



The Apple International Community School

Distance & Blended Learning Policy

2026-2027

POLICY INFORMATION

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Approved By	Principal – Ms Pretty



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Purpose and scope

AICS will maintain safe, inclusive and high-quality education when learning is provided partly or wholly away from the school site. This policy applies to planned blended learning and to temporary distance learning activated because of an emergency, public-authority direction, campus closure, severe weather, health event, individual approved circumstance or other disruption.

It applies from Foundation Stage to Year 13, with provision adapted to students' age, phase, subject and individual needs. Directions issued by the UAE authorities and the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) take precedence over this policy.

Definitions

- Blended learning: a planned combination of face-to-face and online/digital learning.
- Distance learning: structured learning completed away from school through live lessons, recordings, digital resources and/or offline work.
- Synchronous learning: teachers and students participate at the same time.
- Asynchronous learning: students complete assigned learning independently within a stated timeframe.
- Continuity of learning: the school's arrangements to sustain curriculum access, teaching, assessment, support and communication during disruption.

Regulatory and guiding principles

The policy reflects KHDA distance-learning guidance and evaluation expectations, including students' learning and wellbeing, teaching and monitoring of learning, and leadership and management. AICS will:

- follow KHDA, UAE Ministry of Education and other competent-authority instructions in force at the time;
- keep provision aligned with the approved curriculum and expected learning outcomes;
- provide regular teacher interaction, feedback and support, using an appropriate balance of live, independent and offline learning;
- protect equity, inclusion, safeguarding, wellbeing, privacy and responsible technology use; and
- monitor participation, progress and provision, responding quickly where learning is at risk.

Activation and continuity arrangements

The Principal, in consultation with the school owner and relevant authorities, will activate, adjust or end distance-learning arrangements. Families and staff will receive the start date, expected duration, timetable, platforms, attendance rules, support contacts and any phase-specific instructions through official channels.

- Core systems, staff responsibilities, emergency contacts and essential curriculum resources will be maintained and periodically tested.
- If the main platform fails, teachers will use an approved alternative channel and provide downloadable or offline tasks. No student should be penalised for a verified school-wide or household technical failure.
- Leaders will prioritise safeguarding, examination-year learning, students of determination and students with limited access. Recovery plans will address missed content or assessment after normal provision resumes.

Teaching and learning

- Lessons will have clear learning objectives, success criteria, explanations, modelling, guided practice and checks for understanding.
- Teachers will use a purposeful mix of live instruction, recorded explanation, discussion, retrieval practice, independent tasks, reading, practical/creative work and collaboration. Online teaching will not simply reproduce a full classroom day on screen.
- Workload, lesson length, screen time, movement breaks and deadlines will be age-appropriate. Foundation Stage and younger pupils will receive shorter interactions and practical, play-based tasks with reasonable adult guidance.
- Teachers will differentiate work, give clear submission instructions, maintain regular contact and provide timely, actionable feedback.
- Live sessions will normally use school-approved accounts and platforms. Staff will teach from an appropriate setting, maintain professional boundaries and follow the safeguarding code.

Curriculum coverage and recovery

- Phase and subject leaders will map provision against the approved curriculum, schemes of work and statutory/MOE requirements, recording content taught, adapted, deferred or requiring reteaching.

- Essential knowledge, skills, literacy, numeracy, wellbeing and examination specifications will be prioritised without unnecessarily narrowing the curriculum.
- Subjects requiring specialist facilities or close supervision will use safe alternatives, demonstrations or rescheduling; students must not be asked to carry out unsafe practical work at home.
- Leaders will review coverage and assessment evidence at agreed intervals. Identified gaps will be addressed through reteaching, intervention, revised sequencing or catch-up plans.

Attendance, engagement and participation

- Attendance will be recorded for scheduled live sessions and/or verified through meaningful participation in assigned learning, in line with current KHDA and school attendance requirements.
- Parents/carers must report illness, access problems or other authorised absence promptly. Teachers will record barriers separately from wilful non-participation.
- Repeated absence, missed work or disengagement will lead to contact with the family, support planning and escalation through the pastoral, inclusion or attendance process. Safeguarding concerns will be referred immediately.

Assessment, feedback and academic integrity

- Teachers will use questioning, quizzes, submitted work, discussion, projects, presentations, portfolios and other suitable formative and summative methods to check learning and adapt teaching.
- Assessment tasks must be accessible, proportionate and based on taught content. Reasonable adjustments will continue for eligible students.
- Where results contribute to formal reporting, teachers will use appropriate safeguards such as timed access, task variation, oral checks, process evidence or supervised assessment to improve authenticity and reliability.
- Students must submit their own work, acknowledge sources and use artificial-intelligence tools only as expressly permitted. Suspected malpractice will be handled under the school's assessment and behaviour procedures.

- If validity cannot be assured, the school may use additional evidence or require reassessment. External examination-board and regulator requirements will be followed.

Inclusion, access and student support

Students of determination, English-language learners, gifted and talented students and those receiving pastoral support will continue to receive suitable adaptations, accessible formats, targeted teaching and contact with relevant specialists.

The school will identify device, connectivity, language, disability and home-learning barriers. Reasonable solutions may include device support where available, downloadable materials, flexible submission, recorded access, printed work or alternative evidence.

Individual Education Plans, accommodations and support plans remain active unless formally adjusted in consultation with the family and relevant staff.

Safeguarding, online safety and wellbeing

- The AICS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy applies fully online. Staff must report disclosures, concerning behaviour, unexplained absence, inappropriate contact or online harm immediately through the designated safeguarding process.
- Only approved accounts and platforms should be used. One-to-one contact must be necessary, visible/auditable where possible, professionally timed and consistent with school procedures. Personal messaging accounts must not be used.
- Students must not record, photograph, screenshot, edit or distribute lessons or another person's image, voice or work without authorisation. Passwords, meeting links and personal information must not be shared.
- Students must use respectful language, suitable dress and an appropriate background. Cameras and microphones will be used only in accordance with teacher instructions, safeguarding needs and reasonable adjustments.
- Learning plans will include breaks, movement and non-screen activity. Staff will monitor signs of isolation, anxiety, excessive workload or digital fatigue and refer concerns to pastoral or safeguarding teams.
- Parents should provide an age-appropriate, observable learning space where practicable, while respecting the child's growing independence and privacy.

Data protection and cyber security

- AICS will collect and retain only information necessary for education, attendance, assessment, safeguarding and quality assurance, using approved systems and applicable UAE requirements.
- Recordings will be made only for an identified educational or safeguarding purpose, with appropriate notice, access controls and retention arrangements. They must not be downloaded or shared without permission.
- Cyber incidents, lost devices, suspicious links, unauthorised access or data breaches must be reported immediately. Users must keep credentials secure, update devices and follow the Acceptable Use / BYOD requirements.

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Key responsibilities
Principal / SLT	Authorise provision; follow authority directions; ensure resources, safeguarding, inclusion and communication; monitor quality and continuity.
Middle leaders	Coordinate curriculum coverage, timetables, assessment, staff consistency, work scrutiny, interventions and recovery plans.
Teachers	Plan and deliver accessible learning; take attendance; assess and give feedback; maintain contact and professional conduct; report concerns.
DSL / pastoral / inclusion teams	Maintain safeguarding, wellbeing, SEND and vulnerable-student support; advise staff and coordinate referrals and reasonable adjustments.
IT / administration	Maintain approved systems, access support, security guidance, records and timely family communication.
Students	Attend and participate; complete work honestly and on time; communicate respectfully; protect privacy; report concerns and technical barriers.

Role	Key responsibilities
Parents/carers	Support routine, attendance and a safe learning setting; avoid completing work for the child; follow online-safety expectations; notify the school of barriers or concerns.

Communication and complaints

Official school channels will be used for timetables, learning materials, notices and support. Teachers will state lesson times, deadlines, submission routes and reasonable contact hours. Families should raise concerns first with the relevant teacher or form tutor, then the phase/subject leader and senior leadership, following the AICS Complaints and Appeals Policy where needed.

Monitoring, quality assurance and review

Leaders will evaluate provision using attendance and engagement data, curriculum trackers, lesson visits, work scrutiny, progress and assessment evidence, safeguarding and wellbeing information, access/support records, staff reflection and student/parent feedback. Action will be taken where quality, access or progress is inconsistent. The Governing Board will receive appropriate assurance. This policy will be reviewed annually and after any significant activation, regulatory change or safeguarding/technology incident.

References

- Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), Distance Learning Evaluation: students' learning and wellbeing; teaching and monitoring; leading and managing learning.
- KHDA, School-Home Provision: A Collaborative Approach to Distance Learning for Students of Determination (2020).
- Applicable KHDA, UAE Ministry of Education and competent-authority circulars, protocols and examination requirements in force at the time.