Please scan the QR code below and complete the form to confirm that you have **read and understood the information provided**.

YAS
AMERICAN ACADEMY

PARENT HANDBOOK

2026 – 2027

Yas American Academy's Vision

To holistically develop confident learners with the skills, knowledge, and passion to contribute to an inclusive and more sustainable global society.

رؤية أكاديمية ياس الأمريكية

تطوير متعلمين بشكل متكامل، ليكونوا واثقين بأنفسهم وتزويدهم بالمهارات والمعرفة والشغف للمساهمة في مجتمع عالمي متنوع وشامل وأكثر استدامة.

Contents

Contents 2
Welcome to Yas American Academy 4
How to use this handbook 4
Getting in Touch: Your Guide to Contacts 4
The usual path 4
When to start further up the chain 5
Response times 5
If you need to make a formal complaint 5
Key contacts at a glance 5
The School Day 6
KG & Elementary School 7
Middle School 8
High School 8
Curriculum 9
What your child studies 9
Grades 9–12: graduation requirements 9
Choosing a pathway: General or Advanced Placement 10
Choosing and changing courses 10
Who to contact about high school courses 10
Character education 11
Assessment 11
Grades K–8: grade descriptors 11
Grades 9–12: grades and GPA 12
External assessments 12
Academic integrity 13
Attendance and Punctuality 13
Our attendance bands 13
Reporting an absence 14
Collecting your child early 14
Behavior Expectations and Support 15
How we recognize positive behavior 15
How we respond when behavior falls short 15
Serious incidents 16
Bullying 16

Mobile Phones and Devices 16
Mobile phones 16
Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) 17
Extracurricular Activities (ECA) 17
Health and Safety 18
Our clinic and nurses 18
If your child has a pre-existing medical condition 18
Fire drills and lockdowns 18
Nutrition 18
Student Protection, Safeguarding, and Wellbeing 19
Our safeguarding commitment 19
How we support wellbeing, step by step 19
Policies that sit behind this section 19
Uniform 20
Transportation 20
Drop-off and pick-up 21
Behavior on the bus 21
Admissions 22
Visiting and applying 22
Assessment for entry 22
If we are unable to offer a place 22
Accepting an offer 22
Support for students with additional needs 22
Grade placement and progression 23
Returning families: intentions for the next academic year 23
Yas American Academy Parent Agreement 24
What YAA commits to 24
What we ask of families 25
Linked ADEK Policies 26

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Welcome to Yas American Academy

A strong partnership between Yas American Academy and our families is one of the most important ingredients in a child's education. This handbook is designed to help you find your way around school life at YAA: what to expect, who to speak to, and how our policies work in practice.

Yas American Academy follows the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and offers a full Advanced Placement (AP) program, alongside the Ministry of Education subjects required of every school in the UAE. We are part of Aldar Education and regulated by the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) and NEASC.

Every family is asked to read this handbook and the Parent Agreement at the end of it, and to confirm each year that they have done so. This is an ADEK requirement, and it also gives us a shared starting point for the year ahead.

How to use this handbook

Each section is written around the questions you are most likely to have as a parent, rather than as a straight restatement of policy. Where a topic is covered in more detail in one of our full ADEK-aligned policies, we tell you where to find it. If you cannot find the answer to something here, the next section tells you exactly who to contact.

Getting in Touch: Your Guide to Contacts

Most questions and concerns are resolved quickly when they go to the right person first. This section sets out who to contact and in what order, so you are never left wondering where to start.

The usual path

For the great majority of day-to-day questions, whether about learning, behavior, friendships, or how your child is settling in, start with the person closest to your child and work upward only if the concern is not resolved.

Step	Who	When to use this step
1	Class or homeroom teacher (or subject teacher for a subject-specific question)	Your first point of contact for almost everything: day-to-day learning, homework, friendships, minor behavior concerns, and general wellbeing.
2	Head of Grade or Head of Department	If the teacher has not been able to resolve the concern, or if the matter involves more than one class or subject.
3	Phase Leads (KG, Elementary, Middle, or High School leadership)	If the concern needs a decision at a phase level or has not been resolved at Grade or Department level.
4	The relevant Head of Curriculum, Inclusion, Pastoral Care, or Assessment	For concerns specific to one of these areas, for example, additional learning support, a wellbeing or safeguarding concern, or a question about grading and reporting.
5	Head of School (KG & Elementary, or Middle & High School)	If the matter has not been resolved at the steps above or is significant enough to need senior leadership involvement.
6	School Principal	As the final step within the school, for matters that remain unresolved or that require the principal's decision.

When to start further up the chain

You do not need to start at step one every time. Some matters should go straight to a specific person because of the nature of the concern or because of a time-sensitive risk:

- Any concern about a child's safety, welfare, or possible abuse should go directly to the Assistant Principal, who is our Child Protection Officer and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Do not wait for a response at a lower step first.
- A concern about additional learning needs/ special needs or inclusion support can go directly to the Head of Inclusion.
- A concern about assessment results, reporting, or data can go directly to the Assistant Principal – Data & Assessment.
- A concern about college and career guidance can go directly to the Career and Guidance Counselor
- A formal complaint that you feel has not been properly addressed through the steps above can be raised with the School Complaints Committee, chaired by the Principal (see "If you need to make a formal complaint" below).

Response times

In line with ADEK requirements, staff aim to respond to emails and calls within 24 to 48 working hours during term time. If you need to reach the school urgently outside of school hours, please contact the school reception or our Parent Relations Officer, who can direct emergencies appropriately.

If you need to make a formal complaint

If a concern has genuinely not been resolved through the steps above, you can ask for it to be reviewed by the School Complaints Committee. Written complaints are acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt, and the Committee aims to review and respond in writing within 10 working days. If a complaint is about the Principal, the Principal steps aside from the Committee and is replaced by a member of the Governing Board. If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you have the right to raise the matter with ADEK directly.

Key contacts at a glance

The table below lists our leadership and administration contacts for 2026–27.

Name	Role	Contact
Lee Dabagia	Principal/CEO	principal@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Dalia Mouawad	Head of Middle & High School	dmouawad@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Misaal Gill	Head of KG & Elementary	mgill@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Kate Healy	Assistant Principal, KG & Elementary	khealy@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Hannah Grange	Assistant Principal, Teaching & Learning	hgrange@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Ian Power	Assistant Principal, Assessment & Data	ipower@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Cathy Young	Assistant Principal, Pastoral	cyoung@westyasacademy.sch.ae

Name	Role	Contact
Michele Bahadar	Associate Assistant Principal – MS/HS Curriculum | HS Phase Lead	mbahadar@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Saadia Alhashash	Head of MOE & National Identity	salhashash@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Suzan Al Ali	PA to Principal/CEO	pa@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Alana Nortman	Head of Department PreK to Grade 1	anorman@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Lauren Williams	Head of Department Grade 2 to Grade 5	LWilliams2@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Nicole Maalouf	Middle School Phase Lead	nmaalouf@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Kareema Ahmed	Social Worker	kahmed1@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Leila Abdrahman	School Counsellor	labdrahman@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Jacob Cooke	Head of Inclusion	jcooke@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Bernard Usana	Operations Manager	bernard.usana@aldareducation.com
Nour Al Mohamed	Registrar	registrar@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Sherin Jabour	Admissions Officer	admissions@yasamericanacademy.ae
Fadwa Qaid	Parent Relations Executive (PRE)	pre@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Nafla Alomaira	Attendance Officer	Finance@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Noreen Hassan	Finance Officer	nhassan1@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Aysha Al Yamani	MS/HS & KGE Reception	reception@yasamericanacademy.ae
Hala Hassan	Career & College Counselor	hhassan2@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Nurses	Clinic	Nurse3@westyasacademy.sch.ae

The School Day

The school day is structured slightly differently across KG & Elementary, Middle School, and High School. All students are expected in school from 7:30am, when they are registered, receive important information, and join the UAE national anthem before lessons begin.

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KG to Grade 2

Monday – Thursday	Time	Friday	Time
Arrival	7:30 – 7:40am	Arrival & Morning Meeting	7:30 – 7:45am
Morning Meeting	7:40 – 8:00am	Period 1	7:45 – 8:35am
Period 1	8:00-8:50am	Period 2	8:35 – 9:25am
Period 2	8:50-9:40am	Break	9:25 – 9:45am
Break	9:40 – 10:05am	Period 3	9:45 – 10:35am
Period 3	10:05-10:55am	Period 4	10:35 – 11:25am
Period 4	10:55-11:45am		
Lunch	11:45 – 12:20pm		
Period 5	12:20-13:10pm		
Period 6	13:10 – 14:00pm		
Period 7	14:00 – 14:50pm		
ECA	15:00 – 16:00pm		

Grade 3 to Grade 5

Monday – Thursday	Time	Friday	Time
Arrival	7:30 – 7:40am	Arrival & Morning Meeting	7:30 – 7:45am
Morning Meeting	7:40 – 8:00am	Period 1	7:45 – 8:35am
Period 1	8:00-8:50am	Period 2	8:35 – 9:25am
Period 2	8:50-9:40am	Break	9:25 – 9:45am
Break	9:40 – 10:05am	Period 3	9:45 – 10:35am
Period 3	10:05-10:55am	Period 4	10:35 – 11:25am
Period 4	10:55-11:45am		
Period 5	11:45 – 12:35pm		
Lunch	12:35-13:10pm		
Period 6	13:10 – 14:00pm		
Period 7	14:00 – 14:50pm		
ECA	15:00 – 16:00pm		

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Middle School

Monday – Thursday	Time	Friday	Time
Arrival	7:30 – 7:40am	Arrival	7:30 – 7:40am
Homeroom/Registration	7:40 – 8:00am	Homeroom/Registration	7:40 – 8:00am
Period 1	8:00 – 8:50am	Period 1	8:00 – 8:50am
Period 2	8:50 – 9:40am	Period 2	8:50 – 9:25am
Break	9:40 – 10:05am	Break	9:25 – 9:45am
Period 3	10:05 – 10:55am	Period 3	9:45 – 10:35am
Period 4	10:55 – 11:45am	Period 4	10:35 – 11:25am
Period 5	11:45 – 12:35am	Dismissal	11:25 – 11:35am
Lunch	12:35am – 1:10pm		
Period 6	1:10 – 2:00pm		
Period 7	2:00 – 2:50pm		
Dismissal	2:50 – 3:00pm		

High School

Monday – Thursday	Time	Friday	Time
Arrival	7:30 – 7:40am	Arrival	7:30 – 7:40am
Homeroom/Registration	7:40 – 8:00am	Homeroom/Registration	7:40 – 8:00am
Period 1	8:00 – 8:50am	Period 1	8:00 – 8:50am
Period 2	8:50 – 9:40am	Break	8:50 – 9:10am
Period 3	9:40 – 10:30am	Period 2	9:10 – 9:45am
Break	10:30 – 10:55am	Period 3	9:45 – 10:35am
Period 4	10:55 – 11:45am	Period 4	10:35 – 11:25am
Period 5	11:45 – 12:35am	Dismissal	11:25 – 11:35am
Periods 6	12:35am – 1:25pm		
Lunch	1:25 – 2:00pm		
Period 7	2:00 – 2:50pm		

Monday – Thursday	Time	Friday	Time
Dismissal	2:50 – 3:00pm		

Curriculum

At YAA, we teach the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, one of the most respected state curricula in the United States, from Kindergarten through Grade 12, alongside Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and, in the high school years, College Board Advanced Placement (AP) frameworks. We chose this curriculum because of its emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, and real-world problem-solving, and because it prepares students well for university and beyond, wherever in the world they go next. Alongside it, all students study Arabic, Islamic Studies, and UAE Social Studies as required by the Ministry of Education, so that they understand and appreciate the culture, traditions, and values of the UAE.

What your child studies

- English Language Arts develops strong reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, with students learning to support their ideas with evidence and engage in thoughtful discussion.
- Mathematics builds from basic numeracy through to algebra, geometry, and calculus in the high school years, with an emphasis on applying concepts to real situations.
- Science and Technology/Engineering follows Massachusetts standards aligned with NGSS, with plenty of hands-on investigation.
- Social Studies covers history, geography, civics, and economics, with a strong focus on both local and global understanding.
- Alongside these, all students take part in physical and health education, visual and performing arts (KG – Grade 8), and digital literacy, as well as Arabic, Islamic Studies, and UAE Social Studies.
- Grade 9 to 12 students will also have elective subjects chosen yearly based on their skills, abilities, and future planning.

Grades 9–12: Graduation Requirements

Students graduate from YAA with an American High School Diploma on successful completion of the required credits across Grades 9 through 12. The table below shows the minimum credits needed in each subject area, along with the additional credits required by the Ministry of Education for Arab and Muslim students.

Subject area	Minimum credit	Additional MoE requirement
English	4.0	—
Science	4.0	—
Mathematics	4.0	—
World Languages (including Arabic)	2.0	2.0 for students holding a passport from an Arabic-speaking country
Social Studies	3.0	—

Subject area	Minimum credit	Additional MoE requirement
Islamic Education	—	2.0 for all Muslim students
Physical & Health Education	2.0	—
Electives (core, non-core, and arts)	6.0+	—
Total	25	28

Native Arabic and/or Muslim students completing all Ministry of Education requirements may graduate with up to 28 total credits, depending on their category. All students are also expected to complete 100 hours of service learning across Grades 9 through 12, supporting the development of leadership, responsibility, and community engagement.

Students seeking the UAE High School Equivalency, which allows graduates to attend university in the Gulf region or work in UAE government roles, must meet additional Ministry of Education requirements, including passing the SAT Math section with a minimum score of 450 and demonstrating English proficiency through TOEFL iBT (61+) ,or IELTS Academic (5.0+), or SAT Reading and Writing (450+). Arab nationals are strongly encouraged to pursue this equivalency; our University and Career Counselor can talk you through what it involves for your child.

Choosing a pathway: General or Advanced Placement

From Grade 10, students choose courses within either the General pathway or the Advanced Placement (AP) pathway, guided by their strengths, interests, and university plans. Both pathways lead to a recognized American High School Diploma and prepare students well for university; they differ mainly in pace and depth. The General pathway offers a broad, balanced course load with room to explore different interests and extracurriculars, while AP courses are college-level, faster paced, and assessed heavily through external College Board exams, which carry their own registration fee. Neither path is inherently “better” than the other, and our University and Career Counselor is available to help you and your child weigh up what's right for them.

Course selection happens each May, and a full breakdown of pathways, entry guidelines, electives, and course change deadlines is available in the YAA Course Catalogue, which our University and Career Counselor can share with you. Once the year begins, course changes can be requested through the school's online change request form within the first three weeks, with a final deadline in the second week of September; after that, changes aren't possible for the rest of the year, which helps keep classes stable for everyone and aligns with ADEK requirements for credit hours.

Who to contact about high school courses

For questions about course selection, AP options, credits, or university and career planning, the following members of our academic team can help.

Role	Contact
Head of AP	apcoordinator@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Head of MoE	salhashash@westyasacademy.sch.ae
University & Career Counselor	hhassan2@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Head of English	nakhter@westyasacademy.sch.ae

Role	Contact
Head of Mathematics & Technology	gmahfouod@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Head of Science & Engineering	gschafer@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Head of Humanities & Business	pbond@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Head of Art	cyoung@westyasacademy.sch.ae
Head of PE	tmacauley@westyasacademy.sch.ae

A full list of elective courses, including our science, technology, humanities, business, creative studies, and world languages offerings, is available in the YAA Course Catalogue.

Character education

Character development runs through school life at YAA, not as an add-on but as part of lessons, homeroom, and assemblies. Every two weeks, students explore a character focus such as respect, responsibility, empathy, resilience, or integrity. We are proud to hold Kitemark accreditation as a School of Character from the Association for Character Education, recognizing how consistently this is embedded across the school.

Assessment

We use both formative and summative assessments to help your child progress. Formative assessment happens throughout learning, not just at the end of it: it is how teachers spot where a student needs support and how a student learns to reflect on their own progress. You will often see this in books as green comments (what went well) and pink/purple comments (the next step), with students using purple pen to respond and improve their work. In KG and Elementary, symbols are used with younger children who are not yet reading fluently, and in Middle and High School the expectation is a Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT) task roughly every three weeks.

Summative assessment measures what has been learned at the end of a unit or period, through internal tests, projects, or external examinations. Your child's final grade is based solely on their academic achievement against learning standards; things like attendance, behavior, and participation are important and are reported to you separately, but they are never folded into the subject grade itself. In Secondary, ADEK requires that summative assessments make up 60% of a student's total course grade for the year, so that the grade reflects real mastery of the material.

Grades K–8: grade descriptors

In line with ADEK's requirement for all U.S. curriculum schools, 65% is the benchmark for a student “meeting” grade expectations, and 75% for “above.” The scale below is used for report cards through Grade 8.

Grade	Range	Descriptor	What this means
A / A-	90–100%	Significantly above	Consistently demonstrates understanding above grade-level standards.
B+ / B / B-	75–89%	Above	Consistently demonstrates mastery of grade-level standards, occasionally working above.
C+ / C / C-	65–74%	Meeting	Demonstrates mastery of most grade-level standards.
D+ / D	60–64%	Approaching	Demonstrates understanding of some grade-level standards.
F	0–59%	Emerging	Has not yet shown evidence of meeting grade-level standards.

Grades 9–12: grades and GPA

For high school transcripts, ADEK requires a specific letter-grade-to-GPA conversion, shown below. This is the scale that appears on your child's official transcript, alongside their percentage score.

Letter grade	Percent	GPA (4.0 scale)
A+	97–100	4.0
A	93–96	4.0
A-	90–92	3.7
B+	87–89	3.3
B	83–86	3.0
B-	80–82	2.7
C+	75–79	2.3
C	73–74	2.0
C-	70–72	1.7
D+	67–69	1.3
D	65–66	1.0
D-	60–64	0.5
E/F	Below 60	0.0

AP courses may carry a weighted GPA bump in recognition of their college-level rigor and workload.

External assessments

Alongside our internal assessment, your child will also take part in a small number of external assessments across their time at YAA:

- MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) is ADEK's mandated standardized benchmark assessment for American curriculum schools in English, Math, and Science for Grades 3 through 9. At YAA we go further than this minimum: MAP is given in Reading and Math to all grades except KG1, 11, and 12, with additional English Language Usage and Science assessments in the relevant grades. It runs twice a year, as a baseline in Term 1 and again in Term 3, with report links shared in end-of-term reports.
- Advanced Placement (AP) exams are set and scored externally by the College Board each May for students in AP courses and carry a separate registration fee payable by families.
- Ministry of Education (MoE) assessments and Aldar Education's own standardized assessments help us benchmark your child's progress against national and group-wide standards.

The calendar for all external assessments is shared with families at the start of the academic year.

Academic integrity

Academic honesty is an important part of our school culture. Students are regularly reminded not only of the expectations around academic integrity, but also why these expectations matter. Exams are run under conditions designed to be fair and credible for everyone, in line with UAE Federal Decree Law No. (33) of 2023 Concerning Combating Cheating and Violation of Examination Systems.

Cheating, plagiarism, or falsely taking credit for someone else's work is treated as a Level 3 offense under our Behavior Policy, and leaking or helping to leak exam content is treated as a Level 4 offense, in line with ADEK's guidance and the Ministry of Education's Ministerial Resolution No. 851 of 2018 on the Code of Behavior Management for Students in General Education Institutions. The most serious cases are reported to ADEK, and anyone other than a student who is found to have compromized an exam, including a parent or outside party, can be held accountable under UAE law, not just school policy. If you ever have questions about how a particular assessment was conducted, your child's teacher or Head of Grade is the right first call.

Attendance and Punctuality

Every school day plays an important role in your child’s learning and progress. Regular attendance and punctuality help students make the most of their learning and remain fully engaged in school life. The expectations for attendance and punctuality are outlined below, along with the support available to families when attendance becomes a concern.

Our attendance bands

ADEK and the Ministry of Education's guidance shapes how we categorize attendance:

Band	Attendance	What it means
Outstanding	98% and above	Excellent attendance that is celebrated in our termly attendance assemblies.
Good	96% – 97.9%	On track and meeting the whole-school target.
Acceptable	92% – 95.9%	Below target; we will be in touch to understand what support would help.
Unacceptable	Below 92%	Support and intervention are put in place, and your child's enrollment place will be reviewed by our leadership team.

If your child's attendance falls into the Acceptable or Unacceptable bands, you can expect a graduated response from us: conversations with the homeroom teacher or Head of Grade in the first instance, moving to meetings with our Attendance Officer or senior leadership if the pattern continues. This is about understanding what's going on and helping, not simply issuing sanctions.

Reporting an absence

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to your child's learning and progress. Parents are expected to ensure that students attend school every day unless there is a valid reason for absence.

Parents must inform the school of their child's absence and provide appropriate supporting documentation.

For KG and Elementary, please include your child's Homeroom Teacher, Head of Phase, Assistant Principal – Pastoral and Attendance Officer in your communication.

For Middle and High School, please include your child's Homeroom Teacher, Phase Lead, Assistant Principal – Pastoral and Attendance Officer.

If your child is supported by an Individual Assistant (Shadow Teacher), please also ensure that they are informed of the absence.

For illness of up to two consecutive days, parents must provide written notification for each day of absence. From the third consecutive day of illness (including weekends), a sick-leave certificate from a DoH-licensed physician is required and must be submitted within 24 hours of the medical consultation.

In accordance with ADEK requirements, a maximum of 12 school days per academic year may be authorized for medical absence without a doctor's sick-leave certificate. Different arrangements may apply to students with documented chronic medical conditions.

We understand that medical and other essential appointments cannot always be avoided. However, wherever possible, parents are asked to arrange appointments outside school hours. Leaving school during the day results in missed learning and can also disrupt lessons for other students.

Family holidays and non-essential travel should be arranged during the published school holidays. Absence during term time for holidays or non-essential travel will not normally be authorized.

In accordance with ADEK requirements, where a student's total absence exceeds 5% of the school calendar days, including both authorized and unauthorized absence, this will be identified as a cause for concern and the school will follow up with parents.

All absences should be supported by the required documentation. Where appropriate documentation is not provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorized.

Collecting your child early: Early Dismissal Proceedure

To ensure the safety of our students, minimise disruption to learning and allow dismissal to be managed safely and efficiently, all parents and carers are required to follow the school's Early Dismissal Procedure.

Parents wishing to collect their child before the end of the school day must submit an Early Dismissal Request at least 24 hours in advance.

KG and Elementary

Parents must notify their child's Homeroom Teacher and Reception at least 24 hours in advance.

Where sufficient notice has not been provided, there may be a delay in releasing your child.

Middle and High School

Parents must email reception at least 24 hours in advance.

Parents will be asked to provide the reason for the request and supporting documentation where appropriate, for example, confirmation of a medical or official appointment.

Early dismissal collection time: 12:00–12:30 PM only.

To protect valuable learning time and allow the school to manage student dismissal safely and efficiently, students cannot be collected early outside this designated collection window.

Submitting a request does not automatically guarantee approval. Requests will be reviewed by the school, and parents will be contacted if any further information is required.

Important

✓ At least 24 hours' notice is required
✓ Supporting documentation must be provided where requested
✓ Approved early collection is between 12:00–12:30 PM only
✓ There will be no other early pick-up times

Behavior Expectations and Support

Good behavior is the foundation of a classroom where every child can learn, and we work hard to make our expectations clear, fair, and consistent across the school. Our approach is rooted in well-planned lessons, clear routines, and regular positive feedback, alongside a graduated response when things go wrong.

How we recognize positive behavior

We believe in noticing and celebrating the good as much as addressing the difficult. You will see this through verbal praise and ePraise points, written recognition such as a note home or work displayed around school, and larger celebrations throughout the year.

How we respond when behavior falls short

In Elementary School, we use a staged approach that starts with a subtle, non-verbal cue, moves to a direct conversation, and only escalates to a supervised 'reflection' session with a member of our pastoral team if earlier

steps haven't worked. You will always be contacted if your child is sent to reflect, and the incident is logged so we can spot and respond to patterns.

In Middle and High School, disruptive behavior is addressed by the class or subject teacher in the first instance, with clear warnings before any escalation. Repeated concerns may lead to a period of supported time in our refocus room, or a report card that is signed by teachers for a set period, with a review meeting between the Head of Grade and your child afterward.

Where a student has additional needs, our Inclusion Team is involved in deciding whether the behavior policy should be applied differently, and an Individual Behavior Plan may be created or updated as needed.

Serious incidents

For the most serious breaches of our expectations, ADEK sets out Level 3 and Level 4 categories of behavior, ranging from things like repeated Level 2 incidents or vaping on campus, through to the most serious safety and legal breaches. These can result in a fixed-term suspension of up to five days (a decision only the principal can make) or, in the most serious cases, permanent exclusion, which involves the Aldar Academies Disciplinary Committee and ADEK. A full investigation, including consultation with you as parents, always precedes a decision like this.

If you disagree with a disciplinary decision, you have the right to appeal using the Parents' Appeal template in our Behavior Policy. Depending on the nature of the decision, you may be invited to meet with the Principal or the Aldar Academies Director of Education.

Bullying

As defined in the ADEK behaviour policy "Repeated physical, social, or verbal aggression exercised by a person who feels they are in a position of power against another person who is perceived as different, weaker, or powerless. This behavior is intended to achieve specific gains or draw attention, causing harm to the other person physically and/or emotionally. Bullying can occur in person or online (cyberbullying)."

YAA takes a zero-tolerance approach to bullying in any form, and any incident is addressed in line with our Anti-Bullying Policy and ADEK's guidance. If you're ever concerned your child is experiencing or involved in bullying,

Please contact the homeroom or class teacher in the first instance, then the Head of Grade and Phase lead before the Assistant Principal – Pastoral. For anything urgent, please go directly to the Phase Lead or AP Pastoral.

This section should be read alongside the YAA Student Behavior Policy, the ADEK Student Behavior Policy, the ADEK Values and Ethics Policy, and the ADEK Cultural Consideration Policy.

Mobile Phones and Devices

Mobile phones

We know many students bring a phone to school for reassurance or for the journey to and from school. Rather than banning phones from the premises outright, our policy is that phones must be "never used, seen, or heard" during the school day. In practice, this means phones are switched off and not used in school from the moment they enter school until the end of the day, unless a Head of Grade/Phase Lead or a member of senior leadership

gives permission otherwise. This approach reflects ADEK's Student Behavior Policy, which treats taking out or using a phone without permission as a Level 2 concern, and is built on the same Ministry of Education framework, Ministerial Resolution No. 851 of 2018 on the Code of Behavior Management for Students, Article 7, that governs mobile phone conduct in schools across the UAE.

If a phone is seen, heard, or used during the school day, it will be confiscated. For a first offense, it is held by the Head of Grade/Phase Lead and returned at the end of the day. A second offense means a parent or authorized adult needs to collect it in person; a third offense follows the same process, although the mobile home will be kept by the school until the end of the week. Repeated breaches may be treated as a more serious behavior concern. In an emergency, students can use the school telephone to contact home, and if you need to reach your child urgently, please call the school reception rather than your child's phone directly.

A small number of exceptions exist for documented medical or learning needs, or in other exceptional circumstances agreed in advance with the Head of Grade or Head of Inclusion. The school is not able to accept liability for phones that are lost, damaged, or go missing while at school, so we'd encourage you to weigh that up before sending a valuable device in with your child.

To confirm: in 2024, the Ministry of Education issued a directive (based on Ministerial Resolution No. 851 of 2018, Article 7) requiring public schools and private schools following the MoE curriculum to bar phones from school premises entirely, with a full month's confiscation for a first offense. As an American curriculum school, YAA sets its own phone policy, rather than falling under this stricter MoE-curriculum mandate, which is "never used, seen, or heard".

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

From Grade 3 upward, we operate a Bring Your Own Device program to support learning, separate from the mobile phone policy above. Families are asked to purchase a specified device along with our digital safety package, which protects children from online risks and allows appropriate supervision of the device while at school. Aldar's technology partner, JTRS, runs the Aldar Education E-Store (aldareducation.jtrs.ae), where families can buy recommended devices at competitive prices.

Every device needs its own digital safety license, which is tied to that specific device; if a new device is purchased, a new license is needed too. If your child already owns a compatible device, our IT team can add the digital safety package to it for AED 285, valid for the lifetime of the device. Students in Grade 9 and above may use a MacBook as an alternative to an iPad.

	Recommended	Minimum requirement
iPad	iPad 9th Generation, 64GB, with Logitech Combo Touch Keyboard Case and a compatible stylus	iPad 8th Generation or iPad Air 4th Generation, with keyboard case and stylus
MacBook (Grade 9+)	MacBook Air 13” with M1 chip	Any model from 2020 onward

Extracurricular Activities (ECA)

ECAs extend learning beyond the timetable and give students a chance to build skills and confidence, try something new, and connect with the wider school community. Most ECAs run after school, and our ECA

Coordinator publishes the full program to families at the start of each term. Sign-up is done online through ePraise.

If an activity needs to be cancelled, we'll let you and your child know at least 12 - 24 hours ahead of time.

Health and Safety

Our clinic and nurses

YAA has three qualified nurses on site to support your child with medical needs, whether in an emergency or day to day. If your child visits the clinic during the day, we'll let you know, and in some cases the nurse may ask you to collect your child from school.

If your child takes any medication, whether short-term or ongoing, please share the details with the nurse, including exactly how and when it should be given. This includes emergency medication such as EpiPens. We ask families to complete a consent form each term, or whenever a medication changes.

Our clinics are stocked in line with HAAD/DoH guidelines, and first aid boxes are checked monthly. Beyond our nursing team, a number of staff are trained as first aiders, particularly in higher-risk areas such as PE and swimming, and the current list is available on our Health and Safety board at Main Reception.

If your child has a pre-existing medical condition

Please make sure we know about any ongoing medical condition so it can be recorded centrally and shared appropriately with staff who need to know.

Fire drills and lockdowns

We run a fire drill each term, timed where possible to avoid the hottest part of the day, and a lockdown drill at least once a year. We let families know in advance of a planned lockdown drill so it doesn't cause unnecessary worry, and younger students often practice the routine gently before the whole-school drill.

If the fire alarm activates unexpectedly, we evacuate regardless of the time of day or temperature, and work as quickly as we safely can to get students back inside.

Nutrition

All students bring a reusable water bottle and a healthy snack and lunch each day (snack only on Fridays). We check lunchboxes and will let you know if what's been packed doesn't meet our guidelines.

A few important points to keep in mind:

- YAA is a No Nut school, to protect members of our community with nut allergies.
- Fizzy drinks and high sugar content food are not permitted.
- Please don't send hot food; our in-school food service, Food Nation, is available for this.
- Noodle or pasta pots that need hot water added are not permitted, for safety reasons.

- Food should not be delivered to school for any reason, including celebrations, whether ordered by students or families.
- No Talabat, Deliveroo, Careem or any other delivery service will be permitted during the school day. Orders will be held at security and can be collected at the end of the school day

If we ever have a concern about food brought in for your child, we'll be in touch the same day. For more detail, see our Food and Nutrition Policy and the ADEK guidelines it's built on.

Student Protection, Safeguarding, and Wellbeing

Wellbeing underpins everything else at school. A child who feels safe, supported, and understood is a child who can learn. We take this seriously enough that it shapes our whole approach, not just a single policy.

Our safeguarding commitment

Our Assistant Principal – Pastoral is our designated Child Protection Officer and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Any concern about a child's safety or welfare, however small it may seem, should go to them directly and without delay. Every visitor to our campus must sign in, wear a visible pass, and be accompanied unless they are pre-authorized. Parents do not have general access to hallways or corridors during the school day; if you need to be in these areas for any reason, please arrange this in advance with the relevant Head of School, so we always know who is moving through the building and can keep every child's safeguarding front of mind. Please always wear your own pass or lanyard while on site.

How we support wellbeing, step by step

We think about wellbeing in layers. At the whole-school level, this means things like positive relationships between students, a strong anti-bullying culture, and a buddy system that pairs older and younger students. Where a child needs a bit more support, we set goals with families, put together individual learning plans, and bring in specialists such as our counselor, speech therapists, or educational psychologists as needed. For a smaller number of children who need more intensive support, we provide ongoing intervention and keep monitoring and adjusting as things progress.

If a critical incident occurs such as a sudden, serious event affecting a student or family, our senior leadership and pastoral team convene immediately to plan the right support, drawing on internal and external resources as needed.

Policies that sit behind this section

At Yas American Academy, the safety and wellbeing of every student is our highest priority. We encourage all parents to familiarize themselves with our **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**, which outlines our commitment to keeping students safe, the procedures in place to protect them and how to raise any concerns. Please click here to read the full policy: https://www.yasamericanacademy.ae/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2026/10/YAA_Safeguarding_and_Student_Protection_Policy_2026-27_FINAL_Parent_Facing.pdf

This section works alongside a number of full policies, all available on our website: the Anti-Bullying Policy, Behavior Policy, CCTV Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Climate for Learning Policy and Code of Conduct, E-Safety Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Inclusion Policy, Internet Security Policy, Intimate Care Policy, Lockdown Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, Transportation and Traffic Management Policy, and Wellbeing Policy.

Uniform

All students wear the Yas American Academy uniform from the moment they arrive on site each day, and when representing the school off-site, unless we say otherwise for a specific event. We ask families to support this consistently: it builds a sense of belonging, keeps things practical and fair, and reflects ADEK's uniform requirements.

Uniform requirements differ slightly by phase. In KG and Elementary, students wear the school polo shirt in our red house color, along with shorts, a skort, pinafore, or dress as preferred, smart black shoes, and a legionnaire's hat or cap for outdoor time. In Middle and High School, students wear the school shirt and tie, with a blazer or jumper, smart black trousers or a skirt, and formal black shoes.

We recognize that some families prefer fuller coverage for young girls, and plain, second-skin layers or leggings may be worn underneath the uniform for this purpose. A full, phase-by-phase uniform list, including optional items, is available on the Parent Portal and from our uniform supplier.

Students arriving at school in the incorrect uniform will be considered non-compliant with the school uniform policy and will be addressed in line with the school's Behavior Policy and the corresponding behavioral procedures. Please ensure that all uniform items are clearly labelled, as the school cannot take responsibility for lost or damaged belongings.

For the complete list of compulsory and optional items by phase, see the YAA Student Uniform Policy.

Jewelry and Makeup Policy

Makeup, lipstick, nail varnish, nail/ eyelash extensions, temporary tattoos, and piercings are not permitted for any student from KG1 through Grade 12. This sits alongside our wider grooming expectations: hair should be neat and tidy and left in its natural color.

Jewelry is limited to a watch and, for girls, one stud earring per ear. No other piercings or visible piercing jewelry are permitted. All jewelry must be removed for PE and other practical lessons alongside tying up hair which is below shoulder length.

These standards apply in line with the ADEK Student Behavior Policy, which expects students to dress modestly and follow the school's dress code and grooming rules as part of the Student Code of Conduct, alongside the ADEK Cultural Consideration Policy.

If a student arrives at school not meeting these expectations, we will follow the same process as we do for uniform. Your child's teacher or Head of Grade will contact you, and you will be given the opportunity to address the issue. Where there is no valid reason, repeated non-compliance will be treated as a behavior concern, in line with the school's behavior expectations and our approach to repeated uniform breaches.

Transportation

School transport is provided by Emirates Transport, an authorized provider experienced in running school bus services in line with Department of Transport standards. Our Bus Supervisors are trained in child protection and safeguarding, health and safety, and communication, and our designated Transport Coordinator, Mr. Irshad, manages transportation arrangements on the school's behalf.

Drop-off and pick-up

To keep our drop-off and pick-up zones safe and efficient, we run staggered times: buses arrive between 7:30 and 7:40am, and dispersal runs between 2:15 and 2:55pm. Our Traffic Management Plan is reviewed annually.

Behavior on the bus

All students sign a code of conduct covering safe behavior on the bus, including arriving at the stop at least five minutes early, wearing a seatbelt, staying seated while the bus is moving, keeping windows closed, and following the bus attendant's instructions. Any incident is recorded by the bus supervisor and reported to our Operations team; if you ever have a concern about the bus service, our Operations team is your point of contact.

Admissions

Visiting and applying

You are welcome to visit the school before applying to see our facilities and meet the team. Tours are led by our Parent Relations Executives, with a member of the admissions team on hand for questions. You can book a tour through the Aldar Academies website (aldaracademies.com) or by calling the school, and tours are available in person or virtually.

Applications are submitted through the same website and feed directly into the Aldar Academies student database. Applications are generally processed on a first-come, first-served basis, though admissions may use assessment results to keep a healthy balance of gender, nationality, English proficiency, and additional support needs across a grade.

Where a grade is oversubscribed, priority is given first to siblings of current students, then to children of staff or of a current member of the Aldar group, to students transferring within Aldar Education, and to a student with a particular skill or talent.

Assessment for entry

Depending on your child's age and previous school record, we may offer a place directly, or invite your child for an assessment. This helps us understand your child's readiness and identify any support that would help them settle in well. KG applicants are invited to an observational playdate; Elementary applicants and above may complete an online assessment, where space allows in that grade.

A lack of English is never, on its own, a reason to decline a younger applicant, and for older students it is a reason to plan support rather than to decline admission.

If we are unable to offer a place

Occasionally we are not able to accommodate a child, for reasons that might include an inability to access our curriculum, a previous de-enrollment from the school, or a specialist need better met elsewhere. Where this happens, we notify ADEK and the family within seven days of the decision.

Accepting an offer

Once an offer is made, you have seven calendar days to complete the Digital Acceptance Form and pay the registration fee shown on the pro-forma invoice. This fee is deducted from your first year's tuition, and is non-refundable if the place is not taken up, though it can be transferred to another Aldar Academies school. You will also need to register your child in ADEK's student database (eSIS), for which our Admissions team will send you an Essential Documents and Forms pack.

Support for students with additional needs

If you tell us about additional support needs when you apply, we will arrange to meet you and your child so we can properly understand what support would help. This may involve our Head of Inclusion, Assistant Principals, or Head of Phase, and further assessment may be needed. Where a child's needs go beyond our standard inclusive provision, ADEK's Inclusion Policy allows us to request you employ an Individual Assistant to support your child at school.

It matters that we know the full picture from the start. If relevant information about your child's medical, psychological, or behavioral needs is not disclosed and we are later unable to meet those needs, we may need to withdraw the offer of a place.

Grade placement and progression

Children are placed into KG according to age, and from Grade 2 onward according to normal year progression. Very occasionally, a student may need to repeat a year; this is never a decision we take without your agreement and ADEK's approval, and it takes into account attendance, academic performance, and maturity.

Returning families: intentions for the next academic year

Each January, our Parent Relations Executive sends current families an Intention and Registration communication, along with a Leavers' Survey and Form if relevant. The registration fee invoice for the following year follows in April, and paying it secures your child's place; this fee is deducted from the following year's tuition.

For more detail, see the ADEK Student Administrative Affairs Policy, the ADEK Parent Engagement Policy, the ADEK Educational Risk Policy, the ADEK Fees Policy, and the ADEK Inclusion Policy.

Yas American Academy Parent Agreement

A constructive relationship between YAA and our families is at the heart of a good educational experience, and this agreement sets out what each of us commits to. It should be read alongside the rest of this handbook, which explains these commitments in more detail. Once you've read both documents and had any questions answered, we ask you to confirm this each year.

What YAA commits to

Communication

- Sharing our Vision, Strategic Intentions, and Key Drivers with families.
- Responding to emails and calls within 24 working hours during school working hours, with alternative contact information for emergencies.
- Sharing information, policies, and changes with families in a timely way, and keeping communications accessible through the Parent Portal.
- Maintaining courteous, respectful, and professional communication with every family.
- Sharing the ADEK-approved school calendar annually, and keeping you informed of key events, celebrations, and closures.
- Keeping you informed about our bus services and drop-off and pick-up protocols.

Learning, assessment, and reporting

- Assessing and reporting fairly, objectively, and transparently.
- Giving you direct access to any staff member supporting your child, such as an inclusion assistant, counselor, or social worker.
- Explaining assessment results clearly and contacting you promptly about academic or behavioral concerns.
- Sharing progress through regular reports and three Parent-Teacher Conferences a year.
- Involving you in decisions about your child's education where your input is needed, such as placement or support decisions.
- Helping you understand curriculum changes and equivalency requirements and encouraging home learning support.

Attendance and punctuality

- Sharing and applying a clear attendance and punctuality policy.
- Explaining what counts as a school day, our expectations for punctuality, and what is considered excused or unexcused absence.

Student wellbeing

- Giving families opportunities to feedback on our wellbeing policies and to take part in mental health programs.
- Promoting healthy eating and food safety and sharing our Student Mental Health Policy.
- Offering a range of ECAs with a clear calendar and keeping families informed of the school bag weight policy.

- Arranging DoH-appointed providers for school-based immunizations and providing emergency medical care with prompt communication to families.
- Following up on any person on site without a visible pass, and investigating behavioral incidents fully, communicating with parents as needed.

Finance

- Making it straightforward and convenient to pay school fees.
- Explaining our response to non-payment or late payment of fees, in line with the ADEK Fees Policy.

What we ask of families

Communication

- Respecting the school's vision and learning environments.
- Keeping your contact details up to date, including phone numbers, email, and home address.
- Checking our regular communications for updates about the school.
- Being courteous with all staff, including security, cleaning, and support staff, and setting a good example in how you speak and resolve concerns.
- Avoiding culturally inconsiderate or defamatory posts about parents, students, or staff on social media, in line with our Cultural Consideration Policy.

Learning, assessment, and reporting

- Attending meetings, conferences, and reviews related to your child's progress.
- Sharing responsibility for your child's wellbeing and education, including home learning, sleep, nutrition, and physical activity.
- Addressing your own child's behavior where it could create conflict or an unsafe situation, or limit others' ability to learn.
- Cooperating with recommended additional learning support where the school judges it necessary.
- Providing a device in line with our BYOD Policy.

Attendance and punctuality

- Supporting excellent daily attendance and punctuality and avoiding holidays outside official school breaks.
- Aiming for Outstanding or Good attendance (96% or above), and respecting arrival and pick-up times.
- Telling us the reason for any absence; without this, your child will be marked as absent unauthorized.
- Completing an early collection form at least 24 hours ahead if you need to collect your child early, and understanding that without notice, waiting times may be longer.
- Scheduling medical appointments outside school hours where possible.
- Respecting UAE national identity, cultural values, and current legislation while on school premises.

Student wellbeing

- Monitoring your child's digital device use outside school hours.
- Subscribing to the YAA Digital Safety package to help protect your child online.

- Following the school bag weight guidance.
- Always wearing a lanyard on site, to support the safeguarding of every child in our care.
- Working with the school to understand your child's version of events and reach a constructive resolution to any dispute.

Finance

- Paying ADEK-approved school fees on time.

Should any of the above minimum expectations not be respected, the school may, at its discretion, ask a parent to leave school premises or restrict access.

Linked ADEK Policies

Parent Engagement Policy	Student Behavior Policy
Digital Policy	Values and Ethics Policy
Student Administrative Affairs Policy	Cultural Consideration Policy
Assessment Policy	Inclusion Policy
School Performance Reports Policy	Students' Mental Health Policy
Fees Policy	Curriculum Policy

Link to confirm you have read and understood the Parent Handbook and Parent Agreement by scanning the QR code on the front page.