



CULTURAL CONSIDERATION POLICY

Introduction:

The UAE has experienced significant population growth, primarily attributed to the increasing number of non-nationals contributing to the economic and cultural development of Abu Dhabi. Sunrise English Private School reflects this diversity, with a substantial representation of non-nationals among students and staff, fostering an internationally enriched educational environment. While the UAE embraces diversity through the National Tolerance Program, Sunrise English Private School acknowledges the importance of promoting awareness among its school community regarding culturally and nationally acceptable topics and practices in the educational context. This commitment aligns with the school's policy to ensure a harmonious and inclusive learning environment for all members.

Purpose:

This policy aims to establish a cultural consideration framework within the school to:

- Facilitate in cultivating awareness regarding culturally appropriate topics and practices in the UAE.
- Prescribe anticipated school conduct to guarantee compliance with prevailing UAE legislation.
- Pinpoint explicit requisites to ensure alignment of teaching and learning resources with the cultural sensibilities of the UAE.





Definitions:

Cultural Consideration	Knowledge, awareness, and understanding of appropriate topics and practices of a culture.
Culture	The set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs (UNESCO, 2001).
Indoctrination	Biased teaching to further a doctrine, principle, religion, or ideology.
Legislation	The set of legal documents (laws, bylaws, regulations, policies, directives, standards, rules, etc.) that govern and regulate practices in a specific area of jurisdiction.
Malicious Intent	Having a predetermined purpose to disregard cultural consideration and consequently cause cultural offense.
National Identity	A system of social and moral values associated with the lifestyle of the people in the past, present, and future (Ministry of Culture and Youth, as cited in Official Portal of the UAE Government, n.d.).
School Community	Staff, students, parents/families, alumni, and others, who share responsibility for one another, provide an environment for intellectual learning, and create a healthy social atmosphere where all the members of the community are supported.
Teaching and Learning Resources	Any written, audio-visual, and/or e-learning/technological document, material, object, event, person, etc. that supports and enhances teaching and learning, directly or indirectly.





Policy

1. Adherence to UAE Legislation

1.1 The School ensures that members of the school community understand, respect, and adhere to the requirements identified in this policy, the Code of Conduct for Education Professionals in General Education (MoE, 2022), MoE Circular No. 1 of 2022 Regarding Private School's Compliance with National Identity Requirements in the School Environment, MoE Circular No. 1 of 2023 Regarding Promoting a Safe School Environment, and all other legislation in the UAE.

1.2 The Principal is the responsible official for ensuring that school practices and the content of all teaching and learning resources align with and respect cultural consideration as regulated within the laws of the UAE, including but not limited to the following:

1. "Respecting the constitution, laws and orders issued by public authorities in implementation thereof, observance of public order and respect for public morals, is a duty of all residents of the union" (Article 44, Constitution of the UAE).
2. "Preserving the Islamic and Arab principles and values, public morals, and the values, traditions, and systems of the state" (Clause 11, Article 11, Federal Decree Law No. (18) of 2020 Concerning Private Education).
3. "Respect for national identity and sovereignty" (Clause 12, Article 11, Federal Decree Law No. (18) of 2020 Concerning Private Education).
4. Penalties are applied for "Manufactur[ing], import[ing], export[ing], possess[ing], acquir[ing] or transfer[ing] with the intention of exploitation, distribution or display to others, writings, drawings, photographs, films or symbols or other things if they violate public morals" (Article 416, Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law).





2. Addressing Cultural Consideration

2.1 School has implemented the following elements that address cultural consideration:

- 1. Induction and Refresher Training:** The school organizes induction programs on cultural consideration awareness for all new staff, parents, and students. Refresher training will be provided annually to returning staff, parents, and students to enable them to maintain their awareness of cultural consideration in the UAE.
- 2. Vetting Resources:** The school establishes processes and procedures for vetting, reviewing, and selecting teaching and learning resources as per Section 2.3 Learning Resources and Activities of this policy.
- 3. Observation of UAE Cultural Practices:** The school is to embrace cultural practices, including the daily rendition of the UAE national anthem, observance of official public holidays and national celebrations, and adherence to protocol outlined in the Positions of their Highness' Pictures and Placements and Uses of Flags Manual regarding flags and portraits. It is imperative that schools raise only the flag of the UAE and display portraits solely featuring the leaders of the UAE.
- 4. Monitoring of School Communications:** The school regularly monitors all official and unofficial school-related communication channels (newsletters, social media, parent communication groups, etc.) to ensure their compliance with this policy.
- 5. Response Mechanism for Non-Compliance:** The school establishes processes and procedures for reporting and responding to any breaches of this policy in school.

2.2 Community Conduct: All members within the school community has been informed to comport themselves in a manner that demonstrates mindfulness of cultural considerations, encompassing the following:

1. Respecting the UAE's cultural and social norms, values, and traditions.
2. Refraining from (directly/indirectly) promoting inappropriate stereotypes, preconceptions, and assumptions about the UAE and the region.





3. Refraining from directly or indirectly encouraging any behavior, practice, or displays that are culturally inconsiderate, such as drug and alcohol use, smoking, violence, promoting alternative gender identity and sexual orientation, indoctrination, etc.
4. Refraining from using symbols, colors, or imagery associated with any movement/beliefs related to political, social, or extremist religious groups which are culturally inconsiderate, such as misrepresentations of prominent figures, images that are gratuitously violent or sexual in nature, representation of pride movement, extremist ideas, etc.).
5. Refraining from conducting any activities and/or using any content that leads to the indoctrination and promotion of religious/political extremism, racism, bullying, and all other forms of discrimination.
6. Refraining from holding rallies, demonstrations, and protests on school premises or while holding a school-related event offsite.
7. Ensuring that one's appearance is culturally considerate. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - a. Covering of visible body tattoos and any type of piercings for men and women.
 - b. Appropriate clothing in line with the school's dress code.
8. Ensuring the appropriateness of all school-organized events and celebrations to UAE culture, in adherence with this policy.
9. Adhering to the laws of the UAE by conducting themselves accordingly.

2.3 Learning Resources and Activities:

A Resource Selection Committee is instituted by the school to guarantee the thorough vetting of all teaching and learning resources for cultural considerations. The school is mandated to adhere to the following guidelines during the review and selection of any teaching and learning resource:

1. The suitability and appropriateness of materials for specific age groups.
2. Alignment of materials (including topics, content, and images) with UAE culture, values, and national identity. Materials promoting culturally insensitive themes or encouraging undesirable habits/behavior shall be deemed unacceptable, including those related to drug and alcohol use,



3. violence, smoking, gambling, alternative gender identity and sexual orientation, and indoctrination.
4. Evaluation of political topics in accordance with the approved UAE Social Studies curriculum.
5. A structured process, documented comprehensively, is established to vet and verify the suitability of all resources. This process includes final approval from the head librarian, the Resource Selection Committee, and the Principal.

2.4 Topics in the Approved Curriculum:

The following guidelines are established:

1. If the approved curriculum covers topics such as biological reproduction, human evolution, or sex education, the school will use figurative explanations and scientific images/photos judiciously to address learning outcomes in a manner that is respectful and culturally considerate. Schools are required to notify parents in advance, detailing the topics to be covered and allowing them to excuse their child from the lesson with a written exemption.
2. In cases where the approved curriculum includes topics related to revolution, wars, or potential violent conflicts, schools will ensure that the content is discussed within the appropriate educational context, presented objectively, and limiting the use of figurative explanations and scientific images/photos in a culturally considerate manner. This is crucial due to the potential inclusion of offensive, violent, or obscene imagery or themes.
3. If the approved curriculum mandates the inclusion of potentially controversial topics for high-stakes exams preparation, schools are empowered to teach these topics after obtaining approval from ADEK.
4. In instances where controversial topics arise outside of approved curricula due to high-profile current events, schools will align with UAE government guidance and comply with directives issued by relevant federal or local UAE authorities.





3. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Teachers will:

- Develop lesson plans using resources approved by the school's vetting process.
- Conduct additional screening to ensure resources used and content presented to students are culturally appropriate.
- Prepare and vet all online resources in advance of all lessons to ensure they are free of any culturally inconsiderate content, including (but not limited to) images, texts, color schemes, terminologies referencing any of the topics covered in this policy.
- Teachers shall avoid indoctrination when discussing political or cultural matters in class.
- Immediately report any content discovered in resources that may violate this policy to Middle/Senior Leaders and the Principal.
- Ensure adherence with this policy, including data confidentiality requirements when posting school information on public forums, such as social media channels.

2. Middle/Senior Leaders will:

- Review and approve lesson plans and resources developed by teachers.
- Ensure all resources and materials selected and/or developed are age- and culturally considerate and have been approved by the school's vetting process.
- Supervise the use of resources and materials during lessons to ensure adherence with this policy.
- Continuously monitor the content of the approved digital resources to ensure compliance with the regulations, policies, guidelines, and circulars issued by ADEK.
- Immediately report any content discovered in resources that are non-compliant with this policy to the Principal.





3. Head librarians will:

- Review, vet, and sign off all resources requested and ensure that they are compliant with relevant requirements and are age- and culturally appropriate.
- Submit the list of acceptable and non-acceptable resources to the Resource Selection Committee for review and approval.
- Continuously monitor digital and non-digital resources and textbooks including their usage to ensure compliance with the regulations, policies, guidelines, and circulars issued by ADEK.
- Immediately report any content discovered in resources that may violate this policy to the Principal and remove the resource from circulation.

4. Principals will:

- Form a Resource Selection Committee to review, vet, and approve all resources.
- Implement and document the school-level process for the selection of teaching and learning resources as per Section 2.1.2 of this policy.
- Provide, upon request, the full set of documentation for the vetting process as indicated in Section 2.3.4 to ADEK.
- Communicate school-level processes and procedures to all staff.
- Ensure all resources and materials selected and/or developed at the school are age- and culturally appropriate.
- Ensure the delivery of cultural consideration awareness induction and refresher training.
- Report any content discovered in resources that are non-compliant with this policy to ADEK and ensure it is immediately removed from circulation.
- Ensure relevant staff engage parents to communicate that their school:
 - Entrusts parents to oversee their child's use of the internet at home to minimize their exposure to inappropriate content.





2. Expects parents to immediately report to both the school and Abu Dhabi Contact Centre (800 555) any content in school resources that are non-compliant with this policy and always exercise caution when posting school information on public forums and social media channels.

4. Compliance:

The policy took effect on January 9, 2024, at Sunrise English Private School in Abu Dhabi. Non-compliance with this policy may result in legal consequences and administrative penalties as outlined in ADEC's regulations, policies, and requirements. This includes adherence to UAE Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021, known as the Crimes and Penalties Law, or any other applicable laws in force at the time of the incident.



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