



DATE: 29 July 2020

Reopening Faqs For Schools

ATTENDANCE

1. Will all students be required to return to school and can any exemptions be made?

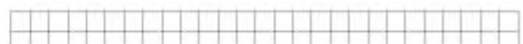
Previously, all students were required to return to school from 30th August and only students who had medical reasons were exempt upon presentation of a medical certificate. UPDATE: In response to multiple requests received from parents to continue distance learning, ADEK will now allow parents the choice to keep their children at home (for the next school term only). However, children must still be enrolled at school and must attend classes through continued distance learning.

2. Can staff apply for exemption if they have medical reasons to continue working remotely and can we replace them?

Upon discussion and agreement with the school, staff may be exempt from returning to school for medical reasons upon presentation of a medical certificate. Schools are encouraged to utilise home-based staff to undertake distance learning for home-based students to cater to both needs. Subsequent staff replacement is at the discretion of each school.

3. Some parents have said they will opt to home school their children next term rather than enroll them in school for either physical attendance or continued distance learning? Are they allowed to do this?

Homeschooling is not recognized in Abu Dhabi. Parents should be informed that students that have been unenrolled in Abu Dhabi schools for a term may be at risk of having to repeat that term and may encounter issues with equivalencies at a later stage.



4. We have new staff recruits who are unable to come to the UAE as well as returning staff who are stranded abroad. Will borders reopen in time to allow us to begin the school year with all our staff?

A special exemption has been made for new and returning education workers to enter the UAE in August 2020. It will nonetheless be necessary to take into account a 14-day quarantine period. Details will be communicated to schools as they unfold.

PPE, SOCIAL DISTANCING, & HYGIENE

5. Our KG classes can fit 20 students, but the new policies indicate that bubbles of maximum 10 students are required for KG. Does this mean only 10 KG students can be in a class, even if the class can fit more?

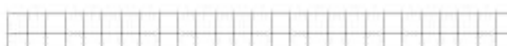
Larger classrooms can be used by more than one bubble, on the condition that there is absolutely no mixing between the bubbles. This can be achieved with a physical barrier being placed between the two groups. In case some sharing of space or material is required (for example, a restroom), appropriate cleaning/sanitization/disinfection is necessary. All other distancing rules apply otherwise.

6. It is unclear which social distance needs to be applied in school. Is it 1.5 or 2 meters?

The social distancing rule is 1.5m for all students and between staff and students. However, in areas that cater specifically to staff (ie. staff offices, staff rooms), a 2m space should be observed.

7. How will young children be able to keep masks on all day and spend the whole day apart from friends? How can we enforce this?

Other countries (i.e. China) have enforced the wearing of masks for young children in addition to social distancing. However, some interaction will be inevitable, and schools are asked to enforce social distancing through soft methods (i.e. game play) in order to avoid causing emotional harm to young children.





8. Can our students wear face shields instead of masks?

Students may be exempt from wearing a mask at school for medical reasons upon presentation of a medical certificate. They would be required to wear a face shield in this case.

9. Our existing furniture is such that students can only be spaced apart by 1m, and we are not in a position where we can buy new furniture. Can any exceptions be made, for example, by using a partition?

ADEK fully understands the constraints that the new social distancing requirements poses on classroom configurations in schools. We are currently looking into this matter with the relevant authorities.

REOPENING MODEL

10. Our parent survey results indicate that a majority of parents prefer to continue distance learning only. Can we therefore adopt a full distance learning model?

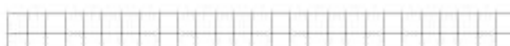
No, while parents may now choose to keep their children at home and continue distance learning, schools must still cater to students who will be returning to school with one of the five approved reopening models (full, half-day, alternating day, alternating week, hybrid). Schools should contact ADEK if they are not able to adopt one of the approved models (i.e. in the case of overcapacity, etc.).

11. Can we phase returns for certain groups?

Schools are granted a four-week pilot period during which time schools may trial the reopening model of their choice with a reduced number of students (considering priority groups).

12. We'd like to use different models for different grades/cycles. Can we do this?

Schools may choose any of the reopening models proposed and are also permitted to use a combination of models for different grades/cycles as they see fit. Schools must contact ADEK only in the case that they are considering a model other than the five approved by ADEK (full, half-day, alternating-day, alternating-week, hybrid).





13. Will ADEK check our reopening plans prior to reopening?

ADEK will not be checking schools' reopening plans prior to reopening. Instead, schools must post their reopening model by July 30, 2020. ADEK will verify adherence to reopening policies through a compliance process.

14. Why do the schools have to arrange for distance learning, even if adopting a full-return model?

No matter the model, there will be students who will stay at home regularly or temporarily because their parents have opted to continue distance learning, because they are feeling unwell, or because they are isolating following a possible exposure. To cater to these cases, all schools (including those that opt for the full return model) must plan for continued distance learning. For partial models, distance learning will supplement times for when face-to-face learning is not possible.

REOTHERS – SAFE OPERATIONS

15. How often will staff and students need to be tested? When does testing need to be completed by? Will it be required on a regular basis? Who will cover the costs of testing?

Details on the schedule, frequency, and process will be announced at a later time in conjunction with relevant authorities. However, schools will not be responsible for the costs of testing.

16. Is physical education (PE) class allowed during school hours? Can students engage in some form of non-contact sports?

PE classes are currently suspended onsite. As ADEK strongly encourages physical education for students' physical and mental wellbeing, PE class is therefore required via distance learning until the suspension is lifted.





17. Live cooking isn't allowed in our canteens, but can we make sandwiches or salads onsite?

Only pre-packed meals may be served, so pre-packed sandwiches, salads, or other hot meals are allowed, as long as these meet the school canteen standards established by the Abu Dhabi Agriculture & Food Safety Authority (ADAFSA).

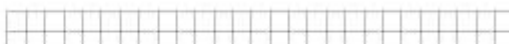
18. Buses are a major concern for us. Can we charge more to parents and even cancel bus service?

Schools may not place the burden of the cost of transport on parents and may only charge as per the ADEK-approved fees for AY 2020-2021. Schools are encouraged to accommodate for parents who have no alternative transportation arrangement. However, the provision of bus service is at the discretion of each school following an assessment of parent demand.

19. Can ADEK revise their policy whereby students and staff cannot travel together during this period?

The Integrated Transport Center (ITC) has provided the following policies:

1. School buses are mainly intended for student transportation.
2. School staff may use the school transportation if there are extra seats not used by the students.
3. Schools shall submit an undertaking stating that the use of school transportation by the staff will not affect the duration of the trip or contradicts with any school or operator's responsibilities, and if there is any violation that has been captured by the ITC compliance team, a fine will be issued to the bus operator.
4. Schools shall submit a request along with the undertaking to the Integrated Transport Centre (ITC) to obtain no objection letter





20. The policies state that parents can only accompany children to the access points, but not beyond. I worry that my child will have difficulty with separation – can I accompany him/her to their classroom?

ADEK understands that separation anxiety may have a detrimental effect on a child’s experience of schooling. Hence, one parent/guardian may initially accompany Students of Determination (as per their Risk Assessment) and young students (KG/early Cycle 1) if deemed necessary in conjunction with the school until the student is ready to enter on their own/accompanied only by school staff. The accompanying parent/guardian must have the ALHOSN app downloaded, and abide by the social distancing, PPE, and hygiene requirements as set out in the entry/exit protocols (ie. temperature checks, hand sanitizing, masks, etc.)

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

21. Will we receive financial assistance from ADEK to help us purchase all the required equipment (i.e. thermal scanners, hand sanitizers, etc.)?

ADEK fully understands the financial constraints that the situation poses on private schools. However, direct financial assistance is not available to private schools currently. ADEK is currently looking into the possibility of corporate rates for transportation and other COVID-19 related equipment (thermal scanners, PPE, etc.). In addition, parents will be required to pay full tuition fees regardless of the school’s reopening model and regardless of whether a student is exempt from returning to school.

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