

Horizon Private School - American Branch

DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

HPSB-021

Academic Year 2025 - 2026

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Policy Title	Distance Learning Policy	Date	24 March 2026
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Scope	All students, academic staff, and parents/guardians - Whole School (Pre-KG to Grade 12)		
Author	Nicolas Jreije, Executive Vice Principal	Status	Active
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1. Purpose

This policy establishes the framework for the delivery of Distance Learning at Horizon Private School - American Branch (HPSB) in accordance with the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) Distance Learning Policies and Guidelines (March 2026 revision).

The policy applies whenever distance learning is activated - whether for a full-school closure, a partial closure affecting specific grades, or a hybrid arrangement. It sets out the minimum requirements for learning delivery, student attendance, welfare monitoring, curriculum continuity, and communication with parents and ADEK.

All staff, students, and parents are expected to read and comply with this policy and its associated sub-documents.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students enrolled at HPSB from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12
- All academic staff including classroom teachers, grade coordinators, subject heads, heads, and assistant heads
- The Distance Learning Lead (designated member of senior leadership)
- The Student Welfare Lead (SWL)
- Parents and guardians of all enrolled students

The following sub-documents support this policy and form part of the Distance Learning framework:

Ref	Document Title	Purpose
HPSB-021.1	Daily Attendance Tracker	Record and monitor daily student attendance
HPSB-021.2	At-Risk Student Log	Track students at risk due to non-attendance or welfare concerns
HPSB-021.3	Welfare Schedule	Schedule and log weekly welfare check-ins
HPSB-021.4	Session Monitoring Assignment Log	Assign reviewers to teachers; log flagged session concerns
HPSB-021.5	Curriculum Continuity Log	Track topics delivered vs planned per teacher and week
HPSB-021.6	Parent Escalation Guide	Step-by-step guide for parents on escalating concerns
HPSB-021.7	Parent Code of Conduct	Parent responsibilities and commitments during DL
HPSB-021.8	Parent and School Commitments	Shared commitments between parents and school
HPSB-021.9	Parent Screen Time Guide	Screen time recommendations by

		grade
HPSB-021.1 0	Student Code of Conduct (Pre-KG to Gr 2)	Expectations for youngest learners
HPSB-021.1 1	Student Code of Conduct (Gr 3-5)	Expectations for elementary students
HPSB-021.1 2	Student Code of Conduct (Gr 6-8)	Expectations for middle school students
HPSB-021.1 3	Student Code of Conduct (Gr 9-12)	Expectations for secondary students
HPSB-021.1 4	Teacher and Staff Code of Conduct	Professional expectations for all academic staff
HPSB-021.1 5	Staff Briefing Presentation	Presentation for staff launch of DL programme
HPSB-021.1 6	Digital Readiness Declaration	Parent/student confirmation of device and platform access
HPSB-021.1 7	Curriculum Catch-Up Plan Template	Plan for students falling behind during DL
HPSB-021.1 8	Parent Survey Template	Feedback survey for parents
HPSB-021.1 9	Student Survey Template	Feedback survey for students

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply throughout this policy and its associated documents, in accordance with the ADEK Distance Learning Policies and Guidelines (March 2026):

Term	Definition
Asynchronous Learning	Learning activities that students complete independently at their own pace, such as recorded lessons, reading tasks, and assignments uploaded to Toddle. Not time-bound.
At-Risk Student	A student who has missed two or more consecutive sessions without a valid reason, has not submitted work for one or more weeks, or has been identified as having a welfare concern during distance learning.
Blended Learning	A combination of live synchronous instruction and asynchronous tasks. The synchronous component must meet ADEK minimums.
Distance Learning	A mode of delivery where teaching and learning take place outside school premises using digital platforms. Includes synchronous and asynchronous components.
Live Instruction	Real-time online teaching delivered via video conferencing or interactive platforms (e.g., Nearpod on Toddle). Counts toward synchronous time requirements.
Non-Attendance	Absence from a required live synchronous session without prior notification or valid excuse. Must be reported by 3:00 PM GST on the same day via eSIS.
One-to-One Check-In	A brief individual meeting between a teacher or SWL and a student for welfare or academic support purposes. Required weekly for at-risk students.
Synchronous Learning	Live, real-time instruction where students and teachers interact simultaneously. Minimum session requirements are specified in ADEK Table 1.
Structured Teaching Time	The total instructional time that includes both live and asynchronous components within the distance learning timetable.
Student Welfare Lead (SWL)	The designated staff member responsible for coordinating welfare check-ins, maintaining the welfare schedule, and reporting to ADEK weekly.
Distance Learning Lead	A senior leadership team member designated under ADEK P5 to oversee the implementation, quality, and compliance of the Distance Learning Programme.

4. Regulatory Framework

This policy is written in full compliance with the ADEK Distance Learning Policies and Guidelines, March 2026 revision. The following ADEK policies are directly referenced:

Policy	Area	ADEK Requirement Summary
P1	Learning Delivery	Schools must provide structured teaching time with a minimum number of live synchronous sessions per cycle as defined in Table 1. Core subjects must be taught live (Table 2).
P2	Attendance	Schools must record attendance for every live session. Non-attendance must be reported in eSIS by 3:00 PM GST on the same day.
P3	Student Welfare	Schools must conduct welfare check-ins for all students at least once per week. At-risk students require daily contact and one-to-one sessions.
P4	Staff Wellbeing	Schools must support staff during distance learning and ensure workload is manageable.
P5	Distance Learning Lead	Schools must designate a Distance Learning Lead from the senior leadership team.
P6	Attendance Reporting	Daily attendance must be entered into eSIS by 3:00 PM GST every school day.
P7	Physical Activity	Students must be provided with structured physical activity opportunities during the distance learning period.
P8	Welfare Check-Ins	Weekly welfare check-ins are mandatory for all students. At-risk students require more frequent contact.
P9	SWL Designation	Schools must designate a Student Welfare Lead to coordinate welfare activities.
P10	ADEK Reporting	Schools must submit a weekly welfare summary report to ADEK every Sunday by 5:00 PM GST.
P11-P16	Additional Requirements	Include screen time guidance, parent communication standards, curriculum continuity, and session quality standards.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Distance Learning Lead

The Distance Learning Lead is the Executive Vice Principal, Nicolas Jreije. Responsibilities include:

- Activating and deactivating the Distance Learning Programme in coordination with the Principal
- Ensuring all policies and sub-documents are distributed and understood before activation
- Overseeing compliance with ADEK requirements (P1-P16)
- Receiving and reviewing the weekly welfare summary from the SWL
- Submitting the weekly welfare summary to ADEK by Sunday 5:00 PM GST (ADEK P10)
- Leading post-programme review and policy updates

5.2 Student Welfare Lead (SWL)

The Student Welfare Lead is designated by the Distance Learning Lead. Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating and overseeing weekly welfare check-in schedules (HPSB-021.3)
- Monitoring the At-Risk Student Log (HPSB-021.2) and escalating cases as appropriate
- Compiling the weekly welfare summary report for submission to ADEK
- Liaising with teachers and grade coordinators on welfare concerns
- Maintaining confidentiality of all welfare records

5.3 Heads of Division and Subject Heads

Heads and Assistant Heads and Subject Heads are responsible for:

- Ensuring teachers within their area deliver the minimum synchronous sessions (ADEK Table 1)
- Conducting quality check-ins on sessions as assigned in HPSB-021.4
- Reviewing curriculum continuity logs (HPSB-021.5) weekly
- Escalating any pacing or quality concerns to the Distance Learning Lead

5.4 Grade Coordinators

Grade Coordinators are responsible for:

- Coordinating attendance follow-up for non-attending students within their grade
- Conducting welfare check-ins as assigned in HPSB-021.3
- Supporting teachers with timetabling and session delivery questions
- Escalating at-risk student cases to the SWL

5.5 Teachers

All teaching staff are responsible for:

- Delivering the minimum number of live synchronous sessions as specified in ADEK Table 1
- Recording attendance at the start of every live session and reporting non-attendance to the grade coordinator immediately
- Uploading all session materials, tasks, and feedback to Toddle
- Delivering lessons through interactive platforms (Nearpod preferred) to ensure engagement and session quality
- Conducting individual welfare check-ins as scheduled
- Maintaining their entries in the Curriculum Continuity Log (HPSB-021.5)
- Responding to parent messages within one working day

5.6 Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child attends all required live sessions
- Notifying the school in advance if a session will be missed
- Providing a suitable learning environment at home
- Completing and returning the Digital Readiness Declaration (HPSB-021.16)
- Reading and complying with the Parent Code of Conduct (HPSB-021.7)
- Communicating promptly with the school if their child is experiencing difficulties

5.7 Students

Students are responsible for:

- Attending all required live sessions on time
- Completing and submitting tasks by the deadlines set
- Communicating with their teacher if they are having difficulty
- Following the Student Code of Conduct applicable to their grade level (HPSB-021.10 to 021.13)

6. Learning Delivery

6.1 Synchronous Session Requirements

In accordance with ADEK Policy P1, the minimum number of live synchronous sessions per cycle (five school days) is as follows:

Cycle	KG	Cycle 1 (Gr 1-4)	Cycle 2 (Gr 5-8)	Cycle 3 (Gr 9-12)
Min. Live Sessions / 5-Day Cycle	10	15	18	20
Min. Session Duration (minutes)	20	30	35	40

Source: ADEK Distance Learning Policies and Guidelines, March 2026, Table 1.

6.2 Core Subjects - Mandatory Live Delivery

The following core subjects must be delivered through live synchronous sessions and may not be delivered solely through asynchronous methods:

KG	Cycle 1 (Gr 1-4)	Cycle 2 (Gr 5-8)	Cycle 3 (Gr 9-12)
English Arabic Math	English Arabic Math Science	English Arabic Math Science Social Studies	English Arabic Math Sciences Social Studies All elective subjects

Source: ADEK Distance Learning Policies and Guidelines, March 2026, Table 2.

6.3 Session Quality Standards

All live synchronous sessions must meet the following minimum quality standards in accordance with ADEK requirements. Reviewers assigned in HPSB-021.4 will conduct trust-based check-ins on sessions:

#	Standard	Implementation at HPSB
1	Clear Learning Objectives	Every session must open with a stated learning objective shared with students via Nearpod or Toddle.
2	Interactive Delivery	Teachers must use interactive tools (Nearpod activities, polls, quizzes, or collaborative tasks) in every live session.
3	Student Participation	Teachers must build in verbal or written participation from students. Silent passive sessions do not meet ADEK standards.
4	Timely Start	Sessions must start within 2 minutes of the scheduled time. Any delay must be communicated to students and logged.

5	Materials on Platform	All session materials, notes, and follow-up tasks must be uploaded to Toddle on the same day as delivery.
6	Feedback	Teachers must provide feedback on student work within 3 school days of the submission deadline.

6.4 Timetable Structure

During distance learning, the school will operate a structured daily timetable aligned to the normal school timetable where possible. The timetable must include:

- A morning registration / check-in period
- Core subject live sessions as specified in Sections 6.1 and 6.2
- Asynchronous task time for students to complete independent work
- A scheduled break period
- Physical activity time (minimum 20 minutes per day - ADEK P7)

The timetable will be communicated to parents and students before the start of the distance learning period via Toddle.

7. Attendance

7.1 Daily Attendance Recording

In accordance with ADEK Policy P2 and P6, attendance must be recorded for every live synchronous session. The following process applies:

- Teachers record attendance at the start of each live session using the Daily Attendance Tracker (HPSB-021.1)
- Any student not present at the start of a session is marked as absent
- If a student joins late, the teacher updates the record accordingly
- All attendance records must be entered into eSIS by 3:00 PM GST on the same school day

7.2 Non-Attendance Response Protocol

Non-attendance triggers an immediate response. The following escalation protocol applies from the first missed session:

Trigger	Responsible	Action Required
Session 1 absent	Class Teacher	Contact parent via Toddle message on the same day. Record in HPSB-021.1.
Sessions 1-2 absent (no response)	Grade Coordinator	Call parents by the end of Day 2. Record in HPSB-021.1. Notify SWL.
3 consecutive absences	SWL + Grade Coordinator	Students added to At-Risk Log (HPSB-021.2). SWL conducts welfare check-in within 24 hours.
5+ absences or welfare concern	Distance Learning Lead (VP)	VP informed. Formal escalation meeting with parents. Case reviewed for referral or additional support.
Persistent non-attendance (10+ sessions)	Distance Learning Lead	Escalation to ADEK. Documentation submitted. Case reviewed under ADEK non-attendance protocol.

7.3 Authorised Absences

A parent or guardian may notify the school of a planned absence in advance via Toddle. Authorised absences are recorded separately in eSIS. They do not trigger the non-attendance protocol, but the student must complete missed work. Students with authorised absences from three or more consecutive days will receive a Curriculum Catch-Up Plan (HPSB-021.17).

8. Student Welfare

8.1 Weekly Welfare Check-Ins

In accordance with ADEK Policies P3 and P8, the school must conduct welfare check-ins for all students at a minimum of once per week. The Welfare Schedule (HPSB-021.3) sets out the schedule of check-ins by grade and assigned staff member.

Welfare check-ins must cover:

- The student's general wellbeing and emotional state
- Physical activity and daily routine
- Access to technology and any barriers to learning
- Family situation if relevant and appropriate

All welfare check-ins are recorded in HPSB-021.3. A summary is compiled by the SWL and submitted to ADEK every Sunday by 5:00 PM GST (ADEK P10).

8.2 At-Risk Students

A student is classified as at-risk under any of the following conditions:

- Two or more consecutive unexcused absences from live sessions
- Failure to submit work for one or more consecutive weeks without explanation
- A welfare concern identified during a check-in or parent communication
- A teacher or parent report of a significant change in behaviour, mood, or engagement

At-risk students must receive:

- Daily contact from the class teacher or SWL (not just messaging - a live or voice check-in)
- A one-to-one welfare session within 24 hours of being identified as at-risk
- An entry in the At-Risk Student Log (HPSB-021.2)
- A Curriculum Catch-Up Plan (HPSB-021.17) if academic gaps exist

8.3 Weekly ADEK Welfare Report

The Student Welfare Lead compiles a weekly welfare summary report covering:

- Total number of students who received welfare check-ins
- Number of students classified as at-risk
- Actions taken for at-risk students
- Any escalations or referrals made

The report is submitted to ADEK every Sunday by 5:00 PM GST by the Distance Learning Lead.

8.4 Physical Activity

In accordance with ADEK Policy P7, the school timetable must include a minimum of 20 minutes of structured physical activity per day for all students. Physical Education teachers will provide daily activity challenges via Toddler. Participation is tracked as part of the welfare check-in process.

8.5 Screen Time

The school follows ADEK guidelines on screen time and the recommendations set out in HPSB-021.9. Total daily screen time (synchronous and asynchronous) should not exceed the following:

Grade Band	Max Daily Screen Time	Max Live Instruction
KG - Grade 2	2 hours	1.5 hours
Grade 3 - 5	3 hours	2 hours
Grade 6 - 8	4 hours	3 hours
Grade 9 - 12	5 hours	4 hours

9. Curriculum Continuity

9.1 Expectations

Distance learning does not suspend the curriculum. All teachers are expected to continue delivering the planned curriculum at the agreed pace. Where adjustments are necessary due to the distance learning context, these must be documented in the Curriculum Continuity Log (HPSB-021.5) with a clear rationale.

9.2 Curriculum Continuity Log

Every teacher must update HPSB-021.5 at the end of each school week. The log captures:

- Topics and lessons delivered during the week
- Materials uploaded to Toddle
- Comparison to planned pacing (on track, ahead, or behind)
- Topics not delivered and the reason
- Review and sign-off by the relevant Head of Department or Division Head

Division Heads review the log weekly and report any significant pacing concerns to the Distance Learning Lead.

9.3 Catch-Up Plans

Where a student has fallen behind due to non-attendance or difficulty engaging with distance learning, a Curriculum Catch-Up Plan (HPSB-021.17) must be completed by the class teacher within 5 school days of the issue being identified. The plan must be shared with the parent and reviewed within two weeks.

10. Communication

10.1 School to Parents

The school will communicate with parents through Toddle as the primary platform. The following communication standards apply:

- Timetables, policies, and key documents are shared with parents before the Distance Learning Programme starts
- Teachers respond to parent messages on Toddle within one working day
- Weekly class updates are posted by teachers every Friday by 4:00 PM
- Any change to the timetable or session arrangements is communicated at least 24 hours in advance

10.2 Parent to School

Parents are expected to:

- Communicate through Toddle for routine messages
- Contact the Grade Coordinator if an issue is not resolved within one working day
- Contact the Distance Learning Lead directly for urgent welfare or operational concerns
- Report technical issues to the school IT contact listed on Toddle

The Parent Escalation Guide (HPSB-021.6) sets out the full escalation path available to parents.

10.3 ADEK Reporting

The Distance Learning Lead submits the following mandatory reports to ADEK:

- Daily: Attendance data entered into eSIS by 3:00 PM GST (ADEK P6)

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- Weekly: Welfare summary report submitted every Sunday by 5:00 PM GST (ADEK P10)
 - As required: Any escalations, non-attendance cases, or significant welfare concerns

11. Staff Wellbeing

In accordance with ADEK Policy P4, the school acknowledges that distance learning can be demanding for staff. The following measures apply:

- Teachers are not expected to be available outside of their contracted hours. Messages received after school hours will be responded to the following working day.
- Weekly briefings will be held to support teachers and address concerns
- The Distance Learning Lead maintains an open channel for staff to raise operational or welfare concerns
- Workload will be monitored; any staff member experiencing difficulty must communicate this to their line manager

12. Data Protection and Safeguarding

All distance learning activities must comply with the school's Data Protection Policy and Safeguarding Policy. The following principles apply during distance learning:

- Teachers must not record live sessions without explicit written consent from parents of all participating students
- Student images or recordings must not be shared on any platform other than Toddle without explicit consent
- All communications between students and teachers must occur through Toddle. One-to-one direct messaging on personal platforms is not permitted.
- Any safeguarding concern identified during distance learning must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately using the established reporting process
- Welfare check-in records are confidential and must be stored securely

13. Policy Compliance and Review

13.1 Compliance

All staff are expected to comply with this policy and its associated sub-documents. Non-compliance may result in:

- A formal discussion with the line manager
- A performance note recorded in the staff file
- Referral to the Principal in cases of persistent non-compliance

13.2 Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- At the end of AY 2025-2026
- Immediately following any change to ADEK Distance Learning Policies and Guidelines
- Following any significant incident during a Distance Learning period

The Distance Learning Lead is responsible for initiating and completing the review.

13.3 Policy Acknowledgement

All staff will confirm acknowledgement of this policy in writing before the Distance Learning Programme is activated. Parents will receive a summary of the key parent requirements via Toddle and through the Parent Code of Conduct (HPSB-021.7).

14. Related Documents

Document	Relationship to This Policy
HPSB-020.2 DL Compliance Matrix	Tracks compliance against ADEK requirements. Updated by DL Lead throughout the programme.
HPSB-008 Digital Policy	Governs acceptable use of technology at HPSB. Applies during distance learning.
HPSB Safeguarding Policy	Must be followed for any safeguarding concerns arising during distance learning.
HPSB Data Protection Policy	Governs data handling, recording consent, and student privacy during DL.
HPSB Attendance Policy	Governs general attendance requirements. Distance Learning attendance rules sit within this framework.
ADEK Distance Learning Policies and Guidelines (March 2026)	Parent regulatory document. All HPSB-021 requirements derive from this document.

Policy Authorised By

Nicolas Jreije | Executive Vice Principal
Horizon Private School - American Branch | 24 March 2026