Approved by: Principal	Date: 30 January 2026

Last reviewed on:	Date: 26 January 2026

Next review due:	Date:22 June 2026

#	Description of Changes	Rev. No	Date of Issue
1	First Issue	00	21 June 24

ICS Vision
The "School of Choice" inspiring, challenging and empowering a 21st century learning community through an ethical and innovative education system.

ICS Mission
Provide a safe, friendly learning environment where lifelong learners follow an international curriculum which promotes academic excellence and nurtures key values and competencies in our global minded, future leaders.

Introduction

The International Community School (ICS) is committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and supportive learning environment that adheres to local cultural norms while promoting gender equality and educational excellence. As coeducation becomes a more common practice within the international school sector in Abu Dhabi, it is essential for ICS to provide clear guidelines on the organization of co educational activities, the gender of staff members in various roles, and the appropriate sharing of spaces. This policy outlines the requirements for maintaining a coeducational environment at ICS, ensuring compliance with ADEK regulations and supporting the school's mission to provide a high-quality, inclusive education.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for the implementation of coeducation at ICS. The policy ensures that the school meets all ADEK requirements regarding the sharing and separation of spaces according to gender, the appropriate gender of staff in different roles, and the overall organization of coeducational activities. It also aims to ensure that ICS provides a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all students, while respecting cultural considerations and maintaining the integrity of the educational experience.

Gender Status and Communication

ICS operates as a coeducational institution, where students of both genders learn together in shared spaces. This coeducational status is clearly communicated to all members of the school community through the school's website, handbooks, and other relevant documentation. In instances where the school's gender status varies by grade or cycle, this information is explicitly stated and approved by ADEK. For younger students in Cycle 1 (up to and including Grade 4/Year 5), ICS operates fully as a coeducational institution, allowing boys and girls to share classrooms and learning spaces. The school ensures that parents and students are fully informed of the school's gender status and any related policies.

Coeducation and Gender Separation

For students in Cycle 1, ICS allows full coeducation, with boys and girls interacting in the same classrooms and participating in the same activities. This approach aligns with ADEK guidelines, which permit coeducation for younger students. As students progress into Cycle 2 and Cycle 3, ICS adheres to specific guidelines on gender separation where necessary, particularly in activities such as physical education and swimming. The school ensures that these guidelines are followed meticulously to respect cultural norms while providing a comprehensive educational experience.

In cases where there may be a need to change the gender status of a class or grade, ICS follows a strict protocol. Any proposed change must be approved by ADEK, and the school must obtain majority consent from parents (more than 50%) before making any adjustments. This ensures that the preferences of the school community are respected and that any changes are made transparently and with full accountability. However, it is important to note that even with parent consent, certain activities, such as swimming for students in Grade 5/Year 6 and above, must remain gender-segregated in accordance with ADEK regulations.

Gender Restrictions for Staff

At ICS, the gender of staff members is carefully considered to align with cultural sensitivities and ADEK guidelines. In Kindergarten (KG), only female teachers and support staff are employed, ensuring that young children are taught and cared for by female staff members. This practice supports a nurturing environment for early learners and adheres to cultural expectations.

For other grades and cycles, there are no specific gender restrictions on teaching staff, except for physical education (PE) and swimming instructors. In PE and swimming classes, particularly from Grade 5/Year 6 onwards, the gender of the instructor must match the gender of the students. This means that female students are taught by female instructors and male students by male instructors. This approach is critical

in ensuring that students feel comfortable and respected during physical activities, which are an integral part of their physical and emotional development.

For coeducational PE classes in Cycle 1, ICS ensures that there are appropriate facilities, including separate changing rooms for boys and girls. These facilities are designed to maintain privacy and respect, ensuring that all students feel safe and comfortable. The school also adheres strictly to the guidelines regarding the separation of genders in changing rooms and other spaces where students may need to change clothes. These spaces are either gender-segregated or their usage is staggered to ensure that only one gender uses the space at a time.

Changing Rooms and Spaces

ICS provides separate changing rooms for male and female students, especially in activities that require changing into PE uniforms or swimwear. The school ensures that these spaces are secure, private, and used exclusively by one gender at any given time. In situations where students are required to change clothes to the level of undergarments or beyond (such as for dance performances or costume changes), ICS provides completely separate spaces to maintain the privacy and dignity of all students. Nudity is strictly prohibited throughout the campus, and the school educates students on modest changing practices to ensure compliance with this policy.

Prayer Rooms

ICS is committed to accommodating the religious practices of its students and staff by providing separate prayer rooms for male and female users. These prayer rooms are designed to be accessible, private, and respectful of religious practices. In Cycle 1, where space may be limited, ICS may allow the sharing of prayer rooms, provided that usage times are staggered to ensure that only one gender occupies the space at any given time. This arrangement allows the school to support the religious needs of its community while adhering to cultural expectations.

Gender Restrictions for Other Staff Roles

Beyond teaching staff, ICS follows ADEK guidelines regarding the gender of other staff members, such as bus supervisors, cleaners, and nurses. For students in Grade 4/Year 5 and below, female staff members are employed as bus supervisors and cleaners to ensure a comfortable and safe environment for younger children. For older students, the gender of staff members is matched to the gender of the students, particularly in roles that involve direct interaction, such as supervision and healthcare.

School nurses, while typically of the same gender as the students they care for, may sometimes be of the opposite gender. In such cases, ICS ensures that a third-party adult of the same gender as the student is present to respect the student's privacy and comfort. This practice aligns with ADEK's requirements and ensures that all students receive appropriate care in a manner that respects their cultural and personal sensitivities.

Policy Awareness and Compliance

ICS is dedicated to ensuring that all members of the school community, including students, staff, parents, and visitors, are aware of and understand the coeducation policy. The school organizes regular awareness sessions to educate the community about the guidelines and expectations outlined in this policy. These sessions help to ensure that everyone is informed about the school's coeducational practices and the reasons behind them, fostering a culture of respect and inclusion.

This coeducation policy is effective from the start of the Academic Year 2024/25, with full compliance required by the beginning of AY 2025/26. ICS takes its compliance obligations seriously and understands that failure to adhere to this policy may result in legal accountability and penalties as stipulated by ADEK regulations. The school is committed to maintaining a coeducational environment that is respectful, safe, and conducive to learning, in full alignment with the cultural and educational standards of Abu Dhabi.

Review and Updates

ICS recognizes that educational practices and cultural expectations may evolve over time, and as such, this policy is subject to regular review and updates. The school will conduct annual reviews of the coeducation policy to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in meeting the needs of the school community. Any updates to the policy will be communicated to all stakeholders through the school's official channels, ensuring transparency and ongoing compliance with ADEK guidelines.

Conclusion

The ICS Coeducation Policy is designed to create a balanced, respectful, and culturally sensitive environment that supports the academic and personal growth of all students. By adhering to this policy, ICS ensures that its coeducational practices align with ADEK regulations and reflect the school's commitment to inclusivity, safety, and excellence in education. The school's approach to coeducation fosters a learning environment where students of all genders can thrive, supported by staff who are dedicated to upholding the highest standards of care and respect.