



AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL OF ABU DHABI

COEDUCATION POLICY

1. SCHOOL VISION

Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD) fosters globally minded graduates through inclusive education, nurturing a sense of belonging, understanding, and respect. We empower students with skills, empathy, and awareness to contribute locally and globally.

2. SCHOOL MISSION

Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD) provides a diverse curriculum with global perspectives to all students. We foster inclusion, embrace diversity, promote understanding, and empower students to excel academically and socially. Our commitment to inclusivity ensures every student feels valued and supported.

3. INTRODUCTION

Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD) acknowledges that schools in Abu Dhabi have traditionally operated as single-gender institutions. With the continued expansion of the international school sector, coeducation has become a common and accepted practice.

However, the adoption of coeducational settings requires adherence to specific regulatory and cultural considerations to ensure alignment with local values and community expectations. In accordance with the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) and its *School Cultural Consideration Policy*, this policy establishes the foundational requirements governing coeducation and the gender of staff permitted in various school contexts.

This policy provides clarity and consistency in the application of coeducational practices, ensuring that ASAD operates in compliance with ADEK's guidelines while respecting the cultural norms of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

4. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the requirements and expectations for ASAD in implementing coeducation in accordance with ADEK regulations and cultural considerations.

Specifically, this policy aims to:

- Establish clear guidelines on the sharing or separation of school spaces and facilities according to gender, ensuring that practices align with ADEK's cultural and regulatory framework.
- Outline requirements regarding the appropriate gender of staff in relation to school type and student grade level, maintaining a respectful and culturally appropriate learning environment.

Through these measures, the policy ensures that coeducation at ASAD operates in a manner that balances educational inclusivity with cultural sensitivity and compliance.

5. SCOPE

This Coeducation Policy applies to all coeducational arrangements, learning environments, and staffing practices at ASAD.

It governs the allocation and use of shared and gender-specific spaces, as well as the appointment and deployment of staff according to gender, in line with ADEK's *School Cultural Consideration Policy* and related regulations.

The policy applies to and must be adhered to by all school leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff, and covers all grade levels and programs offered by ASAD.

6. DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Coeducational	Having students of both genders interacting in a defined space.
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 Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum may follow MoE cycles: KG, Cycle 1 (G1-G4), Cycle 2 (G5-G8), and Cycle 3 (G9-G12).
Gender Status	The classification of a school depending on its gender mixture, defined as coeducational, shared, or single-gendered.
Nudity	The state of not wearing any clothes.
Physical Education (PE)	The subject concerned with developing students' physical literacy and their ability to use their literacy to perform in a range of activities for the progressive development of their physical health. PE is planned, progressive learning (theory and practice) that takes place in a timetabled class with a documented curriculum that is delivered to all students by a qualified PE teacher. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to PE also includes other physical activity-based subjects where intentional physical contact between genders is possible (e.g., dance, yoga).
Section	An administrative grouping of students (e.g., by cycle, grade, class, bus, or any other dividing parameter). A section can have a different gender status than that of the school (e.g., a school may be coeducational in Cycle 1 but have single-gendered sections for Cycle 2 and above).
Shared	Having both boys and girls on a campus, but with completely separate sections for each gender. Students share common facilities (e.g., labs), but use them at different times to ensure that there is no interaction between genders.
Single-Gendered (SG)	Having students of only one gender in a defined space.
Toilet Block	A structure or designated area within the school or outdoor setting that contains multiple toilets and washbasins.

7. POLICY

Gender Status

7.1 Communication of Gender Status

Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD) shall clearly publish its gender status (coeducational, shared, or single gender) on the school website, in all student registration materials, and other official communications.

Where the school operates with different gender arrangements across grades or cycles, these distinctions shall be formally approved by ADEK and clearly indicated on the school's website and admissions documents to ensure transparency for parents and the school community.

7.2 Coeducation in Cycle 1

In alignment with ADEK policy, ASAD is authorised to operate coeducational classes in Cycle 1 (up to and including Grade 4 / Year 5), regardless of the school's overall gender status. This arrangement supports the holistic development of younger learners in a structured and culturally appropriate environment.

7.3 Permanent Gender Status Conversion (Whole School or Cycle/Grade)

ASAD shall not make any permanent changes to its gender status, whether at the whole-school level or for a specific cycle or grade, without prior written approval from ADEK.

To seek approval for a gender status conversion:

- The school must provide documented consent from a majority (more than 50%) parents of students enrolled in the affected school, cycle, or grade.
- Transitional adjustments, including but not limited to communication with parents and ensuring that facilities (such as separate toilets and changing areas) are adequate for both genders must be completed at least one full academic year prior to the intended change.

These measures ensure that any transition is transparent, respectful, and compliant with ADEK's cultural and operational expectations.

7.4 Temporary Gender Status Conversion (Single Class)

ASAD may apply for a temporary conversion of a specific single-gender class to a coeducational format for a term or academic year under the following conditions:

Specialised Programs:

- If the school offers specialised academic tracks (e.g., IB, AP, or other advanced programs), parents shall be informed at the start of each academic year that courses may be temporarily converted to coeducational in cases of low enrollment or teacher shortages.
- Any such conversions shall follow ADEK's policy and require prior approval.

Request and Approval:

- An official request with justification and supporting evidence shall be submitted to ADEK before any conversion takes place.

Parent Consent:

- The school must obtain written consent from at least 75% of parents of students enrolled in the class being considered for temporary conversion.

Class Arrangements:

- The selected classroom shall allow for the safe and separate entry and exit of students from each gender, with access to appropriate toilet facilities.

Accommodations for Non-Consenting Parents:

- The school shall provide suitable accommodations for students whose parents do not consent to the conversion. These may include:
 - Dividing the classroom into separate learning zones

- Installing privacy screens
- Allowing alternative seating arrangements
- Providing online or alternative access to course materials

Unauthorised Conversions:

- Even with majority parent consent, conversion to coeducational swimming classes from Grade 5/ Year 6 onwards is not authorised, in accordance with ADEK's *Coeducation Policy*.

7.5 Gender Restrictions

Kindergarten (Cycle)

At ASAD, all Kindergarten (KG) class teachers and teaching support staff shall be female only, in accordance with ADEK requirements. For Grades 1 and above, there are no gender restrictions on teaching staff, except for those specified under Section 7.6 (Physical Education and Swimming).

7.6 Physical Education (PE) and Swimming

Regardless of the school's gender status, ASAD shall fully adhere to ADEK's gender restrictions for PE and swimming classes, as outlined in Table 1 below. These guidelines ensure that teaching assignments and class groupings maintain compliance with both ADEK regulations and cultural expectations.

Table 1. Gender Restrictions for PE and Swimming

Class	Grades	Gender Status of School/Section	Teacher/Adult Gender
PE	PKG/FS1-G4/Y5	SG Male	Male or Female
		SG Female	Female
		Coeducational**	Male or Female
	G5/Y6-G12/Y13	Male Section	Male
		Female Section	Female
		Coeducational**	Male or Female
Swimming*	PKG/FS1-G4/Y5	SG Male	Male
		SG Female	Female
		Coeducational**	Female
	G5/Y6-G12/Y13	Male Section	Male
		Female Section	Female

*Swimming: applies to swimming during PE only. This does not apply to extracurricular swimming activities.

**Running coeducational sections is contingent on ADEK approval (for coeducational schools only).

7.7 Class and Facility Arrangements

1. From Grade 5 / Year 6 onwards, students shall be separated by gender for all PE and swimming classes, regardless of the school's overall gender status.
2. Coeducational schools may apply to ADEK for exceptional approval to conduct:
 - Coeducational PE classes, and
 - Coeducational swimming classes up to Grade 4 / Year 5, provided that:

- Separate changing facilities are available for each gender, in line with the ADEK *School Buildings and Facilities Policy*.
3. Parental consent shall be obtained for students participating in coeducational swimming or physical activities. The school shall provide suitable alternative arrangements for students whose parents do not consent, such as:
 - Land-based physical training or dryland exercises
 - Use of physical dividers or screens where appropriate

7.8 Teacher–Student Gender Alignment (Swimming from Grade 5/Year 6 Onwards)

During swimming classes for Grade 5 / Year 6 and above, both students and teachers shall be of the same gender at all times. This requirement applies regardless of the school’s overall gender status and ensures full compliance with ADEK’s *Coeducation Policy* and cultural standards.

7.9 Changing Rooms and Spaces

1. ASAD shall ensure that all changing rooms are separated by gender or that their usage is staggered to guarantee occupation by only one gender at any given time.
2. For existing school facilities, bathrooms shall be separated by gender for all grades, except for Kindergarten (KG).
 - For new buildings or expansions, each Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 section shall include at least two gender-separated toilet blocks, in accordance with the ADEK *Private Schools’ Design Guidelines*.
3. Nudity is strictly prohibited on campus. The school shall ensure that all students adhere to modest and respectful changing practices within designated facilities.
4. Completely separated changing areas shall be provided for any school activity requiring clothing changes to the level of undergarments or beyond (e.g., costume changes for performances).
5. Changing of clothes to the level of undergarments or beyond is not permitted outside of designated changing rooms for any activity held on school premises.

7.10 Prayer Rooms

1. ASAD shall maintain separate male and female prayer rooms equipped with appropriate ablution facilities for use by both students and staff.
2. Where providing separate prayer rooms presents logistical challenges, Cycle 1 students and staff may share a prayer room with staggered usage times to ensure it is used by only one gender at a time.

7.11 Gender Restrictions for Other Staff

1. ASAD shall adhere to ADEK’s gender requirements for bus supervisors, cleaners, and nurses, as detailed in the applicable ADEK *Coeducation Policy* tables (see below).
2. In cases where both a male and female nurse are employed, the school shall ensure there are two separate care spaces within the clinic, one designated for male students and one for female students.
3. Male security guards may access female single-gendered sections only in emergencies and, to the greatest extent possible, must be accompanied by an appointed female staff member during such instances.

Table 2. Gender Restrictions for Bus Supervisors

Grades	Gender Status of School	Staff Gender
G4/Y5 and below	SG Male/SG Female/Coeducational	Female
G5/Y6 and above	SG Male	Male
	SG Female/Coeducational	Female

Table 3. Gender Restrictions for Cleaners*

Grades	Gender Status of School/Section	Staff Gender
G4/Y5 and below	SG Male/SG Female/Coeducational	Female
G5/Y6 and above	SG Male	Male
	SG Female	Female
	Coeducational	Male and Female (depending on the gender of toilets, changing rooms, and prayer rooms)

*Gender restrictions for cleaners apply during official working hours and when cleaning outside of working hours is in progress, clear visible signage /notification is required indicating if there is a cleaner of the opposite gender tending to the concerned space.

Table 4. Gender Restrictions for Nurses*

Grades	Gender Status of School/Section	Staff Gender
PKG/FS1-KG2/Y1	Any	Female
G1/Y2-G4/Y5	SG Male	Male or Female
	SG Female	Female
	Coeducational	Female (as a minimum; but additional male nurses may be employed to cater to male students)
G5/Y6 and above	SG Male	Male
	SG Female	Female
	Coeducational	Female (as a minimum; but additional male nurses may be employed to cater to male students)

*While it is preferable for students in a coeducational school in G1/Y2 and above to be treated by a nurse of the same gender, if this is not possible due to an emergency, the student is entitled to request the presence of a third-party adult of the same gender.

8 POLICY AWARENESS

ASAD shall ensure that all members of the school community are aware of and understand this *Coeducation Policy* and its requirements.

1. **Awareness Sessions:**

Regular sessions shall be held for students, staff, parents, and visitors to promote understanding of the policy's guidelines and expectations in line with ADEK regulations.

2. **Staff Training:**

All staff shall receive orientation and annual refresher training on the policy, including professional conduct, supervision responsibilities, and gender-specific requirements.

3. **Student, Parent, and Visitor Awareness:**

- Students shall be guided on respectful interaction and modest behaviour through the school's code of conduct program.
- Parents and visitors shall be informed of relevant provisions through orientation sessions, the Parent Handbook, and school communications.

4. **Documentation:**

The school shall maintain records of awareness and training activities as evidence of compliance for ADEK review.

9 COMPLIANCE

ASAD affirms its commitment to full compliance with ADEK's *Coeducation Policy* and all related directives and regulations. The policy shall be reviewed annually to ensure that the school's coeducational practices, staff assignments, and gender-based arrangements remain fully aligned with ADEK's cultural and operational requirements, while supporting a respectful, inclusive, and safe learning environment for all students.

ASAD recognises that failure to comply with this policy shall be subject to legal accountability and penalties in accordance with ADEK's regulations, policies, and requirements, notwithstanding any other penalties imposed under Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties, its amendments, or any other applicable law. ADEK reserves the right to monitor, review, and intervene where the school is found to be in violation of its obligations.

10 REFERENCES

- Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK).
- *ADEK Private Schools' Design Guidelines*.
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments.

11 RATIFICATION AND REVISION HISTORY

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