Students At-Risk Policy

Ras Al Khaimah Department of Knowledge

1. Introduction

The Ras Al Khaimah Department of Knowledge (RAK DOK) is committed to ensuring that every student receives equitable, high-quality education. Recognising that some students face circumstances that put them at risk of academic failure, emotional distress, or behavioural difficulties, this policy provides a guiding framework for private schools to identify, support, and monitor students who are at risk.

1.1. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Establish clear standards for the early identification of students at risk.
- Outline school-wide systems of intervention and monitoring.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of leadership, support staff, and teaching personnel.
- Ensure alignment with UAE laws and international best practices regarding student welfare and protection.

1.2. Scope of Application

This policy applies to all private schools licensed under RAK DOK, across all grades and curricula.

2. Definitions

Term	Definition
Student At-Risk	A student whose academic performance, emotional wellbeing, or behaviour indicates a higher likelihood of disengagement, failure, or dropping out.
Educational Risk	A condition in which a student is likely to experience delayed academic progress, reduced school engagement, or risk of drop-out due to one or more contributing factors such as low achievement, chronic absenteeism, behavioural challenges, health conditions, grade retention, or adverse life circumstances.
Individual Education Plan (IEP)	A documented plan outlining academic, behavioural, or wellbeing interventions tailored to an at-risk student.

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Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)	A school-wide, data-driven framework that uses tiered intervention strategies to meet students' varying needs.
RAK DOK	Ras Al Khaimah Department of Knowledge - the regulatory authority overseeing the operation of private education institutions in Ras Al Khaimah.
School Support Team	A team typically consisting of the Principal (or delegate), Social Worker, SENCO, Counsellor, and relevant teachers, responsible for monitoring and supporting students at risk.

3. Policy Statement

3.1. Identification of Students At-Risk

Schools must develop an internal policy that is aligned with RAK DOK policy to identify students at educational risk using a data-informed and holistic approach. The following indicators should be systematically monitored:

- **Academic Indicators**:
  - Chronic academic underperformance.
  - Change in the level of student-school engagement.
  - Academic underperformance or failure to meet age/grade-level standards.
  - Chronic absenteeism or irregular attendance.
  - Repeated grade retention risk.
  - Additional learning needs
  - Linguistic difficulties

- **Behavioural Indicators**:
  - Change in student behaviour to include Aggression, rule violations, withdrawal, or erratic conduct.
  - Disruptive or withdrawn behaviour patterns.
  - Increased isolation or loneliness of a student.

- **Social-Emotional Indicators**:
  - Trauma exposure, anxiety, neglect, or expressions of distress.
  - Emotional distress or signs of trauma

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- Medical or mental health conditions impacting learning or students of determination.
- **Environmental Factors**: unstable home circumstances, socioeconomic hardship, frequent school transfers, or language barriers.
  - Significant changes in family or socioeconomic circumstances
  - Transitions between educational settings, especially mid-year or between systems, including:
    - *Moving between grade levels, especially when entering Cycle 2/Phase 3 or Cycle 3/Phase 4.*
    - *Transfer from another school or curriculum*
    - *Transition to post-secondary pathways (university, vocational training, employment)*

Transition plans must be coordinated with parents and documented in the student's support file.

3.2. Intervention Procedures

All private schools in Ras Al Khaimah must implement a structured, tiered model of academic and behavioural support to address the needs of students identified as being at educational risk. The framework should be proactive, data-informed, and responsive, ensuring early identification, timely intervention, and sustained monitoring of student progress.

Tier	Level of Support	Description
Tier 1 – Universal Support	Whole-Class Instruction	- High-quality, evidence-based teaching provided to all students as part of everyday classroom instruction. - Emphasis on positive relationships, inclusive practices, and a supportive learning environment. - Continuous progress monitoring to identify students who are not responding to universal strategies.
Tier 2 – Targeted Support	Small Group Interventions	- Additional targeted teaching for students who show signs of difficulty achieving age-appropriate academic or behavioural goals. - Structured small-group interventions designed to supplement Tier 1 strategies and help students close performance gaps. - Ongoing monitoring to determine the effectiveness of support and whether the student requires escalation to Tier 3.
Tier 3 – Intensive Support	Individualised Intervention	- Highly personalised and intensive teaching interventions tailored to a student's specific needs. - May involve collaboration with external specialists (e.g., psychologists, therapists, behaviour specialists). - Interventions are carefully designed and closely monitored to track progress and adapt support as needed.

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Tiered Interventions for Students At-Risk

Schools in Ras Al Khaimah must design and deliver interventions for students at educational risk using a systematic and tiered approach, guided by the following principles:

Area	Description
Root Cause Assessment	Identify the underlying academic, social, emotional, or behavioural reasons contributing to the student being at risk.
Whole-School and Family Engagement	Address student needs holistically through coordinated support between the school and family, promoting improvement across both environments.
Evidence-Based Practices	Use culturally and linguistically relevant, research-based teaching and intervention strategies.
Inclusive Mindset	Adapt teaching practices to reflect the belief that all students can learn and achieve, regardless of their challenges.
Data-Driven Decisions	Use tools such as universal screening, diagnostics, and ongoing progress monitoring to inform interventions for each support tier.
Personalised Planning	Apply a problem-solving approach to create individualised learning and support plans based on the student's unique needs.
Positive Behavioural Support	Implement school-wide and classroom-level strategies that promote positive behaviour and social-emotional development.
Collaborative Process	Ensure school staff work together to analyse student data, plan interventions, and track progress regularly.

Developing and Implementing Interventions

Schools must create and deliver tailored support strategies for students at educational risk using a structured, collaborative process as follows:

Area	Description
1. **Establish a School-Based Intervention Team**	Form a team to support teachers in designing and reviewing interventions.
2. **Involve the Student and Teachers**	Engage the student (where appropriate) and their teachers in planning personalised interventions—especially for older students in Cycles 2/Phase 3 and Cycle3/Phase 4.
3. **Reduce Risk Factors**	Apply a mix of strategies to enhance protective factors and minimise educational, social, and emotional risks.
4. **Allocate Resources**	Use school resources to support students at risk both individually and in groups.
5. **Individual Education Plan (IEP)**	Each at-risk student must have an IEP co-developed by the school team and parents. It must include: • Intervention goals • Support strategies • Responsible staff • Timeline for monitoring
6. **Refer for Specialist Support**	Where necessary, discuss the need for external specialist intervention with parents, in line with RAK DOK's guidelines and national policies.
7. **Teaching Adjustments**	Ensure teachers adapt instruction and effectively use resources to meet the specific needs of students at risk.
8. **Monitoring and Adjustment**	Schools must regularly track student progress and review interventions based on data and outcomes. Adjustments should be made as necessary.
9. **Engage Stakeholders**	Involve relevant internal stakeholders (e.g., school staff) and external stakeholders (e.g., specialists, parents) in developing and reviewing support plans.

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10. **Re-Enrolment Protocol**	At-risk students must be re-enrolled unless an exemption is approved by RAK DOK. Requests must include: • Updated IEP. • Supporting medical/psychological report. • Evidence of parental involvement. • Documentation that all alternatives were considered.

School Role:

3.3. Roles and Responsibilities

- **School Leaders/ Principals**:
  - Promote a culture that prioritises inclusion, well-being, and participation.
  - Allocate staff and resources to support interventions.
  - Oversee compliance with this policy and ensure regular data review.

- **Social Workers**:
  - Conduct student risk assessments.
  - Provide counselling or coordinate with external services- if needed.
  - Maintain updated logs of all identified at-risk students and their IEPs.
  - Support the development and review of IEPs.
  - Conduct termly reviews of student progress and intervention effectiveness.
  - Submit anonymised risk-intervention summaries to RAK DOK upon request.
  - Ensure that intervention outcomes are used to inform school improvement planning.

- **Teachers**:
  - Identify early warning signs through classroom observations.
  - Implement strategies defined in the IEP.
  - Collaborate with the School Support Team and engage families as needed.

- **Designated School Support Team**

  Every school must establish a School Support Team responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy. The team shall include:

  - A Senior Leader (Principal or Vice Principal)
  - Social worker or counsellor

- Head of Inclusion
- Wellbeing/behaviour support staff
- Parent liaison staff
- Relevant class or subject teachers
- Data coordinator

This team is responsible for executing the actions outlined in the "Developing and Implementing Interventions" section of this policy.

- **Parent Engagement**

Parents and guardians are essential partners in supporting at-risk students. Schools must:

- Inform parents when their child is identified as being at risk.
- Involve families in the creation and review of Individual Education Plans.
- Guide strategies that can be implemented at home.
- Ensure communication is clear, culturally appropriate, and ongoing.

3.4. Legal Obligations for Safeguarding

- Schools must adhere to the UAE Child Protection Framework, including the Ministry of Education's Child Protection Policy, Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 concerning Child Rights (Wadeema Law), and any other applicable federal or emirate-level legislation.
- It is the school's responsibility to ensure that any suspected or confirmed case of abuse, neglect, or endangerment of a student is reported promptly to the relevant authorities, in line with national reporting procedures and safeguarding protocols.
- Schools must maintain an internal safeguarding policy, designate a Child Protection Officer, and ensure that all school personnel receive annual training on recognising and reporting child protection concerns.

- Risk management efforts must align with the school's existing Child Protection, Inclusion, and Attendance policies. Students identified as at risk due to neglect, abuse, or endangerment must be referred under the UAE Child Protection Framework and Wadeema Law reporting procedures. The school's Inclusion Policy must be followed where academic risk intersects with learning difficulties.

- Schools must ensure alignment with the Ministry of Education's Equivalency/Recognition requirements.

4. Compliance

Effective Date: This policy shall take effect from the start of the Academic Year 2025/26. Full compliance by all private schools is expected by the start of the 2026/27 academic year.

Enforcement and Penalties: Schools that do not adhere to this policy will be subject to accountability measures as stipulated by DOK, including possible penalties or other corrective actions. Non-compliance may result in intervention by DOK as per UAE federal regulations.

Compliance Audits: DOK reserves the right to conduct periodic audits to ensure schools comply with this policy. The school administration must promptly resolve any discrepancies found during these audits to avoid further action.

5. Feedback and Improvement

Annual Review: DOK will conduct a yearly review of this policy to incorporate feedback, address emerging needs, and ensure it aligns with the latest educational standards and regulatory requirements.

Feedback Mechanisms: School administrators are encouraged to submit feedback on the At-Risk Students Policy to DOK, which allows for continuous improvement based on schools' practical experiences.

6. Contact Information

For any questions related to this policy, please contact: **info@dok.rak.ae**

7. Conclusion

This At-Risk Students Policy reaffirms the Ras Al Khaimah Department of Knowledge's commitment to safeguarding every student's academic, emotional, and social development. By implementing this policy, private schools in Ras Al

Khaimah will be equipped to identify students at risk in a timely manner, provide structured and personalised support, and promote inclusive school environments where all students are empowered to succeed. RAK DOK will continue to work in partnership with school leaders to ensure the effective implementation of this policy and the well-being of all learners.

8. Revision History

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