Policy: Standards for UAE National Anthem Observance in Dubai's Private Educational Institutions

Early Childhood Centres, Schools, Higher Education Institutions, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, and Training Institutes

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1. Purpose

This Policy establishes standards for observing the UAE National Anthem across all educational institutions regulated by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in Dubai. It sets out requirements applicable to Early Childhood Centres (ECCs), private schools, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutes, and Training Institutes, ensuring a consistent and respectful approach to National Anthem observance across Dubai's private education sector and clarifying institutional obligations.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all educational institutions licensed, permitted, or regulated by KHDA in Dubai, which includes:

- Early Childhood Centres (ECCs)
- Private Schools
- Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) based in free zones
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutes
- Training Institutes

Section 6 sets out the standards applicable to ECCs (covering FS1/Pre K, FS2/KG1, and Year 1/KG2, for children aged three years and above) and to private schools. These standards apply regardless of the mode of delivery, whether in-person, fully online, or temporarily online.

Section 7 sets out the standards applicable to HEIs, TVET Institutes, and Training Institutes. These standards apply in respect of in-person provision.

This Policy is supported by accompanying guidance documents that provide sector-specific implementation guidance to assist institutions in meeting the requirements set out in this Policy.

3. Legislative Alignment

This Policy is in line with the regulatory requirements under Law No. (2) of 2021 Concerning the Knowledge and Human Development Authority and is aligned with the legislative requirements applicable to private educational institutions in Dubai, including the following:

- Federal Decree-Law No. 18 of 2020 on Private Education
- Executive Council Resolution No. (21) of 2011 Regulating Higher Education and Scientific Research Institutions in the Emirate of Dubai and its amendments
- Executive Council Resolution No. (50) of 2015 Regulating Training Institutes in the Emirate of Dubai
- Executive Council Resolution No. (2) of 2017 Regulating Private Schools in the Emirate of Dubai
- Executive Council Resolution No. (35) of 2020 Regulating Early Childhood Centres in the Emirate of Dubai
- Executive Council Resolution No. (30) of 2021 Regulating Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the Emirate of Dubai

4. Strategic Alignment

This Policy is aligned with Dubai's strategic frameworks for social development and education:

Dubai Social Agenda 33 (S33): The Policy contributes to the development of a cohesive and inclusive society by bringing together children, students, educators, and institutional communities through a shared expression of respect, belonging, and civic responsibility, regardless of nationality, curriculum, or institution size.

Education 33 (E33): This Policy advances E33's commitment to embedding Emirati culture and national identity within educational institutions and to promoting meaningful opportunities for children and students to engage with the values and traditions of the UAE alongside academic achievement.

5. Guiding Principles

The implementation of this Policy is guided by the following principles:

A — Allegiance to National Identity

The UAE National Anthem is a symbol of unity, pride, and belonging. Its daily observance builds civic identity and a shared sense of national purpose.

N — Nurturing a Culture of Belonging

UAE National Anthem observance is a shared experience for every child, student, educator and community, regardless of nationality, age, or background. A consistent moment of respect connects individuals to one another and to the wider UAE community.

T — Together, Every Day

Group assembly for the anthem is a defining feature of the learner's day. Regular observance strengthens community, shared responsibility, and respectful participation across institutions.

H — Habits That Shape Character

Regular observance supports positive routines and respectful conduct, shaping individuals who carry their values with them beyond the walls of their institution and into the community.

E — Every Child and Student Included

No child or student is excluded from meaningful participation. Arrangements for students/children of determination are integral to how this policy is applied, not an afterthought.

M — Meeting a Consistent Standard Across Dubai

Every student in Dubai's ECCs, private schools, HEIs, TVET, and Training Institutes shares this experience, regardless of which institution they attend. This Policy establishes a coherent, sector-wide expectation across all educational institutions regulated by KHDA.

Institutions must ensure that their students, staff, and wider community understand the significance of the UAE National Anthem and the conduct expected of them during its observance.

6. Standards for ECCs and Schools

The standards below apply to all private schools and ECCs in Dubai regardless of size, campus configuration, or curriculum. Schools and ECCs have the flexibility to adopt the delivery model that best suits their context; however, compliance will be assessed based on the required outcomes rather than the format of delivery. All schools and ECCs must comply with these standards from the first instructional day that falls on or after September 1, 2026.

6.1 Daily Observance

Institution Requirements:

- Schools and ECCs **must** play the UAE National Anthem on every school day.
- Schools and ECCs **must** not play the National Anthem of any country other than the UAE.
- Where observance cannot take place due to an emergency, evacuation, lockdown, severe operational disruption, or other exceptional circumstances, the institution **must** record the reason and resume normal observance at the earliest safe opportunity.
- Where a school or ECC operates more than one shift, the National Anthem **must** be played at the start of each shift, ensuring every student cohort observes it.
- On days when a group assembly does not take place, or for cohorts not participating that day, the National Anthem **must** be played daily via Public Address (PA) announcement.

6.2 Weekly Group Assembly

Institution Requirements:

- Schools and ECCs **must** ensure that every student participates at least once per week in a group assembly: a shared physical gathering held in a common space, facing the UAE flag, and not conducted within individual classrooms.

- Where a student is absent on a given week, the school or ECC is not in breach of this requirement, provided attendance records and the Assembly Plan demonstrate that the opportunity to participate is available.

6.3 Events

Institution Requirements:

- Schools and ECCs **must** play the UAE National Anthem at the start of every institutional event, as defined in Section 10, including ECC or school plays, open days, sports days, international days, and graduation ceremonies, regardless of whether the event is related to a UAE national occasion.

- Schools and ECCs **must** play the UAE National Anthem at any gathering held in observance of UAE National Day (Eid Al Etihad), Commemoration Day (Martyrs' Day), or Flag Day.

- All individuals present at the event, including students, staff, parents, and visitors, are **required** to stand respectfully during the playing of the National Anthem, where physically able to do so, and give their full attention for its duration.

- Where a school or ECC hosts more than one event in the same week, the anthem **must** be played at the start of each event.

- Where an institutional event is conducted virtually or in a hybrid format, including online graduation ceremonies, assemblies, or other school- or ECC-hosted events, the UAE National Anthem **must** be played at the start of the event.

6.4 Format and Delivery Models

Institution Requirements:

- Each school and ECC **must** adopt one defined delivery model for group assembly and apply it consistently for at least one term.
- The selected format **must** be documented in the institution's Assembly Plan (see Section 6.8) and made available to KHDA upon request.
- Any change to the adopted format during the academic year **must** be updated in the Assembly Plan and communicated to staff, students, and parents before the change takes effect.
- Schools and ECCs **must** select the model below that best reflects their campus configuration, student population, and operational capacity.

Schools and ECCs may adapt their assembly arrangements to suit their facilities, operational requirements and seasonal conditions, provided all standards in this policy are met.

Delivery Model	Description
Whole-School or 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 most visible expression of policy intent and the simplest model for Schools and ECCs with sufficient assembly space. Meeting weekly satisfies the weekly assembly requirement; the daily observance requirement applies on every school day regardless.
Phase-by-Phase Assembly	Each School phase (e.g. Primary, Secondary) gathers in a shared space on a designated day. Every student participates 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	The school or ECC is divided into fixed organisational groups such as gender or curriculum stream, each of which holds its own assembly at least once per week. Unlike the Rotational Model, the groupings do not change; each student always assembles with the same cohort. Suitable where campus layout, student population size, or operational structure makes a combined assembly impractical.

6.5 Distance Learning and Temporary Remote Delivery

Institution Requirements:

- Schools and ECCs operating online, whether permanently or temporarily, **must** play the UAE National Anthem at the start of the first scheduled period on every operating day. This applies to all synchronous online sessions.

- The weekly assembly requirement does not apply during periods of distance learning. Playing the anthem daily at the start of the first online session constitutes full compliance for the duration of the online period. Once in-person delivery resumes, the full standards apply from the next school day.

6.6 Supervision

Institution Requirements

- Schools and ECCs **must** deploy sufficient staff to supervise the assembly safely.
- Schools and ECCs **must** ensure that the process of assembling and dispersing students and children is managed with appropriate risk assessment and emergency planning in place.
- Supervision arrangements **must** account for the needs of students/children of determination.

6.7 Participation and Conduct

Institution Requirements:

- All students present on school or ECC premises at the time of assembly **must** participate in the National Anthem observance, in accordance with the format chosen by the institution.

- During the playing of the National Anthem, whether as part of a group assembly or via PA announcement in classrooms, all students and staff present, including teaching, non-teaching, and support staff, must stand upright, remain still, and face the UAE flag where displayed, where physically able to do so. Students are encouraged to sing along.

- 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.

- Students/children of determination must be supported to participate in a manner appropriate to their individual needs, including, where relevant, by engaging attentively and respectfully from a seated or supported position that allows the student to face and see the flag where possible.

  Schools and ECCs must put reasonable adjustments in place and document these in the institution's observance arrangements. Reasonable adjustments may include supported seating, reduced crowd exposure, visual preparation, adult support, access to a quieter area, use of sensory supports, or phased participation. These arrangements must support the student's inclusion within the wider school or ECC community and must not result in separate or segregated observance arrangements. They must preserve the dignity of the student and must not be treated as non-compliance.

- For children in FS1/Pre-K, FS2/KG1, and Year 1/KG2, age-appropriate conduct is expected and recognised. Attentive, calm, and respectful engagement is the standard. Young children are not expected to stand at formal attention; being still and quiet for the duration of the anthem is sufficient. Compliance is demonstrated through respectful participation appropriate to the child's age and stage, not through formal posture, singing accuracy, or sustained stillness beyond developmental expectations.

Schools and ECCs are encouraged to display the UAE flag and the words of the National Anthem at points of observance, assemblies, or events to reinforce the observance experience.

6.8 Documentation

Institution Requirements:

- Schools and ECCs **must** maintain an Assembly Plan: a documented schedule of assemblies for the academic year, including format, frequency, supervision arrangements, and any adaptations made for students/children of determination.

- Schools and ECCs **must** be able to demonstrate their assembly schedule, supervision arrangements, and chosen format through the Assembly Plan or equivalent documentation.

- Schools and ECCs **must** establish and maintain a written Communication and Induction Protocol setting out how observance expectations are communicated to staff, students, and parents.

- The Communication and Induction Protocol **must** cover the significance of the UAE National Anthem and the conduct expected during its observance from all individuals who may be present on the premises at the time of the daily observance, including parents and visitors. Records of this communication must be retained and made available to KHDA upon request.

- At the start of the academic year, schools and ECCs **must** communicate the protocol to all parents, students, staff (academic and non-academic) and suppliers. Schools and ECCs should also promote awareness of the protocol through visible, accessible communication methods, such as signage, printed materials, digital communications, and other appropriate channels, to ensure that all visitors understand it.

- All new staff joining a school or ECC at any point during the academic year **must** be inducted on observance expectations, including their supervisory role, the conduct standards required, and inclusivity arrangements, within their first week in post.

- Schools and ECCs must make both the Assembly Plan and Communication and Induction Protocol documents available to KHDA on request. Both documents should be reviewed annually or whenever observance arrangements change.

7. Standards for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET), and Training Institutes

HEIs, TVET, and Training Institutes operate under different schedules, campus configurations, and student populations; accordingly, the standards in this section set out the observance requirements applicable to them. All HEIs, TVET, and Training Institutes must meet the standards set out in this section from their first operational day occurring on or after September 1, 2026. Where an institution is already in session on that date, compliance is required from its first instructional day.

7.1 Daily Observance

Institution Requirements:

- HEIs, TVET, and Training Institutes **must** play the UAE National Anthem once every day on which the institution's physical premises are in operation, at a consistent time that reflects when most of the institution's community is present on campus, documented in the Observance Protocol. This requirement applies on days when the campus is open; it does not apply during periods of fully online or remote delivery.

7.2 Institutional Events

Institution Requirements:

- HEIs, TVET, and Training Institutes **must** play the UAE National Anthem at the beginning of every institution-level event. This includes, but is not limited to, UAE National Day (Eid Al Etihad) celebrations, Commemoration Day (Martyrs' Day) observances, Flag Day observances, Orientation Day, International Day, graduation ceremonies, sports day and any other formal occasion convened at the level of the institution as a whole.

- The event-level anthem requirement applies regardless of whether the event is related to a UAE national occasion or not.

- Where an institution-level event is conducted virtually or in a hybrid format, the UAE National Anthem **must** be played at the start of the event.

7.3 Conduct

Institution Requirements:

- All individuals on the premises of the institution at the time of daily observance, including students, academic staff, administrative staff, suppliers, and visitors, **must** stand respectfully, remain still, and listen attentively for the duration of the anthem, wherever they are on campus at that time. Upon conclusion of the anthem, normal activities may resume.

- All individuals present at institutional events, including students, parents, staff, and visitors, **must** stand respectfully, remain still, and listen attentively for the duration of the anthem. Appropriate conduct is expected of all present.

- Students/People of determination must be supported to participate in a manner appropriate to their individual needs. Reasonable adjustments, such as supported seating or other appropriate accommodations, must be provided and documented. These adjustments must preserve the student's dignity, promote inclusion within the wider community, and must not result in separate or segregated observance. This will not be treated as non-compliance.

- Where observance cannot safely take place due to an emergency, evacuation, lockdown, severe operational disruption, or other exceptional circumstances, the institution must record the reason and resume normal observance at the earliest safe opportunity.

7.4 Documentation

Institution Requirements:

- HEIs, TVET, and Training Institutes **must** maintain a written Observance Protocol documenting: the selected daily observance time; the designated method of delivery (e.g. PA system, campus-wide broadcast); event schedules for which anthem observance applies; and any inclusivity arrangements in place. The Observance Protocol **must** be made available to KHDA upon request.

- All new staff joining an HEI, TVET, or Training Institute at any point during the academic year **must** be inducted on observance expectations, including their supervisory role, the conduct standards required, and inclusivity arrangements, within their first week in post.

- HEIs, TVET, and Training Institutes must communicate the significance of the UAE National Anthem and the conduct standards set out in Section 7.3 to all students and staff at the start of each academic year or orientation period. Records of this communication must be retained and made available to KHDA upon request.

8. Monitoring and Enforcement

All educational institutions within scope must comply with this Policy at all times. KHDA will monitor compliance through mechanisms appropriate to each institution type. Schools and ECCs must meet the standards set out in Section 6, while HEIs, TVET, and Training Institutes must meet the standards set out in Section 7. Where an institution does not comply with this Policy, KHDA may take appropriate action in line with its rules and regulations.

9. Evaluation and Review Process

- This Policy will be reviewed annually.
- All institutions within scope will be notified of any material changes to this Policy no later than September 1, 2026

10. Definitions

Term	Definition
Assembly Plan	A documented schedule of assemblies maintained by a school or ECC, including assembly format, frequency, supervision arrangements, and any adaptations for students of determination.
Communication and Induction Protocol	A written document setting out how observance expectations, conduct standards, participation requirements, and inclusivity arrangements are communicated to staff, students, and parents.
Daily Observance	The UAE National Anthem must be played each day an institution operates, either through the Public Address (PA) system or during a group assembly. Both forms are required; PA-based observance does not replace the weekly group assembly requirement for ECCs and Schools.
Early Childhood Centre (ECC)	An early childhood education setting in Dubai regulated by KHDA. The Policy applies only to children in FS1/Pre-K, FS2/KG1, and Year 1/KG2.
Event	A formal occasion organised at an institutional level. Events include but are not limited to plays, choir performances with invitees, open days, UAE National Day (Eid Al Etihad), Commemoration Day (Martyrs' Day), Flag Day, International Day, sports days, and graduation ceremonies. Routine internal activities, such as a parent visiting a classroom, parent-teacher conferences, bake sales, or similar informal gatherings, are not considered events for the purposes of this Policy.
Higher Education Institution (HEI)	An institution in Dubai based in a free zone that is licensed or authorised by KHDA to offer higher education programmes, including universities and colleges.

Observance Protocol	Documentation maintained by an HEI, TVET Institute, or Training Institute to demonstrate its arrangements for National Anthem observance to KHDA upon request, including the time and method of daily observance and the event schedules to which the anthem requirement applies.
Premises	Buildings and enclosed areas that are under the control of an institution. For the purposes of this policy, premises do not include external areas such as car parks, public roads, or public footpaths adjacent to the institution.
Private School	A KHDA-licensed private educational institution in Dubai offering schooling from FS1 to Year 13 or equivalent, across any curriculum.
Public Address (PA) Announcement	A campus-wide communication system used to broadcast the UAE National Anthem to all students and staff simultaneously.
Students of Determination	Students or children with disabilities and additional learning needs who may require accommodations, modifications, and individualised support to access learning, participate fully in school life, and achieve their educational outcomes.
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institute	A KHDA-permitted institution in Dubai delivering technical and vocational education and training programmes leading to recognised qualifications.
Training Institute	A KHDA-permitted institution in Dubai delivering training programmes regulated by KHDA.
Whole-School or ECC Assembly (for children aged three years and above)	A gathering of all students/children within the defined scope and staff in a single shared space for collective observance of the UAE National Anthem.