

UAE International School Selection Guide

A practical, parent-friendly guide to choosing a school in the United Arab Emirates.

1 Set your non-negotiables

- Location and journey: realistic school-run time and transport arrangements.
- Curriculum: British, American, IB, Indian or another pathway; assess continuity if you move countries.
- Year group and entry: eligibility, assessment, availability and waiting-list policy.
- Budget: tuition plus application, deposits, transport, meals, uniforms, activities and possible increases.
- Child's needs: learning support, SEND/inclusion, language, wellbeing and extracurricular interests.

2 Research before booking a visit

- Confirm the school's licence and current regulator information.
- Review inspection or quality information when available; note its date and scope.
- Ask about staff qualifications, teacher turnover, class size and support provision.
- Check curriculum progression, examination routes and university-entry or certificate-equivalency implications.
- Compare written fees, refund terms, safeguarding procedures and parent communication.

3 On the school tour: look beyond the brochure

- Observe classrooms, pupil engagement, behaviour and the learning atmosphere.
- Ask how the school helps children who need additional challenge or support.
- Inspect play, sport, laboratories, technology, toilets and accessible facilities.
- Check medical cover, pick-up controls, transport safety and reporting processes.
- Speak to current parents where possible; ask your child how they felt during the visit.

Important: regulator responsibilities and school requirements vary by emirate. Verify the latest position directly with the authority and school.

Printable School Visit Scorecard

School: _____ Emirate: _____

Curriculum / year group: _____ Visit date: _____

Rate each item 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Leave blank if not assessed. Ratings reflect your visit, not official inspection results.

Assessment area	Rating / 5	Notes / evidence
Quality of teaching and learning	_____	_____
Curriculum and future pathways	_____	_____
Student wellbeing and safeguarding	_____	_____
Inclusion / additional learning support	_____	_____
Class size and individual attention	_____	_____
Facilities and extracurricular activities	_____	_____
Leadership and parent communication	_____	_____
School culture and pupil happiness	_____	_____
Journey, transport and logistics	_____	_____
Total cost and overall value	_____	_____

TOTAL: _____ / 50 My child's reaction: _____

Strengths: _____

Concerns / follow-up: _____

Next step: ☐ Shortlist ☐ Second visit ☐ Apply ☐ Not suitable

Compare Schools & Ask Better Questions

Record costs in AED and confirm whether they are annual, termly or one-off.

Measure	School A	School B	School C
Curriculum / grades	_____	_____	_____
Travel time	_____	_____	_____
Tuition (AED / year)	_____	_____	_____
Other fees (AED)	_____	_____	_____
Class size	_____	_____	_____
Inspection / report date	_____	_____	_____
Visit score / 50	_____	_____	_____
Availability / deadline	_____	_____	_____
Child's preference	_____	_____	_____

Eight questions worth asking

- What does a typical day look like in my child's year group?
- How is safeguarding handled and how can a concern be raised?
- What inclusion and additional-learning support is available, and at what cost?
- How often do parents receive meaningful progress updates?
- What is the school's approach to bullying and pupil wellbeing?
- Which examinations, diplomas and graduation pathways are offered?
- What is the complete fee schedule, including refunds and extras?
- What are the next admissions steps, required documents and deadlines?

Official sources to check

Dubai: [KHDA](#) • Abu Dhabi: [ADEK](#) • Sharjah: [SPEA](#) • Other emirates: check the [Ministry of Education](#) and applicable local authority. Explore education and school profiles at uaethrive.com/businesses. Profile presence is not an endorsement, accreditation or confirmation of school availability.