

Fees and Refund Policy for Private Schools in Dubai

Frequently Asked Questions — For Parents

01 Application and Registration Fees

Q1 What is an application fee, and how much can a school charge?

Schools may charge up to AED 500 to process the application of a new student. This fee covers standard assessment costs and is separate from tuition fees, i.e., it cannot be deducted from the tuition fees.

Q2 Is the application fee refundable?

- If the student is not offered a place following the assessment process, the application fee is fully refundable.
- If the school collected the fee without first informing the parent that no place was available, or that the outcome may only be a position on a wait list, the fee is refundable.

If the school makes a formal offer of a place and the parent chooses not to accept, the application fee is non-refundable.

Q3 What is a registration deposit and when can the school ask for it?

A registration deposit is a payment made to confirm a new student's enrolment. Schools may only request this deposit after a formal offer of enrolment has been made and accepted by the parent. A registration deposit cannot be requested before a formal offer is issued and accepted.

The registration deposit cannot exceed 10% of the annual tuition fees.

Q4 Does the registration deposit count towards the student's tuition fees?

Yes. The registration deposit is deducted from the tuition fees for the first term of enrolment. It is an advance payment, not an extra cost.

Q5 What happens to the registration deposit if I change my mind after accepting the offer?

- If you formally notify the school at least 60 calendar days before the student's start date, the registration deposit is refundable.

Example

You accept an offer and pay the registration deposit in April for a September 1 start. You decide not to proceed and formally notify the school on June 30, which is 61 calendar days before the September 1 start date. Because you gave more than 60 calendar days' notice, the deposit is refundable.

02 Re-Registration Fees

Q6 What is a re-registration deposit?

A re-registration deposit is a payment made by existing parents to secure their child's place for the following academic year. It cannot exceed 5% of the annual tuition fees or AED 500, whichever is higher.

Like the registration deposit, it is deducted from the tuition fees for the following year and is not an extra cost.

Q7 When can the school collect the re-registration deposit?

- September-start schools: the deposit can only be collected after the end of the spring break, and the payment deadline must not be set earlier than May 1.
- April-start schools: the deposit can only be collected after the end of the winter break, and the payment deadline must not be set earlier than February 1.

Q8 Is the re-registration deposit refundable if I decide to withdraw?

It depends on when you notify the school:

- If you formally notify the school at least 60 calendar days prior to the start of the following academic year, the re-registration deposit is refundable.
- If you formally notify the school less than 60 calendar days prior to the start of the following academic year, the deposit is non-refundable.

Q9 What if I miss the re-registration deadline and decide not to come back?

If the deposit was not paid by the stated deadline and the child does not enrol in the following academic year, the school cannot seek payment of that re-registration deposit at a later date. However, the school cannot guarantee the child's place if the deposit is not paid on time.

Example

The re-registration deadline for your child's September-start school is May 31, and you do not pay by that date. Your child does not return in September. The school cannot come back to you and demand the re-registration deposit, as it was not collected at the time it was due. If you had notified the school on July 15 (47 calendar days before September 1), the deposit would not be refunded.

03 Withdrawal & Refund Dates

Q10 How do I officially withdraw my child from school?

You must complete and submit a formal written withdrawal request to the school. The date you specify on this form becomes the official withdrawal date and is recorded on the Withdrawal Certificate issued by the school. This is the date from which all refund calculations are made.

Q11 Does my child's last day of attendance count as the withdrawal date?

No. The withdrawal date is the date specified in your withdrawal request, not the last day your child attended class. Being listed on the school's register counts as active enrolment, regardless of attendance. Fees continue to accrue until a formal withdrawal request is submitted.

Important: *A student's absence from school does not constitute withdrawal and does not trigger a refund. Parents must complete and submit a withdrawal request as soon as they decide to avoid additional fee liability.*

Q12 Can the withdrawal date be backdated?

No. The withdrawal date is the date recorded on the withdrawal request you submit to the school. It cannot be set to an earlier date.

Example

Your child last attended school on October 1, but you submitted a withdrawal request on October 25. Fees are calculated up to October 25 and not October 1 because that is when you formally notified the school.

04 Tuition Fee Refunds

Q13 How is my tuition fee refund calculated when I withdraw?

Refunds are calculated on a term-by-term basis from the withdrawal date recorded on the Withdrawal Certificate. The rules are:

- Fees paid before the academic year begins are refundable (only the registration or re-registration deposit is deducted if the withdrawal is requested less than 60 calendar days prior to the start date).
- If the student was enrolled in the term for two weeks or less: one month's fees are deducted.
- If the student was enrolled in the term for between two weeks and one month: two months' fees are deducted.
- If the student was enrolled in the term for more than one month: the full term's fees are deducted.

Example

You pay Term 2 fees in full. Your child's withdrawal date falls 10 days into Term 2 (two weeks or less). The school deducts one month's fees and refunds the remainder of the term's payment.

If the withdrawal date falls on day 25 of Term 2 (between two weeks and one month), two months' fees are deducted, and the rest is refunded.

Q14 My child has not attended school for several weeks. Am I still being charged tuition fees?

Yes, as long as the school is open and delivering its service, tuition fees are payable regardless of attendance. Your child's place is being held. The only way to stop fees from accruing is to formally submit a withdrawal request.

Q15 How are tuition fees paid during the year?

Schools may collect tuition fees in one of two ways:

Three termly instalments: Term 1 must not exceed 40% of annual fees; Term 2 not more than 30%; Term 3 not more than 30%.

Ten equal monthly instalments: calculated by dividing the total annual tuition fees by 10.

These fees include registration and registration fees.

05 Mandatory & Optional Services Refunds

Q16 I pay for services such as transport or extracurricular activities. Are these refundable?

- Fees for mandatory services (e.g., regulated services approved by KHDA) are fully refundable prior to the start of the academic year.
- Fees for optional services (e.g., transport, trips, extracurricular activities) are governed by the terms you agreed to when you opted for these services. These terms should have been communicated to you in writing before you paid for them.
- Fees for optional services paid before the academic year begins are refundable, provided no binding third-party contract is already in place, and the school has communicated these terms and conditions explicitly to you.

Q17 What if the school did not give me the refund terms in writing before I paid for optional services?

Schools are required to provide refund terms in writing before collecting payment for services other than the core tuition fees. If they did not, you should raise this with the school. KHDA may be contacted if the matter cannot be resolved.

Q18 The optional service is provided by an outside company. Who is responsible if something goes wrong?

Even when services are delivered by a third-party, the school remains responsible for ensuring that you are informed of all applicable terms and refund conditions. Schools must have contracts with third-party providers that protect parents in the event of non-delivery.

06 Transfer & Withdrawal Certificates

Q19 What is a Withdrawal Certificate, and when do I need one?

A Withdrawal Certificate is a formal document issued by the school when a parent submits a withdrawal request. It records the official withdrawal date and confirms that all financial obligations for the period attended have been met. This certificate is required for a student to register at any other private school or educational institution in Dubai and across the UAE.

Q20 What is a Transfer Certificate, and how is it different from a Withdrawal Certificate?

A Transfer Certificate is an official document confirming that a child is eligible to transfer to another school — into a grade compliant with current legislation — and that all outstanding fees have been settled. It is required for enrolment at any other KHDA-permitted school.

A Withdrawal Certificate is issued when a child leaves without immediately transferring to another school. Either document can be used as part of the admissions process at a new school.

Q21 Can the school withhold my child's Transfer Certificate?

Yes, only if outstanding fees have not been paid in full. Once all fees are settled, the Transfer Certificate must be issued promptly and at no additional charge. No processing fee may be levied.

Q22 My child was previously at a nursery or an ECC. Do I need to provide a certificate when enrolling at a school?

Yes. For any child who was previously enrolled at a KHDA-permitted ECC or school offering provision for children under 6, a valid Transfer Certificate or Withdrawal Certificate must be submitted as part of the registration process before enrolment is confirmed.

Example

Your child attended nursery until the end of June. You enrol them at a private school for September. The school will require a Transfer Certificate or Withdrawal Certificate from the nursery as part of the admissions process. Ensure all nursery fees are settled well in advance so the certificate can be issued without delay.

Q23 What happens to my fees if the school voluntarily suspends or reduces its services?

If the school suspends or reduces services for reasons within its own control:

- The school must notify parents in writing as soon as the decision is made, including the reason and expected duration.
- Tuition fees remain payable for the time during which the service was available and delivered, including where it was delivered via distance learning or another method approved by KHDA.
- For any period in which the service was not delivered, the school must compensate for the shortfall. This may be through a fee credit note, additional sessions upon resumption, or a pro-rated refund. The remedy must be agreed in writing between the school and the parents.

Q24 What happens to fees if the school closes due to circumstances beyond anyone's control, such as a public health emergency or government directive?

- Fees remain payable for every day the service was available and delivered, including through distance learning approved by KHDA.
- A parent's decision not to engage with available distance learning does not constitute grounds for withholding or reducing fees. Any concerns about the quality of distance learning should be raised through the school's internal complaints process. Fees remain payable in full while any complaint is being resolved.
- Fees for the period after the service could no longer be delivered are held on your behalf as credit — they are not lost.

- A government-enforced closure does not affect the school's entitlement to open and collect re-registration deposits for the following academic year through digital or remote means. All deposits collected during this period remain subject to the standard refund provisions.

Q25 What happens to the fees held on my behalf after a forced closure?

You and the school must agree in writing on one of the following:

- Credit note — applied against future tuition fees, provided your child returns to the same school. If your child does not return, the amount will be refunded.
- Transfer of credit — if another child in your family enrolls at the same school, the amount retained as a credit can be applied to the sibling's fees.
- Full refund — the held amount is returned to you in full.

08

Circumstances beyond the control of either party (parents and/or schools):

Q26 Are there any circumstances where my registration or re-registration deposit might be refunded, even if I would not normally be entitled?

Yes. In the event of a government-enforced closure, registration and re-registration deposits remain subject to refund consideration. Personal circumstances — such as a change of mind or financial difficulty — do not qualify under this provision.

09

Disputes

Q27 I have a dispute with the school regarding fees or a refund. What should I do?

Start by raising the matter with the school using their internal complaints process. All internal resolution steps must be completed and documented before the matter can be escalated further.

If the dispute remains unresolved after the school's internal process has concluded, either party may refer the matter to KHDA through its official channels. KHDA may request documentary evidence from both parties, and schools must cooperate fully with any review.

