AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL OF ABU DHABI

FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY 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

Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD) is committed to developing strong foundational literacy skills in English and Arabic through evidence-based, inclusive and developmentally appropriate teaching and learning.

In alignment with ADEK's Foundational Literacy Policy, ASAD will implement a structured approach to early literacy instruction, screening, targeted intervention and progress monitoring from the KG Cycle (FS1/Pre-KG) to Grade 3/Year 4, in accordance with applicable ADEK requirements.

This approach supports ASAD's International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP), promoting language development, equitable access to learning and improved literacy attainment and progress for all students.

4. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Foundational Literacy Policy (**Policy)** is to establish a consistent, evidence-based approach to developing foundational literacy skills in English and Arabic across ASAD's KG Cycle (FS1/Pre-KG) to Grade 3/Year 4 by:

- Providing structured literacy instruction grounded in the Science of Reading.
- Identifying students' literacy needs early through appropriate screening and assessment.
- Implementing targeted, tiered interventions to support students with differing literacy needs.
- Monitoring and evaluating student progress to inform teaching, intervention and ongoing support.
- Ensuring inclusive literacy provision aligned with students' individual learning needs and ASAD's IB Primary Years Programme (PYP).
- Improving literacy attainment and progress in accordance with ADEK's expected outcomes.

5. SCOPE

This Foundational Literacy Policy applies to students from the KG Cycle (FS1/Pre-KG) to Grade 3/Year 4 at ASAD, in accordance with ADEK's fee-band and UAE National student enrolment criteria. It covers foundational literacy development in English and Arabic, including structured literacy instruction, screening and assessment, tiered interventions, progress monitoring and inclusive learning support.

This Policy applies to school leadership, teachers, literacy specialists, teaching assistants and inclusion staff involved in the delivery, coordination and monitoring of foundational literacy provision.

6. DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Core Literacy Instruction	The universal, daily structured literacy instruction provided by all classroom teachers to all students as the foundation of Tier 1 support.
Foundational Literacy	The development of foundational English and Arabic reading and language skills from KG Cycle - Grade 3/Year 4.
Fluency Development	Building students' ability to read accurately, at an appropriate pace, and with natural expression.
Grade-Level Reading	The expected standard of reading skill for a student at a given grade or year level, as measured by a valid and reliable literacy assessment.
Multilingual Learner	A student who uses and develops competency in two or more languages and draws upon diverse linguistic resources to facilitate learning and communication.
Oral Reading Fluency	The ability to read aloud accurately, at an appropriate pace, and with natural expression, reflecting a student's overall reading development and comprehension.
Phonemic Awareness	A subset of phonological awareness; the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.
Phonological Awareness	The ability to recognize and manipulate the sound structures of spoken language, including words, syllables, and rhymes, without reference to print.
Science of Reading	Evidence-based reading instruction that focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and can be differentiated to meet the needs of individual students.
Structured Literacy	An evidence-based approach to reading instruction grounded in the Science of Reading.
Systematic Phonics	A method of literacy instruction that teaches the relationships between letters (graphemes) and sounds (phonemes) in a deliberate, sequential, and explicit manner.
Tiered Model of Support	A structured, 3-level instructional framework applied to foundational literacy development providing differentiated levels of support based on student need: Tier I ("Core Literacy Instruction" for all students), Tier 2 ("Targeted Teaching" for students at educational risk), and Tier 3 ("Intensive Intervention" for students with significant reading deficiencies).
Vocabulary Instruction	Expanding students' knowledge of word meanings and language to support comprehension and communication.

7. POLICY

ASAD will develop and strengthen foundational literacy skills in English and Arabic through an evidence-based, inclusive and structured approach to teaching, assessment and intervention, in accordance with ADEK's Foundational Literacy Policy and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP).

7.1 Foundational Literacy Programme

ASAD will implement an evidence-based foundational literacy programme that supports the development of English and Arabic reading proficiency from the KG Cycle (FS1/Pre-KG) to Grade 3/Year 4 by:

- Providing daily, structured literacy instruction grounded in the Science of Reading and aligned with ASAD's International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP).
- Developing students' phonological and phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, oral language and reading comprehension.

- Identifying students' literacy needs early through appropriate screening and ongoing assessment.
- Providing targeted interventions to address identified literacy needs and support students in achieving grade/year-level reading proficiency.
- Monitoring and evaluating student progress to inform teaching, intervention and continuous improvement.

7.2 Screening and Assessment

7.2.1 Mandatory Screening and Assessment

ASAD will implement mandatory foundational literacy screening to identify students' reading proficiency and inform appropriate teaching and intervention in accordance with ADEK requirements by:

- Screening all Grade 1/Year 2 students in English and Arabic by the end of Terms 1 and 3, using ADEK-approved foundational literacy assessments.
- Assessing the mandatory domains of phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and oral reading fluency.
- Using screening results to identify students requiring additional support and determine appropriate levels of intervention.

7.2.2 ADEK-Approved Foundational Literacy Assessments

ASAD will select foundational literacy screening assessments from the ADEK-approved assessments listed in Table 1 or obtain ADEK approval to use alternative assessments that meet the required selection and implementation criteria.

Table 1. ADEK-Approved Assessments

Language	Screening Assessment*	Corresponding Assessment Domains/Subtest
English	MAP Reading Fluency	**Phonological and phonemic awareness:** Phonological Awareness **Phonics:** Phonics and Word Recognition **Oral reading fluency:** Oral Reading Fluency
	DIBELS	**Phonological and phonemic awareness:** Phonemic Awareness **Phonics:** Alphabetic Principle; Decoding **Oral reading fluency:** Oral Reading Fluency
	YARC Early Reading (4–7 years) **AND** YARC Passage Reading Primary (5–11 years)	**Phonological and phonemic awareness:** Sound Isolation; Sound Deletion (YARC Early Reading) **Phonics:** Letter Sound Knowledge; Early Word Recognition (YARC Early Reading); Decoding Accuracy (YARC Passage Reading Primary) **Oral reading fluency:** Reading Rate (YARC Passage Reading Primary)
Arabic	ADEK Grade 1 Assessment for Arabic**	**Phonological and phonemic awareness:** Phonological and Phonemic Awareness **Phonics:** Letter-Sound Knowledge; Decoding; Word Recognition **Oral reading fluency:** Oral Reading Fluency

*A New Group Reading Test (NGRT) shall not be used as a standalone foundational literacy screening assessment as it does not assess the mandatory minimum domains of phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, and oral reading fluency.
**To be shared with schools in AY 2026/27 (Fall term).

7.2.3 Minimum Implementation Requirements

ASAD will ensure foundational literacy screening assessments are implemented in accordance with ADEK requirements by:

- Assessing all mandatory domains of phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and oral reading fluency, using additional ADEK-approved measures where a single assessment does not cover all required domains.
- Ensuring all student screening data is shared directly with ADEK by external assessment providers, with the required third-party data-sharing agreements and consents in place.
- Identifying multilingual learners at the time of screening and interpreting assessment results in consideration of their language learning profiles.
- Using screening results to inform teacher planning, literacy instruction and the allocation of appropriate tiered support.

7.3 Tiered Model of Support

ASAD will implement a three-tiered model of support for English and Arabic foundational literacy development, in accordance with ADEK's requirements, by:

- **Tier 1 – Core Literacy Instruction:** Ensuring all KG Cycle to Grade 3/Year 4 teachers provide daily, evidence-based structured literacy instruction covering phonological and phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, oral language development and reading and listening comprehension.
- **Tier 2 – Targeted Teaching:** Providing students identified as being at educational risk with daily supplemental small-group interventions, in addition to core instruction, for a minimum of six consecutive instructional weeks, typically extending to 12 weeks and up to 18 weeks where necessary, with interventions continuing according to student response and progress monitored every two weeks.
- **Tier 3 – Intensive Intervention:** Providing students with significant reading deficiencies with daily intensive small-group interventions delivered by personnel trained in structured literacy, with progress monitored weekly.
- Ensuring Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions are delivered only by teachers, teaching assistants or specialists appointed to these roles.
- Establishing clear criteria for escalating support and referring students who demonstrate insufficient progress following documented Tier 3 interventions.
- Recognising that tiers identify types of support rather than student identities, and documenting, evaluating and adjusting interventions to increase or decrease support according to individual student needs and progress.

7.4 Inclusion and Referral

ASAD will ensure students with identified literacy-specific learning needs receive appropriate and inclusive support in accordance with ADEK's Inclusion Policy by:

- Identifying students requiring additional support through literacy screening, assessment and ongoing progress monitoring.
- Referring students with literacy-specific learning needs through ASAD's formal inclusion procedures.
- Ensuring literacy interventions complement students' Documented Learning Plans (DLPs), where applicable.

- Coordinating support between classroom teachers, literacy specialists and the Inclusion Department to address individual learning needs.
- Reviewing student progress and adjusting interventions in accordance with assessment findings and documented learning needs.

7.5 Staff Training and Responsibilities

ASAD will ensure relevant staff are appropriately trained and supported to deliver effective foundational literacy instruction and interventions in accordance with ADEK requirements by:

- Ensuring all KG Cycle to Grade 3/Year 4 teachers, literacy specialists and teaching assistants without prior relevant training or experience receive training in the Science of Reading, including evidence-based literacy instruction and the effective delivery of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.
- Ensuring training covers evidence-based literacy instruction and the effective delivery of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.
- Ensuring teachers, teaching assistants and literacy specialists understand their responsibilities for delivering structured literacy instruction, implementing interventions and monitoring student progress.
- Maintaining appropriate staff training records to support monitoring and compliance.

7.6 Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

ASAD will monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of its Foundational Literacy Policy to improve literacy attainment and progress, in accordance with ADEK requirements, by:

- Assigning overall accountability to school leadership, with relevant teachers, literacy specialists and inclusion staff supporting implementation and monitoring.
- Monitoring foundational literacy attainment and progress for students from the KG Cycle (FS1/Pre-KG) to Grade 3/Year 4.
- Reviewing screening results, intervention records and student progress data to evaluate the effectiveness of literacy instruction and support.
- Maintaining appropriate records of screening assessments, interventions, student progress and staff training.
- Establishing a Literacy Leadership Team where more than 30% of students do not demonstrate reading proficiency, comprising a senior leadership team member, Head of Inclusion, teacher representative and staff responsible for parent liaison and data management, with additional members as required.
- Ensuring the Literacy Leadership Team monitors completion of required training by teachers, literacy specialists and teaching assistants, reviews literacy intervention plans and school-wide screening and intervention data and makes recommendations for continuous improvement.
- Developing and submitting a Literacy Intervention Plan to ADEK, integrated into ASAD's School Development Plan, where the 30% threshold is exceeded, in accordance with ADEK's Quality Assurance Policy.
- Implementing and monitoring improvement actions to strengthen literacy provision and student outcomes.

8. COMPLIANCE

ASAD will ensure compliance with ADEK's Foundational Literacy Policy and all applicable regulatory requirements by:

- Implementing the requirements of this Policy in accordance with ADEK's prescribed timelines, with full compliance achieved by the Fall term of Academic Year 2027/28.
- Ensuring school leadership oversees implementation, monitors compliance and addresses any identified areas of non-compliance.
- Maintaining appropriate documentation and evidence of literacy screening, interventions, student progress and staff training to demonstrate compliance with ADEK requirements.
- Cooperating with ADEK's monitoring, evaluation and regulatory intervention processes, where applicable.
- Addressing any non-compliance in accordance with applicable ADEK policies and relevant UAE legislation, including Federal Decree-Law No. 31 of 2021.

9. REFERENCES

- Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK). (2026, July). *Foundational Literacy Policy.*
- Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK). (n.d.). *Assessment Policy.*
- Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK). (n.d.). *Inclusion Policy.*
- Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK). (n.d.). *Quality Assurance Policy.*
- International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). (n.d.). *Primary Years Programme (PYP).*
- United Arab Emirates Government. (2021). Federal Decree-Law No. 31 of *2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law.*

10. RATIFICATION AND REVISION HISTORY

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