

School Fees Framework

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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The Purpose of the School Fees Framework

The objective behind the development of a framework to regulate school fees is to protect the students and their parents as beneficiaries of educational services, as well as to provide a favourable environment for investors in the education sector and encourage them to improve the quality of education in the Emirate of Dubai. This is achieved by creating a comprehensive mechanism for the implementation of tuition fees which takes account of the educational and economic aspects and protects the interests of all stakeholders.

The framework has been developed in line with the strategic goals of KHDA and as a result of community engagement through parent surveys and investor feedback on this issue. The framework motivates schools to improve the quality of education, whilst at the same time protecting the interests of both parents and investors.

General Definitions

Not-for-profit school:

A registered school which teaches each cycle according to the curriculum that it is registered to teach; exists purely for educational reasons; one which is governed by an independent Board with parent representation and from which its shareholders, trustees or any third parties do not benefit financially. Fiscal surpluses, if any, are put back into the institution to further the pursuit of its goals.

For-profit schools:

Schools that are run by private, profit-generating companies or organisations. Fiscal surpluses are taken by shareholders and/or investors and any investments have a predetermined return on investment (ROI).

Embassy schools:

Schools that have been initiated and are funded by the embassy of a particular country for the benefit of the nationals of that country.

Educational Cost Index (ECI):

This is calculated on a regular basis and is announced by Dubai Statistics Center (DSC).

School Fees Framework

A working group of representatives from various government departments was formed to agree on the scope and objectives of the framework. The framework was then developed through a consultative process with concerned parties. This involved the collection of information, the analysis of feedback and the employment of a methodology that is in line with government policy development.

The team has developed a comprehensive framework which can be applied in general to all private schools that have been operating for more than three years. The framework takes into account the quality of education as assessed by Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) and the educational cost index as calculated by DSC.

This framework will be adopted for the coming period from the date of its issuance until any further announcement that renders it null and void.

Schools will be eligible to apply for increases to fees according to the table below:

DSIB School Performance Results	Percentage
Outstanding	ECI x 2
Good	ECI x 1.5
Acceptable	ECI
Unsatisfactory	ECI

The following conditions apply:

1. This framework is applicable to all tuition fees and all fees and costs for services that are provided by the school (for example, buses, uniforms and school books). However, this framework is not applicable for services provided by a third party.
2. New private schools will not have the right to increase tuition fees in the first three years from the date of starting their educational activity;
3. Fees and costs for non-tuition services provided by third parties must be optional for parents and are subject to the supervision and control of other government agencies;
4. Schools should consider all concerns and input received from parents regarding the fee increases.

Exceptions

In addition to the general framework above, applications for exceptions will be considered according to the two categories below:

1. Not-for-profit and embassy schools

KHDA aims to provide flexibility to not-for-profit schools and embassy schools when submitting their applications for fee increases to KHDA. KHDA will study the details of the application, which will be evaluated in accordance with the justifications offered. The application should include at least the approval of the Board of Trustees of the school and the approval of the Embassy/Consulate (in the case of an embassy school), in addition to evidence of extensive consultation with stakeholders.

2. For-profit schools with investments in educational infrastructure

For-profit schools with investments in educational infrastructure as per the areas mentioned below should ensure that the benefits are available to the students by the beginning of the academic year for which the increase is being sought:

- a) Additions to the existing buildings;
- b) Additional educational facilities, such as the establishment of laboratories, libraries and other facilities which support the delivery of the educational process;
- c) Investment in additional property for expansion purposes (renting, buying or constructing);
- d) Distinctive renovation of the existing building that includes demolition and rebuilding part of the building and/or addition of floors;
- e) Construction of a branch of the existing school;
- f) Relocation to a new building built by the school to improve the quality of and access to education;
- g) Qualitative and tangible development that furthers and improves the educational process.

However, the exception does not include the following:

- Maintenance, painting and other maintenance-related services;
- Addition of non-educational facilities;
- Purchase of furniture and new equipment;
- Purchase of information technology-related software or hardware;
- Increases in the salaries of staff or the recruitment of new staff;
- Procurement of new school buses;
- Costs of stationery and similar services;
- Costs of miscellaneous utilities;
- Development of stadia and renewal of flooring;
- Rental increases in the building.

General conditions related to the approval of fee increase requests

- a) KHDA will review cases that are connected to students with special needs, taking into consideration the justification and criteria that schools provide in this respect;
- b) As KHDA sees 'Good' as a minimum acceptable standard for private schools in the Emirate, only schools rated 'Good' and 'Outstanding', as per DSIB ratings, can take advantage of the exceptions mentioned above;
- c) Schools will not be able to apply for exception until they have been in operation for at least three years;
- d) If the expansion is part of the initial plan when the school was first established, the school will not be eligible to apply for an exceptional increase. All schools must declare expansion plans as part of their original business plan.
- e) If a school decides to move to another building with a short-term lease, it will not be eligible to apply for an exception. The general rules of the framework will apply;
- f) The work of expansion and construction of facilities should be completed and ready for use prior to the start of academic year in which the school seeks to apply the fee increase;
- g) The certificate of completion of the building and the rest of the documents related to health and safety from the relevant authorities must be submitted as part of the process and prior to the start of the academic year;
- h) KHDA will give final approval to schools after a team visits the school to verify the readiness of the building for the academic year in which the fee increase will be applied;
- i) Any delay in the readiness of the building or expansion after the academic year has begun will lead to the fee exception approval being cancelled for the current academic year and postponed to the following academic year, once the work has been completed;
- j) If schools are granted exceptional approval, parents must be involved and informed;
- k) Schools that have been granted provisional approval for the fee exception should ensure that investment plans and provisional fee increases are shared with parents;
- l) The addition of grades to an existing educational offering does not qualify schools for exception;
- m) If a school is granted an exception to increase the tuition fees, then such an increase should not be collected in the first fee installment and must be collected in subsequent installments (second or third, as the case may be) to give parents adequate notice;
- n) If a school has been granted approval to increase its fees in line with an exception, the school cannot apply for any further increase in school fees for the following three years;

Registration and Admission Fees

Notwithstanding the conditions mentioned in the parent-school contract, the registration and admission fees are regulated as follows:

Existing students:

A school may charge up to 10% of the school's tuition fees as a re-registration deposit to confirm the return of existing students in the new academic year. This deposit should be deducted from the total tuition fees for the academic year in which the admission is being sought

New students:

A school may charge up to 30% of the school's tuition fees as an admission fee to confirm that selected students will opt to take up the offered places. This fee should be deducted from the total tuition fees for the academic year in which the admission is being sought.

Refund:

In the cases of both existing and new students, deposits and fees will not be refunded if students choose not to return to school for the next academic year or choose not to take the offered places. However, a school may choose to refund the deposit under special circumstances. These circumstances include, but are not limited to, evidence of family travel to another country, a move to another Emirate or any unforeseen circumstances. Such cases may be submitted to KHDA for study.

In the case of refund and recovery, the school fees will be calculated as follows:

- If the student attends school for two weeks or less, a month's fees will be deducted;
- If the student attends school for a period ranging between two weeks and one month, two months' fees will be deducted
- If the student attends for more than a month, three months' fees will be deducted.

The value of the fee per month is calculated by dividing the total tuition fees by ten. Charges for books and school uniforms will not be refunded, but the above conditions for refund apply to transportation fees if the service is provided by the school.