



LEARNERS TODAY, LEADERS TOMORROW

Canadian International School Cultural Consideration Policy

Introduction

The Canadian International School Abu Dhabi (CIS) celebrates cultural diversity and aims to create an inclusive environment that reflects the global perspectives of its students and staff. In recognition of the international community it serves, this policy emphasizes the importance of cultural consideration when ensuring our expectations align with the values and cultural sensibilities of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Purpose

- **Guidance on Cultural Consideration:** Provide guidance to CIS on culturally appropriate topics and practices in the UAE.
- **Adherence to UAE Legislation:** Define expected CIS practices to ensure compliance with current UAE legislation.
- **Alignment with Cultural Sensibilities:** Identify specific requirements to ensure teaching and learning resources align with the UAE's cultural sensibilities.

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.
Indoctrination:	Biased teaching to further a doctrine, principle, religion, or ideology.
Malicious Intent:	Having a predetermined purpose to disregard cultural consideration and cause cultural offense.
National Identity:	A system of social and moral values associated with the lifestyle of the people.

Adherence to UAE Legislation

The Head of School of the Canadian International School (CIS) is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that all school practices and the content of teaching and learning resources align with, and respect cultural considerations as defined by the laws of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Implementation:

- the Head of School, in collaboration with relevant administrative bodies, shall review and monitor all teaching and learning resources to ensure alignment with cultural considerations outlined in the legal provisions
- all CIS staff are expected to incorporate culturally sensitive content and practices in their teaching methods, respecting the Islamic and Arab principles, public morals, and national identity
- CIS shall provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities to staff to enhance their understanding and implementation of cultural considerations within the educational context
- any concerns or issues related to the adherence to this policy should be reported to the appropriate Head of School for appropriate resolution

School Requirements:

To uphold our commitment, the school shall implement the following elements:

- induction and refresher training - CIS shall organize induction sessions on cultural consideration awareness for all new staff, parents, and students. Annual refresher training will be equally provided to returning staff, parents, and students to ensure the ongoing awareness of cultural considerations in the UAE
- vetting resources - CIS will ensure a robust process for vetting, reviewing, and selecting teaching and learning resources in accordance with the Learning Resources and Activities of this policy
- observation of UAE cultural practices - CIS will adhere to cultural practices, including but not limited to playing the UAE national anthem daily, observing official public holidays and national celebrations, and following protocol for flags and portraits as outlined in the Positions of their Highness' Pictures and Placements and Uses of Flags Manual. This encompasses ensuring that the only flag raised in schools is that of the UAE, and portraits displayed are those of the UAE's leaders
- monitoring of school communications - CIS will regularly monitor all official school-related communication channels, such as newsletters, social media, and parent communication groups, to ensure their alignment with this policy
- response mechanism for non-compliance - CIS will establish processes and procedures for reporting and responding to any breaches of this policy within the school community

Implementation:

- CIS Heads of School, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, shall oversee the implementation of the requirements

- all CIS staff are responsible for actively participating in cultural consideration training and incorporating cultural practices into daily school activities
- any instances of non-compliance or concerns regarding cultural considerations should be promptly reported to the Head of School for appropriate action

Community Conduct:

All members of the CIS 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:

- respecting UAE Cultural and Social Norms – All CIS community members shall respect the cultural and social norms, values, and traditions of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- avoiding promotion of inappropriate stereotypes – All CIS community members shall refrain from directly or indirectly promoting inappropriate stereotypes, preconceptions, and assumptions about the UAE and the region
- refraining from culturally inconsiderate behaviour - All CIS community members shall abstain from encouraging behaviour, practices, or displays that are culturally inconsiderate, including but not limited to drug and alcohol use, smoking, violence, promotion of alternative gender identity and sexual orientation, and indoctrination
- avoiding symbols and imagery associated with culturally inconsiderate movements - All CIS community members shall refrain from using symbols, colors, or imagery associated with any movement/beliefs related to political, social, or extremist religious groups that are culturally inconsiderate
- prohibition of activities promoting extremism, racism, and discrimination - All CIS community members shall refrain from engaging in activities and/or using content that leads to the indoctrination and promotion of religious/political extremism, racism, bullying, and all other forms of discrimination
- restriction on rallies, demonstrations, and protests - All CIS community members shall refrain from holding rallies, demonstrations, and protests on school premises or during school-related events offsite
- culturally considerate appearance – Bigger, visible body tattoos (men and women) and multiple of piercings in the ear (women) should be covered. All CIS staff shall adhere to appropriate clothing in line with the school's dress code as outlined in the HR Handbook
- appropriateness of School-Organized Events - All CIS community members shall ensure that all school-organized events and celebrations are culturally appropriate in adherence to this policy
- adherence to UAE Laws - All CIS community members shall adhere to the laws of the UAE, conducting themselves accordingly.

Implementation:

CIS Heads of School will communicate and enforce this policy among all members of the school community.

Violations or concerns related to community conduct should be reported promptly to the Head of School for appropriate resolution.

Learning Resources and Activities:

The school will establish a resource selection committee to vet teaching and learning resources, considering age-appropriateness and alignment with UAE culture, values, and national identity.

This committee will consist of:

- One Head of School (Elementary, Middle, High School)
- Head of the Arabic Department
- Elementary Librarian
- Secondary Librarian
- Lead teacher for English Language Arts
- Lead teacher for Social Studies
- Lead teacher for Sciences

And may include:

- at least one teacher from Elementary (any discipline)
- at least one teacher from Secondary (any discipline)
- at least one member of the Literacy team
- at least one member of the SEN team or Head of Inclusion
- at least one member of the Parent Community

Committee members will evaluate materials for cultural sensitivity, avoiding topics that encourage undesirable behaviour.

Resources (books, videos, or other) should not contain:

- Themes relating to alternative gender identity and sexual orientation, same gender parents.
- Reference to alcohol (written or as an image).
- Symbols and imagery that may be offensive to some based on religious or cultural norms (This includes rainbows, symbols associated with political or extremist religious groups).
- Themes of a sexual nature, including nudity.
- Teaching students about wizardry, witchcraft, and religion (fictional texts are acceptable).

Vetting Process: Develop a documented process for vetting resources and final approvals involving the Resource Selection Committee and the Head of School.

Requested Resources

The Lead teacher requesting the resource will be responsible to ensure that the resources meet the expectations of the Cultural Consideration Policy. This may require a perusal copy of the

resources to be ordered in advance. The resource request must be signed by the divisional Head of School, prior to final approval from the Head of School.

Once the resource is received, the committee will review it, and the parameters outlined above, for current resources, will apply.

Topics in the Approved Curriculum:

Canadian International School (CIS) acknowledges the importance of handling potentially controversial topics with sensitivity and cultural consideration. The following guidelines outline the approach to be taken when addressing such topics within the approved curriculum:

Topics relating to biological reproduction, human evolution, or sex education:

Schools shall limit the use of figurative explanation and scientific images/photos required to address relevant learning outcomes in a respectful and culturally considerate way.

Parents shall be informed in advance of the lesson, including the topics to be covered and whether the topic will be included in assessments. Parents can excuse their child from attending the relevant lesson with a written exemption and the understanding that the material covered will be assessed as per curriculum expectations.

Topics relating to revolution, wars, or potential violent conflict:

Schools shall ensure that content related to revolution, wars, or potential violent conflicts is discussed and handled within the appropriate formal educational context. The presentation shall be objective, and schools shall limit the usage of figurative explanation and scientific images/photos required to address relevant learning outcomes in a manner that is respectful and culturally considerate.

Controversial topics in high-stakes exams:

If the approved curriculum includes potentially controversial topics for high-stakes exams preparation, schools are authorized to teach these topics after seeking approval from the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK).

Handling controversial topics outside approved curricula:

In cases where controversial topics arise due to high-profile current events outside the approved curriculum, schools shall follow the direction of the UAE government and adhere to any directives issued by relevant federal or local UAE authorities.

Implementation:

Heads of School shall ensure that all educators are aware of and adhere to the guidelines outlined in this policy.

Communication with parents regarding potentially controversial topics shall be timely and transparent.

Roles and Responsibilities

Librarians:

- Review, vet, and give final approval of resources for compliance
- Submit resource lists to the Resource Selection Committee
- Monitor digital and non-digital resources for compliance with all regulations, policies, guidelines, and circulars issued by ADEK
- Report any non-compliance to the Divisional Head of School
- Maintain meeting minutes and recommendations from Resource Selection Committee

Teachers:

- Develop lesson plans using approved resources
- Prepare and vet all resources in advance of all lessons
- Will avoid indoctrination when discussing political or cultural matters
- Ensure adherence to this policy including data confidentiality requirements when posting school information on public forums, such as social media channels
- Report to lead teacher and Divisional Head of School all non-compliant content immediately

Lead Teachers and Divisional Head of School:

- Review and approve year/assessment plans and resources
- Ensure all resources are age and culturally considerate and have been approved by CIS' vetting process
- Monitor digital resources for compliance
- Immediately report any non-compliance to the Head of School

Head of School:

- Form a Resource Selection Committee
- Provide upon request the full set of documentation for the vetting process
- Communicate processes to all staff
- Ensure cultural consideration awareness training
- Report non-compliant content to ADEK and remove from circulation
- Use opportunities throughout the school year to communicate with parents the importance of:
 - their child's use of the internet at home to minimize their exposure to inappropriate content
 - always exercising caution when posting school information on public forums and social media channels