

Children required to get ID card

Parents must spend Dh120 per child for the card, and children can complete registration at certified typing centres

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Abu Dhabi: Children under 15 years of age should register for ID cards as per a new decision of Emirates Identity Authority, a government spokesman told *Gulf News* on Wednesday.

Emirates Identity Authority (EIDA) Director General Dr Ali Al Khoury said: "Now ID card is mandatory for children under 15."

Earlier, registering children with the authority's population register was mandatory, but getting an ID card for them was optional.

"The new decision does not make any extra burden on parents [except a fee] as children can complete the registration at certified typing centres without the need to visit the authority's registration centres," he said.

Parents must spend Dh120 per child for the card. Previously, adding a child to the population register was free and the ID card was optional, for a Dh50 fee.

Previous rule

Under the previous regulation, children who were already on the population register did not need to rush to get the ID card, the spokesman said.

"They can apply when their parents renew their ID cards," he said.

"We are developing a system to provide the ID numbers of those children, so that they can use it until they get a card."

The decision, which came into effect recently, was made for the benefit of children and their families, Al Khoury said. The government would soon identify individuals for all its services and transactions using the 15-digit ID number [on the ID card], Al Khoury said.

Better for children

So it was better for children to also have the ID card to enjoy hassle-free services and transactions with the government, he said.

The director-general said the new enrolment strategy for 2010-2013, which eased the registration process by involving about 300 certified typing centres, had contributed to the decision.

Children had been exempted earlier because the authority did not want to have to ask parents to take the children to the authority's registration centres, Al Khoury said.

Mixed response from residents

The decision to make the ID card mandatory for children under the age of 15 received a mixed response from residents.

Bhaskar P., an Indian expatriate whose children are aged 6 and 10, questioned the decision, saying even banks did not accept the ID card for identification. "Then why should children also have it?" he asked. He and his wife renewed their ID card once but never had an opportunity to use it.

Amer, a Jordanian father of two working at a hospital, said he welcomed the decision.

"People will complain about paying up for the cards but it will eventually help the government in strategic planning," he said.

It will help authorities take the right decisions on aspects like how many schools to build and so on, he added.

Number system

The Emirates Identity Authority said it was developing a system to provide ID numbers for children already on the authority's population register, Dr Ali Al Khoury told *Gulf News*.

As the ID card had been optional for children, those who did not apply for an ID card were not given ID numbers, just a receipt, he said. "They [who already registered] can use the ID numbers until they apply for the card."

Registration

- If the parent can submit a passport-size photo of their children with a light blue background along with the required documents at the certified typing centre, children do not need to be present. Otherwise, typing centres will be able to take the picture
- Typing centres will fill out the electronic application form, scan the required identification documents (to transfer to the authority) and accept the fee
- The applicants will receive the ID card by Empost courier

Documents required:

- UAE nationals: Application form, original passport, original family book, parent's family book optional
- Expatriates: application form plus valid original passport including residence visa
- Fees for children: A flat fee of Dh120, including all charges.
- Free for Emiratis

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