



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

## SCHOOL POLICY

on

# VALUES AND ETHICS



### Introduction

The fundamental values of education aim to safeguard the rights of individuals and promote positive, respectful, and inclusive learning environments in schools. They, along with the cultural values and ethics of the UAE, are a foundation for all school activities and decision-making, in accordance with Federal Decree Law No. (18) of 2020 on Private Education and its amendments. This policy defines the values by which schools must be guided and sets out the requirements for schools in ensuring that these values are applied, and that school leaders and staff adopt the highest ethical standards in all aspects of their work.

### Purpose

- Define ADEK’s core values of education, in accordance with the laws, regulations, and relevant policies of the UAE and Abu Dhabi.
- Set out ADEK’s requirement that schools abide by these core values in all their activities, and that they promote the core values within their school communities.
- Ensure that schools are guided by respect for UAE national identity and cultural values in their educational practices.
- Ensure that school leaders and staff adopt and apply the highest ethical standards and demonstrate integrity at all levels, and in all aspects of their professional roles.
- Promote awareness, compassion, cultural diversity, trust, mutual respect, and tolerance within all school communities, in line with the spirit of the National Program for Tolerance.

## Definitions

<b>Additional Learning Needs</b>	<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>
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	<p>Occurs when an individual’s financial, personal, social, or other interest(s) might be reasonably deemed to compromise their judgment, decisions, or actions in relation to their professional responsibilities.</p>
<b>Core values</b>	<p>The fundamental values of education combined with the cultural values of the UAE. This comprises all other values imparted by the different frameworks in this policy, and includes teamwork, integrity, honesty, transparency, innovation, inclusion, respect, accountability, tolerance, care compassion, and sustainability.</p>
<b>Culture</b>	<p>The set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs (UNESCO, 2001).</p>
<b>Ethical Leadership</b>	<p>Leadership demonstrated by the Principal, Governing Board, school operators, and school owners, senior leadership, and others, which holds respect for UAE national identity and cultural values and ADEK’s core values of education.</p>
<b>Ethics</b>	<p>Moral principles that govern a person's behavior or their conduct.</p>
<b>Extracurricular Activities (ECA)</b>	<p>Organized activities that students can participate in that are usually external to the school curriculum (but may be connected to it). Activities can be scientific, athletic, cultural, intellectual, philanthropic, and/or social in nature, and include, but are not limited to sports teams, clubs, private sports lessons, competitions, performances, recreational activities, field trips and overseas travel, as well as activities hosted virtually.</p>

<b>Governing Board</b>	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.
<b>Inclusive Education</b>	An approach to education which celebrates and acknowledges learning diversity and ensures that teaching is adapted to enable all students to learn.
<b>Innovation</b>	The creative generation of new ideas, methods, practices, or devices to make improvements on the status quo.
<b>Malicious Intent</b>	Having a predetermined purpose to disregard UAE national identity and cultural values and consequently cause cultural offense.
<b>School Leadership</b>	Senior members of the school community, including the Principal, members of the Governing Board, operators, and owners/investors.
<b>Tolerance</b>	Willingness to accept behavior and beliefs that are different from one's own without necessarily giving up or weakening one's own beliefs.
<b>National Identity</b>	A system of social and moral values associated with the lifestyle of the people in the past, present, and future (Ministry of Culture and Youth, as cited in Official Portal of the UAE Government, n.d.).
<b>Unethical Behavior</b>	Any behavior or action that is in direct breach of ADEK's core values, the <i>Code of Conduct for Education Professionals in General Education</i> (MoE, 2022), the <i>ADEK School Professional Code of Ethics Policy</i> , the UAE national identity and cultural values, and this policy. Unethical behavior includes, but is not limited to, oppression, discrimination, racism, prejudice, favoritism, dishonesty, bullying, and sexual harassment.
<b>Whistleblowing</b>	An instance where an individual passes on information about organizational malpractice (e.g., fraud, corruption, miscarriage of justice, risk of serious harm to an individual, risks or damage to the environment and other actions against public interest) taking place at, or near, their place of employment or education.

## Policy

### 1. Values and Value Frameworks

- 1.1 Core Values: Schools shall integrate the core values of education in all their activities and shall actively promote these values within their school communities.
1. Schools shall integrate the core values in all decision-making, planning, development, teaching, policymaking, and administration, and thereby foster inclusive school communities and safeguard the rights of all individuals.
  2. Schools shall promote the importance of the core values to all members of the school community by:
    - a. Actively raising awareness of and generating engagement about the core values through events (e.g., values days) and communications (e.g., posters, newsletters).
    - b. Imparting the different aspects of the core values (e.g., traditions, heritage, citizenship, conservation, volunteering) through the school curriculum.
    - c. Having a mechanism in place to ensure that individuals are held to account if they fail to abide by the core values.

### 2. UAE National Identity and Cultural Values

- 2.1 Celebrating and Honoring UAE National Identity and Cultural Values: In order to promote the UAE national identity and cultural values, schools shall ensure the following at a minimum:
1. Whole-School Integration: Schools shall continuously promote, celebrate, and integrate UAE national identity and cultural values in all aspects of school life (e.g., curriculum, community awareness, visitor experience), in line with the [ADEK School Cultural Consideration Policy](#).
  2. Public Holidays and National Celebrations: Schools shall observe official UAE public holidays and national celebrations in line with ADEK's circulars. Schools shall not schedule a working school day on public holidays without prior approval from ADEK, in line with the [ADEK School Calendar and Public Holidays Policy](#).
  3. Flags and Portraits: Schools shall fly the UAE flag and ensure that the only flag raised in schools is that of the UAE. Schools shall display official portraits in compliance with the requirements of the Positions of Their Highness Pictures and Placements and Uses of Flags Manual, in line with the [ADEK School Buildings and Facilities Policy](#).
  4. Assembly and Anthem: Schools shall organize an assembly each morning (in whichever format appropriate to the school, e.g. whether as a whole school, cycle, section, or by class) in which all students are required to attend and sing the UAE national anthem, the proper conduct of which shall be ensured by the Principal and their delegate(s).

- a. Schools shall convey to staff, students, and visitors the importance of showing respect for the national anthem and the appropriate conduct to practice while it is being sung.
  5. School National Identity Committee: Schools shall form a parent committee (e.g., whether as a part of the Governing Board, a parent council, or as a separate committee) composed of a minimum of 3 UAE National parents or parents of UAE National children dedicated to promoting UAE national identity and cultural values in schools.
  6. Initiatives: Schools shall partake in all government-endorsed initiatives relating to the promotion of UAE national identity and cultural values, in line with the [ADEK School Cultural Consideration Policy](#).
- 2.2 Adhering to UAE Laws: Schools shall ensure that members of the school community understand, respect, and adhere to the requirements identified in this policy, and all other legislation in the UAE.

### 3. Ethical Leadership and Culture

- 3.1 Ethical Leadership: Schools shall demonstrate a clear commitment to ethical leadership by ensuring that school leaders:
1. Adhere to the principles of ethical leadership in all their decision-making processes, actions, and behavior and the *Code of Conduct for Education Professionals in General Education* (MoE, 2022) in all school activities and procedures.
  2. Encourage the participation of the wider school community in the process of discussing ideas and making decisions, in line with the approved curriculum.
  3. Ensure that there is no conflict of interest between their personal, financial, social, or other interests that affect their professional duty to deliver high-quality education in line with this policy.
  4. Ensure the provision of training to staff on ethical behavior.
- 3.2 Appointment of Staff: School leaders shall ensure that they follow the core values while appointing staff to the school, as per this policy.
1. School leaders shall ensure that the recruitment, selection, appointment, and promotion of staff are conducted fairly, transparently, and objectively, and where the influence of bias or personal preference is minimized.
- 3.3 Ethical Behavior: Every member of the school community shall uphold the highest standards of ethical behavior. Schools shall establish systems and procedures to prevent, identify, and address unethical behavior.
1. Unethical behavior includes any behavior or action that is in direct breach of the core values, the *Code of Conduct for Education Professionals in General*

Education, (MoE, 2022), the [ADEK School Professional Code of Ethics Policy](#), and the [ADEK School Cultural Consideration Policy](#). This includes but is not limited to, oppression, discrimination, racism, prejudice, favoritism, dishonesty, bullying, and any type of harassment.

2. Schools shall ensure that all school community members demonstrate and uphold the highest integrity and honesty in all academic work without plagiarism, collusion, cheating, tampering, fabrication, or receiving assistance from any other person or any source material not appropriately authorized, and in alignment with the Federal Decree Law No. (33) of 2023 Concerning Combating Cheating and Violation of Examination Systems, in line with the [ADEK School Assessment Policy](#).
3. Schools shall refrain from using ADEK’s name to communicate difficult or negative information or decisions to members of the community, unless explicitly stated (e.g., circulars will explicitly state that schools are authorized to communicate school closure due to rain; however, revealing non-approvals for school-specific requests made to ADEK is not authorized)
4. Schools shall refrain from referring members of the school community to ADEK to seek unauthorized exemptions or to mobilize staff or parents to lobby ADEK to reverse a decision issued to the school (e.g., sending parents to seek exemptions for seats despite the school having full capacity, sending parents to contest an inspection rating).
5. Schools shall establish mechanisms and procedures to identify and deal with instances of unethical behavior.
6. Schools shall act in accordance with the [ADEK Professional Code of Ethics Policy](#) and also in line with the procedures established by the school if a staff member is found to have behaved unethically.
7. Any report of potential violations of the [ADEK School Cultural Consideration Policy](#) will be investigated and will lead to a determination of non-compliance (with corresponding sanctions) if malicious intent is established.
8. Schools shall integrate the ethical self-evaluation process with the performance evaluation of leaders and staff.

**3.4 Whistleblowing:** The Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments places an obligation on individuals to report crimes. In line with this, schools shall establish a Whistleblowing Policy to ensure that there is a safe channel and a reporting mechanism for relevant individuals of the school community to disclose any observed illegal or unethical practices, and to provide a means for redressing such practices.

1. Schools shall have a mechanism in place for anonymous reporting to protect the identity of the individual of the school community who reports or is the subject of a whistleblowing concern.
2. If the identity of an individual in the school community who reports or who is the subject of a whistleblowing concern is known, then the school shall ensure confidentiality and protect individuals against any disciplinary action,

stigmatization, or discrimination, particularly for the latter, until the investigation is completed.

**3.5 Positive Education Environment:** Schools shall foster a positive school environment that reflects the core values, via the following actions and initiatives:

- 1.** The promotion of creativity, positivity, and teamwork, including through the involvement of parents and the local community wherever possible and appropriate, in line with the [ADEK School Parent Engagement Policy](#).
- 2.** A staff-wide commitment to the core values demonstrated by actions and behaviors that are fair and respectful, and that promote trust and equality.
- 3.** Establishment of a clear expectation that staff and students embrace diversity, encourage inclusive education, and respect UAE national identity and cultural values.
- 4.** The provision of the school's policies and documents in both English and Arabic, to facilitate engagement with the parent community.

## 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 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 fines or penalties for academic dishonesty before, during, or after examinations imposed by Federal Decree Law No. (33) of 2023 Concerning Combating Cheating and Violation of Examination Systems or any other relevant law. ADEK reserves the right to intervene if a school is found to be in violation of its obligations.



## References

- Federal Decree Law No. (18) of 2020 on Private Education and its amendments
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments.
- Federal Decree Law No. (33) of 2023 Concerning Combating Cheating and Violation of Examination Systems.
- Ministry of Education (MoE). (2022). *Code of Conduct for Education Professionals in General Education*.
- Official Portal of the UAE Government. (n.d.). Preserving the Emirati National Identity. <https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/social-affairs/preserving-the-emirati-national-identity#:~:text=The%20ministry%20defines%20national%20identity,the%20past%2C%20present%20and%20future>
- UNESCO. (2001). *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*.

## Publication

2024 (September) ADEK\_School\_Values and Ethics 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\_Values and Ethics Policy\_v.1.0

