



GEMS Winchester School Dubai



Attendance Policy Whole School

Person Responsible: Vice Principal & Directors of Pastoral

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At GEMS Winchester School Dubai (WSD), we take the issue of children's attendance and punctuality extremely seriously.

Evidence shows that both lateness and poor attendance have a detrimental effect on a child's educational attainment and life chances. It may also make it more difficult for them to make firm social bonds with other children. The odd day off here and there soon mounts up as does late arrival resulting in missing lesson time in a morning and these have a significant impact on learning.

The National Foundation for Educational Research in the UK (www.nfer.ac.uk) has shown that there is a significant association between absence and attainment and that there is also evidence that there may be critical thresholds of absence linked to significantly lower performance outcomes. Furthermore, this is supported by the KHDA. The Parent School Contract states that parents have a responsibility for 'promoting their child's attendance' and that continued 'absenteeism will result in disciplinary measures and will affect the student's chances of enrolment for the upcoming academic year.'

The Ministry of Education for the UAE also states that 'if a student is absent from school for 20 consecutive days or 25 non-consecutive days' the school can remove the child's place. Additionally, Dr Malak Zaalouk, Unicef's regional education adviser, said that pursuing an education is the right of every child and this is supported by His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

DSIB guidelines for attendance are as follows:

%	Grade
98.0%	Outstanding
96.0-97.9%	Very Good
94.0-95.9%	Good
92.0-93.9%	Acceptable
90.0-91.9%	Weak
89.9% or below	Very Weak

Therefore, all parents should ensure that their child is at school on time every day of the school year, except for illness. The reason for an absence must always be communicated to the school. If a child is sick parents should complete the absence form to explain the reason for absence. After 48 hours absence a sick note is required from the doctor. Absences of more than 48 hours without the support of a sick note will be marked as unauthorized.

The Principal cannot authorise absences other than for medical reasons.

The remainder of this document serves as a summary to how registers should take at GEMS Winchester School Dubai. Please read it carefully and if you have any issues, please raise them with the relevant Director of Pastoral (Primary or Secondary), or Assistant Principal.

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Register Codes

The following codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations set out by the KHDA. They are also used for collecting statistics through SIMS to allow the school to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence.

The following codes should be used by Tutors:

Code	Meaning
/	Present in school during morning registration (Tutor time). If a student were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.
B	Late arrival to school (after the National Anthem), but caused due to a problem with the bus and outside of the students control.
L	Late arrival to school (after the National Anthem).
J	This code is used if a student has been granted Home Study or Study Leave. This code is also used for students who are learning 'online' and are present virtually, rather than physically.
M	This code is used for illness, medical or dental appointments, providing evidence has been provided by parents. For up to 2 days absence, parents can self-report illness. For 3+ days medical absence, an official letter (e.g. a doctors note) will be required.
N	This code is used when we have not yet been given a reason for a student's absence from school. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence – this is the Tutors responsibility. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time (one working week) it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation) but not before.

As well as using the codes above, Heads of Year, SLT or Administrative staff can also use the codes below:

Code	Meaning
C	This code is used if a student is present, but has been authorised to miss registration/lesson (e.g. the student may be attending a Student Leadership meeting).
D	This code is used for Religious observance.
E	This code is used if emergency leave has been granted.
F	This code is used for any student who has defaulted on fees.
H	This code is used when a student is on a holiday authorised by the school in exceptional circumstance and agreed with HoY and the relevant AP.
I	This code is used if a student has been given Approved Leave.
O	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised. This should replace 'N' codes after one working week has passed since the day of absence.
P	This code should be used to record students who have attended school, but have left with parental permission.
R	This code is used for any internally excluded in the Reflection Room.
S	This code is used when a student has been suspended (external) by the school.

T	This code is used when a student is on a school trip.
V	This code should be used for attendance at an organised visit that is approved by the school.
W	This code is used for students on work experience.

The following codes should be used by Administrative staff or SLT only:

Code	Meaning
X	This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend
Y	This code is used when a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. This includes if the school is shut for a snow day, for example.
Z	This code is used when a student has been taken off-roll part way through a year or is put onto the register half way through the year for the days they have not been registered.
#	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as half terms, between term holidays and conference days.

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Daily Attendance Procedures

In the classroom, teachers will take a physical register, using the codes outlined above. All register should be taken by 7.45am and a list of incomplete registers will be generated at this time to ensure compliance with this policy.

1. Teachers will need to mark students who are physically in school with either '/' for present, 'N' for absent or 'L' for late if they arrive after registration (e.g. after the National Anthem). If a family has given a reason in advance, such as a medical leave, then you should use the appropriate code above.
2. For students who have not arrived to school by 7.45am, it is the Tutor/Class Teachers responsibility to email the parents to inform them that the child has either not arrived at school using the template below:

Good morning,

I hope you are well. You are receiving this email because your child has not yet registered for school.

I would appreciate you sending me an email to confirm the reason for their absence by 12pm today, so I can update the records accordingly.

Thank you for your support,

ADD TUTOR/CLASS TEACHER NAME

3. Once this email has been sent, the Teacher must ensure that the code 'N' remains on SIMS until more information has been given by the family.
4. If a student who is expected in school arrives late to school, the 'N' code will need updating to 'L'.

5. If a parent informs a Tutor/Class Teacher that their son/daughter is ill, the Tutor/Class Teacher should amend the register for the relevant day from an 'N' code to an 'M' code which means 'Medical/Illness/Dental'. For any other absence reasons, please use the appropriate code from the list above.
6. This process outlined above must be completed every day and it is each Head of Years responsibility to ensure their Tutor Team/Class Teachers are following this procedure, with support from the relevant Director of Pastoral and/or Assistant Principal.

PLEASE NOTE: This procedure is for daily attendance and not for lesson to lesson attendance. For lesson by lesson attendance, whether a student is physically in the classroom or accessing the lesson virtually, staff simply need to mark the students as '/' for physically present or 'N' for absence, and 'L' for late to lessons.

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Continuous Absenteeism – 3 Consecutive Days or More

1. It is the Tutor's responsibility to inform their HoY where they have had a student fail to attend school for 3 consecutive days or more where no reason has been provided by the family.
2. Once a student has been identified, the HoY is responsible for sending the following email to the family, copying in either the Director of Pastoral for Primary or Secondary, as well as the relevant Assistant Principal:

Dear Parent,

*I would like to draw your attention to the fact that your child, **ADD NAME (ADD TUTOR GROUP)**, has not accessed their morning registration period for the last 3 days. You should have received daily emails from your child's Form Tutor informing you of this, in order for you to respond with an explanation.*

I am emailing you to ask if there is anything that is preventing your child from accessing their lessons, so we can see what support we can offer you to help get them back to learning.

Thank you for your support,

ADD HEAD OF YEAR NAME

3. If the HoY does not receive an email from the family by the following day, they will report this to the Director of Pastoral (Primary or Secondary), as well as the relevant Assistant Principal:
4. On receiving this, the Director of Pastoral for Primary or Secondary, or the relevant Assistant Principal, will attempt to contact the family via telephone, in order to discuss the attendance issue with the family. Once contact is made, the person who has made contact is responsible for emailing the family with a summary of the conversation, as well as reconfirming our school expectations of daily attendance.
5. If the Director of Pastoral (Primary or Secondary), or the relevant Assistant Principal cannot make contact over the telephone after 3 attempts, they will email the parent further raising our any concerns and CC the respective ELT lead (Ms. Preya Sall for Primary, Ms. Leena Atkins for Secondary), a discussion will take place with the AP to determine further actions required. An example of this email is:

Dear Parent,

Over the course of the last few days I have been trying to contact you regarding your child, **ADD NAME (ADD TUTOR GROUP)**, who has not accessed their morning registration period for the last 3 days. You should have received daily emails from your child's Form Tutor informing you of this, in order for you to respond with an explanation, as well as an email from your child's Head of Year. I have also tried to communicate with you over the telephone 3 times.

I am emailing you to ask if there is anything that is preventing your child from accessing their lessons, so we can see what support we can offer you to help get them back to learning.

Best wishes,

ADD ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL NAME

6. For known vulnerable students with attendance issues, the Director of Pastoral (Primary or Secondary), or the relevant Assistant Principal will escalate their concern to the DSL (Ms. Shalini Nair), who will seek further guidance from SSC and ensure contact is made.
7. If we have not had contact for 5 consecutive days with any student, the Director of Pastoral (Primary or Secondary), or the relevant Assistant Principal will share this information with the DSL (Ms. Shalini Nair) is responsible for checking for any previous safeguarding concerns and seeking guidance from SSC to ensure contact is made.

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Daily and Weekly Tracking and Monitoring

1. Each day, HoY are responsible for checking SIMS for any attendance issues within their year group.
2. Each week, an Attendance Report will be run for the entire school, which will contain the following student information:
 - UPN
 - Forename
 - Surname
 - Year Group
 - Tutor Group
 - House
 - Attendance % for current week
 - Authorised Absence % for current week
 - Unauthorised Absence % for current week
 - Attendance % for period of distance learning to date (Start of year to day of report)
 - Authorised Absence % for period of distance learning to date (Start of year to day of report)
 - Unauthorised Absence % for period of distance learning to date (Start of year to day of report)
3. Further to the information shared with SLT listed above, each week a continuous unauthorised absence report will be run highlighting the names of students who have been absent for 3 or consecutive days in the previous week. This will also be shared with SLT.

4. This list should be cross-referenced with the students who should have already been contacted in the previous week to ensure no student 'slips through the net'. The steps outlined above for contacting families by APs/DSL will then take place for any student not already contacted.

Furthermore, when Attendance or Safeguarding is discussed in weekly meetings with HoY and SLT meetings, attendance concerns at an individual level should be flagged by HoY -> Director of Pastoral or AP and AP -> ELT. During SLT phase meetings with ELT, each AP would be expected to confirm the following:

1. The number of students with unauthorised attendance of 3 or more days in total in the previous week.
2. The number of students who have missed 3 days or more in the previous week.
3. Actions taken to address this poor attendance of these groups.
4. Updates on previously discussed students.
5. Vulnerable students' attendance (students who have been identified by DSL).

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Process for Strike Off

If, despite our best efforts listed above, we are not hearing from families then we may move to 'strike-off' students from the school roll. This process is outlined below:

1. If, having received daily absence emails from the Class/Form Teacher, as well as emails from the HoY, phone calls/emails from SLT, we have still not heard from a family after 10 days of consecutive absence, then the following email should be sent by the relevant Assistant Principal, CC the relevant member of ELT (Ms. Preya Sall for Primary, Ms. Leena Atkins for Secondary):

Dear Parent,

Potential Removal from Roll – Step 1 Warning

*Over the course of the last 10 days, the school has been trying to contact you regarding your child, **ADD NAME (ADD TUTOR GROUP)**, who has not been registering for school. You should have received daily emails from your child's Form Tutor informing you of this, in order for you to respond with an explanation, as well as an email from your child's Head of Year. I have also tried to communicate with you over the telephone and have sent you a previous email.*

*It has now been 10 consecutive days that your child has been absent without explanation from you. As such, we are placing your child on a '**Step 1 Warning**' due to attendance concerns. If we have not heard from you in 5 school days from this email, then we will move to a '**Step 2 Warning**' of possible removal from roll.*

I hope to hear from you soon to discuss how we can support your child attending their lessons.

Best wishes,

ADD ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL NAME

2. If, having sent the email above and waiting 5 days we have still not heard from a family (15 days of consecutive absence), then the following email should be sent by the relevant Assistant Principal, CC the relevant member of ELT (Ms. Preya Sall for Primary, Ms. Leena Atkins for Secondary) and Admissions:

Dear Parent,

Potential Removal from Roll – Step 2 Warning

Over the course of the last 15 days, the school has been trying to contact you regarding your child, **ADD NAME (ADD TUTOR GROUP)**, who has not been registering for school. You should have received daily emails from your child's Form Tutor informing you of this, in order for you to respond with an explanation, as well as an email from your child's Head of Year. I have also tried to communicate with you over the telephone on multiple occasions and have sent you a '**Step 1 Warning**' email.

It has now been 15 consecutive days that your child has been absent without explanation from you. As such, we are placing your child on a '**Step 2 Warning**' due to attendance concerns. If we have not heard from you in 5 school days from this email, then we will remove your child from the school roll.

I hope to hear from you soon to discuss how we can support your child attending their lessons.

Best wishes,

ADD ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL NAME

3. If, having sent the email above and waiting 5 days we have still not heard from a family (20 days of consecutive absence), then the following email should be sent by the Admissions Team and CC the relevant member of ELT (Ms. Preya Sall for Primary, Ms. Leena Atkins for Secondary) and relevant Assistant Principal:

Dear Parent,

Removal from Roll

Over the course of the last 20 days, the school has been trying to contact you regarding your child, **ADD NAME (ADD TUTOR GROUP)**, who has not been registering for school. We have tried to communicate with you via email and over the telephone on multiple occasions and have sent you both a '**Step 1 Warning**' email, and a '**Step 2 Warning**'.

As you have not contacted the school, in accordance with KHDA Guidance, we have removed your child from the school roll at GEMS Winchester School Dubai.

Best wishes,

ADD ADMISSION TEAM MEMBER NAME

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