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Welcome to International Community School (ICS)

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the International Community School (ICS) family. We are thrilled to have you as partners in your child's educational journey. This handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to understanding our school's policies, procedures, and expectations, ensuring that your child receives the best possible education in a safe, supportive, and culturally respectful environment.

At ICS, we are committed to fostering a love for learning while nurturing the individual strengths of each student. Our dedicated faculty and staff work tirelessly to create a stimulating, inclusive, and engaging atmosphere that encourages students to reach their full potential. We believe that a strong partnership between home and school is essential for student success, and we are excited to work with you to support your child's academic, social, and personal growth.

This handbook provides valuable information about our academic programs, attendance policies, code of conduct, and the many services and resources available to our students and families. It also outlines the ways you can get involved in our school community, whether through volunteering, attending events, or participating in our Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). We encourage you to read through this handbook and keep it as a reference throughout the school year.

We look forward to a successful and rewarding year together. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. Your involvement and feedback are vital to our continued growth and improvement.

Thank you for choosing ICS. Together, let's make this a memorable and impactful year for your child.

Regards,

Dr. Ziad Aoudi

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1. School Vision and Mission

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

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

2. School Governance

ICS is governed by a dedicated Board of Trustees, responsible for setting the strategic direction of the school and ensuring it meets the highest standards of education. The Board includes parent representatives who act as liaisons between the parent community and the school administration.

3. Admission and Enrollment

Admission Policy
ICS follows an inclusive admissions policy that prioritizes the educational needs of all students. We welcome applications from students of all backgrounds and abilities, ensuring equitable access to our educational programs.

Enrollment Process
To enroll your child at ICS, please complete the online application form and submit all required documents, including previous school reports, identification documents, and any relevant medical or educational assessments. The admission process also includes an interview and placement assessment.

4. Parent-School Agreement

Before enrolling your child, you are required to sign the ICS Parent-School Agreement. This agreement is a binding document that outlines the responsibilities and expectations of both parents and the school in supporting your child's education. It includes:

- **Acceptance of All School Policies**: By signing the agreement, you acknowledge that you have read and agreed to all school policies, including those related to behavior, attendance, punctuality, academic integrity, and health and safety.
- **Commitment to Supporting Learning**: Parents agree to support their child's learning at home, ensuring that homework is completed, and that their child is prepared for school each day.
- **Ensuring Regular Attendance and Punctuality**: Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Consistent attendance and punctuality are crucial for academic success and are monitored closely by the school.
- **Adherence to the School's Code of Conduct**: Parents commit to adhering to the school's Code of Conduct, which includes guidelines for respectful communication, cultural sensitivity, and appropriate behavior on school premises.

5. Parent Code of Conduct

At ICS, we expect all parents to adhere to a high standard of conduct to maintain a positive and respectful school environment. The Parent Code of Conduct includes:

- **Respect for the School's Vision and Values**: Parents are expected to uphold and support the school's vision, mission, and values in all interactions with the school community.
- **Positive and Respectful Communication**: All communication with school staff, students, and other parents must be conducted in a respectful and professional manner. This includes both in-person interactions and online communication.
- **Support for School Policies**: Parents must ensure that their children adhere to all school policies, including those related to attendance, punctuality, uniform, behavior, and academic honesty. Parents are also expected to reinforce these policies at home.
- **Cultural Sensitivity**: ICS is a diverse community that respects the cultural norms and values of the UAE. Parents are expected to dress modestly when on school premises, refrain from using inappropriate language, and ensure that their behavior reflects the cultural values of the host country.
- **Responsibility for Attendance and Punctuality**: Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Absences must be reported to the school in advance, and parents must ensure that their child is well-rested and prepared for the school day.
- **Uniform Compliance**: Parents must ensure that their child wears the correct school uniform every day and that it is clean, neat, and in good repair. The uniform policy is detailed later in this handbook.
- **Social Media Responsibility**: Parents are expected to use social media responsibly, refraining from posting defamatory or culturally insensitive content about the school, staff, or other students. Any concerns should be addressed directly with the school rather than on public platforms.
- **Engagement in School Activities**: Parents are encouraged to actively participate in school activities, volunteer opportunities, and parent-teacher meetings. This engagement helps to build a strong school community and supports student success.

6. Communication Protocols

Effective communication between parents and the school is crucial for your child's success. ICS provides multiple channels for communication:

- **Email**: For formal communication with teachers and administration, including progress updates, attendance inquiries, and school announcements.
- **Parent Portal**: An online platform where parents can access their child's academic progress, attendance records, and school announcements. The portal is updated regularly and is an essential tool for staying informed.
- **Newsletters**: Newsletters are sent out to keep parents informed about upcoming events, important dates, and news from the school.
- **Parent-Teacher Meetings**: Scheduled meetings throughout the year provide an opportunity for parents to discuss their child's progress, address any concerns, and set goals for improvement.
- **Emergency Communication**: In the event of an emergency, ICS uses SMS and phone calls to notify parents immediately. Please ensure that your contact details are up-to-date to receive these notifications.

7. School Calendar

The school calendar is published at the start of each academic year and includes all important dates, including term dates, public holidays, examination periods, and school events. It is available on the school website and parent portal.

8. Daily Schedule and Attendance

School Hours

- The school day begins at 7:45 AM and ends at 2:30 PM from Monday to Thursday.
- The school day begins at 7:45 AM and ends at 12:00 pm PM on Friday
- Students should arrive by 7:40 AM and be picked up no later than 2:30pm.

Attendance Policy
Regular attendance is essential for your child's academic success. The school closely monitors attendance and punctuality, as both are critical to maintaining academic progress.

- **Reporting Absences**: If your child will be absent, please notify the school by email by 7:30 AM on the day of the absence. Absences due to illness require a note from a parent or a medical certificate if the absence exceeds two days.
- **Excused Absences**: These include illness, medical appointments, family emergencies, and religious observances. Other absences must be pre-approved by the school administration.
- **Unexcused Absences**: Absences for reasons such as vacations during school time or non-emergency family events are considered unexcused and may affect your child's academic standing.
- **Punctuality**: Students are expected to arrive at school on time. Late arrivals disrupt the learning environment and may result in disciplinary action if habitual. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child arrives at school before the start of the school day.

Consequences for Poor Attendance
Consistent attendance and punctuality are key to academic success. The school has a tiered response to poor attendance and punctuality, including:

- **Warning Letters**: Issued after three unexcused absences or consistent tardiness.
- **Parent Meetings**: Scheduled to discuss attendance issues and develop an improvement plan.
- **Referral to ADEK**: In cases of chronic absenteeism, the school may refer the matter to ADEK for further action.

9. Uniform Requirements

ICS requires all students to wear the school uniform as a way of promoting unity, discipline, and pride in the school. The uniform policy is as follows:

Boys

- **Regular Uniform**: White ICS Shirt and Beige Pants
- **PE Uniform**: Regular Uniform

Girls

- **Regular Uniform**:
- **PE Uniform**:

General Guidelines

- **Neatness**: Uniforms must be clean, pressed, and worn neatly. Shoes should be polished, and all students must maintain a tidy appearance.
- **Jewelry**: Minimal jewelry is allowed. Girls may wear small stud earrings, but no other jewelry is permitted. Boys are not allowed to wear earrings.
- **Hair**: Hair must be kept clean and neat. Extreme hairstyles or unnatural hair colors are not permitted.
- **Makeup**: Students are not allowed to wear makeup or nail polish.
- **Head Coverings**: Headscarves and other cultural head coverings are allowed, provided they are in school colors (white, navy blue, or black).

Compliance
Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child adheres to the uniform policy. Failure to comply with the uniform policy may result in disciplinary action, including being sent home to change.

10. Health and Safety

The health and safety of our students are our top priority. ICS has implemented comprehensive health and safety policies, including:

- **Immunization**: All students must be up-to-date with their immunizations. The school nurse manages the immunization records in collaboration with the Department of Health (DoH). Parents must provide updated immunization records at the start of each school year.
- **Medical Conditions**: Please inform the school of any medical conditions your child may have. The school nurse will work with you to develop an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) if necessary. This plan will be reviewed annually or as needed.
- **Healthy Eating**: ICS promotes healthy eating habits. We encourage parents to provide balanced meals and snacks for their children and adhere to the school's food safety guidelines. The school canteen also offers healthy meal options that comply with ADEK's Healthy Eating and Food Safety Policy.
- **Emergency Procedures**: ICS conducts regular fire drills and emergency evacuation exercises to ensure that students and staff are prepared in the event of an emergency. The school's emergency procedures are reviewed and updated annually.

11. Behavior and Discipline

ICS maintains a positive school environment through a well-defined behavior management system. The Student Code of Conduct outlines the expectations for student behavior, including:

- **Respect for Others**: Students are expected to treat their peers, teachers, and all members of the school community with respect and kindness.

- **Responsibility**: Students should take responsibility for their actions and be accountable for their behavior. This includes following school rules, completing assignments on time, and participating actively in class.
- **Integrity**: Academic honesty is paramount. Students must complete their work independently and avoid any form of cheating or plagiarism. The school has a strict policy against academic dishonesty, and violations will be dealt with seriously.
- **Consequences for Misbehavior**: Disciplinary actions are applied consistently and fairly, with a focus on corrective measures rather than punishment. Consequences for misbehavior may include detention, loss of privileges, or suspension, depending on the severity of the infraction.

12. Curriculum and Assessment

ICS follows an international curriculum designed to meet the diverse needs of our student body. Our curriculum emphasizes academic excellence, critical thinking, and global citizenship.

Curriculum Overview
The curriculum at ICS is broad and balanced, covering core subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science, Arabic and Social Studies, as well as arts, physical education, and technology. The curriculum is designed to develop well-rounded students who are prepared for the challenges of the future.

Assessment Policy
Assessment at ICS is ongoing and includes a combination of formative and summative assessments. Parents receive regular updates on their child's progress through:

- **Progress Reports**: Issued at the end of each term, detailing academic performance, effort, and areas for improvement.
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences**: Scheduled after each reporting period to discuss your child's progress, address any concerns, and set goals for future learning.
- **Standardized Testing**: ICS participates in international standardized assessments to benchmark student progress against global standards. Results are shared with parents and used to inform instruction.

13. Inclusion and Special Educational Needs

ICS is committed to providing an inclusive education that meets the needs of all students, including those with additional learning needs. Our Inclusion Policy ensures:

- **Documented Learning Plans (DLPs)**: Developed for students requiring additional support, outlining specific goals, strategies, and accommodations. These plans are reviewed regularly and adjusted as needed to ensure that students receive the appropriate level of support.
- **Specialist Services**: Available for students who need extra assistance, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, or psychological counseling. These services are provided in collaboration with parents and are tailored to meet the unique needs of each student.
- **Parental Involvement**: Parents are actively involved in the development and review of their child's ISP and are kept informed of their progress. Regular meetings with the Inclusion Team ensure that parents are fully engaged in their child's education.

14. Student Wellbeing and Mental Health

The wellbeing of our students is central to our mission at ICS. We provide a supportive environment that promotes physical, emotional, and mental health through:

- **Wellbeing Programs**: Activities and workshops designed to promote resilience, stress management, and healthy lifestyles. These programs are integrated into the school curriculum and are designed to support the holistic development of each student.
- **Counseling Services**: Available to all students, with referrals made by teachers or parents if needed. The school counselor works with students to address any personal, social, or academic issues that may be affecting their wellbeing. Parental consent is required for ongoing counseling services.
- **Bullying Prevention**: ICS has a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying. All reports of bullying are taken seriously and addressed promptly. The school provides education and resources to prevent bullying and to support students who have been affected.

15. Extracurricular Activities (ECAs)

ICS offers a wide range of extracurricular activities that complement the academic curriculum and provide opportunities for students to explore their interests. These include:

- **Sports Teams**: Football, basketball, swimming, and more. Participation in sports helps students develop teamwork, discipline, and physical fitness.
- **Arts and Culture**: Drama club, choir, visual arts, and dance. These activities foster creativity and self-expression.
- **Academic Clubs**: Debate club, science club, math club, and robotics. These clubs encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and intellectual curiosity.
- **Community Service**: Opportunities for students to engage in community projects and volunteer work. Community service is an important part of the ICS experience, teaching students the value of giving back to society.

Parents are encouraged to support their child's participation in ECAs and are welcome to volunteer to assist with or lead activities.

16. Transportation Services

ICS provides a safe and reliable bus service for students. The Transportation Policy includes:

- **Bus Routes**: Information on available routes and pick-up/drop-off points. Bus routes are designed to accommodate the needs of our students and ensure timely transportation to and from school.
- **Safety Protocols**: All buses are equipped with safety features, and students are supervised by a bus monitor. Safety on the bus is a top priority, and students are expected to follow the rules set by the bus monitor.
- **Parental Responsibilities**: Parents are responsible for ensuring their child is at the pick-up point on time and for notifying the school of any changes to their child's transportation needs. Timeliness is crucial to maintaining the schedule and ensuring the safety of all students.

17. Digital Learning and E-Safety

In today's digital age, it is crucial to ensure that students are safe online. The ICS Digital Learning and E-Safety Policy includes:

- **Responsible Use Policy**: Guidelines for appropriate use of school-provided devices and internet access. Students are expected to use technology responsibly and for educational purposes only.
- **E-Safety Education**: Programs to educate students about online safety, digital citizenship, and the risks associated with the internet. These programs are integrated into the curriculum and are designed to empower students to navigate the digital world safely.
- **Parental Involvement**: Parents are encouraged to monitor their child's online activities at home and to engage in discussions about responsible internet use. The school provides resources and training sessions for parents on how to support their child's digital learning and ensure their safety online.

18. Parent Involvement and Volunteering

Parent involvement is highly valued at ICS. There are many ways for parents to get involved, including:

- **Parent Council**: A platform for parents to voice their opinions and contribute to school decision-making. The Parent Council meets regularly and works closely with the school administration to represent the interests of the parent community.
- **Volunteering Opportunities**: Parents can volunteer in classrooms, assist with events, or lead extracurricular activities. Volunteering is a great way to be involved in your child's education and to contribute to the school community.
- **School Events**: Parents are invited to attend and participate in a variety of school events, from cultural celebrations to academic showcases. These events provide an opportunity for parents to engage with the school community and support their child's learning.

19. Fees and Financial Information

Tuition Fees

ICS operates on a fee-based system, with tuition fees payable at the start of each term. A detailed fee schedule is provided at the beginning of the academic year and includes information on tuition, transportation, and any additional fees for specialized services.

Payment Methods

Fees can be paid via bank transfer, credit card, or cheque. The school provides multiple payment options to accommodate families.

Late Payment Policy

Late payments may incur penalties, and failure to pay fees on time could result in the suspension of services or withholding of reports. The school's finance office is available to discuss payment plans or any financial concerns parents may have.

20. Emergency Procedures

ICS has comprehensive emergency procedures in place to ensure the safety of students and staff. These include:

- **Fire Drills**: Regularly scheduled to ensure all students know the evacuation routes and procedures. Fire drills are conducted at least once per term.
- **Lockdown Procedures**: In case of a security threat, the school can initiate a lockdown to protect students and staff. Lockdown drills are practiced to ensure that everyone knows what to do in the event of an emergency.
- **Medical Emergencies**: The school nurse is available to handle medical emergencies, and parents will be notified immediately if their child requires further medical attention. The school has procedures in place for responding to a wide range of medical emergencies.

21. Cultural Considerations and Respect for UAE Values

ICS is committed to fostering a culturally inclusive environment that respects the values and traditions of the UAE. Parents are expected to:

- **Dress Modestly**: When on school premises, parents should dress in a manner that reflects the cultural norms of the UAE.
- **Respect UAE Laws and Customs**: All members of the school community, including parents, are expected to adhere to UAE laws and customs, both on and off school grounds.
- **Promote Cultural Sensitivity**: Parents should encourage their children to respect and appreciate the diverse cultures represented at ICS. This includes celebrating cultural events, participating in multicultural activities, and demonstrating respect for others' beliefs and traditions.

22. Linked Policies

This handbook is linked to several other ICS and ADEK policies, including:

- **Admissions Policy**
- **Health and Safety Policy**
- **Behavior and Discipline Policy**
- **Inclusion Policy**
- **Digital Learning and E-Safety Policy**
- **Student Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy**
- **Compliance Policy**
- **Records Policy**
- **Safeguarding Policy**

23. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: How can I contact my child's teacher?
A: You can contact your child's teacher via email or through the parent portal. Teachers are also available for meetings during parent-teacher conferences.

Q: What should I do if my child is sick and cannot attend school?
A: Please inform the school by calling the supervisor or sending an email to the school's attendance officer. If the absence is extended, a medical certificate may be required.

Q: How can I get involved in the school community?
A: There are many ways to get involved, including joining the Parent Council, volunteering for school events, and attending parent workshops. Please contact the school office for more information.

24. Contact Information

Main Office
Phone: +971 2633 8181
Email: br2info@icschools.ae
Website: https://alfalah.icschools.ae/