

Service Guidelines

Policy	Management of Student Transportation
Service Pillar	Operations General Services
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الدار للتعليم
ALDAR EDUCATION

**Implementation and Exemptions**

All schools are required to observe and implement this service guidelines as a minimum expected service level. Exemptions will only be granted for legal (contravention of local and / or federal legislation), technological, cultural, or physical reasons. Sufficient supporting documentation is required to obtain an exemption.

Objective and/or Scope

The objective of this service guideline is to provide the schools with the necessary tools and techniques to manage transport services efficiently and effectively. Due to the significant risks present in student transportation which even with the most effective systems and processes in place, can result in an incident, accident, or a near miss. Therefore, having an effective process in place for managing contracted transportation services, contracted transportation staff and management of contracted vehicles and buses, is an important part of an organisations transport management system.

The scope of the policy covers the effective management of contracted transport services, across all ALDAR Education schools.

Guidelines

1. All ALDAR Education schools must provide the school transport service for their students, whether directly or through any external operators appointed by them.
2. School transport service may not be operated unless by operators duly licensed by the Department of Transport to provide such service.
3. The appointed contractor shall use buses which meet standards approved herein. The Department may amend such standards according to the safety, security, and service quality requirements in coordination with the Concerned Entities.
4. Students shall not be transported by school buses without a bus supervisor/monitor.

Responsibilities

Responsibility of Schools

5. Provide enough school buses, whether directly or through contracted service provider for all students who want to avail of such service and make sure that there are sufficient seats for all students.
6. Assign a person responsible for school transport and provide contracted service provider and student parents with his/her name and contact numbers.
7. All transport staff deployed at school – coordinator, drivers and monitors, must sign and acknowledge the ADEK School Student Protection Policy.
8. Ensure all transport staff – coordinator, drivers and monitors deployed at school for transport services are registered on ADEK PASS.
9. Ensure that female bus monitors are assigned, except for all male students in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 (Grade 5 and above) where a male bus monitor may be employed, in compliance with ADEK Coeducation Policy.
10. Bus supervisor to be contracted for each bus used for transporting students under the age of 11 years.
11. Maintain a list containing the names of students and contact numbers of their parents in emergency cases and provide such list to contracted service provider.
12. Not to allow the contracted service provider to carry out any maintenance works for school buses within the school premises.
13. Assign a person to receive students on their return to school if they are not collected by their parents, ensure that they are not left alone until they are collected by their parents and call the police in emergency cases.
14. Obtain an undertaking from the parents on the Code of Conduct (COC) document shared by the contracted service provider.
15. Maintain and ensure bus pick up and drop off areas are free from any hazards that may put the students at risk.
16. Develop and communicate the Traffic Management Plan (FRM-OP-OR-0008) with all stakeholders i.e. SLT, contracted service provider, supervisors, traffic marshals etc.
17. The Department of Transport may, upon request submitted by the school, give an exception from the provision of school bus service due to insufficiency of students if it is proven that the same is not economically viable provided that a study supported by documents is submitted with the application. This application process should be routed through ALDAR Education's Group Head - General Services.
18. The school must ensure that all buses used for student transportation accommodate students with additional learning needs, including accessibility features such as wheelchair access and other modifications to ensure safe transport.
19. The school must ensure to provide student safety awareness programs, ensuring that students are educated on safe behavior during transport, emergency procedures and how to react during incidents, the importance of following bus safety rules.
20. Schools must implement a formal grievance handling process, prioritizing safety in all decisions. Complaints should be addressed by the school's principal or governing board, and all decisions must be documented and communicated to parents.
21. Designated parking areas must be allocated for school buses within the school premises, and all vehicles must adhere to the speed limits in school zones, as regulated by Abu Dhabi Police.

22. School must ensure the regular inspections of vehicles on Evotix system and report incidents or accidents, following CIRP protocol
23. Managing Student Behaviour
 - 20.1. Make the students aware of the way of behaviour when waiting for and getting on or off the bus and during the trip.
 - 20.2. The school may prevent any student from using the school bus service in case his/her parent refuses to sign the COC.
 - 20.3. A student may also be prevented from using the school bus within one semester/term after notifying his/her parents in the following cases:
 - 20.3.1. If the student violates any safety rules or expose himself or his life or the lives of others to danger during the bus trip; or
 - 20.3.2. If the students misbehave or gets involved in any improper or aggressive behaviour towards other students, the bus supervisor or driver.
 - 20.4. The duration of suspension will be at the discretion of the school with period no longer than the end of the ongoing semester/term.

Responsibility of Contracted Service Provider

24. Not to operate school buses for a period exceeding ten years from the date of manufacture. Such period may be increased from year to year for a maximum of five years after their inspection by the Department to ensure their suitability for student transportation.
25. Obtain the license from the Department of Economic Development in Abu Dhabi.
26. Not to operate any school bus not registered in the Emirate.
27. Constantly ensure that the buses are well maintained and remain in conformity with the safety and technical standards approved in the Department of Transport's Guiding Manual.
28. Must not carry out any maintenance works for school buses within the school premises.
29. Provide comprehensive insurance covering all the passengers.
30. The service provider shall provide students with training on bus safety and pedestrian safety.
31. Ensure that all appointed school bus drivers have obtained applicable ITC and/or DOT permits to practice their profession.
32. Ensure that all appointed bus monitors have obtained applicable QCC, ITC and/or DOT permits to practice their profession.
33. Ensure that female bus monitors are assigned, except for all male students in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 where a male bus monitor may be employed.
34. Ensure that all transport staff acknowledge and comply with ADEK School Student Protection Policy.
35. Appoint a coordinator between the contracted service provider and concerned schools to monitor the transport service organization and school bus traffic.
36. Develop a transport plan in coordination with the school management showing the bus routes and embarkation, stop and disembarkation points according to the General Guiding Manual of the Department of Transport.

37. Determine the points of drop-off and pick-up of students. If such determination is prevented due to an impediment or road works, the stop point shall be at locations:
 - 30.1 that are less than 200 meters from home.
 - 30.2 that are safe so that students are not exposed to any danger when arriving thereto or waiting thereat.
 - 30.3 that do not require students to cross the roads with speed exceeding 40km/hour; and
 - 30.4 where school bus can easily stop without interrupting traffic or exposing the bus or other road users to any danger.
38. Not to transport students more than bus seating capacity.
39. Maintain records of incidents in the format prepared by the Department of Transport.
40. Maintain records of complaints and actions taken by the school.
41. Provide drivers and bus supervisors with details of each trip, names of students and contact numbers and addresses of their parents to ensure that the bus is completely empty at the end of the trip.
42. Provide drivers and female supervisors with contact numbers of person(s) assigned by schools and contracted service provider to monitor the service.
43. Provide separate buses to transport female and male students aged 12 years and above.
44. Maintain records of maintenance and periodic checks of safety systems in the buses according to the guidelines of the Department of Transport and make them at the disposal of schools and the Department of Transport upon request.
45. Ensure that the drivers and bus supervisors comply with the general appearance requirements and provide them with and ensure that they wear the uniform when on duty.
46. Number of nursery children (under the age of 4 years) carried in the bus shall not exceed 21 children.
47. Train bus supervisors and drivers on safety measures, student evacuation, first aid and the way of dealing with students with special needs and retrain them at the beginning of each school year.
48. Provide the necessary equipment to assist students with special needs using the school transport, if any.
49. Report to school any negative attitudes of students within the bus using the behaviour report form.
50. Not to use school bus to transport passengers other than students.
51. The bus trip time in one direction shall not exceed one hour from the initial embarkation point to the final disembarkation point (from picking up the first student until dropping off the last student).
52. Procure replacement buses to transport students to their destination in case of bus failure or accident within maximum of one hour.
53. Maintain CCTV records for at least 180 days.
54. Not to diffuse any video programmes or publicity materials within the school buses without consent of the school or authorities.
55. Maintain hazards record showing the hazards encountered during the trip and bus-related risks and ensure that they are under control in accordance with OSHAD requirements.
56. Submit the form of HSE Management System Development to the Department of Transport within one year from the date on which the permit to conduct the activity is granted by the Department of Transport to the Operator according to OSHAD requirements.

57. In emergency cases, the Department of Transport may, upon request submitted by the contracted service provider, authorize to operate a school bus not registered in the Emirate if the contracted service provider proves their inability to rent school buses registered within the Emirate, provided that the permit does not exceed six months and is renewable only once for a similar period.
58. the maximum journey duration must not exceed 60 minutes from the designated pick-up to drop-off points, unless a parental consent form is signed. Pick-up and drop-off points should be designated for the safety and convenience of students.
59. Service provider must ensure promoting sustainable transport practices, including; encouraging low-emission or electric buses and monitoring and reducing the carbon footprint of school transportation systems.

Responsibility of Bus Drivers

60. Carry out daily bus inspection before driving the school bus, including the check of light, tires, bus exterior and seats, keep lists of bus inspection and report any failure to the contracted bus coordinator.
61. Ensure that the bus is empty, and all students have departed the bus at the final disembarkation point.
62. Ensure that the first aid equipment and fire extinguishers are in place in the school bus.
63. Ensure that the bus entrances, exit and aisles, including the emergency exits are free of any obstructions before starting the trip.
64. Prepare the bus within sufficient time before student boarding, and particularly ensure the bus cleanness and control the internal temperature and adjust the A/C to 21-24 °C depending on the weather.
65. Not to drive the bus at a speed exceeding the legal limit specified for each road and, in any case, not to exceed 100km/h.
66. Use the stop arm and warning lights when the students cross the street and walkways and when they get on or off the bus at the designated drop-off points outside the school.
67. Not to allow any student to leave the bus at any point other than the designated drop-off point unless upon written instruction from the school.
68. Maintain clean attire and wear the uniform when on duty.
69. Present the school bus driver permit to the authorized inspectors on request.
70. Abstain from drinking, eating, or using the phone when driving school bus.
71. Abstain from smoking and not to allow anyone to smoke within the bus at any time.
72. Report to contracted coordinator any misbehaviour on the part of students.

Responsibility of Bus Supervisors

73. Not to allow the students to stand in the bus when moving.
74. Ensure that all students are in their seats with seat belts fastened throughout the trip.
75. Ensure, at the end of the trip, that the bus is empty, and all students disembarked the bus.
76. Not to allow any student under the age of 11 years (Grade 6/ Year 7) to get off the bus at the designated drop-off point until it is ensured that the parent or guardian is present and, if the parent or guardian is not present at the designated point, to notify the school so that the student is returned to school after dropping off all other students.

77. Direct handover of children to parent or guardian must be ensured (hand to hand child handover), do not allow students to disembark from the bus and proceed to their house unaccompanied.
78. Give the bus driver verbal confirmation that the students have been safely handed over to the parent or guardian.
79. Monitor any misbehavior on the part of students and maintain their safety during the trip and report any incident to the contracted bus coordinator.
80. Ensure that the bus entrances, exits and aisles, including the emergency exits are free of any obstructions before starting the trip.
81. Help students crossing the street if necessary.
82. Assist in evacuating the bus in emergency cases.
83. Ensure that all guidelines of manufacturers of seats of buses designated for kindergarten children under the age of 4 years are complied with.
84. Abstain from drinking, eating, or using the phone when the students are in the bus.
85. Maintain clean attire and wear the uniform when on duty.
86. Present the school bus supervisor permit to the authorized inspectors on request.
87. Bus Supervisors must be certified by the QCC and ITC as required by ADEK regulations and must comply with ADEK's Student Protection Policy. Female supervisors should be appointed on buses transporting mixed-gender or female students, with the exception of all-male buses for Cycle 2 and 3 students.

Responsibility of Parents

88. Pick up their children under the age of 11 years at the specific times from the bus drop off point, whether themselves or through their designees.
89. Provide the school with their contact details and update the same, whenever required.
90. Pick up the student from school in case he/she is returned to school due to the non-presence of the parent or guardian at the designated drop-off point.
91. Pay the repair costs for any damages caused by their children to the bus.
92. Notify the school management of any offence relating to the bus cleanness or any misbehavior of the driver, bus supervisor or students.
93. Educate their children on the importance of traffic safety throughout the trip and when waiting for, getting on or off the bus and comply with the following:
94. To be present near their home or at the designated drop off points at or before the specific time.
95. Not to violate any safety regulations or expose themselves or others to danger during the school bus trip.
96. Not to leave the bus before reaching the school or the designated drop-off point.
97. Remain seated with seat belts always fastened.
98. Not to misbehave or get involved in any improper or aggressive behavior.
99. Notify the school management of any offence relating to the bus cleanness or any misbehavior of the driver, bus supervisor, or students.
100. Undertake to agree on the prevention of their children from using the school transport service for the period as determined by the concerned parties in case of breach of any rules and regulations.

Dismissal Procedure

101. Parent Lanyards and ID Cards

- 94.1 Schools must ensure that only authorized persons are permitted to pick up students from school.
- 94.2 Schools must ensure that all such persons are pre-registered, and the following documents are provided:

- a. Car Riders/Parent consent form
 - b. Photograph of person(s)
 - c. Emirates ID of person(s)
 - d. Passport copy of person(s)
- 94.3 If the authorized person is not a parent, additional documentation is required:
- a. Authorization letter from parent
 - b. Emirates ID of parent
 - c. Passport copies of parent
- 94.4 Upon completion of the registration in step 2.2 and 2.3, schools must ensure a parent lanyard and ID card are issued.
- 94.5 The school must hand-deliver the parent lanyard and ID card to the authorized individual.
- 94.6 Schools must verify the Emirates ID of the individual when handing over the parent lanyard.

95 Dismissal Procedure

- 95.1 Schools must ensure that only authorized persons are permitted to pick up students from school.
- 95.2 The parent lanyard must be verified at the collection point before handing over.
- 95.3 If any discrepancies arise, the parent or guardian must be escorted to the reception for further review, and the student must remain in the school's safe custody. The child may only be handed over upon successful review.
- 95.4 Any parent or guardian without a lanyard will not be permitted to collect students and must undergo additional verification.
- 95.5 In such cases, the receptionist will verify the following:
 - a. Emirates ID of the person
 - b. Relationship to the child
 - c. A phone call verification with the parents.
- 95.6 Schools must ensure that only students registered for transport services are permitted to use the bus. The transport registration form must be signed by the parent for each academic year.
- 95.7 Schools must ensure that student details are accurate, updated and reflected in the Salama Application.
- 95.8 Bus monitors must ensure that students under the age of 11 are handed over directly to a parent, guardian or parent-appointed responsible adult at the drop-off location.
- 95.9 If no authorized adult is present at the drop-off location, the bus supervisor must return the student to the school after completing the remaining drop-offs.
- 95.10 The bus supervisor must inform the transport coordinator if a parent-appointed responsible adult is not present at the drop off location.
- 95.11 Schools must ensure that adequate staff supervision is available for up to 90 minutes after the school day ends, for those students who return to school or have not been collected.
- 95.12 Schools must activate their Critical Incident Response Plan if a child is not collected within 90 minutes after the school day ends.

96 Dismissal Procedure for Cycle 3 Students

- 96.1 Cycle 3 students are permitted to leave school campus unaccompanied at the end of the school day using non-school bus transportation.
- 96.2 The school must obtain signed parental consent authorizing the student to arrive at and depart from school unaccompanied.
- 96.3 In such cases, schools must establish a system to record and notify parents of the student arrival and departure time.

97 Picking up younger siblings

- 97.1 Elder siblings, 15 years or above, are permitted to pick up younger siblings, Grade 1 and above, in place of a parent-appointed responsible adult.
- 97.2 In such cases, the school must obtain a signed consent from the parent confirming –
 - a. Parent(s) recognize that the elder sibling's maturity level is deemed sufficient for them to provide consent.
 - b. Parent(s) have explained the responsibility to the elder sibling and that the latter is aware of what it entails.
 - c. Schools shall not be liable in case of any incidents resulting.

98 Communication of Dismissal Procedure

- 98.1 Schools must inform parents of the approved drop-off and pick-up timings in alignment with school hours.
- 98.2 Schools must inform parents about the requirements and process for obtaining a parent lanyard for student pickup.
- 98.3 The school must communicate the parental responsibilities for using non-school bus transportation.
- 98.4 Schools must ensure parents are aware of their responsibilities before and after the school hours for both car riders and bus riders.
- 98.5 The school must communicate the approved traffic management plan to parents.
- 98.6 The school and bus monitor must inform parents of any delays in the school bus during drop-off time.

Licensing and permits

Drivers

- 102. No contracted service provider may employ or use any person as school bus driver unless he is holder of a "school bus driver" permit issued by the Department of Transport, provided that the contracted service provider applies to the Department of Transport fulfilling all the following conditions:

- 102.1. The driver must be at least 25 years of age.
- 102.2. The driver must hold a UAE driver's license for at least one year before submitting the application.
- 102.3. The driver must provide a certificate of good conduct issued by the General Department of Abu Dhabi Police for local hires or from the Country of Hire for international hires, provided that the certificate is issued at least one month before the date of submission of the application and is duly attested.
- 102.4. The driver must have a good knowledge of Arabic or English.
- 102.5. The driver must complete the training prescribed by the Department of Transport for school bus drivers.
- 102.6. The driver must submit copy of his passport with residence page and the Emirates ID.
- 102.7. The driver must submit a record of all traffic violations charged against the driver in the Unified Traffic System.
- 102.8. The driver must submit medical report every two years stating that he is free of the following diseases:
 - 94.8.1. Disability.
 - 94.8.2. Heart, diabetes, and hypertension.
 - 94.8.3. Epilepsy, mental and psychiatric illnesses, and neurological diseases.
 - 94.8.4. Liver diseases and hepatitis.
 - 94.8.5. Leprosy.
 - 94.8.6. Eye diseases, disorders of visual acuity and hearing impairment.

94.8.7. Drug and alcohol abuse.

94.8.8. AIDS

94.8.9. The driver must undergo a medical examination upon his return from each vacation.

103. To renew the school bus driver permit, the contracted service provider shall submit a renewal application accompanied with:

103.10. The previous permit.

103.11. The record of all traffic violations charged against the driver in the Unified Traffic System for the previous year.

103.12. Copy of any updated document (driver's license, passport, residence, ID card).

Bus Supervisors

104. No contracted service provider may employ or use any person to work as school bus supervisor unless he/she is a holder of a "school bus supervisor" permit from the Department of Transport after the completion of the training prescribed by the Department of Transport for school bus supervisors. To obtain such permit, the contracted service provider shall apply to the Department of Transport fulfilling all the established conditions.

Validity of Permits

105. School bus driver and supervisor permits issued by the Department of Transport shall be valid for one year, renewable upon any conditions as the Department of Transport deems proper at the time of renewal.
106. The permit may be suspended or cancelled in respect of any driver or supervisor if he/she becomes unfit or otherwise commits any serious offence at the discretion of the Department of Transport, including his/her indictment of a crime against honour or honesty or condemnation of driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics.

General Considerations

107. All schools must provide the school transport service for their students, whether directly or through any external operator appointed by them.
108. School transport service may not be operated within the Emirate unless by operators duly licensed by the Department of Transport to provide such service.
109. The contracted service provider shall use buses which meet standards approved by Department of Transport. The Department of Transport may amend such standards according to the safety, security and service quality requirements.

Definitions

- **Emirate** – The Emirate of Abu Dhabi
- **Concerned Entity** – The Entity responsible for licensing the operators, vehicles drivers and supervisors, each according to its respective competence, as may be agreed by the Department of Transport and such authority.
- **School Bus** – Each bus exclusively designed for student transportation.
- **School Transport Service** – The Student transportation from/to school by the school bus, whether at cost or on gratuitous basis.
- **School** – Any educational establishment up to the twelfth grade or its equivalent, including nurseries.

- **Contracted Service Provider** – Any entity licensed by the Department of Transport to provide school transport service, whether it be the school itself or an external operator appointed by it.
- **Permit** – The Permit issued by the Department for the provision of school transport service.
- **License** – The License issued by the Department of Economic Development for the conduct of school transport activity according to the established procedures.
- **Bus Supervisor:** The employee appointed by the School/Operator to supervise the students in the bus and for whom a permit is issued by the Concerned Authorities.
- **Student:** The student who takes the bus, whether he/she is inside the bus or is waiting for it.
- **Uniform:** The official uniform approved by the Department for drivers and supervisors.

Associated Guidance

1. ITC – Publications - School Transport Executive Regulations
2. Appendix – Service Provider Conformity Checklist
3. Traffic Management Plan (FRM-OP-OR-0008)
4. ADEK Transportation Policy, September 2024, v1.1
5. ADEK School Safeguarding Policy, January 2025, v1,2
6. ADEK Coeducation Policy, September 2024, v1.1

Appendix – Service Provider Conformity Checklist

S. No	Document
1	A copy of the school contract with the operator. (Signed and stamped)
2	A list of buses and available seats.
3	A copy of the bus attendants' names and their distribution among the buses
4	A copy of bus attendants QCC.
5	A list of the bus attendants and their details. (Name, nationality, mobile number etc.).
6	A list of students below 11 years old and their bus numbers.
7	A list of contact numbers of parents with the Assigned people receiving students.
8	A list of parent contact numbers provided to bus attendants.
9	A list of the shifts of the returned student's reception.
10	A list of contact numbers of parents with the operators.
11	A copy of ADEK approval for the school transportation fees.
12	A copy of the parents undertaking. (Signed and stamped)
13	A copy of the commercial license of the operator that mentions school transportation activity in it.
14	A list of all buses provided to the school with the serial number of the Department of Transport.
15	A copy of the School Bus permit from the Department of Transport.
16	A copy of bus registration
17	A list of the bus drivers and their details. (Name, nationality, mobile number etc.).
18	A copy of the drivers DOT permits. (valid)
19	A copy of the drivers training certificates.
20	A copy of the list, plan or schedule of buses' route and destination for pickup and drop-off.
21	A copy of the accident records.
22	A copy of the complaint's records.
23	A copy of the maintenance records.
24	A copy of the periodic security and safety inspection records.
25	A copy of the map where buses are parked
26	A copy of the list of students with special needs. (If any)
27	A list of the ages of the students under the age of 4 years and mentioning the bus numbers. (If any)
28	A copy of the list of the number of nursery students who are using the school transportation. (If any)
29	A copy of the official certificates by Abu Dhabi Quality Council of the drivers.
30	A copy of the distributed lists to the drivers with the phone numbers of the assigned coordinators.
31	A copy of the list of students over the age of 12 years and their bus numbers.
32	Copy of internal training courses (workshops) for drivers and supervisors by the operator.
33	A photo of the uniform of drivers and supervisors.
34	A list of every bus that has a route plan and a timeline.
35	Copy of Risk Assessment
36	Copy of EID (bus driver, bus assistants & bus supervisor)
37	Copy of passport (bus driver, bus assistants & bus supervisor)
38	Copy of Police clearance (bus driver, bus assistants & bus supervisor)
39	Copy of NCR Issued
40	Copy of Monthly reports from the Operator
41	Copies of Operators policies & procedures

Note: The above list can be curated as per local needs and can have additional documents depending on contract type and updated guidance from relevant authority channels.