PROMOTING A SAFE, HEALTHY AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE

Indian School, Al Ain is committed to providing a safe, healthy and supportive learning environment that protects students from the risks and harmful effects of drug and substance abuse. This policy establishes the school's approach to prevention, awareness, early identification, reporting, response and student support.

The policy is intended to promote informed decision-making, healthy lifestyles, personal responsibility and the wellbeing of every student.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- Prevent the use, possession, promotion, sharing or distribution of prohibited substances within the school environment and during school-related activities.
- Provide age-appropriate education about the risks and consequences of substance use, misuse, abuse and addiction.
- Help students recognise unsafe situations and seek assistance from trusted adults.
- Ensure that concerns are reported, assessed and addressed promptly and confidentially.
- Provide appropriate counselling, referral and follow-up support to students who may be at risk or affected.
- Engage parents, staff and relevant authorities in prevention and safeguarding.

3. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This policy applies to all students, employees, parents, visitors, volunteers and other members of the school community. It applies on school premises, on school transport, during school trips, events, competitions and any activity organised or supervised by the school.

The policy must be read together with the school's Student Behavior Policy, Student Protection Policy, Safeguarding procedures, Health and Safety procedures and relevant ADEK requirements.

4. DEFINITIONS

Prohibited substances: Alcohol, narcotics, illegal drugs, intoxicating or stimulant substances, psychotropic substances and any other substances prohibited by applicable UAE laws or school rules.

Misuse of medication: Using prescription or non-prescription medication other than as directed, taking another person's medication, or sharing medication without proper authorisation.

Substance abuse: The harmful or unsafe use of alcohol, drugs, medication or other substances, including patterns of use that may affect a person's health, safety, behaviour or wellbeing.

Possession or distribution: Having, carrying, supplying, sharing, selling, promoting or facilitating access to prohibited substances.

5. PREVENTION AND AWARENESS PROGRAMMES

The school shall implement planned, age-appropriate awareness and prevention activities to help students understand the risks of substance abuse and develop healthy decision-making skills.

- Include substance-use prevention topics in relevant lessons, wellbeing sessions, assemblies and age-appropriate awareness activities.
- Provide information on the physical, emotional, social, academic and legal consequences of substance misuse.
- Teach students how to resist peer pressure, make safe choices and seek help when they feel pressured or concerned.
- Conduct awareness sessions and campaigns in collaboration with qualified health professionals or relevant authorities, where appropriate.
- Share suitable awareness materials and guidance with parents and provide opportunities for parent engagement.
- Provide staff guidance on recognising concerns, responding appropriately and following reporting procedures.

The school shall maintain evidence of awareness activities, including annual plans, lesson materials, attendance records, presentations, photographs where appropriate, parent communications and feedback.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal / School Leadership: Ensure implementation of this policy, allocate appropriate resources, oversee serious incidents and ensure that reporting and referral requirements are followed.

Child Protection Coordinator (CPC): Coordinate safeguarding responses where a concern involves a child protection risk, follow the school's reporting procedures and liaise with relevant authorities as required.

School Social Worker / Counsellor: Provide appropriate initial support, document concerns, assess support needs within their professional role and coordinate referrals and follow-up.

Teachers and Staff: Promote prevention messages, remain alert to concerns, report suspected incidents promptly through school procedures and avoid investigating or making promises of secrecy.

School Nurse: Respond to immediate health concerns, provide first aid within professional scope, contact emergency medical services when necessary and maintain appropriate health records.

Students: Make safe choices, avoid prohibited substances, never share medication, and report concerns about their own safety or the safety of others to a trusted adult.

Parents: Discuss prevention and safe choices with their children, inform the school of relevant concerns that may affect student safety and cooperate with appropriate support and referral arrangements.

7. IDENTIFICATION AND REPORTING OF CONCERNS

A concern may arise from a disclosure, observation, report, suspected possession, suspected use, distribution or a health-related incident. Staff must respond calmly, prioritise immediate safety and report the concern promptly to the Principal or designated safeguarding lead in accordance with school procedures.

- Listen respectfully and take the concern seriously.
- Do not accuse, threaten, shame or question the student in a manner that may compromise safety or any subsequent process.
- Do not attempt to conduct an informal investigation or make conclusions about substance use.
- Record factual information, including the date, time, location, persons involved, what was observed or reported, and actions taken.
- Maintain confidentiality and share information only with authorised persons who need it to protect students and manage the concern.

The school shall follow applicable ADEK reporting requirements and UAE laws. Where required, the relevant authorities, including emergency medical services, Abu Dhabi Police, ADEK or child protection authorities, shall be contacted through the appropriate channels.

8. RESPONSE TO SUSPECTED POSSESSION, USE OR DISTRIBUTION

Where a student is suspected of possessing, using, promoting, sharing or distributing a prohibited substance, the school shall take the following steps, as appropriate to the circumstances and in accordance with applicable requirements:

1. Ensure immediate safety

Move the student and others away from any immediate danger. Do not leave a student experiencing a medical emergency unattended.

2. Obtain medical assistance when needed

If the student is unwell, unconscious, experiencing difficulty breathing or otherwise at immediate risk, contact emergency medical services and provide assistance within staff training.

3. Inform school leadership

Notify the Principal and the designated safeguarding / child protection personnel immediately.

4. Secure and preserve relevant information

Avoid handling, testing, disposing of or transferring any suspected substance. Restrict access to the area and follow instructions from the appropriate authorities.

5. Notify parents and authorities

The school leadership shall arrange parent communication and notify ADEK, Abu Dhabi Police or other competent authorities as required by law and applicable procedures. Parent notification must not delay emergency action or conflict with safeguarding directions.

6. Document the incident

Maintain a factual, confidential record of the concern, actions taken, communications, referrals and follow-up.

7. Apply school procedures fairly

Any behavioural response shall follow the ADEK Student Behavior Policy and the school's Student Behavior Policy, including age-appropriate, proportionate and fair procedures.

The school shall not conduct medical testing, searches or investigative procedures outside its legal authority and approved procedures. Any such action must be handled by authorised personnel in accordance with applicable law and directions from competent authorities.

9. STUDENT SUPPORT, COUNSELLING AND REFERRAL

A student who may be affected by substance use or exposure shall be treated with dignity and care. The school shall consider the student's immediate safety, wellbeing, age, individual circumstances and support needs.

- Provide appropriate access to the School Social Worker, Counsellor or other qualified support personnel.
- Engage parents or guardians as appropriate and in accordance with safeguarding requirements.
- Refer the student to qualified health professionals or specialist services when required.
- Develop a suitable support and follow-up plan, where appropriate, with relevant stakeholders.
- Monitor the student's wellbeing, attendance, engagement and reintegration into school routines as appropriate.

Support and counselling do not replace required reporting to competent authorities or any disciplinary process required under applicable rules.

10. MEDICATION SAFETY

- Students must not share prescription or non-prescription medication with other students.
- Medication required during school hours must be managed through the school's approved medication and health procedures, with the required parent documentation and medical instructions.
- Staff must not administer medication unless authorised and trained in accordance with school procedures.
- Any suspected misuse, unauthorised possession or sharing of medication must be reported to the designated school personnel.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORD KEEPING

All reports and records shall be handled sensitively and stored securely with access restricted to authorised personnel. Information shall be shared only where necessary for student protection, investigation, support or compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. The school shall maintain incident and referral records in accordance with its records management procedures and applicable ADEK requirements.

12. COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING

- The policy shall be communicated to staff and made available to parents and students in an appropriate format.
- Staff shall receive guidance on prevention, indicators of concern, immediate response and reporting responsibilities.
- Students shall receive age-appropriate awareness through assemblies, lessons, wellbeing activities and campaigns.
- Parents shall be provided with relevant information and encouraged to discuss safe choices and prevention with their children.

13. MONITORING, REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE

The school leadership shall monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy through review of awareness activities, training records, incident reports, referrals and feedback, while maintaining confidentiality.

This policy shall be reviewed at least annually, and earlier if required by changes in ADEK requirements, UAE legislation or school procedures. Any amendments shall be communicated to relevant stakeholders.

14. DOCUMENT CONTROL AND APPROVAL

Policy Owner	Principal / School Leadership
Approved by	Principal
Approval Date	01-09-2026
Next Review	30-03-2027 or (Any amendment from ADEK policy)

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- ADEK School Student Behavior Policy, Version 1.3, November 2025.
- ADEK School Student Mental Health Policy, Version 1.1, September 2024.
- UAE Federal Decree-Law No. 3 of 2016 concerning child rights (Wadeema's Law), and other applicable UAE legislation.
- Indian School, Al Ain Student Protection Policy, Student Behavior Policy, Health and Safety procedures and medication procedures.