مدرسة الزهور الخاصة – Al Zuhour Private School

AL ZUHOUR PRIVATE SCHOOL

POLICY

Approved by: SLT
Last reviewed on:2025/5/30
Next review due by:2026/5/30

Purpose of the Policy

This policy is aligned with the guidelines of UAE educational authorities, including the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA). Its primary purpose is to ensure that all educational resources used at Al Zuhour Private School (AZPS) are culturally, socially, and religiously appropriate within the context of the UAE.

The policy outlines:

- A list of Sensitive Topics and Themes
- Procedures for seeking clarification
- Actions to be taken in the event of unintentional offence
- Measures to safeguard the integrity of educational materials in compliance with UAE norms and laws

Principles of the Policy

- Ensure that all learning resources are culturally, religiously, and socially sensitive to the values of the UAE.
- Establish a clear screening process for all new materials—textbooks, library resources, and digital platforms.
- Raise staff awareness about culturally sensitive topics and ensure such topics are avoided in classroom and library materials.
- Classify and separate resources by age-appropriateness when necessary.
- Label materials clearly if there is any risk of cultural or religious offence.
- Remove any resource that violates UAE educational guidelines.
- Maintain an up-to-date record of materials that have been removed due to non-compliance.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

As a school offering an international curriculum within the UAE, AZPS promotes respect, inclusivity, and cultural sensitivity, especially in relation to Islamic values and Emirati traditions.

Responsibilities:

1- School Leadership must raise awareness among all staff about this policy and its provisions.
2- The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all educational content is compliant with the *Guiding Framework for the Safety of Educational Content in Private Educational Institutions within the Emirate of Sharjah 2025*.
3- All staff are expected to uphold and implement the policy individually and collectively.
4- SLT and Middle Leaders (e.g., Subject Leaders) must take corrective action if any material is found to be non-compliant. This includes sourcing alternative content or seeking additional clarification.
5- The SLT will conduct an annual policy review, incorporating updates from SPEA or MOE.
6- All new textbooks and classroom materials must be reviewed by middle leaders, teachers, and the librarian before use.
7- All new library resources must be screened by the librarian.
8- The librarian must keep records of all removed resources and materials.
9- The IT department will apply firewall filters and block known non-compliant content or keywords, in collaboration with teaching staff.
10- If a complaint is made regarding a school resource:
   a. The principal must be informed immediately and will address the complaint personally.
   b. The complainant may be asked to complete a *Challenge of Curriculum Materials and School Resources Form* (Appendix A).
   c. The principal will consult the librarian (and relevant HOD/Curriculum Coordinator) to determine further action:
      i. Deletion of the resource
      ii. Re-categorization or re-labelling
      iii. Referral to Athena HO for further review
11- All incidents and outcomes must be documented by the responsible staff member.

UAE Guidelines on Content Compliance

Educational content must comply with the following standards: (*Guiding Framework for Educational Content in Sharjah (2025–26)*

1. Avoid imagery or representations that contradict Emirati customs or values.
2. Depictions of people must reflect modesty and cultural norms.
3. No symbols, phrases, or materials associated with LGBTQ+ themes or promotion of alternative sexual identities.
4. Prohibited acts under Sharia or UAE law must not be referenced or promoted.
5. Content must not provoke or encourage sexual behaviors or desire.
6. Avoid all profane or offensive language.
7. Reading materials must reflect Islamic principles and avoid narratives involving prohibited customs or behaviors.
8. No promotion of drugs, alcohol, gambling, or crime.
9. Avoid content offensive to religions, holy figures, or scriptures.
10. Use official UAE flag and map guidelines for any representations.
11. Political content must be developmentally appropriate and educational.
12. No mention of witchcraft, sorcery, or magic that glorifies such practices.
13. Avoid glorification of criminals or criminal behavior.
14. Ensure maps and historical content are factually correct and nationally verified.
15. Eliminate any content promoting violence or extremism.

Common Grievances to Avoid

- Rainbows: Ensure natural form with 7 colors; avoid stylized or symbolic use.
- Origin theories: Present as scientific theories, not absolute truths.
- Any reference to same-sex relationships.
- Depictions of transgender themes, including related flags/colors.
- Pigs as food or farm animals.
- Images showing knees, shoulders, or reproductive organs.
- Pictures of prophets or angels (Note: Jesus is considered a Prophet in Islam).
- Use of magic, mythical creatures, or suicide should be carefully monitored.
- Ensure photographs are modestly clothed unless part of regulated sports activity.
- Charts and case studies should be current and accurate.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all educational resources used or accessed within the AZPS community:

1. Library Resources

- The librarian must screen all new acquisitions and review existing inventory.
- A documented screening report, including top 20 circulated titles each term, will be maintained.
- An online log of deleted or flagged resources will be kept for audit and compliance.

2. Digital Resources

Includes reading platforms, assessment tools, websites, and counselling platforms.

- Teachers are responsible for monitoring digital use and guiding students regarding appropriateness.
- The IT Department will:
  - Block sensitive keywords
  - Respond to teacher requests to block inappropriate websites
- If a student accesses inappropriate material off-campus, the teacher or counsellor should:
  - Advise the student
  - Confiscate the material if necessary
  - Notify parents to remove or delete the content

3. In-Class Texts and Resources
- Teachers must pre-screen all distributed resources to ensure compliance with:
  - *Guiding Framework for Educational Content in Sharjah (2025–26)*
  - UAE Ministry of Education guidelines