



SCHOOL POLICY ON GOVERNANCE

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Introduction

Strong and effective governance is fundamental to the successful functioning of Sunrise English Private School (SEPS). A well-defined governance framework ensures that the school operates in accordance with its strategic vision, upholds high standards of teaching and learning, and makes informed decisions that serve the best interests of the entire school community.

This policy outlines the governance structure, roles, and processes established at SEPS to ensure transparency, accountability, and effective oversight of school operations, leadership performance, and financial management. It provides a framework for monitoring continuous improvement and supporting sustainable school development in line with regulatory requirements and best educational practices.

Purpose

The purpose of the SEPS Governance Policy is to:

- Ensure that SEPS maintains an effective and transparent governance structure under the oversight of the Governing Board.
- Define the framework for governance at SEPS, including the composition, roles, responsibilities, and ethical standards expected of members of the Governing Board.
- Outline the school's expectations regarding the planning, conduct, documentation, and record-keeping of governance meetings, ensuring accountability, compliance with regulatory requirements, and informed decision-making in support of the school's strategic objectives.





Definitions

Board Member	An individual who is appointed, elected, or officially designated to sit on a board as a result of their position.
Casting Vote	The deciding vote (when all votes are equally divided).
Committee	A specialized body permanently or temporarily created by the Governing Board to support the board in the delivery of its functions. The committees' membership, terms of reference, and delegated responsibilities are defined by the Governing Board.
Conflict of Interest	A situation when an individual's financial, personal, social, or other interest(s) might be reasonably deemed to compromise their judgment, decisions, or actions in relation to their responsibilities as a member of the Governing Board.
Corporate Board	A decision-making body representing an entity, external to the school, that has partial or full ownership of a school or a network of schools in Abu Dhabi.
Governance	The structures, rules, processes, and procedures by which a school is directed, and its activities overseen. These structures, rules, processes, and procedures are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, quality, integrity, and stakeholder representation and participation (UNESCO, n.d.).
Governance Rules	A document setting out the structures by which a school is governed, including the membership and terms of reference for the school governing body, the scheme of delegation by which authority is transferred from the school governing body to committees and individuals, the membership and terms of reference of any committees, and the procedure for appointing members to the school governing body and its committees (UNESCO, n.d.).
Governing Board	The governing body of a school, appointed by the school owners, and including qualified representatives and parents. The Governing Board is the senior authority of the school, with responsibility for the overall governance of its activities.
Non-Voting Member	A member of a Governing Board or committee who is present in an advisory or informing capacity and does not have voting rights.
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).
Scheme of Delegation	A reference document showing what authority the Governing Board has delegated to committees or individuals, under the powers of its own Terms of Reference (NCVO, n.d.).



Sunrise English Private School

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الموقع:

Service Term	The length of a term for an appointed or elected member of a Governing Board or committee.
Terms of Reference	The official scope and limitations of a Governing Board's or committee's activities.
Voting Member	A member of a Governing Board or committee with rights to vote on decisions.
Voting Rights	The rights accorded to a member of a Governing Board or committee to vote on decisions.
Quorum	The number of members of a Governing Board that are required to be present, represented by no less than two-thirds of the members, for the Governing Board to legally carry out its functions.





1. Governance

1.1 Governance Rules:

1. SEPS develops and maintains its Governance Rules in alignment with this policy and all applicable laws and regulations of the United Arab Emirates. The Governance Rules are made available on the school website and, at a minimum, include the following:
 - a. The overall governance framework of the school
 - b. The terms of reference, roles, and composition of the Governing Board
 - c. The delegation framework outlining responsibilities assigned to committees or designated individuals
 - d. The terms of reference and composition of all governance committees
 - e. The procedures followed for the appointment of members to the Governing Board and committees
 - f. The selection criteria applied in identifying and appointing board members
 - g. The competencies and skill sets expected of Governing Board members
2. Any revisions or updates to the School Governance Rules are formally documented and submitted to ADEK for review and approval prior to their implementation.
3. SEPS ensures that the Governance Rules are clearly communicated to all relevant stakeholders and are accessible to promote transparency, accountability, and effective governance practices.

2. Governing Board

- 2.1 **Overview:** SEPS establishes a Governing Board as the senior authority and primary governing body of the school, in accordance with ADEK requirements.





2.2 Size of the Governing Board: SEPS maintains a Governing Board comprising seven (7) members, including the Chair, in accordance with regulatory expectations and the school's governance framework.

2.3 Members of the Governing Board:

1. Voting Members: The Governing Board of SEPS comprises the following voting members:

a. Ex-Officio Member

The owner of the school, or a nominated representative, serves as an ex-officio member of the Governing Board and participates either in the capacity of Chair or as a general voting member.

b. Parent Representative

The Governing Board includes at least one parent representative, selected through an election process among the parents of the school. The parent representative acts in the collective interest of the parent community and maintains an objective perspective, rather than representing personal or individual student interests.

c. Teacher Representative

The Governing Board includes at least one teacher representative, elected by the teaching staff of the school. The teacher representative represents the collective interests of the teaching community and contributes to governance discussions in a professional and impartial manner.

d. Independent Member(s)

The Governing Board includes at least one external independent member appointed by the Board. Preference is given to individuals with relevant experience and expertise in the education sector.

Where appropriate, an external independent member from the local business or professional community is included to support the school in achieving its strategic and operational objectives.





e. Chair of the Governing Board

The Chair is appointed from among the voting members of the Governing Board. The roles, responsibilities, and appointment process of the Chair are defined in the SEPS Governance Rules and aligned with the approved Terms of Reference.

2. Principal

The Principal of SEPS serves as a non-voting member of the Governing Board. The Principal attends Governing Board meetings to provide professional advice, respond to queries, and present reports related to the school's academic, operational, and overall performance.

- a. In the absence of the Principal, the Vice Principal attends the Governing Board meeting as the Principal's representative.
- b. The Principal or Vice Principal does not attend any Governing Board meeting, or part thereof, during discussions relating to the Principal's performance appraisal, remuneration, or in any other circumstances where the Chair determines that their presence is inappropriate.

3. Student Representative

SEPS is authorized to include student representatives as members of the Governing Board to encourage student voice and leadership development. Student representatives are drawn from Cycle 3, demonstrate a consistent record of leadership and responsible conduct, and are selected through a student election process.

- a. The allocation of voting rights to student representative(s) is determined by the Governing Board and approved by the school owner.
- b. When student representative(s) serve in a non-voting capacity, their attendance and participation in Governing Board meetings





are guided by the discretion of the Chair, considering the nature of agenda items.

2.4 Each member of the SEPS Governing Board acts in accordance with the collective responsibilities of the Board as defined in the approved Terms of Reference (refer Section 2.11: Terms of Reference). Governing Board decisions are taken collectively, and individual members are not personally liable for such decisions, except where a decision is determined to lack integrity, including circumstances involving an undeclared or unmanaged conflict of interest.

2.5 Appointment of Governing Board Members: The school ensures that:

1. Procedures for the appointment or election of Governing Board members are clear, documented, and transparent.
2. Continuity and institutional knowledge of the Governing Board are maintained during the appointment process.
3. All Governing Board members hold a valid good conduct certificate and demonstrate awareness of UAE national identity, cultural values, and local context.
4. Governing Board members possess appropriate and relevant skills, qualifications, experience, and expertise to effectively fulfill their roles, and the Board collectively reflects a balanced range of competencies and professional experience.
5. Governance rules require Governing Board members to demonstrate relevant skills and competencies, including the ability and willingness to learn, effective communication skills, critical and creative thinking abilities, and a collaborative mindset.
6. Relevant professional expertise represented within the Governing Board includes, but is not limited to, education, law, financial management, social services, student wellbeing and protection, human resources, marketing, project planning, construction, and related fields.





2.6 Tenure of Governing Board Members: The school ensures that:

1. The term of service for a Governing Board member is limited to a maximum period of three (3) years. Members are eligible for reappointment for one or more additional terms through the approved selection process, in accordance with the school's Governance Rules.
2. The school owner is exempt from the restriction on the length of service terms.
3. In cases where a Governing Board member does not complete the assigned term due to resignation, removal, or any other reason, a replacement member is appointed through the approved selection process to serve the remaining duration of the term.

2.7 Quorum

A meeting of the Governing Board is considered quorate when at least two-thirds of the total Board membership is present.

2.8 Frequency of Meetings

The Governing Board meets at least once every three (3) months. Meetings are convened at the request of the Chairperson or the School Owner.

2.9 Open and Closed Meetings of the Governing Board

Meetings of the Governing Board are conducted as open, closed, or closed executive meetings, based on the discretion of the Chairperson, as outlined below:

1. Open Meetings

Open meetings permit observation by relevant stakeholders, including parents and teachers. For open meetings, the school shares the meeting agenda and expectations with attendees in advance.





2. Closed Meetings

Closed meetings are restricted to voting Governing Board members, the Principal, and individuals specifically invited by the Chairperson.

3. Closed Executive Meetings

Closed executive meetings are restricted exclusively to voting Governing Board members.

2.10 Voting and Decision-Making: The school defines the following principles within its Governance Rules:

1. Decisions of the Governing Board are reached through consensus following due discussion. Where consensus is not achieved and a vote is required, decisions are determined by a simple majority of the members present and voting at a duly constituted meeting where quorum is met.
2. Voting rights are limited to designated voting members of the Governing Board. The Principal and any other non-voting members do not hold voting rights, except in cases where voting rights are formally assigned to a student representative in accordance with approved Governance Rules.
3. In the event of an equal number of votes, the Chairperson exercises the casting vote.

2.11 Terms of Reference of the Governing Board: The school ensures that the Terms of Reference of the Governing Board include the following provisions:

1. Responsibilities in relation to ADEK

- a. Ensure the school operates effectively in accordance with ADEK regulations, policies, and other requirements.
- b. Respond to any directives issued by ADEK that require action by the school or the Governing Board, including matters related to inspection outcomes and compliance issues.





2. Responsibilities in relation to the school

- a. Define the mission and vision of the school and ensure delivery of high-quality education that achieves expected educational outcomes and meets the interests of stakeholders and regulators.
- b. Approve the school's strategic, developmental, and operational plans.
- c. Review and approve new school policies and amendments to existing policies, ensuring all policies remain up to date and aligned with ADEK requirements.
- d. Act as the school's primary financial authority by ensuring proper accounting, approving the annual budget and financial statements, and overseeing the school's assets.
- e. Delegate authority to the Principal for execution of strategic and operational plans, policies, and budgets approved by the Governing Board.
- f. Act as the school's primary legal authority, ensuring systems exist to meet all legal and contractual obligations, including contracts and commitments made in the school's name.
- g. Serve as the employing authority for all staff, including responsibility for reviewing and benchmarking remuneration, benefits, and conditions of employment.
- h. Ensure compliance with all applicable federal and local laws, regulations, and policies governing schools.
- i. Govern risk, information, and technology to support achievement of strategic objectives, in alignment with the ADEK School Digital Policy.
- j. Ensure school buildings and facilities comply with the ADEK School Buildings and Facilities Policy and relevant laws and regulations of Abu Dhabi and the UAE.
- k. Investigate formal complaints against the school and take appropriate action in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.
- l. Promote ethical values and practices in all school plans and activities, reflecting UAE national identity and cultural values.





- m. Make decisions in the best interest of the school, avoiding conflicts of interest or preferential treatment, including in disciplinary matters affecting students related to Governing Board members.
- n. Actively participate in key school events.
- o. Ensure the appointment of Board members with specific responsibilities (e.g., safeguarding, inclusion) in alignment with other school policies and ADEK requirements.
- p. Foster and maintain partnerships between the school and the wider community.

3. Responsibilities in relation to the Principal

- a. Appoint and review the performance of the Principal in accordance with the ADEK School Employment Policy, and, where required, dismiss the Principal after obtaining ADEK approval.
- b. Hold the Principal accountable for the effective implementation of Board-approved plans and policies, ensuring alignment with the school's mission, vision, values, and approved budget.
- c. Ensure the Principal maintains an up-to-date master copy of all school policies and procedures, in line with the ADEK School Records Policy.

4. Responsibilities in relation to the Governing Board

- a. Monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the Governing Board as the school's governing body.
- b. Conduct all proceedings and duties in an ethical and transparent manner.

5. Responsibilities of the Chair: Facilitate the efficient and effective functioning of the Governing Board by:

- a. Moderating discussions, ensuring diverse perspectives are considered, and resolving conflicts.
- b. Promoting a culture that supports good governance, including fostering constructive working relationships between the Principal and other Board members.
- c.





2.12 Ethical Requirements:

1. The school communicates the following ethical requirements to all Governing Board members:
 - a. Governing Board members adhere to the ADEK School Professional Code of Ethics Policy, ADEK School Values and Ethics Policy, ADEK School Cultural Consideration Policy, this Governance Policy, the Code of Conduct for Education Professionals in General Education (MoE, 2022), and all associated school policies while performing their roles and responsibilities.
 - b. Governing Board members declare any personal, financial, or professional interest that could reasonably be perceived as compromising impartiality, creating a conflict of interest, or resulting in private benefit.
 - c. Prospective and existing Governing Board members do not offer financial or other gifts to current Board members, and Governing Board members do not accept such gifts on their own behalf or on behalf of the school for the purpose of securing or maintaining Board membership.
 - d. Governing Board members maintain strict confidentiality regarding the content of Governing Board discussions, except for information formally disclosed by the school or where disclosure is legally required. This obligation continues after the completion of a member's term of service.
2. The school ensures that any suspected breach of the above ethical requirements is formally investigated. Where a breach is confirmed, the concerned member is removed from the Governing Board in accordance with the school's Governance Rules and applicable ADEK requirements.
3. The school ensures that any member of staff who is dissatisfied with ethical practices or standards has access to raise a complaint through the School Complaints Committee in accordance with the ADEK School Compliance Policy, or through the school's





whistleblowing mechanism in line with the ADEK School Values and Ethics Policy.

2.13 Governing Board Effectiveness Self-Evaluation: The Governing Board conducts an annual review of its effectiveness through an internal self-evaluation framework. The framework includes structured feedback from the Principal and, where appropriate, from other relevant stakeholders.

2.14 Remuneration of Governing Board Members: Governing Board members serve in an honorary capacity and do not receive remuneration. Reimbursement is limited to Board-approved school-related expenses only.

2.15 Board Offices and School Operations: The Governing Board and school owners do not maintain permanent offices on the school premises and do not interfere with the regular operation of the school through routine or daily visits.

3. The Principal and Vice Principal

3.1 Roles: The Principal has the highest authority in the school and is accountable to the Governing Board and committees. The Vice Principal is the Principal's deputy and stand-in during leave of absence and representative who supports the Principal's leadership role.

1. The Principal does not hold ownership of the school, either directly or indirectly, does not act as an owner's representative, and is not a first- or second-degree relative of the school owner or any of its owners.
2. In accordance with the ADEK School Staff Eligibility Policy, the Principal and Vice Principal comply with required educational leadership standards and professional requirements.
3. The school maintains a documented succession plan to delegate the Principal's responsibilities to the Vice Principal. The plan ensures continuity of school operations during leadership gaps and includes





task-sharing arrangements to mitigate the risk of disruption, in alignment with the ADEK School Employment Policy.

3.2 Responsibilities of the Principal Toward the Governing Board

The Principal:

1. Prepares and submits governance-related documentation, including the organizational structure and school policies, to the Governing Board for review and approval.
2. Keeps the Governing Board informed of all relevant directives, circulars, and communications received from ADEK.
3. Discloses any actual or potential personal conflict of interest to the Governing Board in a timely manner and withdraws from situations that give rise to a real or perceived conflict of interest.

3.3 Responsibilities of the Principal Toward the School

The Principal:

1. Holds overall accountability for the day-to-day operations of the school.
2. Leads the evaluation of school performance to identify priorities for continuous improvement and to raise educational standards, in alignment with the ADEK School Quality Assurance Policy.
3. Provides instructional leadership and management, including monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning practices.
4. Sets, manages, and oversees the school budget in accordance with approved plans and policies.
5. Oversees the maintenance and effective use of school buildings, resources, and facilities.
6. Communicates directives and guidance from ADEK to relevant members of the school community and acts as a liaison to support understanding and implementation.





3.4 Responsibilities of the Principal Toward ADEK

The Principal:

1. Exercises authority to establish school rules, procedures, and educational standards in alignment with ADEK requirements.
2. Notifies ADEK of any legal violation or identified non-compliance with potential serious impact within twenty-four (24) hours of identification.
3. Acts as the primary point of contact between the school and ADEK and ensures effective communication. The principal is authorized to nominate a member of staff to manage this communication and ensure that logistical matters are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.
4. Responds promptly and appropriately to all requests, communications, and directives issued by ADEK.

4. Committees

4.1 Formation of Committees

4.1.1 The Governing Board establishes the following mandatory committees:

- a. School Complaints Committee, aligned with the ADEK School Compliance Policy.
- b. School Development Committee, aligned with the ADEK School Quality Assurance Policy.
- c. Behavioral Management Committee, aligned with the ADEK School Student Behavior Policy.
- d. Appeals Committee, aligned with the ADEK School Student Behavior Policy.
- e. School Health and Safety Committee, aligned with the ADEK School Health and Safety Policy.
- f. School National Identity Committee, composed of a minimum of three UAE National parents, dedicated to promoting UAE national identity and culture in schools.
- g. Any additional committees required by ADEK policies, including but not limited to the Wellbeing Committee.





4.1.2 The Governing Board creates additional committees to support its activities and functions in areas such as:

- Financial affairs
- Health and safety
- Student protection
- School curricula and resources
- School buildings and facilities
- Human resources

4.1.3 The Governing Board defines the membership, roles, and terms of reference for all committees.

5 Records

5.1 Minutes: The school ensures that all minutes of Governing Board meetings are accurately recorded and made available to ADEK upon request. Decisions of the Governing Board that affect relevant stakeholders are communicated and published as appropriate.

6 Compliance

This policy is effective at SEPS from the start of the Academic Year 2024/25 (Fall Term). SEPS ensures full compliance with the requirements of this policy by the beginning of the Academic Year 2025/26 (Fall Term).

Approved by:



Dr.Thakur.S.Mulchandani,
School Director/Principal