

Educating Hearts & Minds

How to open a private school in Dubai



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Foreword: The rising sun of education in Dubai

Ideally positioned as a gateway between East and West, Dubai has developed a distinct identity as a modern and dynamic city. It enjoys a global reputation as a leading trade and finance hub and continues to offer excellent opportunities for investment.

Sustained economic growth relies on effective social development strategies, such as the recruitment, development and retention of skilled local and international professionals. The continued development of high-quality private schooling is essential for this to happen. Education that meets international benchmarks is one of the key areas of social infrastructure that must continue to change and improve.

The private school sector in Dubai is thriving, with a growing demand from Emirati and expatriate families for high-quality early learning, primary, secondary, higher education and continuous training provisions. As of October 2015:

- The private schools sector (173 schools) serves 90% of all school students in Dubai.
- Nearly all of these schools rely on parents or parents' employers to fund their children's education.
- While Dubai's public schools and universities provide free education to Emiratis, over half of Emirati families in Dubai choose to send their children to private institutions.
- The number of students attending Dubai's private schools has grown from 177,587 in 2008 to 265,299 in 2015, an increase of 49%. This growth is expected to continue – current projections estimate an increase to 345,000 students in Dubai by 2020.

International assessment results show that student outcomes in Dubai are above those in all countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Yet much progress is still to be made. Part of KHDA's mission – in line with the UAE Vision 2021 – is to ensure that the quality of education in Dubai is comparable to the best in the world. To support schools in achieving these targets, we set up the National Agenda Parameter – a way of measuring and monitoring schools' annual progress.

Dubai also aspires to be among the happiest and most innovative cities in the world. The happiness and wellbeing of students and teachers in Dubai begins when investors and operators give as much importance to positive education in the structure and culture of their schools as academic performance. We are inspired by schools which promote happiness amongst students and staff by encouraging them to develop their potential, build positive relationships, embrace physical activity and enjoy opportunities to contribute to society. We would like to see more schools in Dubai develop nurturing environments that boost innovation among young people, and equip them with life skills.

The Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) was established by Law No. (30) of 2006 to regulate private education in Dubai. We are committed to supporting the establishment of high quality education institutions to meet the needs of Dubai's expanding population.

We hope you will find this document useful on your journey to opening a new school in Dubai.

Mohammed Darwish

Chief of Regulations and Permits Commission

Section A: Investing in a bright future

1. Why Dubai?

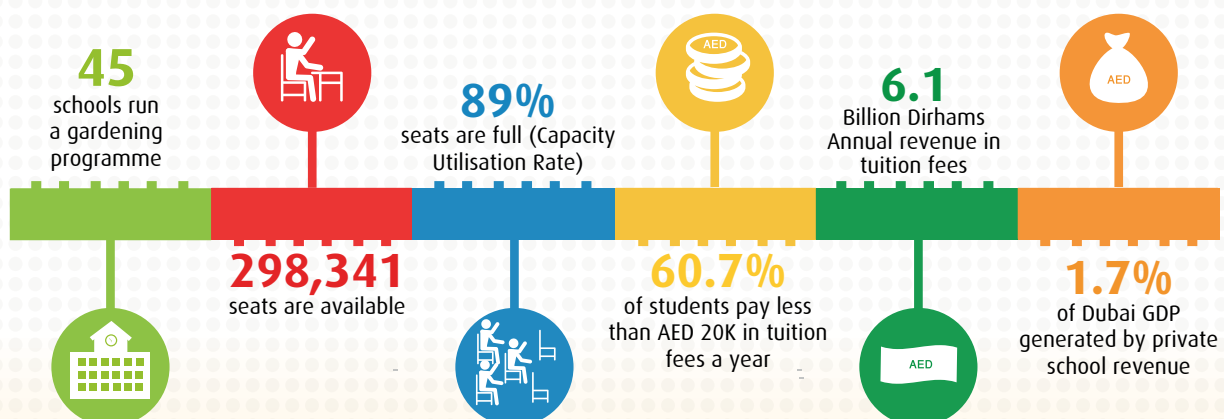
1.1 Growing student population

Dubai's private education sector is unique. More than 90% of all school education in Dubai is currently provided by the private sector, which includes more than 170 schools, upwards of 265,000 students from 183 nationalities, and offers 16 different curricula. This dynamic and complex landscape is constantly evolving to better meet the needs of Dubai's growing population. Essential data include:

- Annual school tuition fees range from AED 2,250 to AED 103,000 per year, 36% of families pay less than AED 10,000 per child per year.
- The 2015-2016 private school market is worth AED 6.1 billion, based on the regulated tuition fees applied to each student (with no allowance for any subsidies from schools).
- The number of private schools has grown from 143 in 2008 to 173 in 2015. 32 new schools have opened between 2012 and 2015 and there are 19,323 students enrolled at these schools (7% of all enrolled students).
- The number of students attending Dubai's private schools has increased from 177,587 in 2008 to 265,299 in 2015, or by 49%.
- This growth is expected to continue – we estimate that there will be 345,000 students in Dubai by 2020, with an estimated need equivalent to the capacity of 50 new schools.

1.2 School capacity and utilisation rate




Figures for 2015-2016 indicate that Dubai's schools offer a combined 298,341 student places. Of these, 89% are currently utilised. Further analysis indicates that in all fee bands, schools that have been rated by KHDA as offering a good or better quality of education benefit from significantly higher utilisation than schools that have been rated as acceptable or lower.





1.3 Which areas in Dubai have the most student growth?

Dubai has seen a significant growth in student population. The diagram below shows student population growth in different residential locations in Dubai. When making the decision to invest in opening a new school, population growth and demographics of specific locations should be taken into consideration. Investors and operators are also encouraged to consider how they can work with the local community when planning their schools.

Communities 	 Increase in student Population (over 4years)	Growth over last 4 years 	Proportion of overall Growth %
Outside Dubai	4,093	8%	16%
Al Garhoud, Al Qusais, Mirdif, Muhaisnah	10,383	21%	23%
Bur Dubai	3,200	7%	11%
Al Quoz/ Al Barsha	3,383	7%	32%
New Dubai (Palm, Marina, Jebel Ali, Emirates Hills, Dubailand, NAS, DIAC)	24,084	49%	81%
Rest	3,677	8%	16%

2. How to start

2.1 Introduction

We aim to make the process for establishing a new school in Dubai as straightforward and transparent as possible. This process includes some components that have to be ratified by other authorities. We have customer-centric Service Licence Agreements with a prompt turnaround time. Our dedicated team will be able to provide the highest quality guidance, assistance and further clarification about any aspect and any stage of the application requirements. Our team is accessible via email, phone and face-to-face meetings.

Below you will find the detailed process to opening a new school in Dubai. Appendix A shows an overview of the stages to opening a new school.

Stage 1: Connect with KHDA

Our team is ready to connect with you at dedicated conferences, fairs or at our office. We will be able to explain more about the educational landscape in Dubai and give you all the necessary information you need to open a school in Dubai. At this initial step, we'll ask you to submit details according to a pre-set list letting us know more about your proposed school. We will give you feedback within five working days of receiving this submission.

Stage 2: Applying for a new school

Once we give you feedback that the information you have provided us with is feasible, we will ask you to sign and submit the investor declaration form attached at the end of this guide (Appendix B). At this stage, you will be able to apply to open a new school. This application form will ask for details regarding corporate and private shareholders and managers, governance arrangements and more specific information about the proposed school and the initial approval from the commercial authority. If some of the information we require from you is not immediately available, you will be able to share this with us later in the process. We will give you feedback on your Stage 2 application within three working days.

Stage 3: Register with the e-service system

At this stage of the process, we require you (the investor of the school) to register with our e-service system. After registering, you will receive a confirmation of registration, username and password.

Stage 4: Submit Academic Plan

After successfully registering with the e-service system, you must upload the approved application form from Stage 2 and submit the Academic Plan along with a non-refundable payment of AED 50,020. A specialised team at KHDA will review the Academic Plan and provide detailed written feedback within ten working days. After the initial submission, you will be able to re-submit your Academic Plan twice.

Our review team will carefully analyse the submission, looking at such aspects as the proposed location of the school, socio-economic trends, catchment area, demographic profile of pupils and other related details. It is crucial that you propose a location for the school that complements the vision outlined in the Academic Plan. We encourage you to look at various options available for land in Dubai. You are free to choose from land in mainland Dubai, freehold areas or purpose-built free zones. Exact school building requirements will differ depending on the zoning regulations of the authority under which your school is located.

We encourage you to involve a dedicated academic team with a single point of contact to discuss feedback on the Academic Plan. Ideally, this academic team would then transition to running the school on a day-to-day basis.

If academic advisors and consultants are supporting an application, there must be a clear contract which outlines the accountabilities of the academic advisors and consultations at every step including but not limited to Academic Plan submission stage, pre-operations of a school, construction of a school, recruitment and staffing, post-operations, initial visits by KHDA and full inspection visit by KHDA.

For schools which have a campus internationally and which wish to open a branch campus in Dubai, we request a point of contact be appointed by the Board of Governors. We will communicate directly with the Chair of the Board of Governors and the nominated point of contact on all matters relating to the application to establish a branch in Dubai. This ensures that all communications are efficient and transparent.

Not all Academic Plans will be given initial approval. In such cases, we encourage you to discuss the feedback at a face-to-face meeting before re-submission. After the initial submission, you will be able to re-submit your Academic Plan twice. Details of the Academic Plan evaluation can be found in Appendix C.

If your Academic Plan is approved, KHDA will issue an Initial Approval as defined in the Executive Council Resolution No. (2) of 2017 Regulating Private Schools in the Emirate of Dubai¹.

Initial Approvals will be valid for a period of one (1) year. KHDA may extend Initial Approvals for a period of no more than six (6) months. An application for Initial Approval extension must be submitted at least thirty (30) days prior to its expiry date. The application will be considered and approved in accordance with the conditions and procedures determined pursuant to a resolution of the Director General.

Kindly refer to the Executive Council Resolution No. (2) of 2017 Regulating Private Schools in the Emirate of Dubai for more details¹.

A notarised commitment signed by all shareholders should be submitted by you to issue a No Objection Certificate (NOC) that can be handed over to Dubai Economic Department (DED).

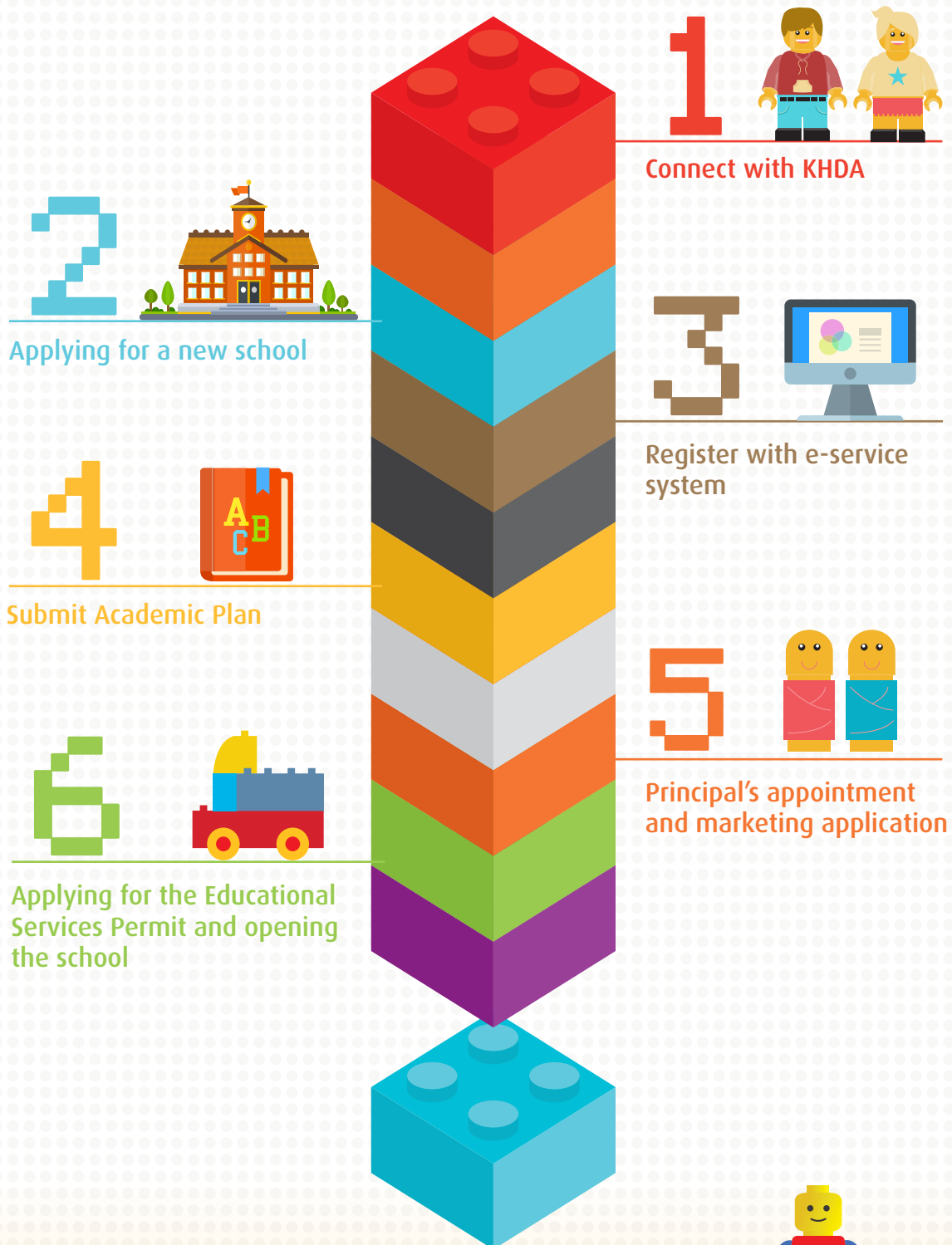
Stage 5: Principal's appointment and marketing application

After receiving the Initial Approval, we require an application to interview the principal/head for the proposed school. The principal needs to be appointed no later than six months prior to the opening of the school. After successful completion of the interview, we will issue an Appointment Letter for the principal/head within five working days.

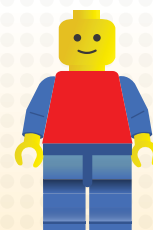
You will now be able to start marketing the school according to our approved marketing guidelines found on our website². You may submit building drawings to us for approval, ensuring that they meet the zoning requirements of the specific authority in which the school is located.

Collection of tuition fees is only permissible once we have completed a site visit to confirm readiness of the building.

How we can work Together



The journey Begins towards a
Happy School



Stage 6: Applying for the Educational Services Permit and opening the school

After the school has obtained all the necessary approvals from the relevant authorities and we have confirmed the readiness of the school building, an Educational Services Permit will be issued. You will now be able to open a new school.

2.2 Ownership

Schools can be set up as different legal entities according to current regulations of relevant commercial licencing authorities. These entities can be individual investors, partnerships, private companies, or well-established educational institutions in or outside of Dubai.

Prior to applying for an Educational Services Permit, we recommend that you consult with a qualified legal counsel and the respective commercial licensing entity³ for details and clarifications regarding the corporate structure of the proposed school. Schools in Dubai have the option to obtain a 100% commercial licence in mainland Dubai (non-free zone) with a local service agent.

The application for the Educational Services Permit should clearly indicate who is responsible for the governance, leadership and management of the school, both during the period leading up to the opening of the school, and once the school is operational.

We recommend you contact us prior to any agreement for purchasing an existing school and any changes involving shareholders, or any changes in ownership of an existing school.

KHDA Education Permit Requirements for International Branch Schools in Dubai

This document sets out the responsibilities and accountabilities for the governing body of any school that wishes to operate a branch campus in Dubai that bears the name of the school in the country of origin. It should be read in conjunction with the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau Handbook, the Guide to Opening a School in Dubai and KHDA's regulations and policies.

KHDA requires evidence in the form of a board resolution by the school of all plans including all requirements listed in this document.

I. General Conditions

1. The governing body of the school in the country of origin is wholly responsible for the submission of the academic plans and business plans for the proposed branch in Dubai.
2. The school in the country of origin needs to demonstrate the ability to deliver high-quality education (such as performance rankings, inspection results, school league tables, exam results at key stages) and a necessary understanding of adaptation to the Dubai context.
3. The branch campus in Dubai will obtain all the necessary approvals from the relevant examination boards and accrediting/authorization bodies within three years of commencement of operations.

II. Teachers, staff and management team

1. Policies and actions on recruitment, appraisal, retention, professional development, and termination applicable to any teacher, staff and management of the proposed branch school in Dubai are in line with the school's policies in the country of origin.
2. Policy for delegation of day to day management of the proposed branch school in Dubai including but not limited to student, staff, academic, financial, operational and infrastructure matters are in line with the school's policies in country of origin.
3. Class sizes and ratios of students to teachers and academic support staff for the proposed branch school in Dubai are not to exceed those of the school in the country of origin.

III. Students and parents

1. Policies on student attitude, student attendance and behavior policy for the proposed branch in Dubai are in line with the school's policies in the country of origin.
2. All students of the proposed branch in Dubai are to have access to all educational rights, privileges, academic grievance policies and financial grievance policies, and alumnae membership and privileges of the school in the country of origin.
3. Emirati students will be given priority in admissions at the proposed branch in Dubai.

IV. Curriculum

1. The curriculum delivery in the proposed branch school in Dubai is of the same quality as in country of origin.
2. The timetabling for the curriculum offered at the proposed branch school in Dubai is to be adapted to meet the UAE statutory requirements for Islamic Education, Arabic and social studies. This adaptation must not affect the curriculum delivery and should not significantly affect any academic award and or certificate given to students.

V. Change in school status or school closure

1. Any change in the status of the branch school in Dubai including closure or changes in status from a branch of the main school requires prior approval by KHDA.
2. After approval by KHDA, the governing body of the school in the country of origin is:
 - a. Responsible for the teaching out of existing students,
 - b. Accountable for settling all grievances arising from academic staff and parents and any financial implications that arise from these grievances, and
 - c. Required to discontinue the use of the name of the Dubai school.

2.4 Naming the school

We have developed guidelines regarding the choice of school name to ensure that legal and cultural aspects are taken into account. The guidelines are also in place to protect the interest of parents as consumers when choosing a school for their children. When proposing a school name, please ensure you follow these guidelines:

1. Provide 3 options for the proposed name both in English and in Arabic. Names should have the same meaning in English and Arabic.
2. Reflect the cultural and religious sensitivities of the UAE.
3. Reflect the ethos, mission and vision of the school without any misrepresentation.
4. Demonstrate an element of consumer protection avoiding any misrepresentation and confusion.
5. Demonstrate, in advance, the ability to attain the quality and/or accreditation requirements from an appropriate and approved education agency when using the name of a particular state, city, county, region, country and/or geographic area.
6. Demonstrate, in advance, the ability to attain the quality and/or accreditation requirements from an appropriate and approved education agency when using the name of a particular curriculum.
7. The name may not include any words implying the inspection rating of the school.
8. The name may not infringe on any existing intellectual property and/or copyright.
9. Demonstrate formal legal, intellectual property and copyright documentation when using the name of any prominent personality, organisation, or academic institution, past or present.
10. Obtain full and final approval from KHDA and the relevant Dubai commercial licensing entity.

2.5 Appointing school staff

2.5.1 Appointing a school principal

All private schools must appoint a principal who has responsibility for educational, administrative, financial, and operational matters. We consider leaders of the schools as true and genuine partners who play a major role in improving the quality of education in Dubai for all students. Principals are the decision-makers who oversee and are accountable for students' achievements, curriculum development, staff recruitment and development, students' assessments, their safety and support, and communications across the school community. They must be able to manage innovation and educational reform.

The Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB), part of KHDA, has confirmed the importance of the leader's role in school improvement by establishing a clear correlation between the quality of school leadership and the school's overall performance rating. It is therefore imperative that school leaders have the appropriate personal attributes, academic qualifications, professional experience, and leadership skills and qualities to ensure continuous improvement in student outcomes.

We oversee the appointment process for private school principals. This is detailed in *A Guide for the*

*Appointment of a Principal in a Private School in Dubai 2015-2016*⁵, available for download from our website.

The process outlined in this document is based on the strong correlation between the capacity of the school leaders and the quality of its overall performance, as established by the findings of the DSIB. It also ensures that school leaders understand and have the capacity to achieve the National Agenda targets. In addition to the general expectations, we will evaluate the intended principal's knowledge of these international assessments and how to integrate the expectations in the school's curriculum and delivery.

Owners of new schools should submit an application for an appointment of a school principal well in advance of the school opening date. We require that an approved principal is appointed at least six months prior to the opening of the school.

A principal's appointment at a private school in Dubai is legally valid only after the principal has completed an interview at our office, and an appointment letter has been issued⁶. School owners can only inform parents of the new principal's appointment when they have received the appointment letter from us.

2.6 Differentiated approach on school expansion

The main purpose of our differentiated approach to school expansion is to ensure that all new schools in Dubai follow a coherent and manageable process of growth in their first years of operation, and after their first and subsequent inspections. Evidence indicates that when school growth is sequentially and coherently planned, schools are more likely to be in a position to offer a good or better quality of education and to maintain high standards.

This Grade-Level Progression Policy was developed following consultation with various stakeholders, including representatives from existing and new schools. Parents also agreed during the consultation process that having such a policy should help to maintain a good or better quality of education for their children in Dubai.

Given the diverse nature and quality of private schools in Dubai, the policy aims to differentiate the regulation of growth on the basis of proven quality of educational provision. This differentiated approach should provide an incentive for operators currently running good or better schools to open and establish new schools of high quality in Dubai.

Furthermore, this policy takes into consideration the requirements of different curricula and phases in Dubai's private schools including, but not limited to, the British, US, Indian, IB and French curricula.

2.7 Fee Framework

The Fee Framework was created for the regulation and implementation of tuition fees. The objective behind the framework is to serve the interests of students and their parents as beneficiaries of educational services, as well as to provide a favourable environment that encourages education investors to improve the quality of provision they offer.

The Fee Framework can be applied in general to all private schools that have been operating for more than three years. Schools will be eligible to apply to increase fees according to the quality of education as assessed by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) and the Educational Cost Index (ECI) as calculated

by Dubai Statistics Centre (DSC). Schools rated as 'Outstanding' by DSIB, will be able to increase fees at double the rate of ECI; 'Very Good' schools are eligible to increase fees at 1.75 times the rate of ECI, 'Good' schools are eligible to increase fees at 1.5 times the rate of ECI and schools rated 'Acceptable' or lower will be able to increase at the rate of ECI. The Fee Framework also offers 'Exceptional Fee Increase' for schools whose level of profitability impacts their ability to continue operating. This complies with the 'fair rate of return' policy and is linked with the quality of education according to the DSIB rating. For further information, please refer to the *'School Fee Framework'*⁷.

New schools may set their fees at any level they choose, taking into account the location of the school and its target demographic. The initial fees, including any optional fees parents may pay, must be approved by us. Additionally, school fees that have been approved in the first year of operation cannot be changed until the school completes three years of operation. Our approval is also required for any discounts on fees that may be offered.

3. What we expect of schools

3.1 The UAE National Agenda and student achievement

One of the priorities underpinning the UAE Vision 2021 National Agenda is the development of a first-rate education system. As part of this key priority, the National Agenda has set targets for students in the UAE to rank among the best in the world in reading, mathematics and science in international standardised tests. By 2021, it is expected that the UAE will feature in the top 20 countries in the 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (PISA) test and in the top 15 countries in the 'Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies' (TIMSS) test. These objectives provide schools with concrete targets against which to measure the progress they are making towards achieving the aspirations of the UAE Vision 2021.

To assist schools in meeting their designated targets, we introduced the UAE National Agenda Parameter in the 2015-2016 academic year. This is a method for measuring and monitoring each school's progress towards achieving their individual National Agenda targets. This parameter requires all schools to participate in annual international and external benchmarking assessments other than PISA and TIMSS.

The benefits of all schools participating in regular international benchmarks are many. Schools will have



reliable assessment information on the performance of cohorts, groups of students and individuals. This, in turn, will help provide a more objective picture to measure student attainment and progress, identify gaps in student understanding and allow schools to make appropriate amendments to the curriculum and teaching. Furthermore, this assessment information will help schools to objectively monitor the progress they are making towards meeting their targets for PISA and TIMSS.

3.2 Happiness and innovation

3.2.1 Promoting a culture of happiness and wellbeing in schools

One of Dubai's aspirations is to be home to a happy community for all the people who live here. We encourage school leaders to nurture an environment which promotes happiness and wellbeing for students and staff. Wellbeing is a general term that refers to a good or satisfactory condition of individuals, in terms of their social, psychological, spiritual, economic or medical states; a high level of wellbeing means the individual is in a positive state mentally or physically or both. Both children and adults alike will be happier when they are able to:

- work productively and creatively, and develop their potential
- see their work and their lives as meaningful and purposeful
- connect with others and build positive relationships
- develop curiosity, reflection and awareness of the world around them
- embrace physical activity as a way of life
- have opportunities to give and contribute to others and to society

3.2.2 Promoting a culture of innovation in schools

DSIB inspections focus on how schools are promoting a culture of innovation. Innovation is driven by a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. It is one of the most effective drivers of economic growth in the modern era for stimulating entrepreneurship and enterprise, which is why the UAE aspires to be among the most innovative nations. The National Innovation Strategy sets the context for 'innovation' and 'innovative leadership' and provides the UAE with a comprehensive plan to develop the entire 'innovation ecosystem', which extends into seven key areas of the economy, including education.

Innovation can be seen in many forms, and not just the school vision, mission and values. There are many innovative ways in which schools can be owned, organised and managed, including:

- curriculum design and models
- teaching, learning and assessment approaches
- development of students' innovation skills, equipping them with skills in idea generation, research,

incubation and discovery

- infrastructure and classroom design
- learning technologies
- partnerships to promote innovation and engagement in the economy
- teachers' and leaders' recruitment, training, development and reward

These innovations can be small or large, recognisable or entirely new and different.

3.3 Focus on quality and improvement through inspections and school self-evaluation

DSIB uses its own inspections as well as schools' self-evaluation reports to determine improvements in student outcomes year-on-year. Our research indicates that effective self-evaluation results in a number of significant improvements in the quality of education and educational standards in many of Dubai's private schools⁸.

The graph below indicates the significant positive shift of schools between 2008-2009 and 2015-2016.

3.3.1 Improving the quality of schools through inspections

DSIB inspections provide oversight of schools' operations and development while ensuring that school owners, governors and leaders are accountable for student outcomes.

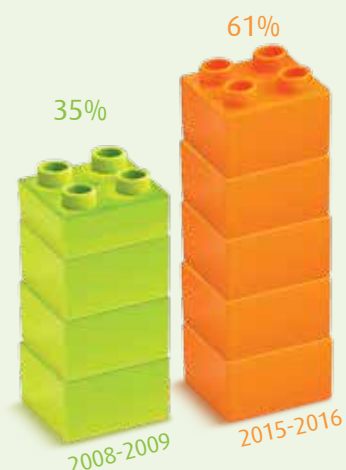
Transparency is one of the key principles of our approach. In this respect, inspections aim to help schools with information about their strengths and areas for improvement, while also empowering parents with the facts they need to make informed choices about their children's schooling.

DSIB's inspections focus on six main Performance Standards indicators:

1. Students' achievement in key subjects⁹
2. Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills
3. Teaching and Assessment

The number of schools judged as good, very good or outstanding overall in 2015-2016 was 86, or 61% of the 149 private schools inspected during that year. This is a significant improvement from 2008-2009, when only 38 schools, or 35% of the 109 private schools inspected that year, were judged as 'good to outstanding'.

The graph on the right indicates the significant positive shift of schools judged good to outstanding between 2008-2009 and 2015-2016.



4. Curriculum

5. The protection, care guidance and support of students

6. Leadership and management

The quality of education provided by each school is rated using a six-level scale:

When judging students' achievement, inspectors make evaluations on the basis of the evidence they gather in relation to each significant age group in the school. Inspectors also take account of any significant variations in the performance of different groups of students. These include:

- Boys and girls
- Emirati students
- Lower and higher attaining students
- Students with special educational needs
- Gifted and Talented students
- Students for whom the language of instruction is an additional language
- Students whose first language is Arabic, including children in the early years

Outstanding:	Exceptionally high quality of performance.
Very Good:	Major strengths in the key areas of performance.
Good:	Important strengths with some areas for improvement. The expected level for every school in the UAE.
Acceptable:	Strengths just about outweigh weaknesses. The minimum level of quality required for schools in the UAE.
Weak:	Important weaknesses in some key areas of performance. Quality is not at the acceptable level for schools in the UAE.
Very Weak:	Major weaknesses in some key areas of performance. Quality is significantly below the level that is acceptable for schools in the UAE.

Newly-established schools will be inspected as part of the DSIB schedule in their third year of operation. In the first two years of operation, schools will have preliminary inspection visits during which the following will be established:

- The extent to which the school is developing in accordance with the Academic Plan approved by KHDA.
- The level of readiness of the school for school inspection and the extent to which it is likely to secure a 'good' or better rating once it is inspected¹⁰.

3.3.2 Quality assurance tools

As well as school inspections, we also carry out regular compliance visits to each school to evaluate the health and safety of the environment, including the buildings and the services of the school. We also quality assure schools by approving teachers and other related staff that have been registered through our online system.

3.4 Curriculum

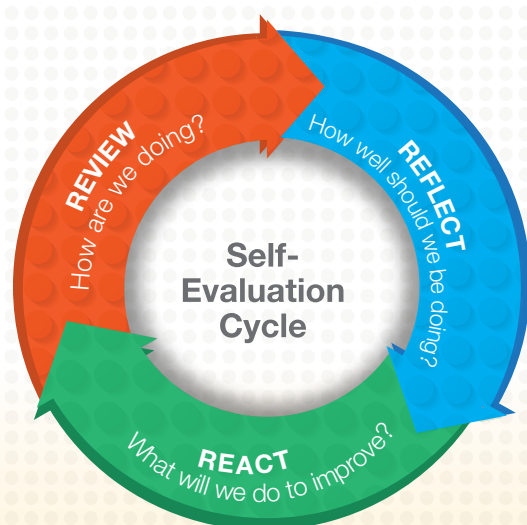
3.4.1 Diversity

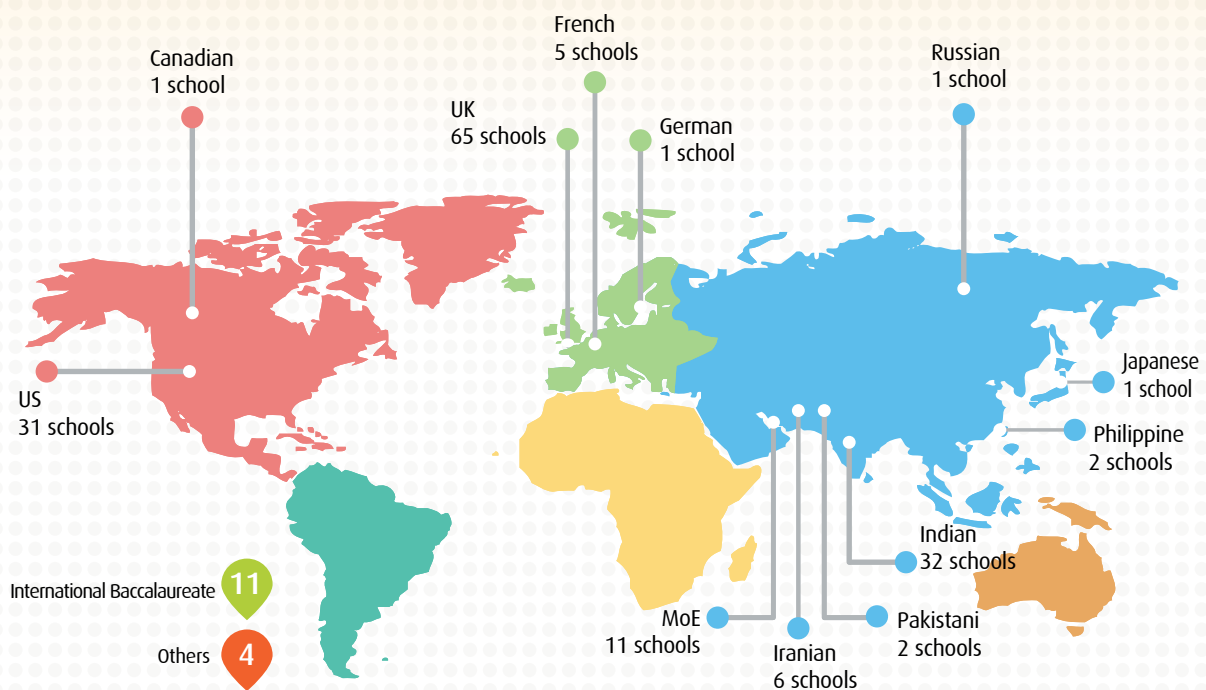
Private schools in Dubai currently offer education based on 16 different curricula. This reflects the growing diversity of Dubai's population. All schools are inspected using global standards applicable to all curricula.

3.3.3 Improving the quality of schools through effective school self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is a crucial part of all schools' ongoing cycle of review and improvement. DSIB expects schools to complete a Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) as part of this process. Self-evaluation helps schools to measure the impact of their work in different areas, leading to an overall analysis of the quality of education they offer.

It is expected that the SEF is used by schools as a working document to inform school leaders and governors of the progress of the school's improvement journey. In line with international best practice in school inspections, DSIB places firm emphasis on the need for all schools to become more familiar with and confident about the processes of self-evaluation and improvement planning.





We welcome applications for new schools offering different types of curricula and encourage investors and operators to explore innovative forms of provision that are not currently offered in Dubai.

3.4.2 Authorisation and accreditation by appropriate bodies

Schools should be appropriately authorised or accredited by the authority that is appropriate for the curriculum. We will grant an Educational Services Permit when the school has begun the appropriate authorisation or accreditation processes.

The following are the accreditation processes that schools should follow if they plan to offer a US or a British curriculum.

a. US curriculum schools

We have set out a number of requirements to ensure that US curriculum schools in Dubai offer education that reflects that which is offered in the US. These requirements cover a range of areas such as curriculum standards, assessment, staffing and personnel, graduation requirements, and can be downloaded from the Publications page of our website¹¹.

Schools that wish to obtain a permit to operate as an 'Authorised American School' must gain accreditation from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). The Association has a long and established history as the oldest accrediting body in the US. In order to facilitate this process, we partnered with NEASC to offer US curriculum schools synchronised inspection/accreditation visits

b. British curriculum schools

In order for schools to claim that they are offering a British Curriculum, they need to apply for accreditation from British Schools Overseas (BSO), a scheme for the inspection of private British schools operating outside of the UK. An essential element of BSO inspection is the extent to which the British character of schools is evident in their ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for students and their achievements. By meeting BSO standards, participating schools will demonstrate that they

provide a British education that has similar characteristics to an education in an independent school in the UK. KHDA and the Department for Education of England (DFE) provide combined DSIB and BSO inspections.

Schools offering a curriculum other than US or UK should be authorised or accredited by the authority that is appropriate for that curriculum.

3.5 The success of Emirati students

While Dubai's public schools and universities provide free education to Emiratis, over half of Emirati students in Dubai choose to study at private institutions. 12,029 Emirati students attended schools judged as good or better in the 2015-2016 academic year. This represents 38% of Emirati students, a significant increase of 12 percentage points since inspections began. It is still a matter of concern, however that 62% of Emirati students are attending private schools that are not good or better.

The Academic Plan requires details on how schools will meet the specific requirements of Emirati students. All new schools must demonstrate how they plan to:

- attract, admit and retain Emirati students
- use student achievement data to support Emirati students' educational success and achievement
- ensure that Emirati students know their potential and feel supported to set goals and take action to enjoy success
- ensure that Emirati students experience teaching and learning that is relevant, engaging, rewarding and positive
- ensure that Emirati students gain the skills, knowledge and qualifications they need to achieve success in the UAE and the wider world

3.6 Teaching and Learning of Arabic

International research has shown being able to speak two or more languages benefits children's intellectual, social and educational development. Students who learn English and continue to develop their native language tend to have higher academic achievement in later years than students who learn English at the expense of their first language.

It is therefore also crucial that Emirati and Arab students receive a good quality of provision in Arabic as a first language, not only to preserve their identity, self-esteem, heritage and culture but also to allow them to develop intellectually and academically. It is also highly beneficial for non-Arab students to learn Arabic, as it enhances their understanding of the local culture, and gives them significant opportunities and advantages in later life.

Arabic studies is broken into two categories, Arabic A and Arabic B. Arabic A is for all students with an Arab nationality, while Arabic B is for all other students. Arabic A is mandatory for students throughout their school years, and Arabic B is mandatory for students in Grades 1 to 9 or Years 1 to 10.

We recognise the crucial role teachers play in inspiring their students to love Arabic, and we are committed to ensuring that Dubai's private schools recruit teachers whose knowledge and experience enables high

quality teaching and learning. The minimum academic requirements for Arabic Studies A teachers is a Bachelor in Arabic language. For Arabic B, teachers need to have a Bachelor's Degree in an education-related field. To confirm their appointment, all Arabic-language teachers must pass a KHDA assessment, which takes place at different times throughout the academic year.

In order to help improve students' attainment in Arabic, Dubai's private schools are expected to:

- recruit and retain teachers with Arabic language academic qualifications supported by one or more formal teaching qualifications
- provide continuous professional development for existing teachers of Arabic to improve their teaching skills
- ensure that internal assessments of students' achievement are accurately aligned to the Ministry of Education's (MoE) Arabic standards and expectations
- develop the curriculum to help improve students' skills in reading comprehension, extended writing, listening and speaking in Arabic
- (in schools with young Emirati and Arab children) offer good quality, play-based provision of Arabic at the early years phase
- modify the curriculum to enable all groups of students, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress when learning Arabic

3.7 Islamic Studies

Islamic Studies comprises two categories: Islamic A and Islamic B. Islamic A is taught solely in Arabic, while Islamic B is taught in Arabic with English-language support for those students whose native language is not Arabic. Islamic studies is mandatory for all Muslims throughout their school years.

The minimum academic requirements for Islamic Studies teachers is a Bachelor in Islamic Studies. Islamic Studies teachers must also pass a KHDA assessment prior to their appointment. This assessment is held at the same time as the assessment for Arabic-language teachers.

3.8 Inclusion

Dubai is determined to become an inclusive, barrier-free society that promotes, protects and ensures the success of people with disabilities and special educational needs. The 'My Community' strategy and 'Vision 2021' exemplify this. Establishing good-quality school provision for students and children with special educational needs is a key step in this journey. Therefore, in accordance with international best practice, and in line with all legislation and charters ratified by the UAE and Dubai¹², we are committed to

ensuring that all students, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to quality teaching, learning and resources.

Students with special educational needs, special talents, and students with special gifts (often referred to as Gifted and Talented) require access to specialist provision in a school, and are often at high risk of experiencing academic and social exclusion. To ensure that these groups of students are catered for, schools should consider:

- the effectiveness of identification procedures
- the appropriateness of curriculum modification systems
- the impact of specific intervention or personal support mechanisms
- the use of feedback from monitoring and assessment processes

We expect schools to put systems, programmes and activities in place so that all students are able to participate in learning. An inclusive school is characterised by how it adapts its curriculum, teaching and physical environment to enable all children to achieve the best they can. Schools which excel at offering an inclusive education have an ethos and culture which make learners feel welcome, accepted, safe and valued and enables them to thrive academically.

3.9 Effective school leadership

Good leadership is undeniably a critical aspect of school effectiveness and improvement. Inspection findings clearly show that in good or better schools, leadership is effectively distributed across different levels and subject areas. In these schools, school leaders work together to achieve a shared vision of the best quality of education for their students.



The characteristics of effective leadership include:

- Governance based on best international practice.
- Boards of Governors and principals who make consistent effort to improve the senior and middle leadership of their schools. They ensure that school leaders are well-versed with the philosophy and standards of the school's chosen curriculum. They also ensure that the school has a sufficient number of leaders who are given enough dedicated time in their daily schedules to lead others effectively.
- School leaders who benefit from focused and high-quality professional development opportunities in different aspects of educational leadership and other relevant educational matters.
- School leaders who thoroughly understand the quality of teaching and learning that takes place in their schools.
- School leaders who adopt collaborative approaches to self-evaluation and improvement planning. These leaders plan a clear path to improvement, and use rigorous methods that hold them accountable for results.
- Schools which identify and develop future leaders as part of their long-term capacity-building and succession planning.

3.10 Registration system and requirements

All students, faculty, administration team and principals must be registered on the KHDA online system. The system simplifies the administration processes of the school and enables us to serve schools, parents and students seamlessly.

All students, with their Emirates ID, need to be registered in the system along with the grade/year they are in. The students will then remain in the system unless they move schools where they will be re-registered. Once the teaching staff details have been registered and approved, appointment letters will be issued.

In addition, we regard the Administration team as two units, the first unit deals with students and parents, the second unit includes the HR, accounting team and the laborers. The first unit should be registered on the system and need our approval. Whilst, the second team need approval from the Ministry of Labour.

Newly, appointed principals (see Appointing a school Principal above) will also need to be registered onto the system.

Additionally, the minimum requirements for teachers is a Bachelor's Degree in the subject that they will be teaching and classroom teachers, i.e., primary phase, need to have a Bachelor's Degree in Education. The minimum requirements for first unit administration team is a Bachelor's Degree.

Section B: Submitting an Academic Plan

All Academic Plans should be submitted in Arabic and/or English (electronic format and two hard copies). The submission of the Academic Plan should be completed following to the guidelines in this section. Additional detailed information may be attached as appendices, which could consist of:

- Reports on quality performance of existing schools owned or operated by the applicant, in the UAE or elsewhere.
- Job descriptions for the principal and other senior academic and administrative staff, including those responsible for the KG/FS phase.
- Supporting curriculum documents.
- Examples of school policies.
- Examples of school-parent agreements or contracts.
- Construction phases, opening dates and cost estimates.
- Details of premises, including dimensions, classroom spaces, special-use areas etc.
- Projections to support statements in the financial plan.
- Letters of support from business and/or government agencies.
- Supporting documents from accreditation/authorisation agencies.

Please include any other information that you think will strengthen your application by explaining and elaborating aspects of your Academic Plan. Use the headings and numbering system set out in this Guide and indicate clearly when any of the information requested does not apply to your proposal.

1. Overview of the academic plan

Briefly outline the nature of the proposed school as follows:

1.1 Applicants' names, profiles and contact details

1.2 Type of school: Please indicate if the proposed school is a new or a branch school.

1.3 Name and address: (general location) of the proposed school.

1.4 Proposed year and month of opening (Academic year and month)

1.5 Proposed curriculum

Please indicate very briefly the nature of the proposed school's curriculum/curricula per phase. For example, 'National Curriculum for England plus IB Diploma at Years 12 and 13, with Early Years Foundation Stage if FS1 and FS2'; or 'Indian CBSE Curriculum'. Please specify the programme to be offered at the KG/FS phase. You will be asked to supply further details of the proposed curriculum/curricula later in the Academic Plan.

For US and UK curriculum schools, please refer to KHDA's specific guidelines for these type of schools, ensuring that these expectations are reflected in the submitted plan.

1.6 Gender and Grade/Year groups

Please indicate the gender rationale for the proposed school. Will the school cater to mixed groups, boys only or girls only? How many Grade/Year groups and students does the school expect to have in the first five years of operation? If you wish, indicate the above in a table format as suggested below. In the first column, please indicate the number of classes for each Grade/Year group in the first five Years of Operation (Y0).

	KG1	KG2	G / Y 1	G / Y 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12*
Y 0-1														
* If it is a UK curriculum please add Y13														

1.7 Instruction time

Please indicate the number of days per year the school will provide instruction, as well as the number of teaching hours per day. Please include the figures in the following table, our team will advise on the minimum school hours:

	Number of days per year	Number of hours per day	Total hours per year
Phase 1			
Phase 2			
Phase 3			
Phase 4			

1.8 Proposed school premises

The school premises will be inspected by the Compliance and Resolution Committee (CRC) team at KHDA to ensure that it is safe and meets requirements and standards.

Please provide a brief description of the proposed premises in which the new school will operate. Include the following information:

- The number of classrooms, offices, rooms for the use of the staff and science laboratories.
- A description of any other specialist teaching areas, such as ICT, libraries, facilities for the arts, for students with special educational needs, technology etc.
- The number of toilets and wash rooms available for students and staff.
- The number of prayer rooms and ablution facilities.
- A description of the facilities available for sports and other physical education activities.
- The size and nature of school grounds and play areas.
- A description of the intended physical layout for the KG/FS learning space.

1.9 Proposed language(s) of instruction

This refers to the language (or languages) that you propose to use for teaching, i.e., the main language(s) of instruction.


1.10 Admissions policy

Please provide the following information:

- The criteria to be used for admitting students. Provide a detailed rationale for any assessment of students' academic ability linked to the admission process.
- Arrangements for the admission and support for all students including students with special education needs.
- Processes and deadlines for student enrolment applications.
- Arrangements for waiting lists and oversubscription.
- Details of any proposed bursaries or other fee waivers.
- Registration and other additional fees.

1.11 Management of the school

If applicable, explain any arrangement made with a managing company to run or support the school as a School Improvement Partner. Explain the managing company's role in maintaining the quality of education in the school. Please supply, along with this proposal, a copy of any contract (actual or proposed) with the managing company. Note that a legal copy of this contract will be part of the final authorisation by KHDA.



1. Key focus areas for KHDA evaluators

- a. If the applicant has a plan for extending the school's Grade range, is it manageable and coherent? Does it follow the KHDA prescribed model?
- b. Do the target numbers match the accommodation available, as shown in the site plan?
- c. Is the proposed class size appropriate? Is it based on international best practice?
- d. Is the total annual instruction time in line with KHDA expectations? (Minimum 20 hours per week Grades 1-2, minimum 25 hours per week Grades 3-12; around 190 days per year for all Grades).
- e. Is the admissions policy in line with the school's vision and mission, as stated in Section 4.3 of the proposal? Does the proposal include appropriate procedures for admitting students with special educational needs?

2. Provision for Emirati students

Explain how the proposed school will provide an excellent quality of education to Emirati students through:

2.1 Attracting, admitting and retaining Emirati students

2.2 Using student achievement data to:

- identify the holistic potential of Emirati students
- identify areas of concern regarding their achievement
- ensure that available resources are being used effectively

2.3 Supporting Emirati students' educational success and achievement by:

- nurturing and building on their potential, as identified by appropriate assessment measures
- providing targeted and appropriate support to ensure good or better progress
- having Emirati students' identity, language, culture and aspirations valued and included in teaching and learning in ways that support them to engage and achieve success

2.4 Ensuring that Emirati students know their potential and feel supported to set goals and take action to enjoy success

2.5 Providing a teaching and learning environment that is relevant, engaging, rewarding and positive

2.6 Ensuring that Emirati students gain the skills, knowledge and qualifications they need

to achieve success in the United Arab Emirates and the wider world

2. Key focus areas for KHDA evaluators

- a. Does the academic plan include a clear plan for the provision of Emirati students?
- b. Does the plan include a coherent and reasoned approach to attracting Emirati students?
- c. Does the plan clearly explain how the school will support Emirati students to achieve educational success and achievement?
- d. Does the plan clearly explain how the proposed schools enable Emirati students to become successful individuals in the UAE and the wider world?

3. KHDA priorities

3.1 Arabic language

Explain how the proposed school will provide high quality Arabic language provision for both native speakers and non-native speakers using the following elements:

3.1.1 Philosophy

Describe the school's philosophy of the importance of teaching Arabic, both as a first and as an additional language.

3.1.2 Leadership

Describe the recruitment and selection requirements for leader(s) of Arabic, as a first and as an additional language. Please include qualifications, skills and experience.

Explain the reporting structure for the leader(s) of Arabic and the expected roles and responsibilities (including any senior leadership roles they might assume).

Describe the performance management policy and professional development plan to build the capacity of the Arabic team.

3.1.3 Curriculum

Describe the school's approach to designing the Arabic curriculum (e.g. using MoE standards and incorporating Arabic culture).

3.1.4 Assessment

Outline the assessment policy which reflects Arabic as a core subject (formative, summative, benchmarks, reporting and standards-based diagnostic test to establish skills profile).

Describe implications of assessment data on teaching and grouping students.

3.1.5 Resources

Describe measures to recruit suitably qualified and experienced teachers and support staff.

Explain how the school will create a print-rich and well-resourced learning environment for teaching and learning Arabic (e.g. learning materials and library books).

3.1.6 Governance

Confirm the commitment of governors to ensure that the school is well-staffed, well-resourced and compliant with statutory requirements.

3.2 The UAE National Agenda

Describe your plan for addressing and responding to the requirements of the National Agenda Parameter requirements as outlined in the DSIB Supplement of the UAE Unified Inspection Framework.

3.3 Provision for inclusion

Explain the provision for inclusion that will be followed and implemented in your proposed school. This section should address the following three categories of students:

1. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)



2. Higher achievers

3. Gifted students and talented students


The key aspects below should be considered in this section:

- The provision model which will be used to meet the needs of all students, and particularly the different groups of students, across the school.
- The skills, experience and expertise of specialist and teaching staff within the school.
- Procedures for the identification of students with SEND, higher achievers and gifted/talented students. Please detail the process when students first join the school, once they are established in the school, and in the early years phase.
- The expected level of engagement and involvement of parents of students with SEND, gifts, talents or high achievement abilities.
- The mechanisms which will ensure effective curriculum modification and curriculum progression throughout the school.
- The systems which will be used to ensure well-targeted and responsive intervention and personal support for students with SEND, gifts, talents and/or high abilities.
- The monitoring and tracking of academic achievement, personal, social, and emotional development of individual students and student groups.

3.4 Innovation

Please describe how the governors, school leaders and owners will ensure a culture of innovation is promoted across the school, specifically in relation to:

- leadership
- human capacity development (teacher and staff development)
- curriculum
- infrastructure



3. Key focus areas for KHDA evaluators

- a. Does the academic plan include a clear plan for Arabic language?
- b. Does the academic plan clearly state what type of external benchmarking the proposed school will use? Does it state which grades and subjects it will target for the UAE National Agenda Parameter?
- c. Is there evidence for a clear inclusion plan that will cater to the needs of all students, especially the group of students in the three categories?
- d. Does the Academic Plan include a clear innovation plan?

4. Vision, mission, rationale and quality assurance

4.1 School vision

Briefly outline the mission (the drivers) and the vision for the proposed school. The school vision should express a common sense of purpose for the school, which all members of the school community can understand, support and strive to achieve. All that follows in the Academic Plan should flow from, and be consistent with, this fundamental statement. It should therefore constitute a set of high level criteria against which the success of the school can be evaluated.

The school vision statement should include reference to the following elements:

- purpose, direction and values of the proposed school
- core competencies expected of the students
- the alignment of the curriculum to the international context of Dubai

4.2 School mission

Outline, in a few paragraphs but no longer than one page, how the mission will be implemented. The entire school community should be the audience for the mission statement. Please use clear and precise language.

The school's mission should clearly set out how the distinctive character and core values will be developed. This should reflect the purpose and direction of the school.

4.3 Rationale for the proposal

Please explain why you have chosen to open a school of this type, with this mission and vision, goals and curriculum. Explain how you think the proposed new school will contribute specifically to the educational provision in Dubai and to the achievement of Emirate's educational ambitions.

You should refer to specific analysis or market research that has led you to believe that there is a need for the type of school you are proposing, in the area you are considering.

Please explain why you expect the school to be successful in meeting the needs of its targeted student population. Applicants are encouraged to refer to research findings and/or their prior experience.

4.4 Quality assurance

Please describe how the school's leaders will maintain a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses, and how you plan to review and improve the quality of education the school provides.

Describe the proposed self-evaluation processes in your school and specify who will have the operational responsibility for the school's internal oversight.

You should explain which sources of information you expect to use and how you expect to use them, for example:

- analysis of internal and external student performance data
- monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment
- review of the curriculum
- performance management and staff appraisal
- review of school policies
- teacher, parent and student satisfaction surveys
- ensuring the accountability of senior leadership and governance.

Indicate with exact timelines your plans and the timeframes for gaining accreditation and/or authorisation for the school from the appropriate external organisations; for example, British School Overseas (BSO), New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) or International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO).

4. Key focus areas for KHDA evaluators

- a. & b. Does the school have a clear sense of purpose in terms of what it proposes to achieve for its students? Are its aims and promises sufficiently ambitious, and achievable in the context of the expectation of Dubai?
- c. Is there a convincing rationale that explains why this kind of proposed school is needed?
- d. Is there evidence of a coherent plan for self-evaluation, drawing on a range of sources including the views of parents?

Refer also to the UAE School Inspection Framework: Performance Indicators 6.1 (The effectiveness of leadership) and 6.2 (Self-evaluation and improvement planning)

5. Curriculum

5.1 Introductory statement

This should explain how the school's curriculum is designed to achieve the goals set out in the school's vision and mission.

You should make clear how the curriculum, through the range and choices of subjects and learning experiences it offers, will be designed to meet the educational needs of all individual and groups of students in all phases of the school who are expected to attend the school. Explain how the intended school programme/curriculum will meet the needs of students of different ages, nationalities, backgrounds, aptitudes and levels of academic attainment and ability.

Explain how learning each proposed subject, including those mandated by statutory requirements, will contribute to the students' overall education and to their understanding of Emirati traditions and culture, including Islam, in the context of Dubai's multi-cultural society. This section should highlight opportunities that Emirati students in particular will have to learn about their culture and to embrace their identity. In addition, it should also highlight opportunities for Muslim students to learn about Islamic values and its impact on their daily lives.

Indicate the type of certification/graduation award to be issued to students upon exit and include the accrediting authority.

5.2 Statutory requirements

Please ensure that your submission complies with the UAE MoE statutory requirements for Arabic and Islamic education.

Explain how these key subjects will be an integral part of the curriculum in accordance with the school's stated vision and mission:

- Islamic Education for Muslim students
- Arabic for native speakers of Arabic
- Arabic as an additional language

Provide information to show how the school may make special arrangements for teaching these subjects to students aiming to undertake higher education in the UAE or in another Arab/GCC country.

5.3 Extra-curricular provision

Please describe the types of activities, with some specific examples, that the school will offer for all phases across the school. In particular, describe to whom, when and how frequently the activities will be offered. Please present this in a tabulated format.

Explain why you propose to offer this range of activities and indicate how they will contribute to students' learning, personal and social growth, how they will support student involvement within the wider community in addition to supporting the school's vision and mission.

5.4 Provision for students whom the language of instruction is an additional language

In this section, please explain how the proposed school will cater to students for whom the language of instruction is an additional language. This should include:

- Range of assessments used to identify those students.
- Language support/curriculum modification programmes that will be used with those students.
- Range of professional development that will enable teachers to better support their students, as well as assess and measure their progress and attainment more effectively.
- If specialist provision is to be provided for these students, a profile of the person(s) to be appointed should be included.
- Clarification of any additional costs to parents for specialist support, including how much extra parents will be expected to pay, the deadlines for paying, and what they will expect to receive as a result of this additional cost.

5.5 Learning resources

Describe briefly in this section the range of up-to-date resources that the school will provide for all students in each key subject to ensure effective teaching and learning in all phases.


Please include in the appendices:

- A layout of a typical early years classroom in your new school, showing the range of resources which will be used.
- A layout of a classroom from another phase, showing the likely resources to be included.

5.6 Happiness

Explain the ways in which the school will promote happiness among its students and staff. How will the school provide them with opportunities to:

- work productively and creatively, and develop their potential
- see their work and their lives as meaningful and purposeful
- connect with others and build positive relationships
- develop curiosity, reflection and awareness of the world around them
- embrace physical activity as a way of life
- engage positively with challenges and critical feedback within and outside the school
- have opportunities to give and contribute to others and to society



5. Key focus areas for KHDA evaluators

- a. Is it clear that the proposed curriculum has been designed to meet the full range of needs of students who will be attending the school? Does the curriculum offer sufficient breadth and choice for students in all phases? What is the validity of the school-leaving award that will be issued?
- b. Does the proposed curriculum include all the specific requirements for Arabic language for native and non-native speakers and Islamic Education?
- c. Does the academic plan include a clear plan for students for the language of instruction is an additional language? Does this plan meet all the requirements?
- d. Is there evidence that the proposed extra-curricular activities have been deliberately chosen to support the school's vision and mission (4.3)?

Refer also to the UAE School Inspection Framework: Performance Indicators 4.1 (Curriculum design and implementation); and 4.2 (Curriculum adaptation)

6. Teaching, learning and assessment

6.1 Strategies for teaching and learning

Please present a policy outline for teaching and learning, setting out the rationale and proposed main instructional methods. Please make sure it is linked to the aims, goals and values in the vision and mission statements. Please be aware of Performance Standard 3 in the UAE Schools Inspection Framework¹³.

Describe teaching and learning in practical terms, from the perspectives of children and students. What will teachers and students in all phases of the school actually experience in lessons? How will they be encouraged to interact with teachers and one another?

Explain the particular strategies you have selected, and why they are expected to be successful in meeting the needs of students of different needs and ages. Applicants are encouraged to refer to research findings and their prior experience.

Please also describe the approaches that the school will take to enhance student learning. How will it enhance students' critical thinking, problem-solving and innovation skills?

6.2 Supporting the needs of individual students

Please present an outline plan for identifying, supporting and monitoring the progress of students with special educational needs admitted to your school, as defined by KHDA categories for SEN.

- Indicate the range of special educational needs that will be supported.
- Describe clearly how students' special needs will be identified and monitored.
- Describe the stages of support that will be provided for students with needs of different kinds, including those whose progress should be accelerated.
- Explain any additional fee implications to parents of particular provision you may offer to these children or students in support of their needs.
- Describe the early intervention process to be followed to support students' needs, taking into account that KHDA approval is required for any exceptional retention or promotional arrangements.
- Provide evidence of any additional exit assessments the school may be able to provide for students with special educational needs such as BTEC/ASDAN.
- Describe strategies you will follow to assist students in learning Arabic A and Arabic B.

6.3 Assessment plan

To assist schools in meeting their assigned targets, we introduced the UAE National Agenda Parameter in the academic year 2015-2016. The Parameter is a method for measuring and monitoring schools' progress in achieving their individual National Agenda targets. It requires all schools to participate in annual international and external benchmarking assessments¹⁴. Your assessment plan should set out the school's general approach to student assessment, defining its purposes and uses in each phase of the school.

The plan should answer the following questions:

- What will be assessed? Which subjects and which other aspects of the students' performance in school?
- By what means? Please state clearly, where relevant, the public and external examinations you expect students to enter and at which Grade (for example Grade 12 IB Diploma; Year 11 Cambridge IGCSE/ GCSEs or BTEC etc.).
- Which curriculum-related benchmarks will the school use to assess students' achievements in relation to expected standards/outcomes? Outline the internal (teacher) assessments you propose to conduct, such as school-based or curriculum-specific formal and informal tests, tasks and projects, portfolios of work, observations, questioning and checking in the course of teaching.
- Please name which KHDA-approved international benchmark tests students will sit, and in which Grades.

- Who will be assessed and when? When will all students be assessed and when will particular identified groups (including students with special educational needs) or Grades be assessed? How often will assessment take place? You should make clear the qualifications that you expect students to achieve at each relevant phase.
- How will assessment data be managed and used? Who will be responsible and accountable for keeping assessment records? What analyses will be made? How will the analysis of assessment data be used to track the progress of individual students and to improve curriculum design and student learning?

Present your assessment plan in the form of a table, showing what will be assessed and when, as in this example:

Subject / aspect	Which students	Forms of assessment	When and how frequently	What records will be kept

Please note: *This example is intended to help structure your thinking. It is not intended as the prescribed format for the presentation of the school assessment plan. You will need to decide how best to present the required information in your Academic Plan.*



6.4 Reporting to and consulting parents

KHDA introduced the Parent-School Contract¹⁵ after listening to the needs of parents and schools. The Contract is an essential tool for developing constructive and cooperative relationships between schools and parents. It fully outlines the expectations and responsibilities of both parties, protects their rights, and serves as a reference guide for solving any misunderstandings that may arise.

Please provide an outline of the proposed school policy on reporting to parents and the approach to discussing student progress with parents.

- Indicate how often parents of students in all Grades will receive information about their children's progress.
- What information will they receive and in what format?
- How will formal oral reporting link with key assessment and written reports? Explain the cyclic nature per phase.
- Explain the school's policy towards communication with parents of students.
- How will regular consultations with parents be organised?
- What arrangements will govern consultations at other times?
- How will the school customise its communications to cater to parents from different backgrounds?

Please give an outline of how the school plans to conduct its relationship with parents. How will the school communicate its duties and responsibilities to parents? How will it communicate its expectations of parents' duties and responsibilities?

6. Key focus areas for KHDA evaluators

- a. Is there evidence that the applicant has thought carefully about an overall strategy for teaching and learning for the school and is able to explain why it is likely to prove successful?
- b. Is it clear which special educational needs will be catered for in the school? Is it in line with the school's admissions policy (Part 1)? Is there evidence that this range of needs will be adequately catered for? How will formal oral reporting link with key assessment and written reports? Explain the cyclic nature per phase.
- c. Is there evidence that parents will be encouraged to play a significant part in their children's education? Will their views be sought on important issues? Has the applicant thought about effective ways to communicate with parents and respond to their concerns?

Refer also to the UAE School Inspection Framework: Performance Indicators 3.1 (Teaching for effective learning); 1.3 (Learning Skills); 3.2 (Assessment); and 6.3 (Partnership with parents and the community) when constructing your responses to this section.

7. Behaviour and attendance

7.1 Student attitudes and behaviour policy


Describe how the school will promote and encourage positive behaviour among its students. This should include information on developing students' interests, confidence and achievements, and be in line with student outcomes as described in the school's vision and mission.

Summarise the school's approach to maintaining discipline and dealing with poor behaviour, including its policy for excluding students.

Please note that any school's decision to exclude a student permanently must be approved by KHDA.

7.2 Attendance

Provide a statement of the school's policy for promoting and ensuring high attendance and good punctuality. This should make clear the practical strategies the school will employ.



7. Key focus areas for KHDA Evaluators

- a. Does the policy extend beyond a regime of disciplinary measures and sanctions? Does it propose strategies the school will use to encourage positive behaviour?
- b. Is there evidence that the applicant has considered the practicalities of the management and monitoring of attendance, as well as encouraging high attendance rates and consistently high levels of punctuality among students?

Refer also to the UAE School Inspection Framework: Performance Indicators 2.1 (Personal development); and 5.2 (Care and support)

8. Student services

8.1 Counselling

Please describe what support will be available to students who experience personal and/or academic difficulties. Explain how and by whom the support will be provided across all phases of the school.

8.2 Career guidance

Please describe what advice and guidance will be available to students at different ages to prepare them for the next stage in their education and employment. Explain when, how and by whom the advice and guidance will be provided.

8.3 Student safety¹⁶


Please describe the arrangements for ensuring that students are kept safe at all times while on the school premises and on external visits. Include the school's approach to the assessment of risk and the maintenance of buildings, facilities and equipment.

8.4 Food¹⁷

Please specify what in-school food will be available for students during recesses and lunch breaks. How does this link with the school's approach to promoting healthy lifestyles?

8.5 Health¹⁸

Please describe the medical services that will be available to children and students and how and by whom these will be provided. Please ensure statutory requirements are met.



8. Key focus areas for KHDA Evaluators

- a. Will first-line health and counselling services be provided by suitably-qualified people?
- b. Is it clear that the applicant is aware of the importance of career and education guidance, particularly for older students?
- c. Does the proposed school have a comprehensive approach to ensuring the safety and security of students?
- d. How well do these proposals fit with what the applicant says about promoting the health of the students?

Refer also to the UAE School Inspection Framework: Performance Indicators 5.1 (Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/safeguarding); and 5.2 (Care and support).

9. Human resources

9.1 Governance structure

Please describe the proposed school's Governing Board and/or advisory group, its membership and pattern of meetings. Explain the extent to which you expect the local community to play a part in the school's governance. What kind of links do you hope to establish to enlist the support of the local community in the work of the school?

Please describe the anticipated working relationship and division of responsibilities between the governing entity and the school's professional leadership.

Please explain the role of the school's shareholders/investors in relation to the management of the school and the plan for their involvement. This should include an explanation about any plans to include the services of consultants and/or educational management companies in the operation of the school.

9.2 School management

Please provide an organisational chart to show lines of reporting and accountability among the school's professional leaders and leading administrative staff. Please explain how the Governing Board will be sufficiently informed to hold the leadership of the school accountable for performance.

Assuming the target for student enrolment is reached in the first three years of the school's operation, please indicate the senior posts at that point in the school in a table format. Also explain the experiences and qualifications desired for each post along with the expected responsibilities and assignments, e.g. Head of Secondary, international assessments manager, educational special needs coordinator and other key roles.

Post (e.g. Head of Primary)	Responsibilities (e.g. teachers appraisal)	Load per week	Qualifications / experience required

9.3 Teachers

Assuming the target for student enrolment is reached in the first three years of the school's operation, please indicate the number of teaching posts at that point, their responsibilities and workloads, using a table as follows:

Post (e.g. Teacher of science)	Grades taught	Any additional responsibility (e.g. subject leader)	Teaching hours per week	Minimum Qualifications required

9.4 Administrative and other staff

Assuming the target for student enrolment is reached in the first three years of the school's operation, please list the job titles and number of all school employees other than teachers at that point, using a table as follows:

Post	Key responsibilities	Hours per week

9.5 Recruiting and hiring

Please give a brief outline (including a timescale) of how the school will recruit, review, and make staff hiring decisions. You should include a timeline for your proposed recruitment programme, especially the recruitment process for the school principal. You should describe who in the school will be involved in the recruiting and hiring process and who will possess hiring authority.

9.6 Performance evaluation (appraisal)


Describe the school's approach to staff performance evaluation, including policies for managing poor performance. Describe how the analysis of student performance data will be incorporated into the evaluation of teachers' performance.

9.7 Professional development

Describe your proposed arrangements (including a timescale for the first year) for the induction of new staff. Also describe how the school will identify the professional learning needs of school leaders, teachers and other staff and how it will provide training and other development opportunities in response to those needs.

9.8 Remuneration and allowances

Provide a breakdown of the anticipated salary range, including all benefits, (basic salary/housing/medical/transport etc.) for each type of post. Please describe any bonus or incentive plan for school leaders, teachers and other staff.



9. Key focus areas for KHDA Evaluators

- a. Will the proposed governing body include representatives of parents and others with a legitimate interest in the work of the school? Are the responsibilities of the governing body expressed clearly?
- b. Do the senior staff have clear and distinct responsibilities and accountabilities?
- c. Do the proposed staff lists indicate that the full curriculum and range of student services will be delivered by suitably qualified people?
- d. How robust are processes to recruit quality teachers for Arabic and Islamic studies?
- e. Is the recruitment plan likely to prove feasible in relation to the schedule for opening the school?
- f. Is there evidence that the applicant has considered the practicalities of managing the performance of the staff? How do these proposals match with the plans for school self-evaluation?
- g. Do the proposals demonstrate commitment to promoting the professional development of the staff?
- h. Consider the practicality of these proposals against the financial plan (see section 10 of this guide).

Refer also to the UAE School Inspection Framework: Performance Indicators 6.1 (The effectiveness of leadership); 6.2 (Self-evaluation and improvement planning), 6.4 (Governance); and 6.5 (Management, staffing, facilities and resources)

10. Financial plan

The financial plan estimates the cost of the resources necessary to achieve the plans outlined in the Academic Plan. It should include a statement of financial policies and procedures, a start-up budget and a three-year operational budget.

The financial plan can be developed and presented in any format.

10.1 Financial policies and procedures

Please provide a brief statement. Please explain the rationale for any unique fee charges other than the tuition fee.

10.2 Breakdown of fees

Please provide a table of all fees required from parents.

10.3 Start-up budget


Please provide an estimate of the school's start-up budget.

10.4 Operational budget

Please provide an estimate of the school's operational budget for a three-year period. It should include enrolment data and estimated profit/loss statements. Include a list of all assumptions used in these calculations, such as fee revenue, salary and benefits estimates, borrowing costs, costs of learning resources etc. This should be aligned to your school growth projection (please refer to the Grade Progression Policy)

10.5 Financial surplus

Describe how financial surpluses will be managed and distributed.



10 . Key focus areas for KHDA Evaluators

Has the applicant provided evidence of competence in managing financial issues, income and expenditure? Specifically:

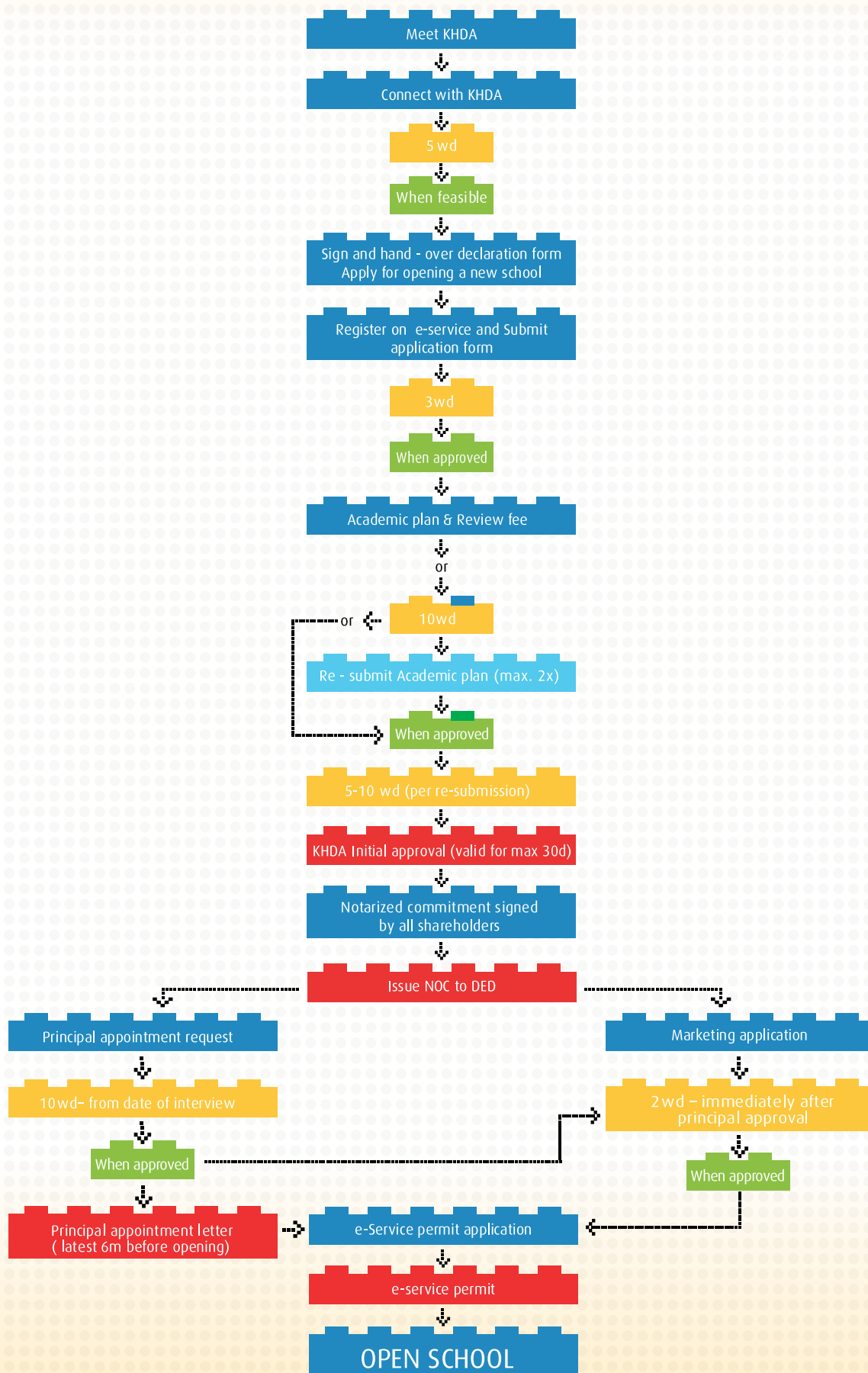
- a. Is there a target for an operating surplus to be generated to meet future capital costs?
- b. Will there be sufficient checks and balances to properly account for income and expenditure?
- c. Does the school have a marketing plan designed to maintain or increase student numbers?
- d. Do the proposed fees reflect market conditions and the need to generate a surplus sufficient for future development?
- e. Where applicable, does the school have proper procedures for awarding scholarships and bursaries?
- f. Is there a clear parental contract that sets out when and how fees are to be paid?
- g. Are there adequate debt control procedures?
- h. Is future capital expenditure clearly set out in the plan?
- i. Will sufficient resources be devoted to planned and day-to-day maintenance of the school?

Glossary

Word – Acronym – Abbreviation	Meaning
Accreditation	A system by which the quality of a school's performance is assessed against written standards and officially recognized by an external organisation
AED	United Arab Emirates Dirham
ASDAN	Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network
BSO	British Schools Overseas
BTEC	Business and Technician Education Council
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
Compliance	Compliance Action in accordance with a recommendation, regulation or law
CRC	Compliance and Resolution Committee; part of KHDA
Curriculum	Everything a school deliberately organises for students to experience
DFE	Department For Education of England
DED	Dubai Economic Department
Disability	A long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which may hinder a student's participation in the curriculum
DSC	Dubai Statistics Centre
DSIB	Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau; part of KHDA
ECI	Educational Cost Index
FS	Foundation Stage; In the English system this term applies to education provided for children before Key Stage 1, i.e., children younger than five years
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
Gifted & Talented	Students who have demonstrated uncommonly high potential knowledge and/or skills in one or more academic or non-academic endeavours
HSE	Health Safety Environment
IBO	International Baccalaureate Organisation
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
KG	Kindergarten; In the American and IB system this term applies to education provided for children before Grade 1
KHDA	Knowledge and Human Development Authority, sometimes also referred to as Dubai Knowledge
MoE	The UAE Ministry of Education
National Agenda targets	The targets set for each school in the UAE in TIMSS and PISA assessments
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
NOC	No Objection Certificate
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SEF	Self-Evaluation Form
SEN(D)	Students with Special Education Needs (and/or Disabilities)
Standards	The knowledge and skills that students should attain at a particular point in time, as explicitly stated in curriculum
Statutory	Anything required by law
TIMSS	Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies
We/Us	Refers to KHDA (Knowledge and Human Development Authority) also known as Dubai Knowledge
You/Your	Refers to the investor and/or operator and/or shareholder that either wants to invest in a new private school in Dubai or to operate a new private school in Dubai



Appendix A – How to open a new school



Appendix B – Investor Declaration Form

The KHDA guidelines to opening a private school in Dubai are designed to assist investors and operators to apply for opening a new private school in Dubai and to prepare their Academic Plan.

The information contained within this guide is accurate upon the time of printing and investors/operators should ensure that they are using the most current version of the guide available on the KHDA website before submitting documentation.

This declaration form should be signed by the investor before applying to open a new private school in Dubai.

I (we),

(full name(s)) have read the KHDA guidelines to opening a private school in Dubai and agree to comply with all the policies and rules contained therein.

I (We),

(full name(s)) agree to follow the most current version of the guide and to seek further clarifications from KHDA directly on any section(s) that may be unclear.

Signature(s)

Investor Declaration Form

The KHDA guidelines to opening a private school in Dubai are designed to assist investors and operators to apply for opening a new private school in Dubai and to prepare their Academic Plan.

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Signature(s)



Appendix C – Evaluation of the Academic Plan

How KHDA Evaluates Proposals

a. Principles

KHDA employs four key principles in the evaluation of every proposal to open a new school:

1. **Rigour.** It is essential that consistent international standards of quality in school provision are maintained in Dubai in order to secure optimum outcomes for students. We therefore apply a scrupulous process for the evaluation of proposals to open new schools.
2. **Simplicity.** Our procedures for processing applications are straightforward and transparent. We take all reasonable steps to ensure that individuals and organisations understand them. We will respond appropriately to all requirements from proposed investors and school operators.
3. **Differentiation.** We minimise the length of time required for reviewing and determining the success of excellent applications.
4. **A developmental process.** Evaluation procedures should not raise unnecessary barriers to obtaining a permit to open a school. Rather, they should actively assist applicants to submit proposals of the highest quality. We therefore give developmental feedback on applications, with sufficient time for applicants to improve subsequent drafts.

b. Criteria

We employ the following criteria in evaluating Academic Plans:

1. Overall educational quality.

Evaluators consider the quality of the information provided in each part of the Academic Plan. They do so by aligning the applicant's responses with the appropriate UAE School Inspection Framework Performance Indicators employed by DSIB, in particular:

- The quality of teaching
- The quality of student learning
- The appropriateness of the curriculum in meeting the educational needs of all students
- The effectiveness of the school's protection and support for its students
- The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school
- The effectiveness of the school overall

We approve Academic Plans that have the potential to support the development of schools that would be rated as 'Good' or better by DSIB.

2. Clarity and conciseness

- Is the plan well-organised with clear numbering, bullets, paragraphs, headings etc. to guide the reader?
- Does the plan use plain language to make points precisely, with relevant details and suitable examples to illustrate key points?
- Where tables and diagrams are included, are they clear and fit for purpose?
- Is the plan concise, with about the right length and balance between subsections, without unnecessary elaboration?

3. Coherence

Are the subsections coherently aligned with each other and with the school's vision and mission, so that the implications of one section are properly addressed in other connected sections?

4. Compliance

Does the plan comply with the letter and the spirit of the requirements in the Guide to Preparing an Academic Plan?



Evaluation Process

KHDA Evaluation for the academic plan of (proposed school name)	
Review of the 1st submission	
Review of the 2nd submission	
Review of the 3rd submission	

	<p>Level 4: This aspect of the plan is fully compliant in all important respects and requires no further development</p> <p>Level 3: This aspect of the plan is broadly satisfactory but would benefit from further development in one or two respects</p> <p>Level 2: This aspect of the plan requires further development in some significant respects</p> <p>Level 1: This aspect of the plan falls well short of satisfying the criteria in several significant respects</p> <p>Required improvement to the plan: Evaluators to include general comments highlighting areas within each aspect that may need improvement.</p>
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1. Overview of the Academic Plan	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
1.1 Applicant's name	
1.2 Name and address of proposed school	
1.3 Proposed year and month of opening	
1.4 Gender and grades catered for	
1.5 Target numbers of students	
1.6 Instruction time	
1.7 Proposed school premises	
1.8 Proposed curriculum	
1.9 Proposed languages of instruction	
1.10 Admissions policy	
1.11 Management of the school	

2. Provision for Emirati students	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
2.1 Attracting, admitting and retaining Emirati students	
2.2 Using student achievement	
2.3 Supporting Emirati students' educational success and achievement	

2.4 Ensuring that Emirati students know their potential and feel supported to set goals and take action to enjoy success	
2.5 Ensuring that Emirati students' experience teaching and learning that is relevant, engaging, rewarding and positive.	
2.6 Ensuring that Emirati students gain the skills, knowledge and qualifications they need to achieve success in the United Arab Emirates and the wider world.	

3. KHDA priorities	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
3.1 Arabic language	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
3.1.1 Philosophy	
3.1.2 Leadership	
3.1.3 Curriculum	
3.1.4 Assessment	
3.1.5 Resources	
3.1.6 Governance	

3. KHDA priorities	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
3.2 The UAE National Agenda	

3. KHDA priorities	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
3.3 Provision for inclusion	

3. KHDA priorities	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
3.4 Innovation	

4. Vision, mission, rationale and quality assurance	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
4.1 School vision	
4.2 School mission	
4.3 Rationale for the proposal	
4.4 Quality assurance	

5. Curriculum	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
5.1 Introductory statement	
5.2 Statutory requirements	
5.3 Extra-curricular provision	
5.4 Provision for students for whom the language of instruction is an additional language.	
5.5 Learning resources	
5.6 Happiness	

6. Teaching, learning and assessment	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
6.1 Strategies for teaching and learning	
6.2 Supporting the needs of individual students	
6.3 Assessment plan	
6.4 Reporting to and consulting parents	

7. Behaviour and attendance	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
7.1 Student attitudes and behaviour policy	
7.2 Attendance	

8. Student services	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
8.1 Counselling	
8.2 Career guidance	
8.3 Student safety	
8.4 Food	
8.5 Health	

9. Human resources	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
9.1 Governance structure	
9.2 School management	
9.3 Teachers	
9.4 Administrative and other staff	
9.5 Recruiting and hiring	
9.6 Performance evaluation (appraisal)	
9.7 Professional development	
9.8 Remuneration and allowances	

10. Financial plan	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
10.1 Financial policies and procedures	
10.2 Breakdown of fees	
10.3 Start-up budget	
10.4 Operational budget	
10.5 Financial surplus	

	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
Meeting KHDA requirements for UK/US schools	

Clarity and conciseness	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
Organisation	
Use of plain language	
Concise	

Coherence	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()
Subsections coherently aligned	

Overall level and recommendation	For KHDA use only:
	1st submission level: ()
	2nd submission level: ()
	3rd submission: ()

References

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3. Executive Council Resolution No. (2) of 2017 Regulating Private Schools in the Emirate of Dubai [http://www.khda.gov.ae/CMS/WebParts/TextEditor/Documents/ExecutiveCouncilResolutionNo.\(2\)of2017RegulatingPrivateSchoolsintheEmirateOfDubai.pdf](http://www.khda.gov.ae/CMS/WebParts/TextEditor/Documents/ExecutiveCouncilResolutionNo.(2)of2017RegulatingPrivateSchoolsintheEmirateOfDubai.pdf)
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6. Please refer to the Principal Appointment Guide. Retrieved from http://www.khda.gov.ae/CMS/WebParts/TextEditor/Documents/Principal%20Appointment%20Guide%202014_English.pdf
7. Please refer to 'School Fees Framework'. Retrieved from <http://www.khda.gov.ae/CMS/WebParts/TextEditor/Documents/FeeFramework-English.pdf>
8. Please refer to KHDA's 'School self-evaluation form for improvement planning'. Retrieved from http://www.khda.gov.ae/Areas/Administration/Content/FileUploads/Publication/Documents/English/2015-40-24-08-38-Self_Evaluation_and_Improvement_Planning_EN.pdf
9. Key subject areas currently include: Arabic as a first or additional language, English, the language of instruction (when it is not Arabic or English), Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and the Early Years (where applicable).
10. For a more detailed insight into the improvement of schools in Dubai, please refer to - 7 years on... Inspecting for school improvement: A collaborative journey - 2008-2015 key findings. This document and the latest framework for inspections can be downloaded from the publications section of the KHDA website at - <http://www.khda.gov.ae/en/publications>.
11. KHDA Publications. Retrieved from <https://www.khda.gov.ae/en/publications>
12. Dubai Law No. 2 (2014) and supporting Federal Law 2006 demonstrate Dubai's particular commitment to, and support for, children, adults and families affected by disabilities. The laws reflect international best practice in accordance with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). The key principles of 'Inclusion' and 'equality' lie at the heart of this law.
13. For further information on 'Teaching for effective learning' please refer to the 'School Inspection Framework'. Retrieved from http://www.khda.gov.ae/Areas/Administration/Content/FileUploads/Publication/Documents/English/2015-52-24-08-34-KHDA_INSPECTION_FRAMEWORK_EN.pdf
14. Please refer to the 'DSIB School Inspection Supplement' page 6-9 for further information. Retrieved from http://www.khda.gov.ae/Areas/Administration/Content/FileUploads/Publication/Documents/English/2015-19-24-08-44-KHDA_INSPECTION_SUPPLEMENT_EN.pdf
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