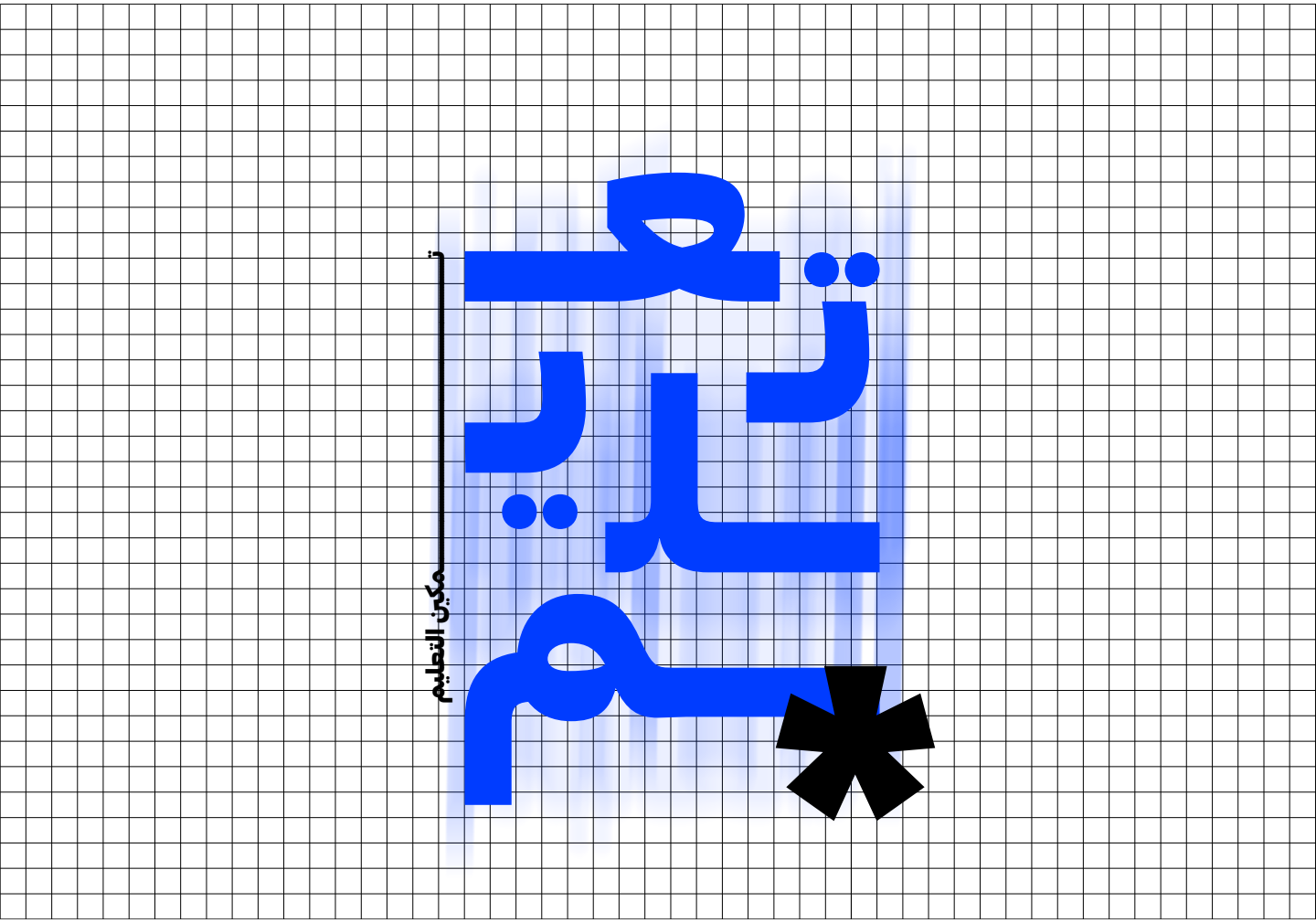
دائـرة الـتـعـلـيـم والـمـعـرفـة
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND KNOWLEDGE



PARENTS GUIDE TO SCHOOL REOPENING

SCHOOL IS BACK IN SESSION!

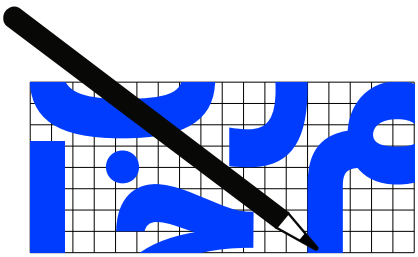
Dear Parents,

We have just completed one of the most challenging academic years in our history as a nation, and your unparalleled commitment and cooperation was instrumental in ensuring that our schools delivered quality learning to our children.

Over the summer, ADEK has worked extensively with schools, parent representatives, teachers and federal policymakers to develop guidelines to ensure a safe return to school for our children. These guidelines reflect scientific evidence and international best practices, but more importantly, they are informed by hours of discussions with school leaders, teachers and thousands of responses by parents to surveys conducted by ADEK. With these guidelines in place, we are confident that schools will be able to welcome students back for the Academic Year 2020/21.

This guide provides you with essential information to prepare you and your child for their return to school. If you have specific questions or comments, please direct them to your School Principal.

Once again, Welcome Back!



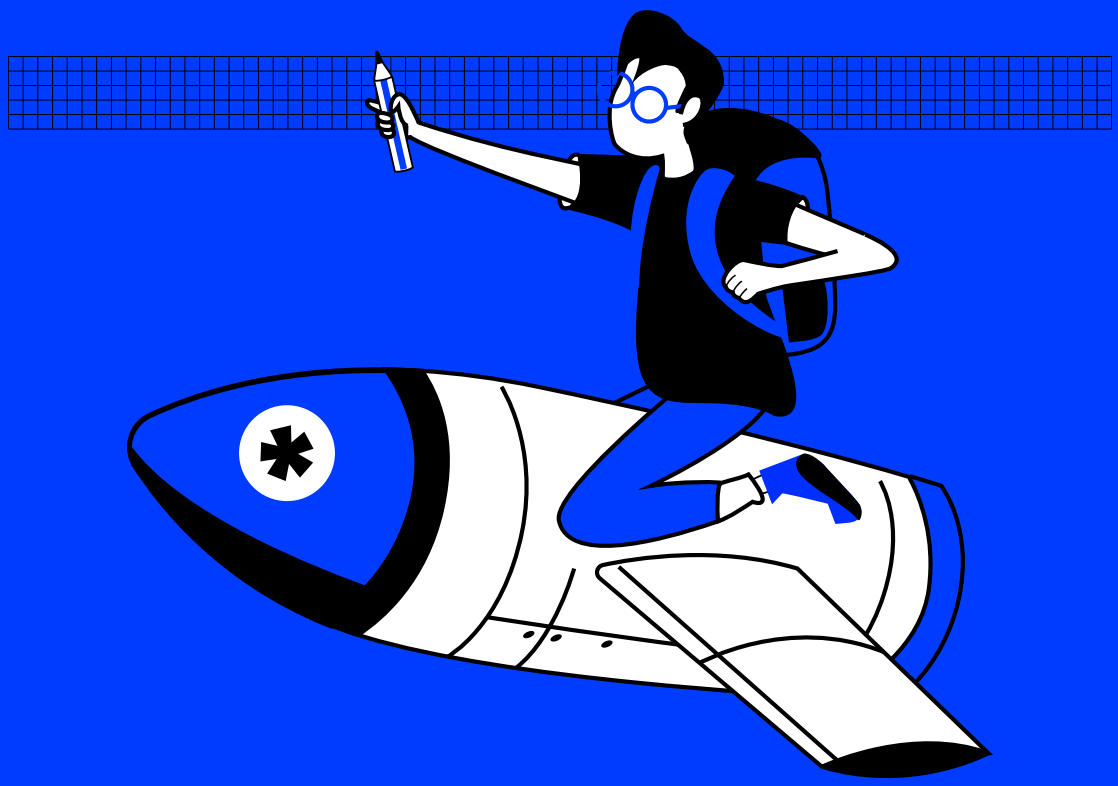
We understand that starting the new school year might make your children feel nervous or reluctant to return to school.

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILDREN DURING THIS PHASE:

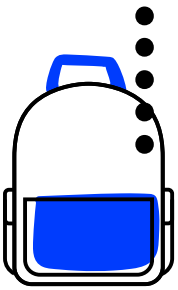
- Speak to your children about COVID-19 and let them know that it's natural to feel anxious or nervous about returning back to school.
- Have an open conversation about their anxieties and fears about returning to school and reassure them about safety measures and precautions the schools will have in place to keep everyone healthy.
- Be honest about the changes that they will see at school, such as the need to wear masks, inability to be close to their friends and teachers.
- Explain to your children that they will play an important role in keeping themselves and their community healthy by wearing a mask, maintaining social distancing, and sanitizing hands.
- Highlight the positive aspects of returning to school such as being able to meet their friends and learning new things.
- Continuously check in with your children to evaluate their well-being when school begins.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL PREP

What Do You Need to Know?



IMPORTANT TO NOTE



- Please ensure that you are present in the UAE, at least 14 days prior to your children's school reopening date to comply with any health and travel requirements set by the government.
- It is mandatory for all children of school-going age to be enrolled in school for Academic Year 2020/21.
- Schools will provide distance learning for students who have a medical reason for not being physically present on campus. If your child has a high-risk health condition, he/she may continue distance learning by submitting a medical certificate to the school. Contact your school for details.
- Your school may request you to provide a medical clearance if your child is absent for a prolonged period.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Your school will reopen with one, or a combination of the following models based on parental survey and school capacity:

- **Full:** Your children will attend school daily
- **Half-Day:** Your children will attend half a school day daily
- **Alternating Days:** Your children will receive face-to-face learning at school on alternating days
- **Alternating Weeks:** Your children will receive face-to-face learning for 2 weeks and distance-learning for the remaining 2 weeks, every month
- **Hybrid:** This will feature a combination of the above

Your school will announce the model they will follow on their website by 30 July 2020.
Schools may follow different models for different grades.

| TUITION FEES

- Full tuition fee will apply to students, regardless of the mode of attendance and reopening model followed by the school.
- If you are facing financial constraints, reach out to your school's Principal for support.
- If you choose not to enroll your child in a school, and instead homeschool him/her, you take the risk that your child will need to repeat the grade once he is back in the system.

SAFETY FIRST

What Do You Need to Know?

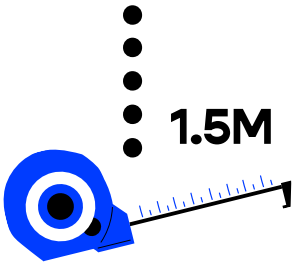
| HEALTH AND HYGIENE ARRANGEMENTS

- Schools will carry out a general cleaning and disinfection once every 24 hours.
- Schools have been mandated to provide hand washing or hand sanitizing stations in key locations around the school premises and on the school bus.
- All classrooms will have sanitizing wipes, hand sanitizer and covered bins to maintain proper hygiene.
- High-contact surfaces such as light switches, handrails, doorknobs, toilet seats etc. will be cleaned and disinfected **every hour.**
- Toilets will be cleaned and disinfected **every hour.**
- Schools will have a Nurse or Registered Medical Professional present on the premises, and a Quarantine room for students or staff members who experience a sudden onset of COVID-19 symptoms.

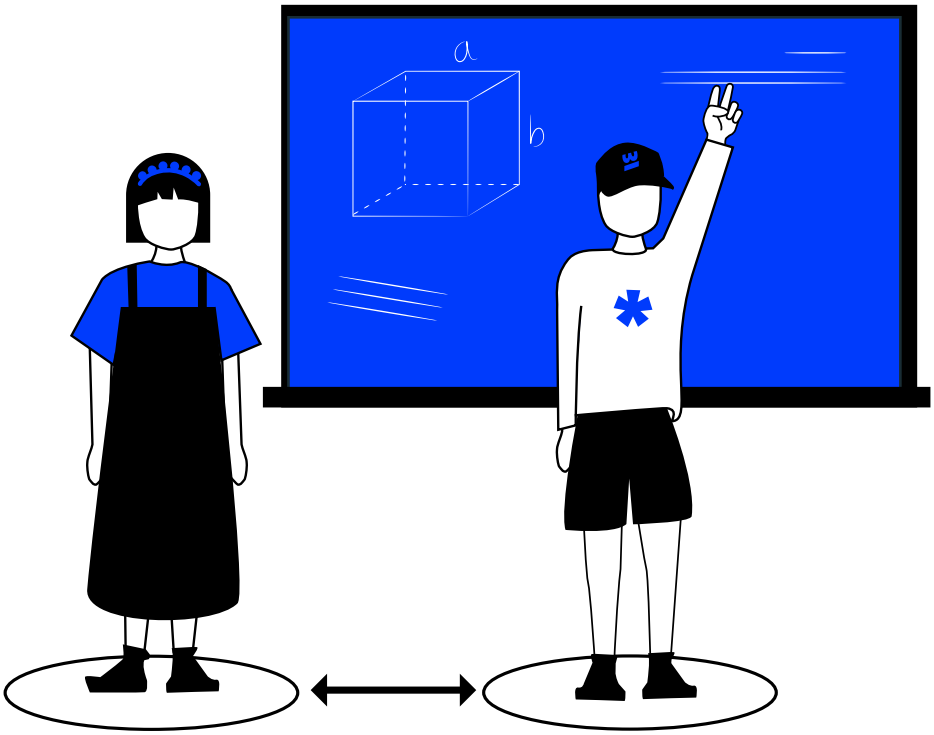
| INDIVIDUAL HEALTH & SAFETY

- Your child may have to undergo a COVID-19 PCR test before returning to school.
- Your child will have to wear a mask if they are older than 6 years **(KG1 and KG2 students do not have to wear a mask. Students from Grade 1 and above must wear a mask as directed):**
  - If your child is unable to wear a mask, they may be allowed to wear a face shield if supported by a medical certificate
  - Students of Determination with hearing impairments may use transparent masks
- Gloves are not recommended as they are less effective than hand washing in controlling the spread of COVID-19. However, they may be worn.

SOCIAL DISTANCING



- Students will be expected to stay 1.5m apart at all times.
- Younger children who find it difficult to maintain social distancing in KG and early primary grades may be grouped into “bubbles of up to 10 individuals”.
  - A bubble is a group of students and staff member who spend the entire day together and do not interact with other students and staff.



| ENTERING AND EXITING THE SCHOOL

- Parents will **not** be allowed on the school premises, unless they are supporting a Student of Determination. Exceptions can be made to allow one parent to accompany a KG or early Cycle 1 student, if needed.
- Only **one** parent/guardian can accompany children outside the entrance to the school.
- If you accompany your child as they stand in the queue, you **must** wear a mask.
- Non-contact temperature screening will take place before entering the school.
- Students will queue outside the gate to enter, maintaining a 1.5m distance from other families/students.
- Your school may stagger entry and exit times for students to avoid large queues and crowding. These times will be communicated to you by your school.
- You will be allowed to remain in the designated waiting area to pick up your child for a maximum of 10 minutes. During this period, you will be required to maintain a 1.5m distance from other people.

| TRANSPORT SAFETY MEASURES

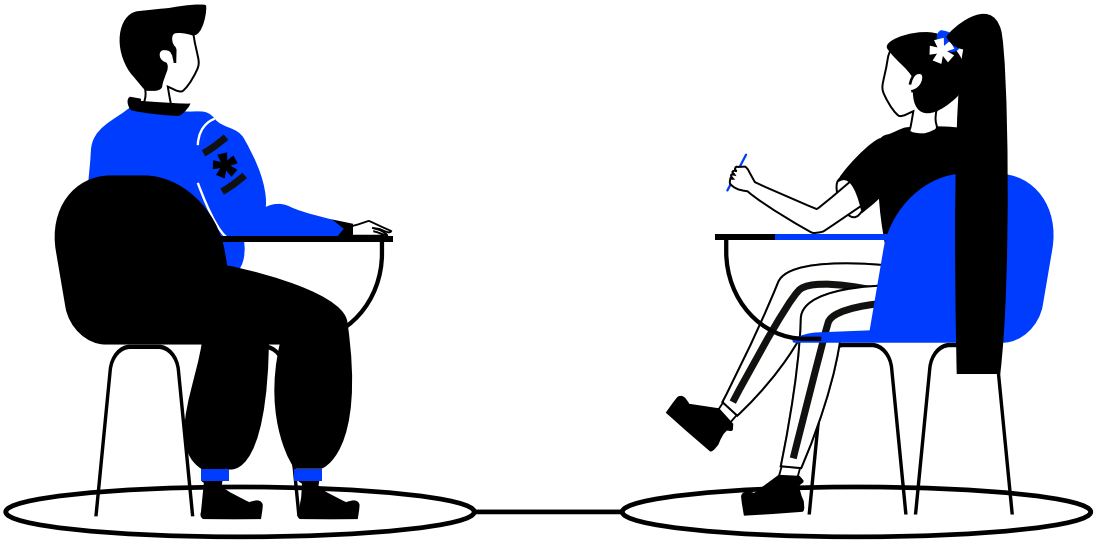
- Buses will operate at **50% of their capacity**, and children will be required to maintain a distance while on the bus.
- Children will be assigned seats on the bus for the entire semester.
- Temperature checks will happen before boarding the bus, and children with elevated body temperature will not be allowed on the bus.
- We encourage you to transport your children to and from school in order to ease the pressure on the school transport system.

SCHOOL IS IN

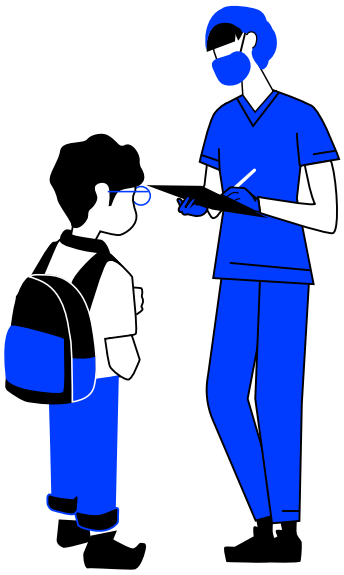
What Do You Need to Know?

| CLASS SIZES AND GROUPING

- It is likely that your child's class will be split into two or more groups to accommodate for social distancing requirements.
- To minimize exposure to others, your child will remain in this group until the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- While ADEK hasn't mandated a maximum class size, we expect schools to keep classes small enough that every student can effectively hear and see the teacher.
- If your child uses the school bus, they will also be part of a fixed "bus group" so that their exposure to other children is minimized.



IF YOUR CHILD BECOMES SICK AT SCHOOL



- They will immediately be moved to the Quarantine Room, where they will be monitored by a School Nurse.
- You will be contacted immediately to retrieve your child from the school.
- The school shall not administer any medicines to your child.
- The school will inform you about the nearest hospital and COVID-19 testing center.
- If your child tests positive for COVID-19, you are mandated to inform the school so that they can take measures to secure the health of other students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus.
- Information about your child will **not be shared** with anyone other than the relevant government authorities.

OPTIMIZING SCHOOL FACILITIES AND SUPPLIES

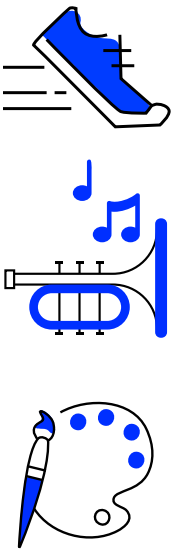
- Some schools may convert non-teaching areas such as gymnasiums and libraries into classrooms.
- Classrooms will be configured to maintain a 1.5m distance between children, and children will be assigned fixed seats for the semester.
- Non-essential furniture will be stowed away.
- The school will minimize sharing of items such as toys and educational equipment.

| RECREATION, LUNCH & BREAK TIMES

- Students will receive regular breaks during the day. However, these breaks will likely be very different from what they experienced in the pre-COVID times: students will have to maintain a 1.5m distance between themselves and their friends.
- For the initial period after reopening, playground equipment like swings and slides will be off-limits to reduce chances of cross-contamination.
- Schools will not be allowed to cook on the premises; they may provide pre-packaged food. We strongly encourage you to provide your child with a packed lunch.
- Children will be allowed to take off their masks to have lunch under supervision.

| SPORTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

- Physical education at school is suspended until further notice. Virtual activities may be provided.
- Your school may also reduce the number of cultural activities that they offer, such as music, art and performing arts classes.



MAINTAINING QUALITY OF LEARNING:

What Do You Need to Know?

| SUPPORT FOR STUDENT WELL-BEING

- Schools will offer sessions for children on a range of topics: cyber safety, dealing with loss and/or bereavement, anxiety etc. to support them in navigating these challenging times.

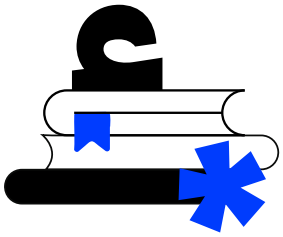
| CLOSING THE LEARNING GAP

- Schools shall carry out student learning evaluations to identify areas where children need additional support to overcome any learning loss experienced during school closure and distance learning.
- Schools will focus on core subjects during the next phase and integrate all other non-core subjects into numeracy and literacy, as much as possible.

| SPECIAL NEEDS

- If your child is a Student of Determination, or has any special needs, your school is mandated to develop an Individual Education Plan and a risk assessment for him/her with your consultation.
- This risk assessment will enlist all special arrangements that your child requires in order to return to school safely and in good spirits.

| ONGOING COMMUNICATION



- Schools will stay in close contact with you after reopening. This may mean weekly newsletters, text-message updates or emails.
- All meetings and discussions with staff and administration will have to be done remotely.
- Schools are mandated to inform you in case your child may have been exposed to a patient of COVID-19 while at school.

BACK TO SCHOOL

What is Expected of Me as a Parent?

BEFORE THE SEMESTER BEGINS

- If you're not in the UAE, plan to return at least 2 weeks prior to the beginning of the new academic year to meet any requirements of quarantine/COVID-19 testing enforced by the UAE Government.

- Re-register your child for the new academic year.

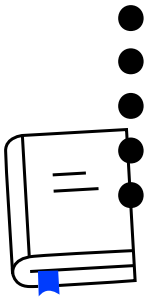
- Review the model that your child's school is adopting, along with any specific guidelines related to:
  - The days/weeks your child is supposed to attend school (if applicable)
  - Requirements/modes for distance learning
  - Timings for pick-up and drop-off (private transportation and school buses)
  - Any additional guidelines that your school has provided

- Respond to your school's requests related to:
  - Updated contact information
  - Updated medical records
  - Special arrangements for your child as required

- Inform the Principal if your child has undergone bereavement or loss due to the pandemic.

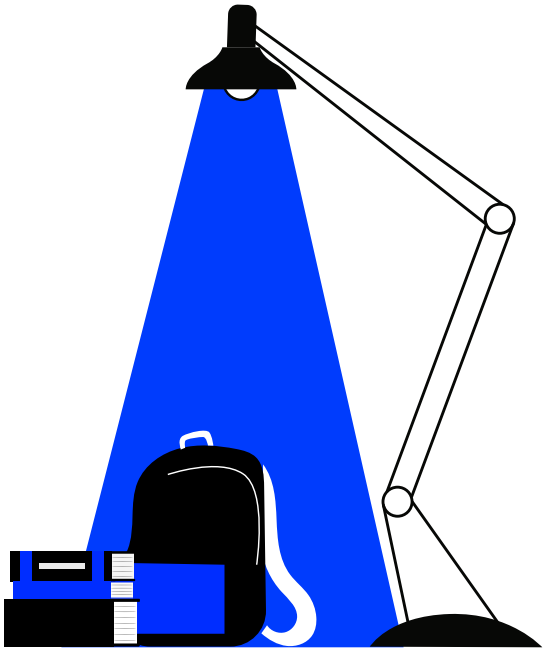
- Arrange for your child to undergo a COVID-19 PCR test prior to the start of the new academic year and share the report with their school.

- Ensure that you and your child have installed the ALHOSN app [https://www.ncema.gov.ae/alhosn/index.html] on your phones.
  - This is required for students who have their own mobile phones.
  - If your child does not have a mobile phone, he / she will be covered under your personal ALHOSN account.



| DAILY ACTIONS DURING THE SEMESTER

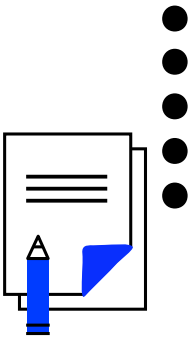
- Ensure your child does not have a fever or any symptoms such as cough, breathing difficulty or body aches.
- If your child has a personal device, please ensure the ALHOSN app is installed and functioning.
- If your child is older than 6 years, ensure he has at least two masks (if disposable) to wear at school during the day.
- Wear a mask when dropping off your child to school.
- Stay 1.5m away from other families and individuals during drop-off and pick-up.
- If your child can manage, provide them with 70-80% alcohol-based sanitizer to carry in their pocket.



ONGOING ACTIONS TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITY:

As we work with schools across Abu Dhabi to create the safest possible environment for our children to return to school, we will also rely on your vigilance to ensure that the risk of COVID-19 transmission is minimized outside of school. To this end, you can support by:

1. Ensuring that you limit your and your child's potential exposure to COVID-19. This means staying away from crowded areas and avoiding large gatherings.
2. When you leave your home, ensure that you and your family members wear a mask and maintain social distancing as directed by UAE's public health authorities.
3. If your child is participating in extra-curricular activities or play dates, please ensure that they follow hygiene and social-distancing measures diligently.
4. If your child experiences COVID-19 symptoms such as cough, fever or breathlessness, do not send them to school, and seek immediate medical care.
5. Teach your child the following prevention techniques to safeguard themselves and others:
   - Keeping a safe distance of 1.5m from others.
   - Covering their mouth and nose with a tissue/paper towel when they cough or sneeze and throwing used tissues in the trash immediately.
   - Coughing or sneezing into their elbow if they don't have a tissue.
   - Washing hands with soap for 20 seconds multiple times during the day.
   - Remembering to wear a mask when stepping outside the house.



VOICING YOUR CONCERNS

We trust that the information we have provided you in this Guide supports your understanding on how we collectively plan to prepare for school reopening.

If you have any concerns about your school's compliance with the school reopening guidelines, or if you are dissatisfied with the health and safety arrangements at your child's school, reach out to us on ADEK's compliance hotline: 800-COMPLIANC(E)

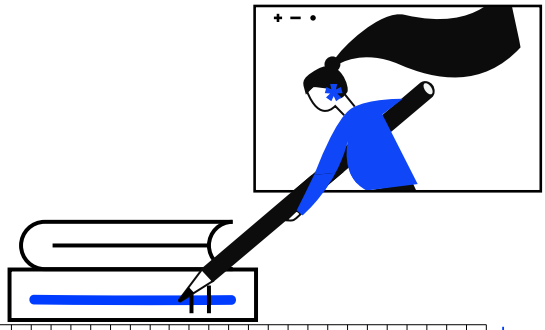
To keep up to date with any changes in these policies, we encourage you to view the latest version on the ADEK website: https://www.adek.gov.ae/en/Education-System/Coronavirus-COVID19

ADEK reserves the right to update the information in this guide at any time based on the latest information issued by federal and local authorities.

WHERE TO FIND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For the latest official COVID-19 information and developments in the UAE, please visit the following websites:

1. UAE's Ministry of Health and Prevention & Health Authorities (MOHAP):

   https://www.mohap.gov.ae/en/AwarenessCenter/Pages/COVID19-Information-Center.aspx

2. Abu Dhabi Department of Health: https://doh.gov.ae/covid-19