AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL OF ABU DHABI

# PARENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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## 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

At the Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD), we recognise that parents are essential partners in their child's learning journey. Their ongoing involvement, encouragement, and communication with the school form the foundation for each student's academic success and personal wellbeing.

This policy supports ADEK's expectations for parent engagement and reflects the school's commitment to fostering an inclusive, collaborative, and respectful relationship between families and the school community. Through shared responsibility, transparency, and mutual trust, ASAD aims to create a strong partnership where parents are actively engaged in their child's education, wellbeing, and growth in alignment with the values of the UAE and the principles of the International Baccalaureate (IB).

## 4. PURPOSE

This policy aims to:

- Define ASAD's commitment to meaningful and consistent engagement with parents in alignment with ADEK's *Parent Engagement Policy.*
- Establish clear expectations for a Parent–School Agreement and Parent Handbook to guide mutual responsibilities and effective communication.
- Outline the requirements for parent engagement in supporting students' learning, development, and wellbeing, while encouraging participation in school life and community initiatives.
- Promote transparent, inclusive, and respectful communication that empowers parents to take an active role in their child's educational journey.

## 5. SCOPE

This policy applies to all parents, guardians, and members of the Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD) community. It governs all parent–school engagement activities, including communication, meetings, events, and collaborative initiatives that support student learning and wellbeing. The policy applies across all programs and year levels and ensures alignment with ADEK's *Parent Engagement Policy* and the school's IB framework.

## 6. DEFINITIONS

| TERM | DEFINITION |
|---|---|
| **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).<br>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. |
| **Documented Learning Plan** | A plan which outlines any personalised 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. |
| **Extracurricular Activities (ECA)** | Organised 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. |
| **Head of Inclusion** | The Senior Leader with responsibility for the coordination of provision for students with additional learning needs. |
| **Healthy Eating** | Consuming a variety of foods to ensure the intake of nutrients (carbohydrates, healthy fats, proteins, vitamins, and minerals) and fluids in appropriate proportions and quantities to support the energetic and physiological needs of the individual and maintain overall health. Healthy eating includes sustainable practices that consider the health of the planet (Cena & Calder, 2020). |
| **Individual Assistant** | Formerly known as “Shadow Teachers”, Individual Assistants are parent-funded staff who provide 1:1 support for students with additional learning needs for any logistical, safety-related, behavioral, medical, and/or social and emotional need. In these cases, the student requires 1:1 support for at least 50% of their school day. |
| **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). |
| **Parent Engagement** | Active involvement of a parent and their collaboration with the school to support and improve their child’s learning, development, and wellbeing. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Parent involvement** | Participation of a parent in school activities, to support ongoing school improvement, community relationship-building, and/or leadership decision-making. |
| **People of Determination (PoD)** | Every person suffering from a temporary or permanent, full, or partial deficiency or infirmity in their physical, sensory, mental, communicational, educational, or psychological abilities to an extent that limits their possibility of performing the ordinary requirements (Federal Law No. (29) of 2006 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its amendments). |
| **Governing Board** | The governing body of a school, appointed by the school owners, including qualified representatives and parents. The Governing Board is the senior authority of the school, with responsibility for the overall governance of its activities. |
| **School Fees** | All fees charged to parents by a school. |
| **Sustainable Meal Practices** | Meal practices with low environmental impacts, including low carbon footprint, and which are accessible, affordable, and healthy, while optimising natural and human resources (FAO, 2010). |

## 7. POLICY

### 7.1 Parent- School Agreement

ASAD values parents as essential partners in their children's education and wellbeing. Parents are expected to model behaviour that upholds the school's values, the UAE's cultural principles, and the IB philosophy of respect, integrity, and shared responsibility.

#### 7.1.1 Parent Code of Conduct

In accordance with ADEK's *Parent Engagement Policy,* parents agree to the following Parent Code of Conduct:

1. Respect the vision, mission, and value statements of the school and its learning environment.
2. Treat members of the entire school community including students, staff (including security guards, cleaners, etc.), parents, in a professional and respectful manner and maintain relationships in the best interest of students.
3. Acknowledge that the education and wellbeing of each child whilst in school is a joint responsibility based on a positive school-to-home relationship between the school and the parent and that they will commit to their responsibilities (e.g., ensure their children engage in home learning, get adequate sleep, consume healthy foods in moderate amounts, engage in physical activity).
4. Set a good example with regard to speech and behaviour and a willingness to resolve concerns in a professional manner whether verbal or written (e.g., not raising one's tone of voice, using offensive language, or using social status to belittle or threaten others).
5. Refrain from posting culturally inconsiderate or defamatory content about parents, students, or staff of the school on social media as per the ADEK *School Cultural Consideration Policy.*
6. Seek to clarify a child's version of events with the school's view in order to bring about a peaceful solution to any disputes.
7. Correct their child's behaviour (or those in their care), where it could lead to conflict/unsafe conduct or limit the ability of other children to learn.

8. Commit to and be respectful of the school's general policies and whilst on school premises, behave and dress in a manner that is respectful of UAE national identity and cultural values and its current legislation.
9. Strive to achieve and maintain excellent daily attendance and punctuality of their child, including not taking holidays outside of official school breaks, following up on their child's academic performance, and being respectful of arrival and pick-up timings.
10. Respect the school's policy on academic honesty and integrity (i.e., monitoring their child's schoolwork for plagiarism, refraining from providing unnecessary assistance) to ensure the work accurately reflects the child's ability. This includes refraining from providing false information to the school (i.e., submitting fraudulent documents, and making false excuses for absences).
11. Respond to teacher requests to attend parent/teacher meetings as invited and maintain frequent positive communication to benefit their child's growth and steady progress.
12. Cooperate with the school's recommendations for additional learning support, in instances where the school deems learning support is necessary for their child's educational progress and development.
13. Should the above minimum requirements be disrespected or ignored, at the discretion of the school, parents may be asked to leave the school premises or be denied access.

## 7.2 Parent Handbook

The Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD) will develop and make available a Parent Handbook that provides parents and guardians with essential information about the school's programs, policies, and procedures.

ASAD will make the Parent Handbook available to all parents at the beginning of each academic year through the school website.

### 7.2.1 Requirements

The Parent Handbook will include, at a minimum:

1. School rules, policies, and procedures relating to admission, enrolment, tuition fees, uniform, daily schedule, attendance and punctuality, behaviour, academics, curriculum, assessment, communication protocols, nutrition, student protection and welfare, and transportation, in accordance with the relevant ADEK policies.
2. A blank copy of the Parent–School Agreement, including the Parent Code of Conduct.

## 7.3 Parent Engagement

The Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD) recognises that strong parent–school partnerships enhance student learning, wellbeing, and achievement. The school promotes active and respectful collaboration with parents by ensuring open access to information, staff, and support systems in accordance with ADEK's *Parent Engagement Policy.*

### 7.3.1 Engaging Parents in their Child's Learning

ASAD will promote parent engagement in the learning and development of their children by facilitating access to information, staff, and resources that support student progress and wellbeing.

1. **Interaction and Communication with Staff**
   a. ASAD will ensure courteous, respectful, and professional communication between parents and school staff.
   b. Parents will have direct access to their child's teachers to discuss academic progress and learning goals.
   c. Parents will have access to relevant staff providing additional support to their child, such as the Inclusion Team and Social Worker.
   d. Teachers and school leaders will contact and notify parents regarding academic, behavioural, or wellbeing concerns in line with the ADEK *School Student Administrative Affairs Policy, Inclusion Policy*, and *Student Behaviour Policy.*
   e. Parents will adhere to the Parent Code of Conduct when communicating with staff.
   f. ASAD will communicate expected response times for staff during working hours and provide alternative contact information for emergencies.

2. **Student Learning and Progress**
   a. ASAD will share information with parents about the school's curriculum, learning outcomes, and strategies to support students' progress.
   b. Parents will be engaged in planning and decision-making related to their child's education, including placement, pull-out, or push-in support decisions, as per ADEK policies.
   c. When external specialists are involved, parents will monitor progress and provide updates to the designated school contact.

3. **Assessment Guidance**
   ASAD will partner with parents to support students in achieving their best in internal and external assessments. The school will help parents understand assessment results and next steps for learning through reports, communication, and parent workshops, as per the ADEK *School Assessment Policy.*

4. **Curriculum Transfer and Equivalency**
   ASAD will guide and support parents seeking curriculum transfers, ensuring they understand the academic implications and UAE equivalency requirements, in accordance with the ADEK *Curriculum Policy* and *Student Administrative Affairs Policy.*

5. **Student Performance Reports**
   ASAD will share student performance reports digitally and provide opportunities for parent–teacher conferences at least once every term, as per the ADEK *Student Performance Reports Policy.*

6. **Home Learning Support**
   ASAD will encourage home-based learning that promotes parent–student interaction, including for students with additional learning needs, in accordance with the ADEK *School Inclusion Policy.*

### 7.3.2 Engaging Parents in their Child's Wellbeing

The Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD) recognises that parents play an essential role in promoting the wellbeing, safety, and holistic development of their children. The school actively engages parents in wellbeing initiatives by communicating relevant strategies, policies, and opportunities for partnership and feedback, in alignment with ADEK's Wellbeing and Health Policies.
To achieve this, ASAD will:

1. Promote awareness of its Wellbeing Strategy and related policies to all parents. Parents will be provided with opportunities to share feedback on their child's wellbeing through parent wellbeing surveys, in accordance with the ADEK School Wellbeing Policy and ADEK School Quality Assurance Policy.

2. Encourage parents to pack healthy and balanced meals and snacks for their children, following sustainable and hygienic practices. Parents will be informed of food restrictions and items to avoid bringing to school, especially during shared events. Any food-related concerns will be reported to parents on the same day they are observed. Parents must provide accurate information regarding their child's food allergies, in compliance with the ADEK *School Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy.*

3. Communicate its *Student Mental Health Policy* clearly to parents. The School Social Worker and teachers will inform parents of any identified counselling needs, explaining confidentiality and consent requirements. Parents who decline consent will be informed of any related implications. The school will keep parents informed of its mental health education programs and offer engagement opportunities. Where external support is provided, parents will monitor and report progress to the school counsellor, who will update the school's Mental Health Lead, in line with the ADEK School Student Mental Health Policy.

4. Inform parents about inclusive admissions procedures, clinical assessment requirements, and any limitations related to specific accommodations. Parents will receive regular progress updates and be involved in decision-making concerning modified curriculum pathways that may affect equivalency requirements**.** The school will also communicate any additional fees for specialised support or individual assistants, following the ADEK *School Inclusion Policy* and ADEK *In-School Specialist Services Policy**.***

5. Encourage parents to support their child's participation in extracurricular activities by sharing ECA calendars, schedules, and registration details. Parents will also be encouraged to volunteer or assist in ECAs, in accordance with the ADEK *School Extracurricular Activities and Events Policy**.***

6. ASAD will engage parents in supporting responsible and safe digital practices in line with the ADEK *School Digital Policy.*

    a. Parents will be informed of the school's expectations for responsible digital usage, including what is permitted or restricted on school premises, networks, and systems.
    *b.* The school will obtain written consent from parents before taking or publishing any photographs or video recordings of students.

7. Communicate its Sustainability Strategy, policies, and initiatives to parents and encourage their involvement in sustainability activities and events, as per the ADEK School Sustainability Policy.

8. Facilitate access to Department of Health (DoH)-appointed health providers for school-based immunisation programs and support parental communication in accordance with DoH guidelines and the ADEK *School Health and Safety Policy.*

9. In the event of a medical emergency where parental consent is not immediately available, the school nurse will contact parents and take all necessary measures to protect the student's wellbeing, following the ADEK *School Health and Safety Policy.*

**10.** Remind parents regularly to ensure that their child's school bag weight does not exceed ADEK's approved limits, as outlined in the ADEK *School Health and Safety Policy.*

### 7.3.3 Parent Involvement and Notifications

ASAD will promote active parent engagement by outlining clear procedures for participation and communication, ensuring that parents are informed of essential matters in the following areas:

**1. Visits to School**

The school encourages parents to visit and engage with the learning environment. The school will provide opportunities for parents to visit and engage with the school community. As part of the school's commitment to transparency and partnership, parents will be invited to attend annual PYP, MYP, and DP Exhibition Days, which serve as key events for parents to experience students' learning journeys and achievements. These exhibition days will be recognised as fulfilling the annual requirement for parent access to the school, in accordance with ADEK policy.

**2. Volunteering**

Parents are welcome to participate as volunteers in school activities. Volunteers must comply with all ADEK and school-specific requirements, including:

- Registration in the Private Schools Staff Information System (PASS)
- Security clearance and student protection training
- Adherence to relevant ADEK policies such as:
    - School Employment Policy
    - School Safeguarding Policy
    - School Student Protection Policy
    - School Values and Ethics Policy
    - School Cultural Consideration Policy
    - Professional Code of Ethics Policy
    - Code of Conduct for Education Professionals (MoE, 2022)

**3. Participation in School Events**

The school will promote and encourage parent attendance at all major school events such as National Day celebrations, graduation ceremonies, and sports competitions, in accordance with the ADEK *Extracurricular Activities and Events Policy.*

**4. Governance and Representation**

The school will ensure structured parental representation as part of governance and advisory mechanisms:

- **Parent Representatives:** One parent representative per grade/year group to liaise between parents and teachers.
- **Parent Council/Advisory Body:** A formal parent council (or PTA) will be established to serve as a channel for communication and collaboration. Parent members are expected to represent the wider parent community, not personal interests.
- **Support:** The school will provide logistical and administrative support to the Parent Council, and where one does not exist, will implement strategies to encourage its formation.
- **Governing Board Representation:** At least one parent representative will hold voting rights on the Governing Board, in line with the ADEK School Governance Policy.

**5. School Fees**

The school will communicate clearly with parents regarding ADEK-approved tuition fees, payment timelines, and procedures. No VAT will be charged. The school will also outline measures for non-payment or late payment as per the ADEK *School Fees Policy.*

**6. Inspection Ratings**

The school will publish inspection ratings and reports on its website and make them available to parents as per the ADEK *School Quality Assurance Policy.*

**7. School Records and Data Access**

The school will ensure confidentiality and transparency in handling student records:

- Obtain parental consent before transferring any student information.
- Provide parents with copies of submitted reports upon request.
- Allow parents to access their child's records, including medical information, in accordance with ADEK *School Records and Reporting Policies.*

**8. Student Protection**

The school will inform parents of their duty of care in supporting the protection and wellbeing of all students. Parents will be made aware that all members of the school community are mandated reporters and must report any concerns regarding student safety or wellbeing to the appropriate authorities. This includes, but is not limited to, cases of excessive absences, sudden unexplained withdrawal, or any suspected maltreatment.

The school will conduct parent orientation sessions and ongoing awareness campaigns to ensure that parents understand their shared responsibility in protecting students, in line with the ADEK *School Student Protection Policy.*

**9. Student Safeguarding**

The school will notify parents of all requirements and procedures designed to safeguard students and the school community. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Issuance of permanent access passes for authorised individuals;
- Authorisations for unaccompanied Cycle 3 students;
- Arrival and departure notifications and pick-up procedures;
- Pre-registration of guests attending school events; and
- Protocols for informing the school of any changes to student collection or transportation arrangements.

These measures ensure the safety and security of all students and are implemented in accordance with the ADEK School Safeguarding Policy.

**10. Communication of Calendar and Operational Updates**

Once approved by ADEK, the school calendar will be shared with parents, including all term dates, public holidays, and significant events. Any changes will be promptly communicated.

**11. Transportation**

The school will provide clear information about transportation services, routes, safety protocols, and parent responsibilities in accordance with the ADEK *School Transportation Policy.*

**12. Inclusion**

The school will ensure equal opportunities for participation for all parents, including those of students with additional learning needs or who are people of determination, in line with the ADEK *School Inclusion Policy.*

**13. School Suspension or Closure**

In the event of a license suspension, reinstatement, or cancellation, the school will:

- Inform parents once ADEK finalises the decision.
- Fulfill all legal and contractual obligations, including refunding unutilised fees.
- Provide all student reports and transfer certificates in accordance with the ADEK *School Compliance, Licensing, Records* and *Student Administrative Affairs Policies.*

### 7.3.4 Means of Communication

ASAD will ensure effective, timely, and accessible communication with parents through multiple channels that promote transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness. Communication methods will adhere to ADEK requirements and reflect the diverse needs of the school community.

**1. Communication Channels**

The school will utilise various media to communicate with parents, including school newsletters, telephone calls, SMS, e-mails, letters, online portals, and scheduled meetings. The school will also consider the accessibility needs and communication preferences of parents in accordance with the ADEK *School Digital Policy.*

**2. Emergency Communication**

The school will maintain a mass notification system to ensure the rapid dissemination of urgent information during emergencies. This may include text messaging systems, mobile applications, public address announcements, or other suitable means, as outlined in the ADEK *School Health and Safety Policy.*

**3. Record Keeping**

The school will maintain accurate and secure records of all written communication with parents, in compliance with the ADEK *School Records Policy.*

## 8. COMPLIANCE

The Australian Schol of Abu Dhabi will ensure full compliance with the ADEK *Parent Engagement Policy* and all related ADEK regulations governing communication, governance, safeguarding, inclusion, and community engagement. The Principal will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and ensuring that all staff understand and fulfill their respective roles in promoting effective parent engagement. The school will regularly review and update its practices to remain aligned with the most current ADEK policies, circulars, and guidelines.

To demonstrate adherence, the school will monitor and document parent engagement activities, including communication records, event participation, and parent feedback, and make these available for review during ADEK inspections or audits. Continuous improvement will be supported through ongoing consultation with the Parent Council and periodic parent surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of engagement initiatives.

Any instance of non-compliance with this policy or with related ADEK directives will be addressed promptly and appropriately in accordance with the ADEK School Compliance Policy.

## 9. REFERENCES

- Department of Education and Knowledge, Abu Dhabi (ADEK), 2024 (September) ADEK_School_Parent Engagement Policy_v.1.1
- Federal Decree Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights (Wadeema).
- Federal Law No. (29) of 2006 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its amendments
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments

## 10. RATIFICATION AND REVISION HISTORY

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|---|---|
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| **Ratified By** | Director: Mr Adel Salman |