

Guidance on the Implementation of the UAE National Anthem Observance Policy

For Dubai's Private Schools and Early Childhood Centres

June 2026

1. Introduction

This document accompanies the Policy and provides practical guidance for implementing the Standards for UAE National Anthem Observance in Dubai's Private Schools and Early Childhood Centres (ECCs) regulated by KHDA.

All mandatory requirements take effect on September 1, 2026.

Date	Milestone
June 2026	Policy and Guidance issued
September 1, 2026	Mandatory commencement of all standards

The Policy will be reviewed annually following its first year of implementation. Compliance checks may also be conducted throughout the academic year.

2. Core Requirements

Two distinct and equally mandatory requirements apply to every operational day:

Daily Observance

The UAE National Anthem must be played every operational day, either through group assembly or via PA announcement in classrooms. Schools and ECCs must not play the national anthem of any country other than the UAE.

Weekly Group Assembly

Every child and student must participate in a shared physical gathering for the anthem at least once per week. Daily PA-based playing does not substitute for this requirement.

3. Approved Delivery Models

Schools and ECCs must adopt one of the four approved models and apply it consistently for at least one full term:

Model	Description
Whole-School / ECC Assembly (for children aged three years and above)	All students within scope and staff gather in a single shared space. For ECCs, this means children in FS1/Pre-K, FS2/KG1, and Year 1/KG2 only. The simplest model where space allows. A weekly gathering satisfies the weekly requirement, while daily observance still applies every school day.
Phase-by-Phase Assembly	Each phase (e.g. Primary, Secondary) gathers on a designated day, ensuring every student attends at least once per week.
Rotational Model	Year groups or grades rotate through a shared assembly space on different days. Each cohort participates at least once per week.
Divisional / Section Model	Fixed groups (e.g. by gender or curriculum stream) each hold their own weekly assembly. Suitable where campus layout or school size makes a combined assembly impractical.

Additional provisions:

- **Multiple Shifts:** When more than one shift operates, the anthem must be played at the start of each shift, and the Assembly Plan must reflect this.
- **Distance Learning (Online/temporary remote delivery):** The anthem must be played at the start of the first scheduled period each day. The weekly assembly requirement does not apply during full online delivery; it resumes from the first day in-person teaching returns.
- **Exceptional circumstances:** Where observance cannot safely take place (e.g. emergency, evacuation, lockdown, severe operational disruption), the institution must record the reason and resume normal observance at the earliest safe opportunity.

4. Participation and Conduct

Clear expectations apply to all children and students during observance, with inclusive provisions that ensure every child/student can participate meaningfully, regardless of ability or age.

- **All Must Participate:** All children/students on the premises at the time of congregation must participate in line with the institution's chosen format.
- **Standing, Stillness, and Facing the Flag:** During the anthem, whether at assembly or via PA, children/students must stand, remain still, and face the UAE flag where displayed. Singing along is encouraged.
- **Students of Determination:** Students or children with a disability, mobility need, health condition, additional learning need, or sensory sensitivity must be supported to participate in a way appropriate to their needs, remaining included within the wider community rather than in separate or segregated arrangements.
- **Early Years (FS1/Pre K, FS2/KG1 and Year 1/KG2):** Age-appropriate, attentive, and calm engagement is the standard; formal standing is not expected. Compliance is shown through respectful participation appropriate to the child's stage, rather than through formal posture or singing accuracy.

5. Staff Supervision and Induction

Schools and ECCs must ensure staff are properly inducted and prepared to support safe, respectful observance.

Supervision Requirements:

- All staff must stand respectfully during the anthem, wherever they are on the premises.
- Sufficient staff must be deployed to supervise the congregation safely, with risk assessment and emergency planning in place.
- Supervision must account for students/children of determination.

Induction Requirements:

- New staff joining at any point in the year must be inducted on observance expectations within their first week in post, covering supervisory role, conduct standards, and inclusivity arrangements.

- Schools are encouraged to include observance expectations in staff onboarding packs and handbooks.

6. Institutional Events

An Event is a formal occasion organised at institutional level. The UAE National Anthem must be played at the start of every institutional event, including virtual and hybrid events.

Events include (but are not limited to):

- UAE National Day (Eid Al Etihad), Flag Day, and Commemoration Day (Martyrs' Day) observances
- School plays, choir performances, and open days
- Sports days, International days and graduation ceremonies
- Virtual or hybrid versions of the above

Events do NOT include:

- Parent-teacher conferences
- Classroom visits
- Bake sales
- Routine informal gatherings.

Standards That Apply to All Events

- **All Attendees Must Stand:** All individuals present, including students, staff, parents, suppliers and visitors, must stand respectfully, remain still, and give their full attention for the duration of the anthem.
- **Multiple Events in One Week:** Where a school or ECC hosts more than one event in the same week, the anthem must be played at the start of each.
- **Virtual and Hybrid Events:** Where an event is conducted virtually or in a hybrid format, including online graduations or assemblies, the anthem must be played at the start of the event.

Schools and ECCs are encouraged to display the UAE flag and the words of the National Anthem at the point of observance to reinforce the experience.

7. Required Documentation

Schools and ECCs must maintain two key documents and make them available to KHDA on request. Non-compliance will be addressed in accordance with current KHDA regulations.

Assembly Plan

A documented schedule of group congregations for the academic year. It must include:

- Congregation format (whole-school, phase, rotational, or divisional/section).
- Congregation frequency and schedule for the academic year.
- Supervision arrangements, including risk assessment and emergency planning.
- Adaptations for students with disabilities, mobility needs, or additional learning needs.
- Any change to the adopted format, documented and communicated before it takes effect.

Communication and Induction Protocol

A written document setting out how observance expectations are communicated to staff, students, and parents. It must address:

- How observance expectations, including conduct standards, delivery format, participation requirements, and inclusivity arrangements, are communicated to all stakeholders.
- The significance of the UAE National Anthem and the conduct expected during its observance, with communication records retained and available to KHDA on request.
- Communication of the protocol to all parents and students at the start of each academic year.
- Induction of all new staff within their first week in post.
- Periodic (annual) review of the protocol.

KHDA may review the Assembly Plan, the Communication and Induction Protocol, the school or ECC timetable, event schedules, or equivalent documentation.

These documents do not require KHDA approval, provided they are aligned with the Policy before being shared with their communities. Schools and ECCs should communicate the documents to staff, students, and parents as soon as they are finalised.

Appendix A: Compliance with the Policy

Observance	
Daily observance	Anthem is played every operational day via assembly or PA and is confirmed with staff against the timetable. Multi-shift institutions play it at the start of each shift.
Weekly group congregation	A weekly group assembly runs; the Assembly Plan schedules every student to attend at least once a week.
Events	The anthem opens every school and ECC event, including virtual and hybrid.
Conduct and Inclusion	
Student conduct	Respectful and age-appropriate; standing, stillness, and facing the flag where physically able; calm, quiet engagement is sufficient for early years.
Reasonable adjustments	Appropriate arrangements must be in place to support the participation of students/children of determination. Reasonable adjustments made to meet their needs will not be regarded as non-compliance with this Policy.
Parents and visitors	Parents and visitors must stand respectfully, remain attentive, and observe appropriate decorum throughout the playing of the National Anthem. They should refrain from using mobile devices, engaging in conversations, or undertaking activities that may distract or undermine the respectful observance of the anthem.
Documentation and Records	
Assembly Plan	A current plan is available on request, covering schedule, format, supervision, and adaptations.

**Communication &
Induction Protocol**

Available; parents and students informed at the start of the year; covers anthem significance and expected conduct with records retained; new staff inducted within one week.

Appendix B: The UAE National Anthem — Lyrics, Pronunciation, and Meaning

عيشي بلادي — Ishy Biladi

Understanding the words turns the anthem into something students carry with them, connecting them to the values, history, and identity it expresses. This table is offered as a resource for schools and ECCs wishing to build that understanding within their community.

Phonetic (English)	Arabic	English Translation
Ishy Biladi, Asha Ettihadu Emaratina	عيشي بلادي عاش اتحاد إماراتنا	Live my country, the unity of our Emirates lives
Ishti Lisha'bin, Dinuhul Islamu, Hadyuhul Qur'an	عشت لشعب دينه الإسلام هديه القرآن	You have lived for a nation whose religion is Islam and guide is Quran
Hassantuk Bismillah ya Watan	حصنتك باسم الله يا وطن	I made you stronger in God's name, oh homeland
Biladi, Biladi, Biladi, Biladi	بلادي بلادي بلادي بلادي	My country, my country, my country, my country
Hamakil Ilahu Shurur al-Zaman	حماك الإله شرور الزمن	God has protected you from the evils of the time
Aqsmna an Nabni Na'mal	أقسمنا أن نبني نعمل	We have sworn to build and work
Na'mal Nukhlis, Na'mal Nukhlis	نعمل نخلص نعمل نخلص	Work sincerely, work sincerely

Phonetic (English)	Arabic	English Translation
Mahma 'Ishna Nukhlis, Nukhlis	مهما عشنا نخلص نخلص	As long as we live, we will be sincere, sincere
Dama Al-Amanu wa 'Asha al-'Alam ya Emaratina	دام الأمان وعاش العلم يا إماراتنا	The safety has lasted and the flag has lived, oh our Emirates
Ramza al-'Urubati	رمز العروبة	The Symbol of Arabism
Kullana Nafdika bil-Dima'i Narwika	كلنا نفيديك بالدماء نرويكي	We all sacrifice for you, we supply you with our blood
Nafdika bil-Arwah ya Watan	نفيديك بالأرواح يا وطن	We sacrifice with our souls, oh homeland

Appendix C – Frequently Asked Questions

Implementation, Daily Observance and Weekly Assembly

Q: When do we need to start implementing the National Anthem policy if we are on an April academic calendar?

A: All educational institutions must begin implementing this Policy from the first instructional day on or after **September 1, 2026**, regardless of their academic calendar. Institutions operating on an April-start academic calendar that are already in session at that time must commence implementation on September 1, 2026, or the next instructional day thereafter.

Q: We already play the anthem daily over the PA. Do we still need a weekly group assembly?

A: Yes. Daily PA-based playing satisfies the Daily Observance requirement but does not substitute for the Weekly Group Assembly. These are two distinct, complementary requirements. Every student must also have the opportunity to participate in a shared physical gathering at least once per week.

Q: We hold a weekly whole-school assembly that already includes the anthem. Does that count?

A: Yes, provided every student has the opportunity to participate. The format must be documented in your Assembly Plan, and the chosen model must be applied consistently for at least one full term. Daily observance (via assembly or PA) is still required on every other school day.

Q: Our school runs more than one shift. Does each shift need its own observance?

A: Yes, the anthem must be played at the start of each shift so that every student cohort observes it. Your Assembly Plan must reflect the arrangements for all shifts.

Q: What happens during periods of distance or online learning?

A: During distance learning (whether permanent or temporary), the anthem must be played at the start of the first scheduled period of each school day for all synchronous sessions. The weekly group assembly requirement does not apply during distance learning. Once in-person teaching resumes, all standards apply from the next school day.

Q: What if an emergency or exceptional circumstance prevents observance of the National Anthem?

A: Where observance cannot safely take place due to an emergency, evacuation, lockdown, or severe disruption, record the reason in the Assembly Plan and resume normal observance at the earliest safe opportunity.

Participation and Conduct

Q: What if a student cannot stand due to a medical condition, disability or additional support needs?

A: The student must be supported to participate in a manner appropriate to their individual needs; this may include seated or supported participation. Schools must put reasonable adjustments in place (such as supported seating, access to a quieter area, or reduced exposure to crowds) and document these arrangements. Adjustments must preserve the student's dignity and inclusion within the wider community, must not result in separate or segregated observance, and will not be treated as non-compliance.

Q: What is expected of young children?

A: Age-appropriate engagement is the standard. Being still and calm throughout the anthem is sufficient. Children in FS1/Pre-K, FS2/KG1, and Year 1/KG2 are not expected to stand in formal attention, sing accurately, or maintain sustained stillness beyond developmental expectations. Compliance is demonstrated through respectful, calm participation appropriate to the child's age and stage.

Q: What is expected of parents and visitors who are on the premises during the observance of the National Anthem?

A: Parents and visitors present on the premises during the playing of the National Anthem must stand respectfully and give their full attention for its duration. This expectation applies to all individuals on the premises at the time of the observance, including those who may be present only briefly, such as parents accompanying children to class. All individuals should pause their activities and remain respectful until the National Anthem has concluded.

Q: Are students encouraged to sing the anthem?

A: Yes. Students are encouraged to sing along and to know the lyrics and their meaning. However, singing is not a formal requirement, and observance is not assessed based on participation in singing.

Staff

Q: What are the expectations for staff during observance?

A: All staff must stand respectfully during the anthem wherever they are on the premises. Schools must deploy sufficient staff to supervise congregation safely, including appropriate support for students with disabilities or additional learning needs.

Q: When must new staff be inducted on observance expectations?

A: All new staff joining at any point in the academic year must be inducted within their first week in post. Induction must cover their supervisory role, conduct standards, and inclusivity arrangements. Schools are encouraged to include this in onboarding packs and staff handbooks.

Events

Q: Which events require the anthem to be played?

A: The anthem must be played at the start of every school event, including school plays, open days, sports days, international day, graduation ceremonies, and any gathering held in observance of UAE National Day, Commemoration Day (Martyrs' Day), or Flag Day. This includes virtual and hybrid versions of these events. When multiple events are held in the same week, the anthem must be played at the start of each.

Q: Which does not count as an institutional event?

A: Routine informal activities and gatherings do not qualify as events. Examples include parent-teacher conferences, a parent visiting a classroom, bake sales, and routine internal activities.

Documentation

Q: Do our Assembly Plan and Communication and Induction Protocol need to be approved by KHDA before we share them?

A: No. These are your own documents to develop and share directly with your staff, students, and parents. There is no need to submit them to KHDA for approval. You simply keep them up to date and make them available to KHDA upon request. You may communicate them to your community as soon as they are in place.

Q: What documentation will KHDA review for compliance?

A: KHDA may review any of the following: the Assembly Plan, the Communication and Induction Protocol. Compliance will be monitored through KHDA's existing mechanisms, and non-compliance will be addressed in accordance with current KHDA regulations.

Q: How often must the Communication and Induction Protocol be reviewed?

A: The protocol must be reviewed at least annually. Observance expectations must be communicated to all parents and students at the start of each academic year, and all new staff must be inducted within their first week.