AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL OF ABU DHABI

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY 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

The Australian School of Abu Dhabi (**ASAD**) recognises physical activity as an essential component of students' physical health, wellbeing and holistic development. Regular participation in physical activity supports physical fitness, emotional wellbeing, social development and academic engagement, while fostering positive attitudes towards active and healthy lifestyles.

As an International Baccalaureate (**IB**) school offering the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP), ASAD is committed to providing inclusive, age-appropriate and meaningful opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day. These opportunities extend beyond timetabled Physical Education (PE) lessons to include active breaks, recreational activities, school sports and extracurricular programmes, supporting the development of physical literacy and lifelong participation.

This Physical Activity Policy (**Policy**) establishes ASAD's whole-school approach to physical activity in accordance with the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) requirements. It complements and operates alongside the school's existing Physical Education and School Sports Policy, ensuring a consistent and coordinated approach to physical activity, student participation, safety and wellbeing across all three IB programmes.

4. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish a whole-school approach to physical activity that supports student health, wellbeing and holistic development.

Specifically, this Policy aims to:

- Promote regular physical activity and the development of physical literacy across all year levels.
- Ensure inclusive and equitable opportunities for students to participate in physical activity, recreation and school sports.
- Establish expectations for safe, age-appropriate and meaningful physical activity throughout the school day.
- Increase student participation in sports competitions and support the identification and development of sporting talent.
- Support the monitoring and evaluation of student participation and physical activity levels.
- Ensure compliance with ADEK requirements and alignment with ASAD's existing Physical Education and School Sports Policy.

5. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all students across ASAD's Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP), as well as staff, coaches and external providers involved in planning, delivering or supervising physical activities.

It encompasses physical activity during the school day, including Physical Education lessons, breaks and recreational activities, alongside school-organised sports, extracurricular programmes and competitions.

Implementation is aligned with ASAD's existing Physical Education and School Sports Policy to ensure consistency in participation, inclusion, safety and wellbeing.

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). 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.
Coach	A qualified professional, trained in professional coaching and sport-specific technical standards, who is responsible for organizing, planning, and implementing all or part of the school sports program.
Competition	A contest in which everyone who participates is aiming to win. Refers to sport and activities whereby students compete against others, or themselves, in ways that supports their health and fitness.
Continuous Professional Development (CPD)	All activities undertaken by staff to improve their knowledge, skills, competencies, and performance on a regular basis. CPD includes in-person training, online training (synchronous or asynchronous), coursework, short certificate and degree programs, mentorship programs, peer/ collaborative learning, academic conferences, research projects, observational visits, and community programs to share teaching best practices. CPD excludes planning hours and general staff meetings.
Documented Learning Plan	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.
Health and Safety	Requirement for schools to ensure that students, staff, contractors, sub-contractors, relevant stakeholders, and visitors are kept safe and healthy in school and school-related activities.

Physical Activity	Any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. Physical activity refers to all movement including during leisure time, for transport to get to and from places, or as part of a person's work. Both moderate- and vigorous-intensity physical activity (MVPA) improve health (WHO, 2020).
Physical Literacy	The motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life (IPLA, 2016). A physically literate person can draw on their physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to stay physically active and lead a healthy life, relative to their situation and context.
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.
School Sports	All structured physical activities and learning that take place under the school's supervision beyond PE. School sports includes all physical activity conducted during school breaks and extracurricular activities. These activities are often competitive in nature and should adequately prepare all students for competition (in and beyond the school environment) and lifelong participation in sports and physical activity.

7. POLICY

ASAD will implement a coordinated, whole-school approach to physical activity in accordance with ADEK requirements and its existing Physical Education and School Sports Policy. The following provisions establish the requirements for daily physical activity, Physical Education, inclusive participation, school sports, student safety, staffing and monitoring across all three IB programmes.

7.1 Daily Physical Activity

ASAD will ensure that Physical Education (PE) complements daily physical activity and supports the development of students' physical literacy across the PYP, MYP and DP by:

- Providing a minimum average of 60 minutes of timetabled PE per week across the academic year, subject to the exceptions and provisions permitted by ADEK.
- Ensuring the majority of PE lesson time is dedicated to active physical practice, balanced with appropriate instruction, rules and theoretical learning.
- Delivering a structured, age-appropriate PE curriculum that develops students' physical, social, cognitive and psychological capabilities.
- Developing and implementing a Physical Literacy Framework that identifies physical, social, cognitive and psychological learning outcomes, differentiated by students' ages and developmental stages, in alignment with relevant IB programme requirements.
- Maximising active participation during PE lessons while providing appropriate adjustments or alternative activities for students with additional learning or medical needs, including students whose parents have not consented to particular activities.
- Applying ADEK-permitted exceptions, including optional PE for Cycle 3 students undertaking high-stakes examinations or intensive coursework and occasional reductions in weekly PE time due to prevailing weather conditions.

- Implementing PE provision in accordance with the school's existing Physical Education and School Sports Policy.

7.2 Physical Education Provisions

ASAD will ensure that Physical Education (PE) complements daily physical activity and supports the development of students' physical literacy across the PYP, MYP and DP by:

- Providing a minimum average of 60 minutes of timetabled PE per week across the academic year, subject to the exceptions and provisions permitted by ADEK.
- Delivering a structured, age-appropriate PE curriculum that develops students' physical, social, cognitive and psychological capabilities.
- Aligning PE learning outcomes with ADEK's Physical Literacy Framework and the relevant IB programme requirements.
- Maximising active participation during PE lessons while providing appropriate adjustments or alternative activities for students with additional learning or medical needs.
- Implementing PE provision in accordance with the school's existing Physical Education and School Sports Policy.

7.3 Inclusive Participation

ASAD will promote equitable and meaningful participation in physical activity, ensuring that opportunities are accessible to all students, regardless of ability, gender or individual learning needs, by:

- Providing inclusive activities that accommodate students with additional learning needs, including physical, cognitive and sensory needs.
- Adapting activities, equipment and levels of support to enable safe and meaningful participation.
- Ensuring equitable opportunities for girls to participate in physical activity and school sports, in accordance with ADEK's gender requirements.
- Encouraging students who are less physically active to engage in activities suited to their interests, abilities and confidence levels.
- Providing alternative participation opportunities, such as team leadership, refereeing or scorekeeping, where direct physical participation is restricted.
- Identifying and supporting gifted and talented students with exceptional sporting abilities through talent development pathways established in collaboration with local sports clubs or national sports federations, including talent identification, coaching masterclasses and access to competition venues.

7.4 School Sports, Competition and Talent Development

ASAD will promote student participation in school sports and competitive opportunities while supporting the identification and development of sporting talent by:

- Providing opportunities for students to participate in age-appropriate school sports, tournaments, leagues and competitions.
- Participating in ADEK-mandated competitions in accordance with the Abu Dhabi Sport Championships Requirements, as well as other ADEK-led or ADEK-recognised interschool competitions.
- Conducting merit-based intra-school trials and competitions for all sports entered in ADEK-led competitions, using these as the primary means of selecting students to represent ASAD in ADEK-led and other inter-school competitions.

- Identifying students with sporting potential and providing appropriate opportunities for skill development, coaching and progression.
- Encouraging wider participation through recreational and extracurricular sports, including opportunities for students who do not represent school teams.
- Maintaining records of participation in competitions and sporting activities, and reporting participation in non-ADEK competitions to ADEK as required.

7.5 Gender Requirements and Swimming

ASAD will ensure that Physical Education (PE) and swimming activities comply with ADEK's gender requirements, respecting cultural considerations and supporting safe, inclusive participation.

Table 1. Gender Requirements 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 or Female
		Female Section	Female
		Coeducational	Male or Female
Swimming*	PKG/FS1-G4/Y5	SG Male	Male or Female**
		SG Female	Female
		Coeducational	Female
	G5/Y6-G12/Y13	Male Section	Male
		Female Section	Female

*Swimming: The requirements set out in this policy apply only to swimming activities conducted as part of PE and do not apply to extracurricular swimming activities.
**Teacher/adult shall be female only for KG cycle unless teaching support staff (female only as per *Coeducation Policy*) are also provided.

ASAD will ensure that:

- Swimming conducted as part of PE follows ADEK's applicable gender requirements.
- Male and female students participate in separate swimming sections from Grade 5/Year 6 onwards, regardless of school type.
- Parents are offered the option to withdraw their children from mixed-gender PE activities in Grades 5/Year 6–12/Year 13 and coeducational swimming activities in PKG/FS1–Grade 4/Year 5 through a signed non-consent form.
- Suitable alternative activities are provided for students unable to participate due to parental non-consent or medical restrictions.
- Teachers, swimming instructors and supervising personnel meet the applicable gender, qualification and supervision requirements.
- Swimming safety, lifeguard supervision and safeguarding procedures are implemented in accordance with ADEK requirements and the school's existing Physical Education and School Sports Policy.

7. 6 Health, Safety and Wellbeing

ASAD will ensure that all physical activities are conducted in a safe and appropriately supervised environment that supports student health and wellbeing by:

- Conducting appropriate risk assessments for physical activities, sports events and the use of facilities and equipment.
- Ensuring adequate supervision and access to first aid by personnel holding valid first aid certifications approved by the relevant UAE authorities.
- Ensuring PE teachers and sports coaches have access to relevant student medical information, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality and safeguarding requirements.
- Adjusting, relocating or suspending outdoor activities in response to extreme heat, humidity or adverse weather conditions, in accordance with ADEK requirements.
- Providing access to temperature-controlled drinking water and encouraging regular hydration, particularly during strenuous activities and hot weather.
- Ensuring students wear appropriate PE uniforms and footwear, taking account of heat, humidity and activity requirements.
- Maintaining records of injuries and incidents and following established reporting and emergency response procedures.

7. 7 Staffing, Qualifications and Professional Development

ASAD will ensure that personnel responsible for delivering and supervising Physical Education, school sports and other physical activities are appropriately qualified and competent by:

- Appointing qualified PE teachers who meet ADEK's subject-specific eligibility requirements and complete mandated continuing professional development (CPD).
- Ensuring sports coaches hold relevant coaching certifications or obtain them within one year of appointment, in accordance with ADEK requirements.
- Ensuring PE teachers undertaking coaching roles also hold relevant sport-specific coaching certifications in addition to their teaching qualifications.
- Ensuring coaches who do not meet the eligibility requirements for PE teachers do not independently deliver timetabled PE lessons.
- Providing relevant professional development to support inclusive participation, physical literacy, safe practices and effective coaching.
- Ensuring swimming activities are supervised by appropriately qualified personnel, including at least one certified lifeguard for a 25-metre pool and two for a 50-metre pool.
- Ensuring lifeguards rotate positions every 15, 20 or 30 minutes, remain in one static position for no longer than 30 minutes, and receive a 15-minute break for every 90 minutes spent in the pool hall.
- Maintaining up-to-date records of staff qualifications, certifications and professional development.

7. 8 Facilities, Equipment and External Providers

ASAD will ensure that facilities, equipment and external services used for physical activity are safe, accessible and appropriate for students' ages and abilities by:

- Providing and maintaining suitable indoor and outdoor spaces and equipment for Physical Education, recreational activities and school sports.
- Conducting regular inspections and maintenance to identify and address potential safety hazards.
- Ensuring facilities and equipment accommodate students with additional learning needs wherever reasonably practicable.
- Ensuring external providers and third-party operators comply with ADEK requirements, school safeguarding procedures and applicable security and access restrictions.

- Permitting third-party operators to use ASAD's sports facilities and auxiliary spaces, including changing rooms, on a free-use or rental basis, while restricting access to all other school areas and ensuring appropriate supervision, safeguarding and compliance with ADEK requirements.
- Seeking sports-related sponsorships that support ASAD's educational mission.
- Ensuring any sponsorships or promotional activities associated with school sports comply with ADEK's Cultural Consideration, Food and Nutrition, and Marketing requirements.

7. 9 Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting

ASAD will monitor and evaluate student physical activity and sports participation to assess the effectiveness of its provision and support continuous improvement by:

- Monitoring and reporting students' average daily moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) against ADEK's minimum requirements.
- Establishing and documenting appropriate methods for measuring MVPA, including evaluating the effectiveness of these measurement methods.
- Tracking student participation in school sports, extracurricular activities, tournaments, leagues and competitions, including students with additional learning needs.
- Monitoring the identification and development of sporting talent and opportunities for student progression.
- Recording relevant physical activity and sports participation information in student performance reports, in accordance with ADEK's Student Performance Reports Policy.
- Reviewing participation data and outcomes to identify areas for improvement and inform future planning.
- Maintaining accurate records and submitting required information to ADEK in accordance with applicable reporting requirements.

7.10 Roles and Responsibilities

ASAD will ensure clear accountability for the implementation and monitoring of physical activity requirements through the following responsibilities:

- **School Leadership:** Oversee implementation, ensure compliance with ADEK requirements, review monitoring outcomes and provide appropriate resources and support.
- Head of Physical Education: Coordinate physical activity provision, oversee PE and school sports programmes, monitor and report student activity levels and sports participation, and maintain required records.
- **PE Teachers and Sports Coaches:** Deliver safe, inclusive and age-appropriate activities, identify sporting talent, support participation tracking and promote student development.
- **Classroom and Subject Teachers:** Facilitate age-appropriate movement opportunities during the school day and support whole-school physical activity initiatives.
- **Inclusion Team:** Work with relevant staff to ensure students with additional learning needs can participate meaningfully and safely.
- **School Health and Safety Personnel:** Support risk assessments, medical considerations, emergency procedures and incident reporting.
- **Students:** Participate responsibly in physical activities and follow established safety expectations.
- **Parents and Guardians:** Support student participation and communicate relevant medical information or participation restrictions to the school.

8. COMPLIANCE

ASAD will implement and maintain the requirements of the ADEK Physical Activity Policy in conjunction with its existing Physical Education and School Sports Policy.

The school will ensure that:

- All relevant physical activity provisions are implemented in accordance with ADEK requirements.
- School leadership oversees compliance, identifies any gaps and ensures appropriate corrective actions are taken.
- Records and supporting evidence are maintained to demonstrate compliance and made available to ADEK when required.
- Relevant procedures and practices are reviewed and updated in response to changes in ADEK regulations.

9. REFERENCES

- Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK). *Physical Activity Policy* (July 2026).
- Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK). *School Physical Education and School Sports Policy,* 2024, v.1.1
- ASAD *Physical Education and School Sports Policy,* 2025
- International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP) frameworks, as applicable.
- Australian Physical Literacy Framework (Sport Australia 2019)
- Department of Community Development (DCD) (2024). Sports for All Policy Abu Dhabi.
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments.
- International Physical Literacy Association (IPLA) (2017).

10. RATIFICATION AND REVISION HISTORY

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