ليـــوا للتعليم
Liwa Education

Framework for Selecting External Providers & Products

Policy Document

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A. Rationale

1. The following Governance Framework outlines the principles and practices necessary for evaluating and selecting external service providers and digital products used within Liwa Education.
2. As educational institutions increasingly rely on external technology platforms, learning applications, and infrastructure services, it is essential that the selection of such providers is conducted in a structured and responsible manner.
3. By establishing a consistent framework for assessing external providers and products, Liwa Education ensures that third-party solutions meet institutional, regulatory, and cybersecurity requirements while supporting high-quality education.

B. Purpose

1. To establish a structured framework for assessing and selecting external IT service providers and technology products used within Liwa Education.
2. To ensure that third-party systems, platforms, and applications meet cybersecurity, data protection, and regulatory requirements.
3. To support informed decision-making when adopting external providers, including learning applications, infrastructure services, and open-source technologies.

C. Scope

1. This framework applies to all Liwa Education campuses and departments.
2. It applies to the selection of external IT service providers and digital products that interact with or connect to school networks, systems, infrastructure, or data.
3. This includes, but is not limited to, learning applications, educational platforms, infrastructure services, and open-source software used within the school environment.

D. Framework

1. Liwa Education shall maintain a third-party risk assessment framework when selecting external IT service providers and products related to school networks, systems, and infrastructure.
2. The evaluation of external providers and products shall consider the following minimum criteria:

    a. Compatibility with existing school systems and infrastructure.
    b. Secure management and protection of institutional data.
    c. Compliance with cybersecurity standards and frameworks.
    d. Protection against cyber threats and vulnerabilities.
    e. Service delivery capability and provisions for backup and recovery.
    f. Reputation, reliability, and financial stability of the provider.
    g. Adherence of the vendor to Federal Decree-Law No. (45) of 2021 on the Protection of Personal Data and the relevant ADEK terms and conditions, copyright policy, and data privacy policy with regard to the collection, use, and disclosure of information.
    h. Where applicable, particularly for learning applications, the educational quality and age-appropriateness of the content.

3. Schools shall ensure that external vendors are informed that they are subject to Federal Decree-Law No. (45) of 2021 on the Protection of Personal Data, as well as ADEK terms and conditions, copyright policy, and data privacy policy regarding the handling of information.

4. External vendors shall ensure that any collection, processing, storage, or transmission of Liwa Education data is conducted in accordance with applicable UAE data protection laws and ADEK regulatory requirements.
5. Prior to the adoption of any new digital platform, application, or external technology provider that connects to school systems or processes institutional data, the proposed solution shall be reviewed by the IT Department to assess technical compatibility, cybersecurity considerations, and data protection requirements.

6. No external digital platform, application, or service may be implemented within Liwa Education systems or used to process school data without prior evaluation in accordance with this framework.

E. Roles and Responsibilities

1. **IT Department –** Responsible for supporting the evaluation of external technology providers and assessing technical, security, and infrastructure compatibility considerations.
2. **School Leadership / Departments –** Responsible for ensuring that proposed external providers align with operational and educational requirements.
3. **External Vendors –** Responsible for complying with applicable legal and regulatory requirements relating to cybersecurity, data protection, and privacy when providing services to Liwa Education.
4. **Chief Finance Officer (CFO)** – Responsible for final review, approval readiness, and ensuring alignment with Liwa Education governance requirements.

F. Policy Review and Maintenance

1. This framework shall be reviewed periodically to ensure alignment with ADEK requirements, regulatory updates, and evolving cybersecurity risks.

2. Updates to this framework shall be approved through Liwa Education governance procedures.

Appendix A – Third-Party Risk Assessment Considerations

When evaluating external providers and products, Liwa Education shall consider the following risk assessment areas:

1. **Technical Compatibility**
   The solution should be compatible with existing school infrastructure, systems, and network architecture.

2. **Data Security and Privacy**
   The provider must demonstrate appropriate safeguards for the secure collection, storage, processing, and transmission of institutional data.

3. **Cybersecurity Controls**
   The vendor should maintain reasonable cybersecurity protections to safeguard systems and data from unauthorized access, cyber threats, and vulnerabilities.

4. **Service Reliability and Continuity**
   The provider should demonstrate the ability to deliver services reliably and provide appropriate backup and recovery mechanisms where applicable.

5. **Vendor Reputation and Stability**
   Consideration should be given to the vendor's reputation, operational history, and financial stability to ensure long-term service continuity.

6. **Educational Suitability**
   Where applicable, learning applications and educational platforms should provide age-appropriate content that supports educational objectives.

Appendix B – Applicable Regulatory References

The selection and use of external providers and products shall comply with applicable regulatory and institutional requirements, including:

1. **Federal Decree-Law No. (45) of 2021 on the Protection of Personal Data.**
2. **ADEK Terms and Conditions relating to the collection, use, and disclosure of information.**
3. **ADEK Copyright Policy.**
4. **ADEK Data Privacy Policy.**

Policy Owner Department

Education Technology Department

Key Stakeholders		
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