

P O L I C Y	Owner	Futures Counsellor (University and Careers Guidance)
	ID (Version)	Du: 4.1.12 v1.0
	Published	September 1 2026
	Valid Until	September 1 2028

POLICY STATEMENT

The Arbor School is committed to ensuring that every student in Years 9 to 13 receives impartial, accurate and personalised academic and career guidance. Guidance is a planned and progressive programme and an entitlement for all students, ensuring that support is available to every student rather than only to those who actively seek it.

Guidance at Arbor is shaped by the school's ethic of "enough for all, forever". Students are supported to make decisions that reflect their own interests, strengths, values and circumstances, and to understand the longer-term consequences of those decisions for themselves and for others.

The school recognises that success takes many forms. Students are supported to consider a broad range of future pathways, including university, foundation programmes, apprenticeships, vocational training, employment and entrepreneurship.

Purpose

This policy sets out The Arbor School's position on academic and career guidance and establishes responsibility for its delivery, quality and review. It supports the school's compliance with the requirements of the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) and the expectations of the UAE School Inspection Framework, particularly Performance Standard 2 (students' personal and social development and their innovation skills) and Performance Standard 5 (the protection, care, guidance and support of students).

The policy also sets out the school's position in relation to the FutuReady Framework published by KHDA in September 2026.

Scope

This policy applies to all students in Years 9 to 13; to all staff who contribute to academic and career guidance, including the Futures Counsellor, senior leaders, Heads of Key Stage, the Head of Sixth Form, tutors and subject teachers; and to external parties who work with Arbor students for guidance purposes, including university representatives, employers, and work experience providers. It applies to guidance delivered on site, off site and online.

APPLICATION

1. General Principles

The Arbor School will:

- 1.1 Provide a planned, progressive and age-appropriate programme** of academic and career guidance for all students in Years 9 to 13, reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant and effective.
- 1.2 Ensure guidance is impartial, accurate, current, personalised and student-centred**, taking account of each student's needs, interests, strengths, aspirations and circumstances, and free from commercial influence. Information such as entry requirements, application deadlines, tuition fees, visa rules and qualification recognition or equivalency will be checked against appropriate official sources at the point at which it is used.
- 1.3 Ensure equitable access to guidance and opportunities**, including appropriate individual support at key academic and career transition points and for students who require additional support due to their qualifications, needs or circumstances.
- 1.4 Support informed decision-making and student ownership**, providing access to information about a broad range of academic, vocational and career pathways, and opportunities to engage with universities, employers and others from the world of work.

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1.5 Work in partnership with parents, relevant staff and external organisations, while keeping the student at the centre of the guidance process.

1.6 Provide appropriate support for applications and future pathway decisions, while clearly communicating where decisions and outcomes rest with external institutions or authorities. The school does not guarantee admission, scholarships, financial aid, fee status, visa outcomes, or the recognition or equivalency of qualifications.

1.7 Ensure relevant external requirements are considered at the appropriate stage of decision-making. In particular, students considering university study in the UAE will be advised of applicable Ministry of Education equivalency requirements at the point of Sixth Form subject selection, so these can be considered before choices are confirmed. Decisions on equivalency remain the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

1.8 Maintain appropriate records and handle student information securely, lawfully and confidentially.

2. Subject Selection and Pathway Decisions

The school will provide guidance at key subject selection and pathway decision points:

2.1 End of Year 9: GCSE subject choices, including their implications for Sixth Form pathways, university courses and careers, and any commonly required subjects.

2.2 End of Year 11: Available Sixth Form qualifications and pathways, including A Levels, BTECs and blended pathways, their recognition by universities in intended destinations, and relevant subject requirements.

2.3 Non-standard pathways: Where a student's Sixth Form pathway differs from the standard qualification pathway, the implications for university admission and qualification recognition will be explained in writing before the pathway is confirmed, including any destination-specific restrictions. The discussion will be acknowledged by the student and parents and recorded by the school.

3. University and College Applications

The Arbor School will:

3.1 Support applications across destinations and application systems, in accordance with the requirements of the relevant institution or system.

3.2 Support timely and accurate applications, including references, predicted grades and required documentation. Students remain responsible for external deadlines.

3.3 Provide accurate, evidence-based and confidential references, in accordance with application requirements.

3.4 Uphold authenticity and academic honesty, ensuring students submit their own work and accurately represent their experiences, achievements and qualifications, in line with the requirements of the relevant application system.

3.5 Ensure school-issued documentation is accurate and clearly distinguished from official awarding body documentation, with official examination results and certificates remaining the responsibility of the awarding body.

3.6 Provide guidance on attestation, equivalency and verification requirements, while recognising that outcomes rest with the relevant institution or authority.

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4. Work Experience and Encounters with the World of Work

The Arbor School will ensure that students have meaningful opportunities to engage with the world of work and develop an understanding of different industries, workplace skills and career pathways.

Work experience and workplace encounters will:

- 4.1 Be purposeful and educational**, supporting students to develop knowledge, skills and self-awareness rather than being measured solely by duration.
- 4.2 Comply with applicable safeguarding, health and safety and UAE regulatory requirements**, with placements subject to appropriate approval and parental consent.
- 4.3 Be accessible and equitable**, with reasonable support provided to students who may not have access to opportunities through personal or family networks.
- 4.4 Contribute to informed academic and career decision-making**, providing students with meaningful exposure to a range of workplaces, sectors and career pathways.

5. Governance and Accountability

- 5.1 The Principal and Senior Leadership Team** will oversee the academic and career guidance programme, ensuring it is appropriately resourced, monitored and aligned with this policy.
- 5.2 The Futures Counsellor** will lead the implementation and coordination of the programme, working with relevant staff across the school to ensure a coherent and effective approach. The Futures Counsellor will report to Senior Leadership on the programme's effectiveness and impact.
- 5.3 Any exceptions** to this policy requires the prior approval of the Principal and is recorded in writing.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Document Title	ID / Reference No.
FutuReady Framework: Dubai's Standards for Academic Guidance and Career Readiness (KHDA, 2026)	
FutuReady Framework self-assessment and implementation plan (in development)	
Futures Counselling Department Handbook	
Futures (University and Careers) Counselling Programme, Years 9 to 13	
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	
Inclusive Education Policy	
Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy	
Data Protection Policy	
Admissions Policy	
Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities Policy	
Academic Honesty and Malpractice Policy	
Complaints Policy	

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ACADEMIC AND CAREER GUIDANCE

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Abbreviation / Term	Description / Definition
A Level	Advanced Level qualification, normally studied over two years in Years 12 and 13.
AS Level	Advanced Subsidiary Level, a qualification equivalent to the first year of an A Level.
BTEC	Vocational qualification offered at Level 2 and Level 3, assessed largely through coursework and practical work.
GCSE / IGCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education and its international equivalent, normally completed at the end of Year 11.
KHDA	Knowledge and Human Development Authority, the regulatory authority for private education in Dubai.
MoE	The UAE Ministry of Education, which determines the equivalency of qualifications for study and employment in the UAE.