

NATIONAL IDENTITY POLICY

Introduced	June 2023
Review 1	January 2024
Review 2	July 2026 — restructured and aligned to ADEK's National Identity Policy and UAE School Inspection Standard 4.2
Next review	July 2028, or earlier upon guidance from ADEK regulations

1. DEFINITION

Dunes International School recognizes the critical importance of preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage and national identity of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This policy aligns with the initiatives of the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) in fostering a strong sense of national pride and identity among students and staff.

National Identity is understood as the understanding, appreciation, and practice of the values, culture, heritage, traditions, history, achievements, and aspirations of the UAE. At Dunes International School, National Identity enables every learner, irrespective of nationality, to develop a strong sense of belonging to the UAE while demonstrating respect, responsibility, tolerance, compassion, and active citizenship.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

This policy ensures UAE National Identity is embedded across every aspect of school life — curriculum, teaching and learning, leadership, student experience, school environment, and community partnerships — in alignment with ADEK's National Identity Policy and UAE School Inspection Standard 4.2 (Curriculum Adaptation), Element 4.2.3 – Links with Emirati Culture and UAE Society. It supports students in developing pride in the UAE, appreciation of Emirati culture, and the knowledge, skills, and values required to become responsible local and global citizens.

Specific objectives are to:

- Foster a deep appreciation and understanding of UAE culture, heritage, and national identity among students and staff.
- Align educational practices with ADEK's national identity initiatives.
- Integrate UAE cultural elements seamlessly into the curriculum to enhance the learning experience.

Scope

This policy applies to all students, teaching staff, administrative staff, and other stakeholders within the Dunes International School community.

3. NATIONAL IDENTITY STRATEGY

Educational Approach

Dunes International School adopts a holistic, values-based, student-centred educational approach in which National Identity is integrated into everyday learning rather than taught as an isolated topic. Through inquiry-based, project-based, experiential, and collaborative learning, students explore the history, culture, heritage, language, environment, innovation, and future vision of the United Arab Emirates. As a diverse international school, Dunes is committed to ensuring every learner understands, respects, and values the UAE as their home, and contributes positively to its multicultural society.

Motto

“Innovate and Excel”

Vision

Dunes International School's vision is to grow a community of learners who innovate and excel — thinking critically and creatively, collaborating effectively, and communicating with confidence — as they develop into resilient, globally minded citizens. National Identity is a core expression of this vision: students who understand and value the UAE are better equipped to become the engaged, responsible citizens the school's vision describes.

Mission

The school's mission is built around five commitments, reflected in the acronym DUNES:

- Deepen students' understanding of what it means to be a resilient global citizen.
- Continually widen learning opportunities so every learner can reach their potential.
- Nurture each learner to become a positive role model for others in a fast-changing, complex society.
- Empower students to embrace multicultural traditions and values.
- Build the skills learners need to thrive in a rapidly evolving digital world.

National Identity work directly supports this mission: understanding and embracing UAE culture and values is itself part of embracing multicultural traditions, and appreciating the UAE's history of innovation reinforces the school's own “Innovate and Excel” ethos.

Core Values

National Identity is embedded within the school's four core values:

- Reflective Learning — reflection is central to how students grow and understand their place in the world, including their relationship with the UAE.
- Proactive Innovation — students are encouraged to engage with the UAE's own culture of innovation and forward planning.
- Passion for Excellence — students pursue excellence in understanding and representing Emirati culture and heritage, not only academic subjects.
- Global Citizenship — students learn to be engaged citizens of the UAE first, as the foundation for engaged global citizenship.

These values are reinforced by the school's broader goal of promoting positive attitudes towards others regardless of background, race, gender, or religion — a goal that aligns directly with the tolerance and inclusion at the heart of UAE National Identity.

4. POLICY: CULTURE, VALUES, AND CITIZENSHIP IN PRACTICE

4.1 Leadership and Governance

- Promote National Identity as a whole-school priority, embedded within the School Development Plan.
- Monitor implementation through lesson observations, work sampling, learning walks, and self-evaluation.
- Ensure appropriate resources are allocated to support implementation.
- Review impact through school self-evaluation processes.

4.2 Curriculum and Learning

National Identity is integrated across all curriculum areas (MoE and non-MoE) through authentic, meaningful learning experiences, in line with the KG MoE Subjects Policy, Curriculum Policy, and Staff Eligibility Policy. Teachers incorporate:

- UAE history, geography, and heritage.
- Emirati customs and traditions.
- Arabic language appreciation.
- UAE innovation, sustainability, and future vision.
- Islamic values of respect, compassion, and tolerance.
- Cross-curricular and project-based/inquiry-based learning connected to local contexts.
- UAE National Identity themes within assessments, discussions, and student reflection.
- Arabic Language
- Develop and integrate a comprehensive Arabic language curriculum across all grade levels.
- Implement language proficiency programs and language immersion experiences.

- Emphasize the cultural and historical significance of the Arabic language in the UAE.
- Provide diverse learning resources that cater to students of different linguistic backgrounds.

History

- Design and implement a curriculum that thoroughly covers key aspects of the UAE's history.
- Utilize interactive and engaging teaching methods, such as field trips and guest speakers.
- Encourage critical thinking by presenting historical events from multiple perspectives.
- Relate historical events to current issues, demonstrating their ongoing significance.
- Organize events and celebrations that highlight significant cultural milestones, historical achievements, and traditional festivals, fostering a sense of pride and identity among students.
- Heritage
- Educate students about the importance of preserving and passing down cultural practices, ensuring a connection to their roots.
- Invite local historians, cultural experts, and community leaders to share their knowledge and experiences.
- Offer extracurricular activities centred on heritage, such as traditional arts, crafts, and performances.

School libraries shall maintain an adequate, age-appropriate collection of books, digital media, and resources supporting National Identity, in line with the ADEK National Identity Libraries and Resources Guide.

4.3 School Culture and Values

The school promotes UAE National Identity through its environment and daily practices by:

- Observing UAE flag raising and the National Anthem during assemblies.
- Displaying the UAE flag and official portraits in line with UAE guidelines.
- Bilingual displays, signage, and National Identity learning walls.
- Arabic greetings and cultural appreciation during assemblies and school events.
- Daily routines that promote responsibility, respect, kindness, and belonging.
- Break timings aligned and adapted to give students reasonable opportunities to pray during the school day.

The school celebrates Eid Al Etihad and Flag Day through school-wide events, with parents invited to attend, and observes all official UAE public holidays. Working school days are not scheduled on public holidays without prior ADEK approval, in line with the Calendar and Public Holidays Policy.

Respect

- Foster an inclusive and respectful school environment where students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds feel valued and heard.
- Incorporate cultural sensitivity education to enhance understanding and appreciation for different customs, traditions, and perspectives.
- Promote respectful communication through dialogue, active listening, and empathy.
- Encourage educators and staff to serve as positive role models, demonstrating respect in their interactions with one another and with students.
- Compassion
- Incorporate empathy education to cultivate compassion and understanding among students.
- Engage students in community service initiatives that promote compassion and a sense of social responsibility.
- Establish peer support programs that encourage students to support one another emotionally.
- Introduce practices to help students develop self-awareness and emotional regulation.
- Global Understanding
- Infuse global perspectives into various subjects to broaden students' worldviews.
- Facilitate cross-cultural exchanges and collaborations with different schools.
- Connect global understanding lessons to real-world scenarios, demonstrating the UAE's role on the international stage.

4.4 Student Development and Belonging

Students are provided opportunities to:

- Respect UAE culture and traditions, and demonstrate responsible citizenship.
- Participate actively in National Identity initiatives.
- Develop leadership through school councils, the Heritage Club, and service activities.
- Participate in environmental sustainability programmes.
- Engage in volunteering and community service.
- Develop responsible citizenship through school programs.
- Participate in experiential learning linked to UAE heritage and society.

Belonging

- Support students in developing strong connections with their peers and teachers to promote a sense of belonging and shared responsibility.
- Encourage collaborative class projects fostering a sense of unity and belonging.
- Organize regular cultural events celebrating the diversity within the school community.
- Create opportunities for students to engage in meaningful community experiences that contribute to their sense of belonging.

Participation in values-based daily habits is encouraged solely through positive reinforcement; no disciplinary measures are applied for non-participation. The school maintains an open majlis for dialogue and student exchange, fostering appreciation of Emirati heritage, mutual respect, and belonging.

4.5 Experiential Learning

Students engage in UAE-linked experiential learning including:

- Cultural workshops, heritage activities, and guest speakers.
- Community engagement and service learning.
- Educational trips aligned with the UAE context.
- A minimum of one visit to the Zayed National Museum during schooling (once per student).

4.6 Parent and Community Engagement

- Invite parents to National Identity events and celebrations.
- Promote volunteering opportunities and organize cultural events.
- Encourage home support for Arabic language and UAE cultural appreciation.
- Promote collaborative cultural understanding initiatives.

4.7 Volunteering, Citizenship, and Conservation

Students in all cycles complete minimum annual volunteering hours, and are encouraged to participate in supervised volunteering opportunities:

- KG & Cycle 1: minimum 5 hours annually.
- Cycle 2 & 3: minimum 10 hours annually.

All volunteering is age-appropriate, supervised, and in line with safeguarding requirements. Partnerships are established with local community organizations to create volunteering opportunities that are diverse, meaningful, and aligned with students' interests and abilities, both within and outside the school community. The school additionally facilitates at least one annual community service initiative linked to UAE National Identity, upon ADEK approval, engaging students, staff, and parents.

Conservation

- Integrate environmental conservation topics into the curriculum across subjects.
- Implement practical initiatives such as school-wide recycling programs or sustainable energy projects.
- Conduct educational campaigns to raise awareness about environmental issues and conservation.
- Collaborate with local authorities and environmental organizations to align initiatives with broader sustainability goals.

4.8 Staffing and Professional Practice

- Teachers delivering UAE Social Studies meet required standards.
- UAE National Identity is integrated across teaching practices.
- Professional development is offered to relevant staff (as applicable under exemption conditions).
- Staff attend and actively participate in training sessions, workshops, or seminars focused on cultural education and sensitivity, continuously seeking professional development opportunities to effectively implement National Identity in teaching.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

School Leadership (Principal)

- Lead implementation of the National Identity Strategy and monitor compliance with ADEK requirements.
- Review the impact of National Identity initiatives and support continuous improvement.
- Oversee the analysis of data related to cultural programs, actively participating in identifying trends and areas for improvement.
- Advocate for the importance of cultural integration within the school community, aligning with the school's mission and values.
- Allocate resources to support the effective implementation of cultural initiatives and programs.
- Advocate for policies that empower students and ensure their voices are heard in shaping the school's cultural environment.
- Build partnerships with local organizations to enhance cultural initiatives and provide additional opportunities for students.
- Regularly communicate with teachers and middle leaders to gather feedback and address concerns related to cultural integration.
- Stay updated on the latest research, trends, and best practices in cultural education, contributing to informed decision-making.

Middle Leaders (Monitoring and Reporting)

- Regularly monitor the progress of cultural initiatives and curriculum integration, ensuring alignment with the school's goals.
- Collaborate closely with teachers and staff to ensure continuous monitoring of cultural initiatives and curriculum integration.
- Foster critical thinking among students by supporting history teachers in presenting events from multiple perspectives.
- Exemplify positive role modelling in interactions with both staff and students.

- Promote and incorporate empathy education initiatives in collaboration with fellow educators.
- Develop and implement data collection methods to systematically track the success of cultural programs, analysing findings to identify trends and areas for improvement.
- Present findings and recommendations to the Principal and other relevant stakeholders, contributing to informed decision-making.

Teachers

- Integrate National Identity across all subjects and deliver culturally responsive lessons.
- Promote UAE values through daily classroom practice and encourage active student participation.
- Provide meaningful learning experiences linked to the UAE.
- Develop and implement strategies for seamlessly integrating UAE culture into lesson plans across all subjects.
- Facilitate cross-cultural exchanges and collaborations with different schools.
- Share best practices and innovative ideas for effective cultural integration in teaching.
- Attend training sessions, workshops, or seminars focused on cultural education and sensitivity, and continuously seek professional development.
- Foster a welcoming and inclusive classroom environment that values and celebrates UAE culture, creating a space where students feel comfortable expressing their cultural identities.

Students

- Respect the UAE, its leadership, culture, and traditions.
- Demonstrate the school's core values.
- Participate enthusiastically in National Identity programmes.
- Care for the environment and contribute positively to the school community.

Parents

- Support National Identity learning at home and participate in school celebrations.
- Reinforce UAE values and encourage appreciation of Arabic language and Emirati culture.
- Partner with the school in community initiatives.

6. MONITORING AND REVIEW

Implementation of this policy is evaluated through:

- Curriculum planning reviews, lesson observations, and learning walks.
- Student work sampling, displays, and learning environments.
- Student voice and parent feedback.
- Participation in National Identity events.

- School self-evaluation and ADEK inspection evidence.
- Feedback collected from students, parents, and staff regarding the effectiveness of cultural initiatives.
- Monitoring of the inclusion of UAE cultural elements in classroom materials and resources.
- Evaluation of the success of initiatives in promoting cross-cultural understanding and respect, and overall stakeholder satisfaction.

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier in response to changes in ADEK regulations

Amendments:

Prepared By	Date
National Identity Coordinator	June 2023

Review 1 — January 2024	No changes
Review 2 — July 2026	Fully restructured and reissued as the National Identity Policy; realigned to ADEK's National Identity Policy and UAE School Inspection Standard 4.2; applicability note added regarding current enrolment profile.

Approved By	Signature
Mr. Paramjit Ahluwalia Principal	

