CULTURAL CONSIDERATION POLICY

Introduction

Grace Valley Indian School embraces cultural diversity and is committed to fostering an inclusive atmosphere that values and respects the global perspectives of its students and staff. Recognizing the rich international community it serves, the school underscores the importance of cultural awareness to ensure that its practices and expectations are consistent with the values and traditions of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Purpose

- Cultural Consideration: Provide guidance to Grace Valley Indian School staff with clear guidelines on UAE cultural norms to ensure their practices and policies are respectful and appropriate."
- Adherence to UAE Legislation: Define the standards and procedures that GVIS has implemented to maintain adherence to the legislative requirements of the UAE.
- Alignment with Cultural Sensibilities: Implemented the process to guarantee all educational materials are culturally appropriate and aligned with the sensibilities of the UAE.

Definitions

Cultural Consideration	Knowledge, awareness, and understanding of appropriate topics and practices of a culture.
Culture	The set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs (UNESCO, 2001).
Indoctrination	Biased teaching to further a doctrine, principle, religion, or ideology.
Legislation	The set of legal documents (laws, bylaws, regulations, policies, directives, standards, rules, etc.) that govern and regulate practices in a specific area of jurisdiction.
Malicious Intent	Having a predetermined purpose to disregard cultural consideration and consequently cause cultural offense.
National Identity	A system of social and moral values associated with the lifestyle of the people in the past, present, and future (Ministry of Culture and Youth, as cited in Official Portal of the UAE Government, n.d.).

School Community	Staff, students, parents/families, alumni, and others, who share responsibility for one another, provide an environment for intellectual learning, and create a healthy social atmosphere where all the members of the community are supported.
Teaching and Learning Resources	Any written, audio-visual, and/or e-learning/technological document, material, object, event, person, etc. that supports and enhances teaching and learning, directly or indirectly.

Policy

1. **Adherence to UAE Legislation**

1.1 Grace Valley Indian School has ensured that all members of the school community understand, respect, and adhere to this policy, alongside key legislation including the *Code of Conduct for Education Professionals in General Education (MoE, 2022), MoE Circular No. 1 of 2022 Regarding Private School's Compliance with National Identity Requirements, MoE Circular No. 1 of 2023 Regarding Promoting a Safe School Environment*, and all other applicable UAE laws.

1.2 The principal is responsible for aligning all school practices and teaching resources with UAE cultural norms and legal requirements."

1. "Respecting the constitution, laws and orders issued by public authorities in implementation thereof, observance of public order and respect for public morals, is a duty of all residents of the union" (Article 44, Constitution of the UAE).

2. "Preserving the Islamic and Arab principles and values, public morals, and the values, traditions, and systems of the
state" (Clause 11, Article 11, Federal Decree Law No. (18) of 2020 Concerning Private Education).

3. "Respect for national identity and sovereignty" (Clause 12, Article 11, Federal Decree Law No. (18) of 2020 Concerning Private Education).

4. Penalties are applied for "Manufactur[ing], import[ing], export[ing], possess[ing], acquir[ing] or transfer[ing] with the intention of exploitation, distribution or display to others, writings, drawings, photographs, films or symbols or other things if they violate public morals" (Article 416, Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law).

2. **Addressing Cultural Consideration in School**

2.1 **School Requirements:**

GVIS have in place the following elements that address cultural consideration:

1. To foster a respectful and inclusive environment, our school provides a cultural awareness induction for all new staff, parents, and students. We are also committed to ongoing learning and will offer annual refresher training for our returning community members.

2. Vetting Resources: We have established processes and procedures for vetting, reviewing, and selecting teaching and learning resources as per Section 2.3 Learning Resources and Activities of this policy.

3. Observation of UAE Cultural Practices: School is strictly adhering to UAE cultural practices, including the daily singing of the national anthem, observance of official holidays, and the exclusive display of the UAE flag and leaders' portraits as mandated by the official protocol manual.

4. Monitoring of School Communications: School has proactively monitored all official and unofficial communication channels—including newsletters, social media, and parent groups—to ensure our adherence to the cultural consideration policy.

5. Response Mechanism for Non-Compliance: School also has established a clear processes and procedures for reporting and responding to any breaches of this policy in school.

2.2 Community Conduct:

All members of the GVIS community are expected to uphold standards of behaviour that demonstrate mindfulness and respect for cultural considerations of the UAE. The following guidelines outline the expected conduct

1. All GVIS community members must uphold and honor the cultural values, traditions, and societal norms of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

2. All school members must avoid directly or indirectly expressing or supporting inappropriate stereotypes, biases, or assumptions regarding the UAE or the wider region.

3. Refraining from promoting or engaging in behavior, practices, or displays that may be perceived as culturally insensitive, including but not limited to the use of drugs or alcohol, smoking, acts of violence, promotion of alternative gender identities or sexual orientations, and any form of indoctrination.

4. Must not use or display symbols, colors, or imagery representing movements, ideologies, or groups (political, social, or extremist religious) that may be considered culturally inappropriate.

5. Refraining from participate in or promote any activity or content that fosters religious or political extremism, racism, bullying, or any other form of discrimination.

6. Refraining from organize or participate in rallies, demonstrations, or protests within school grounds or during any school-related events outside the campus.

7. Ensuring that one's appearance is culturally considerate. Examples include but are not limited to:

a. Covering of visible body tattoos and any type of piercings for men and women.

b. Appropriate clothing in line with the school's dress code.

8. All stakeholders must ensure that all school-organized activities and celebrations remain culturally appropriate and aligned with this policy.

9. Adhering to the laws of the UAE by conducting themselves accordingly.

2.3 Learning Resources and Activities:

Grace Valley Indian School has established a Resource Selection Committee to ensure that all teaching and learning resources are vetted for cultural consideration. The school also ensured the following while reviewing and selecting any teaching and learning resource:

1. Teaching and learning resources must be appropriate and relevant for the targeted age group of learners.

2. All materials, including topics, content, and images, must align with UAE culture, values, and national identity. Content that is culturally insensitive or promotes undesirable behaviors—such as the use of drugs or alcohol, violence, smoking, gambling, or references to non-traditional gender identities, sexual orientation, or ideological indoctrination—shall not be permitted.

3. Political topics must be handled in accordance with the guidelines and themes outlined in the approved UAE Social Studies curriculum.

4. School has implemented a documented review process to assess and confirm the appropriateness of all educational resources. This process also included final approval from the head librarian, the Resource Selection Committee, and the principal.

2.4 Topics in the Approved Curriculum:

Grace Valley Indian School embedded a system to ensure the following when addressing potentially controversial topics:

1. When the school's approved curriculum includes topics such as biological reproduction, human evolution, or sex education, these subjects are to be delivered in a factual and age-appropriate manner. The use of figurative descriptions or scientific images is to be limited to what is necessary to achieve the required learning outcomes, ensuring respectful and culturally sensitive presentation.
   a. Parents are informed in advance of any related lessons, including the topics to be discussed and whether the content will form part of assessments. Parents may request an exemption for their child from attending the specific lesson through a written notification submitted to the school.
2. In cases where the curriculum covers areas such as revolutions, wars, or other potentially violent or sensitive historical events, the content is presented objectively and within the appropriate educational context. Any related imagery or explanatory resources are selected with care to ensure relevance, respect, and cultural consideration.
3. When potentially sensitive or controversial topics form part of the resources or activities required for high-stakes examinations, like CBSE Board examinations, the school seeks approval from ADEK prior to instruction. Lessons involving such material are designed and delivered with professionalism and cultural awareness.
4. When potentially sensitive or controversial topics form part of the resources or activities required for high-stakes examinations, the school seeks approval from ADEK prior to instruction. Lessons involving such material are designed and delivered with professionalism and cultural awareness.

3. **Roles and Responsibilities**

We have ensured that explicit responsibilities have been conveyed to all parties.

1. Teachers at GVIS will:

a. Create lesson plans using materials that have been approved through the school's vetting process.

b. Perform an additional review to confirm that all resources and content presented to students are culturally appropriate.

c. Review and approve all online resources prior to lessons to ensure they do not contain any culturally insensitive elements, including (but not limited to) images, text, color schemes, or terminology related to the subjects outlined in this policy.

d. Refrain from promoting any form of indoctrination when addressing political or cultural topics in the classroom.

e. Promptly report to Middle/Senior Leaders and the Principal any content found in resources that may breach this policy.

f. Comply with this policy at all times, including maintaining data confidentiality when sharing school-related information on public platforms such as social media.

2. Middle/Senior Leaders will:

a. Lesson plans and resources developed by teachers are reviewed and approved in accordance with the school's academic quality procedures.

b. All teaching materials, whether selected or created by staff, are expected to reflect age-appropriateness and cultural sensitivity. Such materials are to undergo the school's internal vetting and approval process prior to classroom use.

c. The use of approved resources during lessons is to be supervised to confirm alignment with this policy.

d. Approved digital platforms and online resources are subject to ongoing review to verify compliance with current ADEK regulations, policies, guidelines, and circulars.

e. Any material identified as inconsistent or non-compliant with this policy is to be promptly reported to the principal for appropriate follow-up and action

3. Head librarians will:

a. Review, evaluate, and approve all requested resources to ensure they meet relevant requirements and are suitable for students' age levels and cultural context.

b. Submit a categorized list of approved and rejected resources to the Resource Selection Committee for final review and approval.

c. Regularly monitor the use of both digital and print resources, including textbooks, to ensure ongoing compliance with ADEK regulations, policies, guidelines, and circulars.

d. Any material identified as inconsistent or non-compliant with this policy is to be promptly reported to the principal for appropriate follow-up and action.

4. Principal will:

a. Establish a School Resource Selection Committee responsible for reviewing, evaluating, and approving all educational resources to ensure quality, compliance, and relevance.

b. Develop, implement, and document the school-based procedure for selecting teaching and learning resources in alignment with the guidelines outlined in Section 2.1.2 of the ADEK policy.

c. Maintain a comprehensive record of all resource vetting and approval documentation and provide this information to ADEK upon request, as stated in Section 2.3.4.

d. Communicate all resource selection policies, processes, and responsibilities to teaching and administrative staff at the start of each academic year.

e. Ensure all resources and materials selected and/or developed at the school are age- and culturally appropriate.

f. Deliver cultural awareness training for staff during induction and at regular intervals through refresher sessions each academic year.

g. Report immediately to ADEK any identified non-compliant content found in instructional materials, digital platforms, or school resources, and ensure prompt removal from use and circulation.

h. Ensure relevant staff engage parents to communicate that their school:

1. Entrusts parents to oversee their child's use of the internet at home to minimize their exposure to inappropriate content.
2. Expects parents to immediately report to both the school and Abu Dhabi Contact Centre (800 555) any content in school resources that are noncompliant with this policy and always exercise caution when posting school information on public forums and social media channels.

4. Compliance

4.1 This policy has been effective on 9 **January 2024** and fully compliant in the school by the same date.

Effective date	**9 January 2024**
Compliance date	**9 January 2024**
Next review date	**11 January 2027**