



مدرسة جيمس الدولية – شارع الخيل  
**GEMS International School**  
AL KHAIL

# Whole-school Attendance Policy

**GEMS**  
EDUCATION



WE ARE A  
**CIS**  
MEMBER  
SCHOOL

**المعرفة**  
Knowledge



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## Aims and Principles

At GEMS International School (GIS) we aim to meet our obligations with regards to attendance and punctuality by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence/lateness
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled to
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

Research indicates that effective partnerships between school and home are fundamental to students' academic, social and emotional development. We support and motivate students as best as we can, and we ask that parents remain active partners in our endeavors to ensure that students maintain an appropriate attendance record.

The school environment is best placed to support learning, and students are expected to maintain the highest possible levels of attendance to lessons. Attendance and punctuality at school is a prerequisite to successful academic, social and emotional development. This is particularly pertinent in an IB setting, where we emphasize the development of the whole student.

A poor attendance record to both school and lessons means that students miss key ideas and skills needed to achieve their expected academic progress. GIS takes attendance very seriously and will question any absence without good reason. The attendance register is therefore an important tool in the work of the school to drive up standards and student attainment. It helps us to identify students who might need extra support to catch up on learning (linked to progress information) and to take action against poor attendance through the protocols outlined in this policy. It is worth noting that, in cases where attendance is perceived to significantly impede development, students may be required to repeat the grade level.

GIS, in conjunction with KHDA, has an overall attendance target of at least 98% for all students. The expectations placed on students, however, is that they attend 100% of sessions. If attendance falls to 95% for any reason whatsoever, the appropriate person (Homeroom Teacher/ Grade Level Leader) will meet with the student and their family. The Head of Primary/Secondary School will be informed of this meeting. It is important to note that every student must maintain a minimum attendance of 92% throughout the school year. KHDA Attendance Guidelines state that absence of fourteen consecutive days or a non-consecutive total of twenty-one days in a school year may result in the child not being enrolled for the next academic year.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### The CEO / Principal

- Ensures this policy is implemented consistently across GIS
- Monitors school level absence

### The Executive Leadership Team

- Ensures effective systems and protocols are put in place and implemented to track and manage



student attendance

- Engages with staff, parents, other agencies and the wider community to raise overall student attendance

### Grade Level Leaders

- Liaise regularly with Homeroom Teachers in tracking attendance data
- Monitor students of concern by putting in place measures to assist with support
- Assist Homeroom teachers in contacting parents of students whose attendance does not improve

### Teaching Staff

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately and registers are submitted at the beginning of the day (Primary) and **within 10 minutes of the start of each lesson** (Secondary)
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a student's absence/tardiness to parents
- Liaise with parents and other relevant stakeholders to address issues acting as barriers to students' attendance
- Support students with attendance concerns to engage with their learning once they return to school
- Ensure that any correspondence received from parents with regard to their child's absence is communicated with the Attendance Secretary

### Attendance Secretary

- Monitor sectional attendance data and individual student attendance data
- Ensure all registers have been taken; and action the steps outlined in this policy for staff who fail to complete the register
- Contact parents of absent children where no Leave Request is submitted
- Keep a record of students who arrive late or leave school early, and update registers as appropriate
- Work with the relevant pastoral team to tackle unauthorized and persistent absences

### Parents/carers

- Ensure that their child/ren receive/s a full-time education and those children registered at GIS attend regularly and punctually
- Inform the school of any absences/ leave as set out in Appendix B
- Discuss with the Class teacher (Primary)/Homeroom Teacher (Secondary) any planned absences well in advance
- Support the school by aiming for their child to have maximum attendance each year
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- Only request a leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance



## Recording Attendance - Primary School

An accurate and consistent registration system is essential for absenteeism to be tackled. It is important to ensure that students are aware that registration is taking place and is of utmost significance.

Teachers should only use the registration codes "P" (Present), AU (Authorized Absence), "L" (Late), UA (Unauthorized Absence), "FJ" (Future Joiner), "Ed" (Offsite School Trip), "RL" (Remote Learning), "S" (Suspension) and click either "A" (if they know if an authorized absence) or "O" (for unauthorized absence) when entering registration data into the system.

Students should arrive no earlier than 7.50 am, but are required to be in their Class/Homeroom by 8.10 am each day. Students who are not in class by the time the National Anthem is played at 8:10 am are considered absent and are marked as absent by the Homeroom Teacher.

If a student arrives to school after 8:10, they will be marked late by their homeroom teacher until 8:25am. After 8:25 the FOH team will mark students late using Toddle. When students are marked late after 8:25 they will be given a late slip which they will write their name on, and put on their teachers desk upon arrival to homeroom.

In the event a member of staff is unable to take a register through the online system, they must send an email register, or a paper register to the Attendance Secretary.

All attendance codes can be found in Appendix A of this policy.

## Recording Attendance - Secondary School

An accurate and consistent registration system is essential for absenteeism to be tackled. It is important to ensure that students are aware that registration is taking place and is of utmost significance.

Teachers should only use the registration codes "P" (present), "L" (late) "A" (absent), "S" (sports activity) and "F" (field trip) when entering registration data into Managebac. All other registration codes (i.e. the authorizing of absence for specific reasons) should only be entered by the Attendance Secretary.

Students should arrive no earlier than 7.50 am, but are required to be in their Class/Homeroom by 8.10 am each day. Students who are not in class by the time the National Anthem is played at 8:10 am are considered absent and are marked as absent by the Homeroom Teacher.

If a student is late to Homeroom, the teacher will mark the register for that student as L (Late). Any student failing to attend Homeroom must be marked as (A) absent. If a student fails to show for Homeroom but arrives during the day, the student must sign in late at the Secondary Reception desk, the absence will then be amended to late by the Attendance Secretary. The reason for lateness will be logged and the school register will be updated accordingly. The student will be required to attend detention, should they be late to school regularly.

In the secondary school, registers are taken in every lesson. All registers must be taken **within 10 minutes** of the start of **each period** via the school management information system, Managebac.

If you are covering a Homeroom, an email or a paper register should be sent to the Attendance Secretary at [k.vino\\_gis@gemsedu.com](mailto:k.vino_gis@gemsedu.com). Same procedure should be done if you are unable to log the attendance (laptop & internet connection issues).



If you are covering a lesson, you should add yourself as a teacher in MB so that you can mark the attendance, you can remove yourself from MB right after the lesson.

All attendance codes can be found in Appendix A of this policy.

## Failure to Complete Register (Secondary)

If a member of staff fails to complete a register the following steps will be followed:

1. First instance - an email reminder will be sent to the teacher by the Attendance Secretary, cc'd to the relevant Grade Level Lead & Assistant Head of School.
2. Second instance - an email reminder will be sent to the teacher by the Attendance Secretary, cc'd to the relevant Grade Level Leader & Assistant Head of School. A formal discussion will take place with the Assistant Head of School to support the staff member with strategies to ensure register completion.
3. Third instance - a disciplinary letter will be issued by the Head of Secondary and placed on the teacher's record for a period of six months.

## For Parents/Carers

### Absence

It is the responsibility of Parents/carers to notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence. Notification should be made by 8:00 am or as soon as practically possible. Notification for absence for a primary student can be done directly to Homeroom teacher and for secondary students by submitting a [Secondary Leave Request](#). If an absence is more than 2 days for a primary student, an absence [form](#) must be completed and submitted to the PYP office or homeroom teacher on the child's first day back.

Unplanned absence of no more than 3 days can be authorized unless the school has a genuine concern about the reason for the absence. If the authenticity is in doubt (even short term), the school may ask parents to provide evidence, such as a doctor's note, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. The Attendance Secretary will not ask for evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the absence, it will be recorded as unauthorized and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Where a student has an unplanned absence from school for 3 or more days, a medical certificate is required to be submitted to the Attendance Secretary on the day the student returns to school. When a planned assessment is missed, a medical certificate is required regardless of how many days are absent.

A child that does not attend school, without an acceptable cause, is considered a safeguarding concern. If a child is absent or is planning to be absent from school, the parent must follow the guidelines in Appendix B.

If a student has been marked absent, and no notification has been received, the school will attempt to make parental contact on the day to ascertain the reason for absence/lateness and enter the appropriate code using the guidelines within. The parent will be reminded of the importance of contacting the school



Attendance Team in future.

If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three consecutive days of absence the school will alert the appropriate agency.

GIS will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family.

## Absence Causing A Concern

Concerns about a student's attendance and/or punctuality (95% or below) may include:

- if a parent fails repeatedly to phone in when his/her child is sick
- if a parent fails to provide his/her child with proof of medical/dental appointments
- if a parent fails to advise of a family holiday or leave of absence during term time
- if a student's attendance falls below acceptable levels
- a high level of unauthorized absences
- persistent lateness
- questionable authenticity of absence/lateness notes

In cases where there are concerns, the Homeroom Teacher should use a range of strategies to try to improve attendance and punctuality, such as:

- attendance and punctuality reports
- setting specific attendance and punctuality targets and goals for achieving these targets
- phone calls or letters home – acknowledging positive or negative performance
- meetings with parents to set up fixed period attendance/punctuality target monitoring
- loss of personal time to make up for lost learning
- GIS Pastoral referral
- in-school mentoring support for the student

In particular, attendance causing concern will be managed according to the following table:

Step number	Action
Step 1 Attendance is a cause for concern	Homeroom Teacher contacts parents/carers to let them know that the school will be monitoring the child's attendance for the next two weeks.
Step 2	Homeroom Teacher contacts parents/carers to let them know that the



No significant improvement in two weeks	student will be put on attendance report for a period of four weeks. The report will only be passed if the student is present and on time for at least 19 of the 20 days.
Step 3 Failed 4-week attendance report	Homeroom Teacher will arrange a meeting with parents/carers to let them know that the attendance report has not been passed. The parent/carer will also receive a letter from the school explaining the significance of persistent absence.
Step 4 Attendance has not improved within 4 weeks	The Grade Leader will call parents/carers to let them know that attendance has not improved and that a further letter will be sent out. This letter will contain details of the action if attendance does not improve; <b>the student goes on a Grade Leader report.</b>
Step 5 Attendance has not improved within 4 weeks	The Assistant Head of School meets with parents/carers to inform them that attendance has not improved. The parent/carer will be given a letter informing them that the details of the case will be passed to the relevant authority and will likely impact the student's promotion to the next grade level. GIS Safeguarding Team Referral is made.

## GIS Pastoral Referrals

If the strategies above do not improve a student's attendance/punctuality and his/her attendance falls below 92%, then a referral to the GIS Pastoral Team is necessary.

If a student's attendance falls below 92%, a letter will be sent home informing parents that any further absences will not be authorized unless documented evidence is provided. The School Pastoral Team will advise on further intervention.

A referral to KHDA may be considered when attendance falls below 87% or if a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers after ten consecutive days of absence.

## Student Deletion From Registers

The school can delete compulsory school-age children from the registers in the following circumstances:

- Transfer between schools (where the new school has confirmed attendance of the student)
- Where there has been 20 working days continuous unauthorized absence and only if both the KHDA and GIS have located the student or made reasonable enquiries
- Parents/carers have withdrawn child from GIS and have given written notice that their child will be educated elsewhere than at the GIS





- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the UAE school system
- Permanent exclusion (after the appeal process has been completed)
- Above compulsory school age
- A medical condition preventing their attendance and return to school before the ending of compulsory school-age
- Death of the student

## Reporting to parent/carers

Parents/carers can see their child/children's attendance and punctuality records on ManageBac.

## Monitoring, Evaluating and Review

The ALT will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and published throughout the school.

## Links with other policies

Safeguarding Policy

## Appendix A: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the s guidance on school attendance.

### Secondary (*ManageBac*)

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>P</b>	Present	Student is present at registration
<b>A</b>	Absent	Student is not present at school
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed (prior to 8:20)
<b>O</b>	Authorized Absence	
<b>UA</b>	Unauthorized Absence	
<b>RL</b>	Remote Learning	Student is remotely connecting to lessons due to Covid 19 diagnosis
<b>SP</b>	Sports Activity	Student is participating in an elite sporting activity approved by GIS



<b>F</b>	Field trip	Student is on an educational visit/trip organized, or approved, by GIS
<b>SL</b>	Study Leave	
<b>E</b>	Suspended	

### Primary (Toddler)

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>P</b>	Present	Student is present at registration
<b>AU</b>	Authorized Absence	Student is not present at school but email has been received from parents
<b>UA</b>	Unauthorized Absence	Student is not present at school and no communication received from parents
<b>S</b>	Suspended	Student is not present at school due to pending fees
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed (prior to 8:30)
<b>RL</b>	Remote Learning	Student is remotely connecting to lessons due to Covid 19 diagnosis
<b>ED</b>	Off Site School Trip	Student is on an educational visit/trip organized, or approved by GIS
<b>FJ</b>	Future Enrolled Students	

### Appendix B: What to do if my child is absent?

Parents/carers must follow the below guidelines where a student/s will be absent from GIS, or the parent/carer would like to request a leave of absence.

#### Primary

1. Email your child's homeroom teacher before 8am so that he / she can mark their absence as excused.
2. Complete an absence **form** for an absence of more than 2 days and submit to PYP office or homeroom teacher on the child's first day back.
3. Absence for more than 3 days requires prior approval if planned or a doctors clearance for illness related leave (in some cases a medical certificate is requested )

#### Secondary

Parents/carers are required to submit a [Secondary Leave Request](#). In case of any difficulties or additional queries, please contact the school's Attendance Secretary at [k.vino\\_gis@gemsedu.com](mailto:k.vino_gis@gemsedu.com) .



Reason for Absence	Parental Responsibility	Sanction	Attendance Code
Student arrived late to school between (8:10 & 8:30 am)	Parent/carer must notify attendance before 8.30 am	Lateness recorded	L – Arrived at school late before registration closed
Student repeatedly (3 or more times) arrives late to school after 8:20 am	Parent/carer must notify attendance before 8.30 am	Late detention	A – Arrived at school after registration closed.
Student is ill and, therefore, will not be able to attend school	Parent/carer must notify attendance before 8.10am each day of absence (The school can request parent/carer to provide medical evidence to support illness for 3 or more days absent)		<p>O - Authorized</p> <p>UA - unauthorized absence if insufficient medical evidence is provided by parent/carer</p> <p>A - absent if no communication was received from parent/carer</p>
Student is ill and, therefore, will not be able to attend school and will miss a planned assessment	Parent/carer must notify attendance before 8.00am and provide a medical certificate on the return to school	No results awarded for assessment	<p>A - Authorized</p> <p>UA - unauthorized absence if insufficient medical evidence is provided by parent/carer</p> <p>A - absent if no communication was received from parent/carer</p>
Student has a medical or dental appointment, visa or passport renewal.	Parent/carer should avoid making appointments during school hours as this affects student attendance. Parent/carer <b>must provide a medical note to the Attendance Secretary at least 24</b>		<p>O – if appointment letter is submitted</p> <p>UA-unauthorized if they leave school without a sufficient note having been provided 24 hrs prior</p>



	hrs before the appointment for this to be an authorized absence.		
Student is going on holiday during term time	GIS will not authorize any holiday during term time. Leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances and will need to be requested in writing with supporting documentation. <b>If leave is granted, no more than 5 working days in any year will be authorized</b>	A note of concern may be issued in cases where absence has not been authorized by GIS	<p>UA – Unauthorized absence where parent/carer has failed to notify GIS</p> <p>O - Holiday approved in exceptional circumstances</p> <p>UA – Unauthorized Holiday where parent/carer has notified the school and request has been denied or is in excess of the period determined by GIS</p>
Death or serious illness of a family member	<b>If the leave request is approved it will only be granted for death/illness of a close family member for a maximum of 5 working days</b>	These will be considered on a case by case basis.	<p>O – Leave of absence authorized by GIS</p> <p>UA - Unauthorized absence where leave has been denied or student is absent for more than 5 working days</p>
Student has an interview at another school	Parent/carer and students should avoid making appointments during school hours as this affects student attendance. Where this is not possible, request for leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances	A note of concern may be issued in cases where absence has not been authorized by GIS	<p>O - Interview absence authorized by GIS</p> <p>UA - Unauthorized absence where leave has been denied</p>



Representation on external sporting/cultural team	Parent/carer must provide documentation from the relevant sporting governing body to support their request for leave. Failure to do so will see the leave being denied		SP - representative participation  UA - Unauthorized absence where leave has been denied
Religious observance	Parent/Carer must apply for this leave at least 3 days prior to		O - student is taking part in a day of religious observance  UA - Unauthorized absence where leave has been denied