

DIGITAL POLICY

Introduction

At APS, we focus on creating a safe and modern digital environment that helps students learn and succeed. We believe using technology can boost both teaching-learning and the overall school operations. Our digital plan is adaptable and sustainable, meeting the changing needs of our community and the rapidly advancing technology environment while maintaining high educational standards. We aim to prepare every student for future challenges and support their success.

Aim

To ensure that our students become a responsible digital users/citizen through ethical engagement with the digital world.

I. Digital Strategy

a. Technology Deployment for Enhanced Learning and Inclusion:

We use technology to boost student learning, streamline operations, and ensure all students are included. We utilize MS Teams for efficient communication with students and parents, managing activities and assignments effectively. Use of other educational platforms provides extra learning resources to enrich the educational experience. Our computer labs are well-equipped, giving every student access to essential tools along with the devices devoted to support KG to Grade 12 learners, promoting an inclusive environment where students are respectful to one another and individual rights are protected.

MS Teams

Students:

- Communication
- Calendar for assignments
- Calls and plans
- Weekly plans
- Exam guidelines

Teachers and Staff:

- Meetings
- Internal School Announcements/Posts and policies
- Video conferences
- External training/workshops from ADEK
- Submission of learning resources
- Uploading of learning resources for the students

b. Student Digital Skills Development and Staff Training

Student Digital Skills Development:

- **Early Introduction to Coding:** Starting in Cycle 1, students are introduced to basic coding concepts using "Scratch," alongside foundational skills in MS Office applications. This early exposure helps build digital literacy from a young age.
- **Advanced Programming Skills:** By Cycle 3, students advance to programming with Python, developing more complex coding skills and preparing them for future technological challenges.
- **Digital Tool Proficiency:** Students regularly use Microsoft Teams to manage assignments, collaborate with peers, and communicate with teachers, enhancing their ability to navigate digital platforms effectively.

Staff Training:

- **Training:** Staff receive continuous training on how to use different digital platforms as an effective reading learning platform, ensuring that they can integrate technology seamlessly into their teaching.
- **ADEK Empowered trainings and workshops.**
- **MS Teams Mastery:** The school provides continuous professional development focused on maximizing the potential of Microsoft Teams in the teaching-learning process. This training helps educators create engaging, interactive, and well-organized digital classrooms.
- **Ongoing Support:** Regular feedback and peer support sessions are held to ensure that staff can continually improve their digital competencies and keep up with new features or updates in the tools they use.

c. Infrastructure, Technology Plans, and Security:

Infrastructure and Technology Plans:

- **Smart Board Integration:** The school has initiated the procurement of Smart boards for classrooms, building on the existing over-head projectors in each room.
- **Comprehensive Internet Connectivity:** The entire school premises are equipped with reliable internet connectivity, ensuring that both students and staff have consistent access to digital resources.
- **MPR/Meeting Room:** Equipped with over-head projectors and speakers for enhanced presentation.
- **Accessible Learning Devices:** Android devices equipped with internet connectivity for seamless learning experiences.
- **Computer Labs** – Equipped with high-speed internet, our workstations enable interactive learning and effective research, supporting both collaborative activities and individual study.

Security and Data Integrity:

- **Staff and Student Account Protection:** Each staff member and student receive a school account that requires a password of at least 8 alphanumeric characters, including a special character, with no repeated characters. Passwords must be updated regularly, and old passwords cannot be reused. It is essential to keep these passwords confidential to ensure the security of our digital environment. Additionally, multi-factor authentication is enabled for all users.
- **Firewall Protection:** The school's internet is safeguarded by a secure firewall that restricts access to untrusted online content, ensuring a safe digital environment for all users.

- **Secure Data Storage:** All digital files are securely stored on the school local server (Mostanadi), which is regularly maintained and updated to prevent data loss and unauthorized access.
- **IT-System Administration:** A dedicated IT-system administrator is in place to constantly update and monitor the security of all digital-related data. This proactive approach ensures the prevention of data loss and protection against malicious attacks, maintaining the integrity of the school's digital systems.
- **Forgotten/Compromised Accounts:** Staff and Parents can request an account recovery or password reset through a written request that will be sent through: <https://hd.aladhwa-sch.com/>

Staff, students, and guests are expected to use the school internet and technology responsibly to ensure security and protect against threats. All users are required to have antivirus software installed on their personal devices.

d. Future-Proofing and Resource Allocation:

Future-Proofing Measures:

- **Scalable Solutions:** Adopt cloud-based platforms like OneDrive for scalable storage solutions and NAS Server, allowing easy expansion as the school's needs grow.
- **Emerging Technologies Training:** Offer training on emerging technologies to prepare staff and students for future innovations.

External Providers and Products:

The school established a third-party risk assessment framework for selecting external IT service providers and products. This framework includes:

- **System Compatibility and Security:** All providers must ensure compatibility with our existing systems and maintain secure data management, in line with cybersecurity standards.
- **Service Reliability and Protection:** Vendors must provide robust protection against cyber threats and have reliable service delivery, including backup and recovery provisions.
- **Vendor Credibility and Compliance:** Providers must demonstrate financial stability, uphold a strong reputation, and comply with Federal Decree-Law No. (45) of 2021 on Personal Data Protection, as well as ADEK's copyright and data privacy policies.
- **Educational Quality and Appropriateness:** For learning applications, content must meet educational standards and be age-appropriate.

II. Responsible Usage and Digital Safeguarding

- **Software Usage:** All school-provided software must be used solely for educational purposes, in alignment with the school's curriculum and policies. Unauthorized copying, distribution, or modification of software is prohibited.
 - Microsoft Applications (Teams, Outlook, Office, and etc.)
 - Office 360 Online
 - KUTUBEE
 - Scratch
 - Python

- **Network and Internet Access:** The school's internet should be used responsibly for educational purposes. Accessing inappropriate content, downloading unauthorized files, or compromising network security is not allowed. Using VPNs to bypass security measures is prohibited.
- **Digital Services:** Use school digital services like email and learning platforms professionally and respectfully. Personal use should not interfere with schoolwork, and everyone must follow privacy and security rules.
- **Digital Devices:** School-issued devices must be treated with care and used responsibly. Follow guidelines for proper use, avoid unauthorized installations, and return devices in good condition.
- **Shared Devices:** Always log out and remove personal data after using shared devices. Use them considerately to keep them in good condition for others.
- **Protective Filtering:** Our school uses filtering systems to block inappropriate or harmful websites. This helps keep students safe while using school devices or networks.
- **Monitoring Systems:** We have a monitoring system to oversee online activities on the school's internet. This helps us detect and respond to potential risks, ensuring safe digital behavior. Our monitoring system is led by our Digital Wellbeing Committee that includes the following members:
 - **Head of Committee/ICT Middle Leader**
 - **Digital System Administrators**
 - **Vice Principal**
 - **Wellbeing Coordinator**
 - **Middle Leaders**
 - **ICT Teachers**

Artificial Intelligence (AI): It is rapidly-evolving technology that greatly affects our lives including education.

- With regards to AI, APS is committed to:
 - Promoting responsible and ethical use of AI technology in the school environment
 - Establish clear expectations for students, teachers, and staff regarding the use of AI.
 - Ensuring that the integration of AI enhances the educational experience and does not compromise privacy or security.
- **Responsible use of AI:** The primary goal is to improve learning outcomes and promote academic success.
- **Guidelines for AI Usage:**
 - **Students:**
 - Must be aware of the ethical considerations with regards with AI.
 - Which includes with AI-generated contents appropriately
 - Avoiding plagiarism by properly attributing AI-generated assistance in their work.
 - Actively engage with AI as a supplement to their learning and not substitute. (ie. AI can aid in research, data analysis, grammar and spell-checking, and even generate suggestions for improvement. However, it should never replace critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving skills that are the core objectives of education.)
 - Follow the school code of conduct and adhering of the school policy

- with using the AI technology.
- Misuse of AI technology for cheating or academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.
- **Staff:**
 - Integration into curriculum
 - APS encourages teachers to integrate AI into their curriculum when appropriate and beneficial for learning.
 - APS provide training and PDs about effective use of AI in the classroom.
 - Be responsible and ensure that they comply with the school policy when using AI.
 - Report any technical or ethical concern related to the use of AI.

II. Digital Incidents

What Constitutes a Digital Incident?

A digital incident happens when someone in the school community misuses digital technology. This includes breaking usage policies, accessing inappropriate content, engaging in improper online behavior or communication, cyberbullying, or any other violation of school rules in an online context.

School Response:

If a digital incident happens during school hours or within our digital policies, the school together with the Behavior Committee will step in to support the students and staff involved. This will follow relevant ADEK policies, like the ADEK Student Behavior Policy or Staff Wellbeing Policy. If needed, we will report the incident to ADEK and Abu Dhabi Police for further investigation.

Parental Responsibility

Parents play a vital role in preventing and managing digital incidents both during and after school hours by:

- Ensuring they have access to their child's MS Teams account and other digital platforms where incidents may occur.
- Guidance: Regularly discussing responsible digital behavior with their child, including the importance of respectful and safe online interactions.
- Promptly reporting any suspected digital misconduct or issues to the school for timely intervention.

Record Keeping:

Every digital incident will be thoroughly recorded, documented, and signed by the Principal. These records will be securely stored for auditing purposes, in compliance with the ADEK Records Policy, ensuring accountability and transparency in handling such incidents.

III. Digital Communications

We prioritize the privacy and rights of students and their families. We obtain written consent from parents before taking or sharing photos and videos of students, clearly stating how the media will be used. If parents do not consent, we ensure their child is not included in any published media. All digital media is stored securely, and only authorized school staff can use personal devices or accounts to record or share school content.

Social Website:

Our school maintains a dedicated and regularly updated website to serve as a central reference point for the school community.

School Website link: <https://aladhwa-sch.com/aal/>

The website features important information, including contact details, school services, fees (like transportation and optional activities), inspection reports, and overall student achievement data (or individual achievements with consent). It also includes the annual report in line with ADEK's Reporting Policy, relevant school policies for parents and students, and any other required content from ADEK.

Social Media Use:

- **Official Social Media Use:** In addition to the school portal, our school uses Facebook and Instagram to promote the school and to share important news, updates, and student achievements. A designated staff member is responsible for posting and moderating all content, ensuring that only appropriate, school-approved material is shared. This staff member is the only one authorized to manage and update the school's social media accounts.
 - **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/aladhwa.pvt>
 - **Instagram:** https://www.instagram.com/adhwaschool_official/
- **Content Monitoring and Moderation:** The appointed moderator monitors the school's social media pages, removes inappropriate or disrespectful content, and ensures all posts reflect the school's values and UAE cultural standards. We have procedures to prevent and address negative behaviours, like trolling or impersonating the school's accounts, to maintain a safe and respectful online environment for our community.
- **Students and Staff Behavioural Expectations:** Adhere to the school policy when using digital technologies.
 - Actions violating community standards include:
 - Cyberbullying
 - Harassment
 - Threats
 - Viewing, posting, or sharing inappropriate content
 - Immediate action will be taken by APS for violations.
 - Respect the privacy of others.
 - Avoid sharing copyrighted materials without authorization.
 - Breaches of this policy may lead to various consequences, including:
 - Report any violations or misuse immediately to the school office.
 - Consequences depend on the severity of the violation and specific circumstances.
 - Warnings
 - Notifications regarding inappropriate actions
 - Temporary suspension of the account
 - Temporary loss of internet access
 - Legal actions in case of breach of laws

These policies ensure that our digital communications are conducted responsibly and respectfully, safeguarding the privacy of our students and maintaining the integrity of our school's online presence.

Digital Device Consent form:

<p>Al Adhwa Private School Lic No. (402)</p>  <p>مدرسة الأضواء الخاصة ترخيص رقم (402)</p>			
Student Name:		Class:	
<p>I, the undersigned student, understand that I will have access to digital devices provided by Al Adhwa Private School for educational purposes. I agree to the following terms:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I will use digital devices for educational purposes only and will follow the school's digital technology policy.2. I understand that while my use will be supervised at school, I am also responsible for using these devices appropriately at home.3. I acknowledge that the school will monitor and filter inappropriate content but that no system is perfect.4. I understand that violating the school's digital technology policy may result in consequences, including loss of device privileges.5. I agree that APS is not liable for any loss or damage to personal data or devices during the use of school-provided digital devices. <p>By signing below, I give my consent to use digital devices under the terms outlined above.</p>			
Student Signature:			

For Implementation

To be reviewed annually by the Principal and Review Committee.


Ms. Amira Gafer Goraish
Al Adhwa Private School

