Guide for Implementing Islamic Education in the Early Years in Schools and Early Childhood Centres (ECCs)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

These questions have been put together based on the input collected during two information sessions with representatives from private schools and ECCs across Dubai.

I. Scope

1. Who must receive Islamic Education as per this guide?

All registered Muslim children aged 4–6 in private schools, kindergartens and Early Childhood Centres (ECCs) in Dubai must receive Islamic Education. This applies to Arab and non-Arab Muslim children, including Muslim children of determination.

2. Is the requirement based on age or year group, such as FS1, FS2, KG1 or KG2?

The age range 4–6 is used to align implementation across curricula and settings. In practice, the requirement applies to children enrolled in KG1/FS2 and KG2/Year 1, or the equivalent year groups in other curricula.

3. Does the guide apply to ECCs and nurseries as well as schools?

Yes. The guide applies to all private schools, kindergartens and ECCs in Dubai serving children aged 4–6.

II. Implementation timeline

4. When does implementation become mandatory?

Schools and ECCs must comply from the academic year 2026–27. Schools and ECCs that follow an April-start academic calendar must comply from April 2027.

5. Is 2026–27 a transition year or a full implementation year?

It is a full implementation year. However, the guide allows flexibility of timetabling in the first year of implementation, provided that the full 90 minutes is delivered each week as a standalone subject within regular operating hours.

III. Instructional time and timetable

6. How many minutes of Islamic Education are required each week?

Muslim children aged 4–6 must receive 90 minutes of Islamic Education each week. It must be delivered as a standalone subject during regular operating hours.

7. Can Islamic Education be delivered before or after the normal school or nursery day?

No. Islamic Education must be delivered during regular operating hours and not through additional sessions before or after normal hours.

8. Must the 90 minutes be delivered as three 30-minute sessions or two 45-minute sessions?

The standard options are three 30-minute sessions per week or two 45-minute sessions per week. During the 2026–27 academic year, schools and ECCs may use timetable structures that suit their context, provided that the full 90 minutes is delivered each week as a standalone subject during normal working hours. The school day should not be extended to accommodate the teaching of this subject.

9. Does Islamic Education count towards KHDA's requirement for children to be exposed to Arabic language for one-third of their time in the early years setting?

The 90 minutes per week of Islamic Education may count towards KHDA's requirement for children to be exposed to Arabic for at least one-third of their time in the early years setting, provided that the minimum Ministry of Education (MoE) requirements for structured Arabic instruction have been fully met. It is the responsibility of schools and ECCs to regularly check for MoE updates regarding Arabic language requirements.

10. Is Islamic Education included within the MOE Arabic-language minutes?

No. Islamic Education is a separate 90-minute standalone MoE requirement.

IV. Language of instruction

11. What language should be used for Arab Muslim children?

For Arab Muslim children registered with a passport issued by an Arab country, Islamic Education must be delivered in Arabic.

12. What language should be used for non-Arab Muslim children?

For non-Arab Muslim children, Islamic Education must be delivered in the school or ECC's approved language of instruction.

13. Can parents request Arabic-medium Islamic Education for a non-Arab Muslim child?

Yes. Parents of a child with a non-Arab passport may request placement in the Arabic-language group. Approval is at the discretion of the school or ECC, taking into consideration the child's level of proficiency in Arabic.

14. Can an Arab-passport child who does not speak Arabic be placed in Islamic B?

No. Where exceptional circumstances or documented special educational needs require an alternative arrangement, the school or ECC should contact KHDA for guidance or request an exemption.

15. Can teachers mix Arabic and English during the lesson?

Teachers should maintain instruction in the designated language. They may use age-appropriate language-acquisition strategies, modelling and scaffolding to support children's understanding.

V. Grouping of children

16. Must Arab and non-Arab Muslim children be taught in separate rooms?

The guide allows flexible grouping. Arab and non-Arab Muslim children may be taught in the same room or in separate rooms, provided that each group receives instruction in its designated language. Schools or ECCs may determine the most appropriate operational model based on their circumstances and the needs of their children.

17. Can one teacher teach Arab and non-Arab groups at the same time?

Yes, provided that the teacher has excellent command of Arabic, good command of the school or ECC's other approved language of instruction, and the ability to deliver learning effectively to both groups.

18. Can KG1 and KG2, or equivalent year groups in other curricula, be combined for Islamic Education?

The expectation is that KG1 and KG2, or equivalent year groups, are taught separately.

19. Can groups be organised by prior Islamic knowledge instead of age or year group?

Children within the same grade or year level may be grouped according to their prior knowledge and ability. Any grouping and provision must remain aligned with the approved learning outcomes framework.

20. Is there a maximum class size for Islamic Education?

The guide does not establish a separate maximum class size for Islamic Education. Schools and ECCs must comply with all applicable regulatory requirements related to class size, staffing ratios, supervision, safeguarding and age-appropriate provision to ensure safe and effective teaching and learning.

VI. Teacher approval and qualifications

21. Does a teacher need specific KHDA approval to teach Islamic Education to Muslim children aged 4–6?

Yes. Islamic Education teachers of Muslim children aged 4–6 must have KHDA approval to teach Islamic Education.

22. Can an Arabic teacher teach Islamic Education automatically?

No. An Arabic teacher may teach Islamic Education only after obtaining KHDA approval to teach the subject. Schools and ECCs must also ensure that the assignment does not compromise the teacher's Arabic-language teaching responsibilities and complies with the workload expectations set out in the Arabic Language Policy Guide.

23. Can a teacher who is already approved to teach Islamic Education in higher grades teach Islamic Education in KG/FS?

Yes, provided the school or ECC is able to provide evidence that the teacher is suitable to teach in early years. This may include an appropriate early childhood qualification, relevant training, or supervision by an experienced and qualified early years teacher.

24. What are the minimum qualification expectations?

For ECCs, the guide refers to a minimum Level 3 qualification in Early Childhood Education. For schools, it refers to a minimum bachelor's degree in an acceptable relevant field, as specified in the guide. In both cases, ECCs and schools must ensure teachers possess appropriate subject knowledge to deliver the required curriculum.

25. What specialisations are acceptable?

The guide identifies three broad acceptable areas: Islamic Education or related fields, such as Shariah, Hadith, Tafseer or Aqeedah; Early Childhood Education or related fields; and Arabic or related fields, such as journalism, social disciplines or sociology. Teachers must demonstrate appropriate Islamic Education subject knowledge aligned with MOE curriculum requirements.

26. Must the teacher be Muslim?

Yes. Teachers assigned to teach Islamic Education must be Muslim.

27. Is early years' experience required?

Teachers must demonstrate their suitability to teach children aged 4–6 through relevant experience, professional development in age-appropriate pedagogy, an early childhood qualification or training, or supervision by a qualified early childhood teacher.

28. Can a teaching assistant with a CACHE Level 3 qualification teach Islamic Education?

Staff classified as Teaching Assistants are not automatically permitted to teach the subject. A qualified Teaching Assistant must apply to KHDA to obtain an Appointment Notice to teach Islamic Education at this phase.

29. What should a school or ECC do if it cannot find a teacher who fully meets the requirements?

Where exceptional circumstances require an alternative arrangement, the school or ECC should contact KHDA for guidance.

VII. Curriculum, resources and assessment

30. Where can schools and ECCs find the MoE learning outcomes framework?

The MOE learning outcomes framework documents have been shared as attachments to KHDA communication. Schools and ECCs should refer to these documents to support their curriculum planning and implementation.

31. How should learning be assessed at this age?

Assessment must be age-appropriate. Schools and ECCs should maintain documented evidence of how children's progress is monitored against the approved learning outcomes.

32. Should assessment take account of children's different starting points?

Yes. All children should work towards the approved learning outcomes, while teachers use age-appropriate assessment to respond to children's different starting points and learning needs.

VIII. Other questions

33. How should schools and ECCs manage irregular attendance and children who join mid-year?

Schools and ECCs should maintain a simple rolling register of eligible Muslim children, record attendance at Islamic Education sessions, and retain evidence of how newly enrolled children are introduced to the relevant learning outcomes.

34. Do schools and ECCs need to communicate their implementation model to parents?

Yes. The adopted timetable model must be reflected in children's weekly schedules and communicated to parents. Grouping models must also be shared with KHDA and parents at the start of the academic year.

B. Compliance Checklist

Use this checklist to review implementation readiness and identify any areas requiring action.

No.	Requirement	Evidence of compliance	Compliance status
1	**Identify all Muslim children aged 4–6.**	Child register showing age, religion, nationality and class.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial
2	**Provide 90 minutes of Islamic Education each week.**	Weekly timetable for each child or group.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial
3	**Islamic Education delivered as a standalone subject.**	Timetable and subject plan.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial
4	**Lessons delivered during regular school or ECC operating hours.**	Daily or weekly schedule.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial
5	**Correct language of instruction used: Arabic for Arab Muslim children and the setting's approved language of instruction for non-Arab Muslim children.**	Grouping list and lesson resources.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial
6	**Establish a clear grouping model for Arab and non-Arab Muslim children.**	Grouping plan shared with parents and KHDA.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial
7	**Ensure that every Islamic Education teacher has specific KHDA approval to teach children aged 4–6.**	KHDA approval or appointment notice.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial
8	**Ensure that each teacher is appropriately qualified and suitable for early years teaching.**	Qualification certificates, CPD records or supervision records.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial
9	**Follow the MOE learning outcomes for this age group.**	Curriculum map, weekly plans and resources.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial

No.	Requirement	Evidence of compliance	Compliance status
10	**Maintain simple evidence of children's progress.**	Observation notes, progress tracker and activity samples.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial
11	**Make appropriate adaptations for children of determination where needed.**	Individual support notes or adapted resources.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial
12	**Inform parents about the timetable and grouping model.**	Parent email, letter or handbook update.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partial