall determine the grade placement for transferring students based on the last grade/year completed as per the Transfer Certificate.
 - a. Schools shall not place students who have not attended school for more than two years in a grade/year level more than two years behind the grade/year level corresponding to their age.
 - b. When evaluating the placement of students with additional learning needs, schools shall consider the students' documented learning plans (DLPs), in line with the [ADEK School Inclusion Policy](#).

1.8 Transition for New and Transfer Students: Receiving schools shall take all necessary steps to ensure a seamless transition for new and transfer students.

1. Transfer of Records: Sending schools shall transfer the records of a student to receiving schools in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the [ADEK School Records Policy](#). In case of transfers within the Emirate, receiving schools shall update the student's registration on both ADEK's eSIS and the school's internal system.
2. Transferring Curricula: When students are transferring to receiving schools with a different curriculum from the sending schools, receiving schools shall write to the student's parents highlighting the potential risks that may arise in the adoption of a different curriculum, especially for those students who seek equivalency to the UAE's general secondary education certificate (Al Thanawiya), in line with the [ADEK School Curriculum Policy](#).

2. Attendance

2.1 Requirements: At the beginning of each academic year, schools shall develop, implement, monitor, and regularly review and communicate their Attendance Policy to parents and publish it on their website. Schools shall outline the following elements in their policy, at a minimum:

1. Defining Attendance and Punctuality: Schools shall ensure that their attendance policy defines attendance and punctuality and sets out the school's procedures to ensure compliance.

- a. Schools shall have a procedure in place to follow up on all unreported absences within 2 hours of the attendance register being closed.
 - b. Schools shall establish a system to record and notify parents of the arrival and departure of unaccompanied Cycle 3 students and upon request for students in any grade below Cycle 3, in line with the [ADEK School Safeguarding Policy](#).
 - c. Cycle 1-3: Schools shall identify students with absence rates above 5% (including authorized and unauthorized absences) of the total calendar days outlined by ADEK as a “cause for concern”.
 - 1) Schools shall determine whether to identify the student as being at educational risk, in line with the [ADEK School Educational Risk Policy](#).
 - 2) If the absences lead to reasonable suspicions of student maltreatment (neglect), the school shall report this in line with the [ADEK School Student Protection Policy](#).
 - d. KG Cycle: For students with absence rates (including authorized and unauthorized absences) above 10% of the total calendar days, schools shall engage with parents to advise them that persistent absences may have a negative impact on student learning and progression. For absences where there is reasonable suspicion of student maltreatment, the school shall report this in line with the [ADEK School Student Protection Policy](#).
 - e. Schools shall require students with additional learning needs to comply with the school's attendance requirements as detailed above. However, schools are authorized to accommodate leaves requested for medical or therapeutic reasons.
- 2. Ensuring Attendance Compliance:** Schools shall outline the procedures via which attendance compliance is ensured, including:
- a. Recording attendance.
 - b. Managing absences in accordance with the guidelines issued by the ADEK Student Happiness Committee.
 - c. Recognizing excellent or improved student attendance.
 - d. Reporting attendance to ADEK daily on eSIS.
 - e. Safeguarding against travel-related absences during periods before school breaks by verifying that lesson plans enable positive engagement in productive learning throughout the academic year (e.g., lesson plans are not designed to be “light” in the last week before the end of the term in anticipation of student absences).
 - f. Communicating and working effectively with parents, students, and school staff about the importance of good attendance, the rules of attendance, and the consequences of poor attendance.
- 3. Authorized Absences:**
- a. Schools shall authorize the following types of absences, provided they are supported by official documents from appropriate authorities:
 - 1) Illness (see [Section 2.1.4. Absence Due to Illness](#))
 - 2) Death of a first- or second-degree relative
 - 3) Medical appointment scheduled prior to the absence
 - 4) Official community task
 - 5) Mandatory appearance before an official body
 - 6) Essential urgent family travel for matters such as medical care, escort leave, or a death in the family

- 7) Attendance of conferences, competitions, and events, with the permission of the Principal (e.g., Model United Nations, sports events, Olympiads)
 - 8) Work in the entertainment industry
 - 9) Observation of religious holidays that are not defined as public holidays in the UAE
 - 10) Examination leave (for board and pre-collegiate examinations only, when approved by ADEK)
 - 11) Study leave (up to 4 weeks annually for board and pre-collegiate examinations only, when approved by ADEK)
 - a) Schools shall remain open for learning during study leave and shall ensure that adequate support is provided to students who are not taking leave.
 - 12) Leave for medical or therapeutic reasons for students with additional learning needs
 - 13) Government-approved school closures due to extreme weather conditions
- b. Where an absence is authorized, schools shall inform the student of work to be caught up and shall allow the student to complete any assignments or tests that they have missed.
- 4. Absence Due to Illness:**
- a. Parents shall submit a parent-written sick note (daily) if their child is absent for up to 3 consecutive days, or the absence will be recorded as an unauthorized absence.
 - b. Parents shall submit a sick leave certificate from a DOH-licensed physician on the fourth consecutive day (including weekends), or the absence will be recorded as an unauthorized absence. Sick leave certificates shall be submitted within 24 hours of the medical consultation.
 - c. Schools shall authorize a maximum of 12 annual school days of student absence due to medical reasons without requiring a sick leave certificate from a DoH-licensed physician.
 - d. For students with chronic medical conditions who may require more than 12 school days of student absence, parents shall submit medical reports from a DoH-licensed physician or a relevant health authority, and schools shall consider each case at their own discretion.
- 5. Punctuality:**
- a. Schools shall excuse students who are late in the morning in the case of adverse weather conditions, or any other exceptional reason deemed appropriate by the school administration.
 - b. Schools shall have a mechanism in place to approve and manage student punctuality (for instance, requiring students to register at the reception to obtain a late pass).
 - c. Schools shall identify frequent lateness and take appropriate action at their discretion.

2.2 Maintenance of Attendance Records: Schools shall ensure that teachers record student attendance daily and report it to the centralized unit responsible for updating eSIS.

2.3 Intervention Mechanism for Students at Educational Risk: Schools are authorized to identify any students with low attendance as “students at educational risk”.

1. Schools shall work with the concerned students and their parents to implement an intervention plan in line with the [ADEK School Educational Risk Policy](#).

3. Promotion

3.1 Requirements: Schools shall develop and implement a Promotion Policy, which must outline the following elements at a minimum:

1. **Age Requirement:** Schools shall set out the age requirements for grade placement as per Table 1. Age Cut-Offs for Grades/Years.
2. **Mandatory Promotion:** Schools shall promote all students with their peer group sequentially from one grade/year to the next if they fulfill the promotion requirements for the previous year.
 - a. **Exceptions to Mandatory Promotion:** Schools shall not retain students in a grade/year in any circumstance, except where a Cycle 2 or 3 student does not meet the promotion requirements as per the ADEK-approved curriculum and fails to make progress following interventions identified in the [ADEK School Educational Risk Policy](#).
 - 1) Where a student fails to meet the objectives in their DLP but does meet the promotion requirements set out in the ADEK-approved curriculum, schools shall promote them and adjust their DLP objectives accordingly.
 - 2) Schools are not authorized to retain a student in Cycle 2 or 3 in a certain grade/year more than 2 consecutive times.
 - 3) Schools are not authorized to retain any student in more than two different grades during the entirety of their school education.
 - 4) **Voluntary Grade Repetition:** Schools are authorized to exceptionally allow a student to repeat the school grade/year upon the request of the student's parents, and if deemed in the best interest of the student and their wellbeing.
 - b. If parents request grade/year repetition to enable the student to improve their grades, schools are authorized to use their discretion to make the decision.
 - c. Schools shall obtain ADEK's approval before retaining a student.
3. **Exceptions for Students with Additional Learning Needs:** Schools shall consider, on an exceptional basis, requests by parents of students with additional learning needs for their child to be retained in their grade/year in Cycle 2/3. Such cases must be considered by the school in close collaboration with the parents. This decision must be approved by ADEK.

3.2 Supporting Students at Educational Risk: Where a student is identified to be at risk of not being promoted:

1. Schools shall abide by the requirements of the [ADEK School Educational Risk Policy](#).

2. Schools shall notify the student's parents and involve them in planning support and intervention measures.

4. Transition Support

- 4.1 Schools shall provide transition support for students throughout their education journey, which includes the following stages/phases:

1. Admissions: Schools shall establish programs to support new students in the school. In particular, targeted transition support shall be provided to:
 - a. Students starting school for the first time or coming from alternative early education settings.
 - b. Students transferring from specialized provision, homeschooling, or any other type of educational provision.
 - c. Students in exchange programs.
 - d. Students with additional learning needs in all circumstances, in line with the [ADEK School Inclusion Policy](#).
2. Promotions: Schools shall develop plans to support students with transitions between cycles and promotions:
 - a. Schools shall establish targeted DLPs to support individual students who have not been promoted or who have accelerated, in line with the [ADEK School Inclusion Policy](#).
 - b. Schools shall develop programs to support students' transition between cycles (or other key stages defined by the school) by preparing them for the new environment (in the year prior) and during their first year in the new cycle.
3. Graduation and Leaving School: Schools shall develop programs to support students' transition following graduation or switching pathways by preparing them for the new environment.
 - a. Schools shall develop support for individual students transitioning out of the current school into Higher Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), specialized provision, homeschooling, and other non-mainstream education systems, in line with the [ADEK School Career and University Guidance Policy](#) and [ADEK School Inclusion Policy](#).

5. Compliance

- 5.1 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).
- 5.2 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. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights (Wadeema)
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments

Publication

2025 (September) ADEK_School_Student Administrative Affairs Policy_v1.2

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.

Current version:

Updated attendance and absence sections, including new requirements for absence due to illness.

Past version:

- 2024 (September) ADEK_School_Student Administrative Affairs Policy_v1.1
First published
- 2024 (January) ADEK_School_Student Administrative Affairs Policy_v1.0
First circulated to schools

