

Health & Safety Policy

Date of Issue: 12 August 2025
Next Review: 11 August 2026
Policy Owner: GEMS Winchester School L.L.C – Abu Dhabi

School Health & Safety Policy

GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy environment for all staff, students, and visitors that aligns with ADEK's Health and Safety Policy and requirements, and all other applicable legal and regulatory requirements. The School Principal and Governing Board hold ultimate accountability for health and safety across the school, and they also share the responsibility for ensuring appropriate healthcare services are available to meet the needs of students.

Policy Requirements

The school has developed and implemented this comprehensive Health and Safety Policy, which will remain accessible on the school website in both Arabic and English. This policy sets out the key principles and expectations for managing health and safety, forming the foundation for a consistent and proactive approach across all school operations. The policy outlines the following:

1. The responsibility of the Principal and the Governing Board for ensuring the health and safety of all school operations and school-related activities, both on and off site.
2. The roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community, including students, staff, health and safety officers, contractors, subcontractors, relevant stakeholders, and visitors, in relation to health and safety.
3. The procedures for ensuring the health and safety of school and extracurricular activities, including those that take place off-campus.
4. The resources and processes in place to ensure a healthy, safe, and secure school environment including promoting a culture of responsibility and accountability.
5. The provisions for educating students and training staff on health and safety.
6. The procedures for preventing injuries and ill health.
7. The provision for risk assessments, maintenance of a risk register, implementation of appropriate control measures, and continuous monitoring and reviewing of health and safety systems.

Regulatory Compliance

1. GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi ensures that its Health and Safety Policy complies with the policies, procedures, regulations, frameworks, compliance checklists, circulars, and special instructions and their amendments issued and supervised by ADEK, ADPHC/DoH, Abu Dhabi Civil Defence Authority (CDA), and any other relevant UAE authority regarding school activities, operations, buildings, facilities, and equipment used. This includes:
 - a. Submission of periodic reports, audits, and action plans.
 - b. Submission of relevant forms, including incident reports and management systems.
 - c. Compliance within given timeframes.
 - d. Displaying the Health and Safety Policy in prominent locations throughout the school (main reception areas) ensuring it is readily accessible to all stakeholders, including staff, students, visitors, etc. Additionally, a digital copy will be available for staff via the staff shared folders.
2. GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi meets all requirements for obtaining necessary licenses and permits and maintain valid contracts to conduct its operations from ADEK, ADPHC/DoH, Department of Municipalities and Transport (DMT), Integrated Transport Centre (ITC), Monitoring & Control Center (MCC), ADCDA, the Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority (ADAFSA), and any other relevant government or regulatory entity regulating areas related to health and safety.

3. The school maintains inspection records, observations, and notifications issued by relevant authorities, in line with the ADEK School Records Policy and meets all applicable compliance requirements.
4. GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi ensures that every digital incident is recorded, documented, and signed by the Principal, and stored for auditing purposes, in line with the ADEK School Digital Policy and the ADEK School Records Policy.
5. The school adheres to all school transportation and traffic management procedures, including maintaining school bus inspection records and acquiring relevant licenses and permits for school buses, bus drivers, and bus supervisors, in line with the ADEK School Transportation Policy.

Health and Safety Officer and Resources

GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi has set aside adequate resources (eg. financial resources, necessary infrastructure etc) to appropriately implement this policy.

1. GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi has appointed the Manager of School Operations (MSO) as the Health and Safety Officer to effectively implement, oversee, manage, and monitor the school's Health and Safety Policy. Despite this being an operation-wide role, as the Health and Safety Officer, they ensure that health and safety remains their primary focus.
2. The Health and Safety Officer remains on school premises during the school day, and a deputy is assigned by the members of the Health and Safety Committee to cover short leave periods.
3. GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi Health and Safety Officer is adequately trained to implement the Health and Safety Policy and meets the minimum requirements outlined in ADEK Health and Safety Policy. That is, they are NEBOSH qualified, proficient with incident and investigation reporting, meet all requirements of the Abu Dhabi Occupational Safety and Health System Framework (ADOSH-SF V4.0), ADPHC/DoH and Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council (QCC).
4. The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring compliance with ADPHC risk classification, requirements, and documentation. They will:
 - a. Implement the GEMS Education health and safety management system (including all policies and procedures), which meets ADPHC's compliance requirements, and fulfil the periodic submission requirements of ADPHC/DoH and other relevant authorities, based on the school's risk classification.
 - b. Reporting of incidents using the Al Adaa online system.
 - c. Establish a clearly defined leadership structure for health and safety within the school, including delegation mechanisms and linkages with external stakeholder requirements.
 - d. Ensure relevant staff training including appropriate handover and induction training for new employees and contractors.
 - e. Carry out hazard identification and risk assessment activities and implement control measures to ensure risk mitigation in critical areas (eg. school bus services, parent pick-up and drop-off, traffic management etc).
 - f. Develop, maintain, and periodically update the school's Emergency Response Plan and Fire Evacuation Plan.
 - g. Establish a School Health and Safety Committee to handle all related matters.
 - h. Maintain records of incidents and incident investigations on GEMS HSE Guard system, and report via ADEK and ADPHC electronic OSH reporting system on a timely basis.
 - i. Liaise with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), in line with the GEMS Safeguarding Policy and ADEK School Safeguarding Policy, to maintain sufficient supervision and monitoring of students, with full visual coverage, to safeguard against and tend to incidents.

Education and Training

Student Education

GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi educates students on health and safety, including teaching road safety, risk management, fire safety, using personal protection equipment, emergency and evacuation procedures, basic first aid training, and personal physical awareness.

Staff Training

1. GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi ensures that all staff receive training to equip them with the foundational knowledge (including reporting hazardous and health and safety-related incidents) and practical skills to ensure student health and safety, in line with the ADPHC/DoH and ADOSH-SF V 4.0 guidelines.
2. This training includes but is not limited to procedures for ensuring student safety in cases of emergency on campus or during school-related activities (eg. fire or security incidents), in line with the ADEK School Safeguarding Policy.
3. The type and level of health and safety-related training (eg. first aid, fire safety) that staff require is based on the school's own risk assessment and as per Abu Dhabi and UAE regulations, where applicable.

Health and Safety Requirements

As well as this School Health and Safety Policy, GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi also implements the GEMS Education Health, Safety and Environment Management System (HSE-MS) – a structured framework of policies, procedures, and supporting documents that enable the school to effectively manage risks, ensure compliance and, importantly, promotes a culture of health and safety awareness and competence.

General Health and Safety Measures

GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi ensures that:

1. Procedures relating to the secure storage and safe use of potentially dangerous substances and equipment (eg. laboratory chemicals and equipment, biological materials, cleaning substances, workshop tools, and maintenance equipment) are meticulously followed, as per ADCDA, ADPHC/DoH, ADAFSA, and any other relevant government or regulatory authority.
2. All equipment used in the school is regularly tested and maintained in safe working condition, in line with regulatory requirements and manufacturer recommendations.
3. Regular safety assessments are carried out (eg. fire safety systems/equipment, emergency evacuation plans, emergency lighting, emergency response equipment) by a competent facilities management provider, as required by ADEK, ADPHC/DoH, and other relevant authorities.
4. The school is equipped with fully functioning and effective security systems to prevent and detect crime, vandalism, unlawful behavior, and inappropriate conduct. Surveillance provisions are in line with the ADEK School Digital Policy and the Manual of Standards for Surveillance Devices (ADMCC V 2.0, 2023).
5. The school is equipped with fully functioning and effective fixed and portable protection systems for fire prevention and detection, as outlined below in the 'Fire Protection' section.

Smoke-free Campus

GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi maintains a smoke-free environment, within the school premises and in the perimeter outside the school premises as defined by ADPHC/DoH, by enforcing a strict no-smoking policy (e-cigarettes/vaping included) for all students, staff, and visitors.

Fire Protection

GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi ensures its premises are equipped with integrated and effective systems, both fixed and mobile, for fire protection and detection, including fire detection systems, fire suppression systems.

1. The school ensures that these systems are fully compliant with the specifications set out by the ADCDA and have obtained the necessary valid licenses for such systems.
2. GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi maintains inspection records and notifications relating to fire protection and detection systems, in line with the ADEK School Records Policy.
3. The school has installed the HASSANTUK system, as directed by the ADCDA to ensure timely response to fire and life safety emergencies.

Emergency Planning

GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi prioritizes student safety in cases of emergency.

1. The Principal is responsible for creating and maintaining the School's **Emergency Response Plan**, which outlines the circumstances that define an emergency and the corresponding response and evacuation procedures to be followed.
2. GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi conducts **fire evacuation drills** on a termly basis, and a lockdown drill annually, to ensure preparedness for emergencies and to identify potential areas for improvement. Observations from these drills are documented and maintained.
3. The school has a **notification system** in place to quickly communicate information to parents (eg. text message system, parent portal, or mobile apps) in the event of an emergency.

Weight Limits of School Bags

A student's school bag shall not exceed 5-10% of their body weight when packed (considering individual factors such as the student's overall health, physical strength, and any existing health conditions). This helps prevent adverse effects on the students' spine or body. GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi ensures compliance with the maximum weight limits for students' school bags, as outlined in the table below from ADEK School Health and Safety Policy, and this is communicated to parents.

Grade / Year	Maximum Backpack Weight
KG1 / FS2	Not exceed 2 kgs
KG2 / Year 1	
Gr 1 / Year 2	
Gr 2 / Year 3	
Gr 3 / Year 4	Not exceed 3 to 4.5 kgs
Gr 4 / Year 5	
Gr 5 / Year 6	
Gr 6 / Year 7	Not exceed 6 to 8 kgs
Gr 7 / Year 8	
Gr 8 / Year 9	
Gr 9 / Year 10	Not exceed 10 kgs
Gr 10 / Year 11	
Gr 11 / Year 12	
Gr 12 / Year 13	

Health and Safety-Related Mental Health Support

GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi provides students and staff with mental health support following any serious whole-school emergency situations, in line with the ADEK School Student Mental Health Policy and the ADEK School Staff Wellbeing Policy.

Health System

GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi provides medical services in compliance with the ADEK Health and Safety Policy.

School Clinics: The school has established and maintains a clinic on the school's premises to provide healthcare services to students, in line with DoH requirements and standards. The school holds a valid DoH healthcare facility license to operate the clinic.

School Nurse, GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi employs full-time school nurses with valid DoH healthcare professional licenses, in line with DoH requirements and the ADEK School Coeducation Policy. The nurses meet the professional qualifications requirements and performance criteria set by DoH, and strictly adhere to all DoH standards regulating the administration of medication in the school.

Administering of Medication: The school ensures that medication is administered (including the handling of accidents and medical emergencies such as anaphylaxis and seizures) as per DoH requirements and with a completed parental consent form that is renewed each term or whenever there is a change in student's medication.

Inclusion: GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi provides individual healthcare plans for students with additional learning needs, where appropriate, in line with the ADEK School Inclusion Policy.

Health Screening: The school ensures that regular basic and comprehensive health screening is conducted in compliance with DoH requirements.

Immunization: GEMS Winchester School Abu Dhabi facilitates access to DoH-appointed health providers and supports their efforts of conducting the school-based immunization program for students as per DoH's guidelines.

Student Records: The school ensures that all medical care provided at school, including any medication administered, health screening, immunization, and the outcomes of any medical interventions, are recorded in the student's medical record while maintaining confidentiality in line with the ADEK School Records Policy.

References

Internal	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none">School Emergency Response PlanSchool Fire Evacuation PlanGEMS Health and Safety PolicyGEMS HSE Roles and Responsibilities PolicyGEMS HSE Legal Requirements PolicyGEMS HSE Document & Record Control PolicyGEMS HSE Risk Management PolicyGEMS Crisis Management PlanGEMS Safeguarding Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">UAE Federal Law No. 8 of 1980 (Labour Law), Article 91ISO 45001:2018 – OHS Management SystemsADEK Health and Safety PolicyADEK School Digital PolicyADEK School Records PolicyADEK School Transportation PolicyADEK School Student Mental Health PolicyADEK School Staff Wellbeing PolicyADEK Coeducation PolicyADEK Inclusion PolicyADEK Safeguarding Policy