

Mandatory Curriculum Requirements for Private Schools in Dubai

Islamic Education,
Arabic, Social Studies
and Moral Education
For the academic year
2025-26



Introduction

In line with Dubai's vision and the Education 33 (E33) strategy, KHDA is committed to enhancing opportunities for better student learning and higher student achievement in all Mandatory Subjects. These subjects play a key role in shaping future generations, enabling them to actively contribute to Dubai's multicultural society while embracing and preserving the UAE's identity.

The provision of UAE Mandatory Subjects in private schools in Dubai is essential for strengthening the nation's identity, culture, and values among students. Improving Arabic language proficiency and fostering meaningful, context-rich learning environments help reinforce its importance in UAE society.

To support this mission, KHDA presents these guidelines to all private schools in Dubai, helping them plan and design curricula that meet mandatory requirements while offering balanced and enriched learning opportunities. This will enable students to reach their highest potential.

Purpose of the document

This document outlines KHDA's mandatory requirements for teaching all national subjects across all private schools licensed in Dubai. It details key modifications that must be implemented by the start of the 2025-26 academic year and provides clear guidelines to support schools in planning, designing, and delivering their curriculum. These guidelines cover key aspects such as timetabling, class organisation, language of instruction, and curriculum implementation.

Enhancements will be gradually implemented over the next few years, particularly with an increased time allocation for national subjects. All private schools in Dubai are required to adopt these changes to ensure a balanced approach that aligns their licenced international curricula with national requirements. This includes the effective integration of Arabic, Islamic Education, Social and Moral Studies for all students in Dubai, with a particular focus on promoting Emirati values and culture.

Scope and Implementation date

This document highlights KHDA's requirements for Mandatory Subjects in all private schools in Dubai. The table below lists these mandatory requirements for the 2025-26 academic year.

For all schools that start their academic year in April, the implementation date is April 2026.

Compliance

- The instructional time specified by KHDA for each grade/year group outlined in the mandatory requirements table (below) must be provided to all Dubai school students, based on whether they belong to the Arab or non-Arab group.
- All schools are required to provide the full amount of weekly instructional time as stated in the mandatory requirements table for all relevant students. The requirements are calculated based on a 40-minute lesson unit, but schools may adjust the lesson duration to better suit their context and students' needs, as long as the total required time set by KHDA is met.
- All private schools offering the UAE MoE curriculum must adhere in full to the requirements and guidelines of the MoE, including any future updates or guidance from the MoE.

Curriculum

- All private schools in Dubai must adhere to the standards and expectations of the MoE outlined in the UAE National Curriculum documents for each mandatory subject, as well as any future updates or supplements that may be published by KHDA or the MoE.
- Schools should aim to fully cover the MoE curriculum while maintaining appropriate breadth and balance across all the skill areas/strands within each subject in their provision.
- Schools are expected to review their current curriculum maps to make the best use of the increased time allocations for Islamic Education, Arabic and the standalone Social Studies lessons starting from the 2025-26 academic year.
- Schools may use the increased time to adjust the curriculum to meet students' needs including providing personalised learning opportunities aligned to their needs and goals.
- Schools are required to base their work in these subjects on the curriculum standards, expectations and resources published by the MoE. The use of any different or additional content, without prior permission from the MoE, is strictly prohibited.

Timetabling

- All mandatory subjects' lessons must be scheduled within the official school timetable.
- Schools should ensure a balanced timetable with fair opportunities for all Arab and non-Arab students which guarantees that their learning in other subjects is not negatively affected.
- While schools may choose to modify their lesson lengths to be longer or shorter than 40 minutes, it is advised that the length for any mandatory subject lesson is at least 25 minutes.

Language of instruction

- In Islamic Education for Arabs and Arabic as a first language, schools must ensure that the main language of instruction is Standard Arabic.
- In Social Studies for Arab students, the primary language of instruction should be Arabic. Schools may modify instruction to address specific individual students' needs.
- For non-Arabs, in Islamic Education and Moral, Social and Cultural studies, the language of instruction should be the language of the licenced school curriculum.

Teaching staff

- Schools are required to ensure that all teachers of Islamic Education and Arabic have appropriate KHDA approval to teach these subjects.

Set-up and structure

- For Arabic as a first language, Islamic Education and Social Studies, schools must organise separate classes for Arabs and non-Arabs. Combined classes for both groups are strictly prohibited due to the different curriculum expectations and language of instruction.
- Schools may organise classes for Arabic as an additional language by student ability and/or their learning targets. In doing so, schools must ensure that class sizes are appropriate and that there is no significant age difference between students within the same group. Students' attainment in this subject should be evaluated in relation to the number of years they have studied the language, regardless of the ability group they are attending classes with. Progress should be measured against each student's starting point within their school phase.

- Schools may place non-Arab students in classes of Arabic as a first language upon parents' request if the school timetables and resources allow for this. Schools are advised to assess the achievement of these students in relation to their status as additional language learners and make every effort to help students make the best progress they are capable of.
- In Social Studies, Arab and Emirati students should not be placed in a non-Arab Moral, Social and Cultural (MSC) education class. Schools are expected to modify its provision to ensure that all Emirati and Arab students can access the curriculum effectively.

Specific guidance on Moral Education

- For non-Arab students, Moral Education curriculum is taught as part of the Moral, Social and Cultural (MSC) studies subject and is taught in English and/or the language of the school's licenced curriculum.
- For Arab and Emirati students, the Moral Education subject has its own separate curriculum standards and expectations. For the 2025-26 academic year, KHDA will continue to allow schools to integrate/embed this subject into other elements/subject areas within the school curriculum. Schools are free to choose where and how Moral Education will be integrated, provided that appropriate curriculum maps and academic plans are provided, applied and assessed accurately.
- Schools' provision of Moral Education should be based on the relevant MoE curriculum standards and expectations for Arab students, and on MSC standards for non-Arab students.



MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL PRIVATE SCHOOLS OFFERING THE MOE CURRICULUM

All private schools in Dubai that offer the UAE Ministry of Education curriculum must strictly adhere to the requirements of the MoE curriculum specified in Ministerial Resolution 194 issued in 2023 and its future updates by the UAE Ministry of Education.



Mandatory requirements for all private schools offering a curriculum other than the MoE curriculum

	G1/Y2	G2/Y3	G3/Y4	G4/Y5	G5/Y6	G6/Y7	G7/Y8	G8/Y9	G9/Y10	G10/Y11	G11/Y12	G12/Y13
Arabic as a first language for Arabs	6	6	6	NEW 6	NEW 6	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Arabic as an additional language for non-Arabs	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	Optional	Optional	Optional
Islamic Education for Arab Muslims	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Islamic Education for non-Arab Muslims	NEW 3	NEW 3	NEW 3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Social Studies for Arabs (Standalone lesson) New!	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Optional	Optional	Optional
UAE Moral, Social and Cultural for non-Arabs (MSC) (Standalone lesson) New!	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Optional	Optional	Optional
Moral Education for Arabs (Standalone or Integrated)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1