

GEMS Winchester Private School, Fujairah

Attendance Policy

This policy has been produced for GEMS Winchester Private School Fujairah. When 'The School' is referred to in this policy it is solely GEMS Winchester Private School (WSF) that is being referred to.

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Purpose

At GEMS Winchester Private School, we believe that regular and punctual attendance is essential for students to maximise their educational opportunities. Good School attendance is a key factor in raising attainment and reducing social exclusion. Students should be at School on time every day that the school is open, unless the absence is unavoidable and an acceptable reason is given.

At WSF we work in partnership with parents and students to encourage excellent attendance and to offer support in removing barriers that may prevent students from coming to school. Students who have full attendance are more successful and confident in their studies. Those who are frequently absent not only have significant gaps in their own learning but also require additional support to help them catch up.

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.

Parents are expected to contact the school in the morning on the first day of their child's absence, and every day the child is absent. Parents are also expected to notify the School at an early stage of potential significant problems to enable early intervention work to take place before poor attendance becomes a habit.

WSF is aligned with the Ministry of Education's attendance thresholds and gradings, as outlined in the table below:

%	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

Aims

Through this policy we aim to:

- Ensure the School's attendance is above 96%
- Outline the updated procedures for recording attendance
- Outline the steps the School will take to promote positive attendance and punctuality.
- Outline absence procedures for parents to follow.

Procedures

Monitoring of Attendance

Student attendance is monitored through our registration system. For attendance recording purposes, students' presence is taken during the morning registration period (AM mark) and period five in the afternoon (PM mark). For internal monitoring and safeguarding, registration is taken at the start of each lesson across the Middle and Senior school. With regard to individual lesson registration, please note that where there is a change of teacher or classroom, the teacher must take the register.

To ensure that the attendance of students remains high on the School's agenda, attendance figures are shared daily, and a more detailed analysis is conducted weekly, with leaders and discussed at leadership meetings, including the Executive Leadership Team. Analysis of attendance data at senior and middle leadership further informs strategic decision-making, monitoring trends across the school, and acting as required.

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, students, and all members of School staff.

STUDENTS: Students are responsible for ensuring they are in School every day on time and are punctual to every lesson. School opens from 7:20am and lessons begin at 7:40am each morning. School ends at 2pm each day and 10:40am on Friday. For Pre-KG, school ends at 11:40 each day except Friday.

PARENTS and CARERS: Parents and Carers are fully responsible for ensuring the highest levels of attendance possible. They are required to inform the School by 7.30 am if their child will be absent on that day. They are obliged to provide the School with a full explanation as to why the student will not be attending. Failure to do so may lead the School to categorise the attendance as unauthorised. In accordance with UAE law a student may be permanently excluded if he/she is absent from school for 15 consecutive days within an academic year. In such cases, the School does reserve the right to exclude a child, ask them to repeat a year or withdraw the offer of a place for the following academic year. This 15-consecutive-day threshold for exclusion is separate from the Ministry of Education's promotion criteria in Appendix 3, which count 15 unexcused absences (whether consecutive or spread across the year) as grounds for repeating a grade. Students with attendance under 75% attendance across a year will fail the year. Half-termly monitoring, including Tier 1 tracking and the parent meeting and attendance plan process outlined later in this policy, exists to support students to improve before this point is reached. The Ministry of Education's own grade-level promotion criteria (see Appendix 3) are stricter than this 75% threshold and remain the final determinant of promotion.

FORM TUTORS and CLASS TEACHERS: Form Tutors and class teachers are responsible for encouraging students to attend the School each day. Senior Leaders will receive a weekly report from the data team and will use the data to work with teachers to notify parents of students of concern. Form tutors will receive a weekly report of the attendance and will notify parents of concerns through parent-tutor communications. Middle and Senior leaders will work with the form tutor/class teacher to follow-up on unexplained absences. For unexplained absences of five days or more, a safeguarding referral may be made.

For unexplained absences, the procedure will follow the below:

Day 1- Teacher will message on Class Dojo to find out why the student is absent from school.

Day 2- If no response or evidence is received, the teacher will follow up with a second message on Dojo.

Day 3- Teacher will refer student to school social worker. The social worker will then contact home.

Day 5- Teacher will refer the student to our safeguarding platform as a whole week has been missed.

SOCIAL WORKER: The school social worker is responsible for tracking TIER 1 students.

Tier 1 students are any students who have 3 or more unexplained absences in a week or drop below 75% attendance across a half term. The Social Worker will follow up with these students and families to ensure that attendance improves and to see what support we can offer as a school. These students will also be referred to our safeguarding platform.

DATA TEAM: The data team will have oversight of the data sharing process and ensure that the appropriate data is shared with the appropriate teams. There will be daily attendance percentage updates, as well as a more detailed weekly analysis.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS/RECEPTIONISTS/PRE (PARENT RELATIONS EXECUTIVE): Will update the attendance register upon awareness of a student absence. Administrative assistants expect to be notified by the parent directly, or by a member of staff (e.g. support staff or bus guardian). Once SLT have completed the Late Room register, Receptionists will log this on SIMS.

Absences authorised by parents should be entered by Receptionists or PRE using the appropriate code into the register by 8.00 am each day. The class teacher or form tutor will contact the parents of students who are absent without explanation; communication will be by ClassDojo. The reason for the absence will then be updated onto the register.

SENIOR LEADERS: The SLT will monitor and track patterns of attendance through regular reports. These reports will be prepared by the AP pastoral.

Late Room Process

After the school gates close at 7:50am, students arriving will be directed to the late room in the KG Corridor. Their attendance will be registered by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and a conversation regarding their lateness will take place. Repeated lateness will be discussed with parents to see what support may be required to ensure the child is getting to school on time each day.

Attendance and Safeguarding

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.

Where a child has five consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps* have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the class teacher or form tutor will record the concern on the Guard platform. The school will also ensure they follow the requirements of regulators for reporting non-attendance, where appropriate.

*Reasonable steps may include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (local/international).
- Emails to parents/guardians.
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered.
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts.
- Referral to the CPU(Child Protection Unit).

Where a vulnerable student shows low attendance or frequent absenteeism, they will be moved to the Vulnerable Student List, maintained by the School Counsellor in coordination with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Once added to the Vulnerable Student List, the student's name is removed from the Tier 1 Tracker and their attendance is monitored separately through the appropriate safeguarding and pastoral support process

Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect a student's education as much as any other absence. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised. If a parent would like to request a term-time leave of absence for their child, they must submit the request in writing to the Head of School, who will inform them whether the leave of absence is granted, subject to final approval by the Principal (see Appendix 2).

A form is available from school and can be found in the appendices in this policy.

Contact Details

As there are times when we need to contact parents about School matters, including absence, it is therefore important to have accurate contact details at all times. Parents are encouraged to ensure we have up to date numbers and email addresses.

Absence Procedures:

Timings

7.30 am	Parents inform School about their child's absence
7.40 am	Bus guardians inform School of bus student absences
7.30-8.00 am	Teachers or Reception update attendance register with correct codes for absent students
7.40-8.00 am	Form Tutors/Class teachers complete class register

If a student is absent a parent/carer must:

- **Contact the School** as soon as possible on the first day of absence via email or Class Dojo.
- **Provide evidence** of the illness/ reasons for absence to be recorded on school system. For illness-related absences up to two days, a verbal or emailed reason without a doctor's note is sufficient.
- **Provide a doctor's note** if they are ill for 3 days or more.
- If the absence is extended, share additional documentation with the school

Registration procedures

Staff register students' attendance via the school register every morning by 8am and every afternoon at 12:20pm, with the exception of Fridays, when the school day ends before the afternoon registration period and no PM mark is taken.

In the event that the attendance register is not functioning, staff should arrange for a paper register to be delivered to reception by 8.00am and 12.20pm

Staff removing students from classes for events will let the teacher know so the correct register code can be applied.

Where circumstances occasionally mean a student is removed for an impromptu educational reason, staff will inform the class teacher and the administration team **know immediately** to ensure the student receives a registration mark.

Attendance and Punctuality recording

Teachers and administration staff will record and track attendance and punctuality on SIMS. The following codes will be used for absences. If a student is present, they are marked with a /

Reason	Code	
Illness or appointment – notified by parent	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 doctor's note) will be required.
School Trip	V	This code is used when a student is on a school trip or educational visit.
Study Leave- notified by parent	S	This code is used if a student has been granted Home Study or Study Leave, or is sitting an examination. This code is also used for students who are learning 'online' and are present virtually, rather than physically.
Other authorised leave	C	This code is used in exceptional circumstances.
Arrived late to School	L	This code is used when the student arrives at or after 7:50am, once the school gates have closed.
No reason provided	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 Class Teacher/Form Tutor's responsibility. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended with the correct code. If N remains on the child's register, an unauthorised absence will be recorded.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student is late during the start of the day they miss out on learning and important information. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons and the learning of others. Reflection Time may be set for persistent lateness and students who are late to lessons without a note or a valid reason.

How we manage lateness

Lessons start at 7.40 am, and we expect students to be in their class or take part in assembly where registration will take place, and students will participate in the National Anthem. Gates close at 7.50am, and any student arriving at or after this time is marked late and directed to the late room. If a student is persistently late, the relevant leader will be notified, and appropriate action will be taken to support the student with time management or sanction the student with a reflection time. If a student has an accumulation of persistent lateness, parents will be asked to meet with the Head of School.

Responsibilities

The people responsible for attendance and punctuality are as follows:

Name	Role
Class teacher (Primary and EYFS)	• Updates register as first point of contact. • AM and PM marks must be recorded, in addition to lesson by lesson for Specialist lessons. • Send a Class Dojo message to parents if the absence is not communicated on the day (see Appendix 4). • Investigate unexplained absences each day. • Send communications to parents for repeated absence (see Appendix 4). This is for Day 1 and 2 • Record any concerns around unexplained absence or absence of 5 days or more on Guard.
Form Tutor (Middle and Senior)	• Updates register as first point of contact. • AM and PM marks must be recorded, in addition to lesson by lesson. • Send a Class Dojo message or email if the absence is not communicated on the day (see Appendix 4). • Investigate unexplained absences and report to parents through parent pulse calls daily and weekly • Send daily communications to parents for repeated absence (see Appendix 4). This is for Day 1 and 2. • Record any concerns around unexplained absence or absence of 5 days or more on Guard.
Phase Leaders and Assistant Heads	• Investigate unexplained absences at the end of each week. • Analyse trends in absences and provide support to students that are of concern. • Record any further concerns around absence on Guard.
School Social Worker	• Track low absenteeism and poor punctuality weekly with a parent follow up for students of concern. This is from Day 3 onwards. • Ensure that any concerns around unexplained absence or absence of 5 days or more have been recorded on Guard.
Student	• Arrive to school on time and take responsibility for time management.
Parent/Carer	• Report absence and follow up with required documentation. • Ensure their child arrives at School on time. • Provide evidence of medical, dental or other appointments or reasons for absence • Request leave of absence through the WSF Leave of

	Absence request form.
Administrative Assistants/PRE (Parent Relations Executive)/Class Teachers	• Log authorised absences as reported by the parent • Record lateness after the Late Room closes.
Data Team	• Provide data and regular attendance reports to the appropriate teams.

All School staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure high levels of attendance.

There will be an annual review of this policy by the Senior Leadership Team and final approval will be given by the Principal.

Appendix 1

Attendance advice for Parents and Carers

Keep Your Child on Track – Attendance Matters at GEMS Winchester Private School, Fujairah

At GEMS Winchester Private School, Fujairah, we believe that showing up every day is one of the most important factors in your child's success — both in school and in life. The UAE Ministry of Education requires that students attend regularly, and families play a vital role in making that happen. The Ministry have highlighted that missing 10% of school days can reduce achievement levels by half a school year, while 20% absences can set a student back by a full year.

Why Attendance Matters

Regular attendance helps children stay engaged, confident, and on track for future success. Missing school means missing learning opportunities, classroom discussions, and friendships — all of which support your child's wellbeing.

Did you know:

- Research in the shows that students with 90 – 95% attendance are nearly twice as likely to achieve expected curriculum standards, compared to students with 85-90% attendance.
- Missing school for 9 days can half a student's chances of achieving expected curriculum standards
- Missing just 2 days a month adds up to 10% of the school year.
- By Grade 9, attendance is a stronger predictor of graduation than test scores.

Make School Attendance a Priority

- Talk about the importance of attending school every day.
- Build strong routines — pack bags the night before, set wake up alarms, and plan a calm morning start.
- Try to schedule non-urgent appointments (like dental or travel) outside school hours.
- Keep your child healthy, but if they must miss school, let the teacher know and help them catch up.
- Holidays during term time are not authorised by the Ministry of Education.

Reporting Absences

If your child cannot attend school:

1. Notify the class teacher or form tutor before 7:30 a.m. via Class Dojo or email.
2. Include the reason for absence.
3. For absences longer than two days due to illness, please provide a medical certificate.
4. For extended absence, more documentation will be required. Please be prepared to get this to us swiftly once requested.

Punctuality Counts Too

Every minute of learning matters. Gates open at 7:20 a.m. and lessons begin at 7:40 a.m. Gates close at 7:50 a.m.; students arriving at or after this time are marked late. Late arrivals miss valuable learning time and disrupt the class. Repeated lateness will be followed up by the teacher and leaders of the school.

Help Your Child Stay Engaged

- Ask your child about their classes and friendships — are they feeling safe and motivated?
- If your child seems anxious or reluctant to attend, contact their teacher or the school counsellor.
- Encourage participation in clubs, sports, and after-school activities — belonging helps boost attendance.
- Monitor social connections and help manage peer pressure or online distractions.

When Attendance Becomes a Challenge

We understand that some families face genuine difficulties with attendance. Please don't wait until absences add up — reach out early. Our team, including counsellor and Assistant Heads, can help with strategies, routines, or emotional support.

Consequences of Poor Attendance

- Repeated unauthorised absences will result in communication from the school.
- Continued absenteeism may be logged as a safeguarding concern and referred to the Ministry of Education's Child Protection Department.
- Poor attendance or punctuality affects academic progress and may affect promotion to the next grade/failing the year.

Together, We Can Make Every Day Count

Families and schools share the same goal — helping every child thrive. By making attendance a daily habit, you are giving your child the best chance for success. Thank you for supporting regular, on-time attendance at GEMS Winchester Private School, Fujairah.

Appendix 2

Student Leave of Absence Request Form

GEMS Winchester Private School Fujairah

Student Leave of Absence Request Form

In accordance with UAE Ministry of Education regulations and GEMS Winchester Private School, Fujairah attendance policy, parents or guardians must submit this form in advance of any planned absence to request the student to be granted authorised absence. Requests will be reviewed by the Head of School and Principal. Authorised leave will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

Student Information

Student Name: _____

Student ID number: _____

Year Group / Class: _____

Form Tutor: _____

Parent / Guardian Information

Parent / Guardian Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Details of Requested Absence

Dates of Absence: From _____ To _____

Total Number of School Days Requested: _____

Reason for Absence (please provide full details):

Supporting Documentation

Please attach any supporting evidence (e.g., medical certificate, travel documentation, or official letter). Requests without documentation may be considered unauthorised.

Parent / Guardian Declaration

I understand that prolonged or unauthorised absence may affect my child's academic progress and promotion to the next grade. I confirm that the information provided is accurate.

Parent / Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

School Use Only

Received By: _____ Date: _____

Reviewed By (Head of School): _____ Decision: Approved / Not Approved

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Notes:

Appendix 3

Ministry of Education Guidelines

Attendance Benchmarks:

- Outstanding/Excellent: 98% (**no more than three days absent**)
- Very Good: 96% (**up to seven days absent**)
- Good: 94% (**up to 11 days absent**)
- Acceptable/Satisfactory: 92% (**up to 13–15 days absent**)
- Weak/Very Weak: Below 92% (**more than 15 days absent**)

According to the MoE guidelines, the below are the Attendance Requirements by Grade Level

- **Grades 1–3:**
 - Must attend **at least 65%** of school days and complete assessments in **two semesters** to be promoted.
 - Alternatively, complete assessments across **three semesters**.
- **Grade 4:**
 - Must pass all core subjects with **at least 50%**.
 - Must have **fewer than 15 unexcused absences** (consecutive or separate).
- **Grades 5–8:**
 - Same as Grade 4: pass core subjects with **50% minimum** and **less than 15 unexcused absences**.
- **Grades 9–12:**
 - Must score **at least 60%** in all core subjects.
 - Must maintain **fewer than 15 unexcused absences**

Any Students who do not meet the requirements will run the risk of failing the year and having to repeat the grade level again.

Appendix 4

Dojo Message for sending to parents upon child absence

1. For students who have not arrived to school by 8am, it is the Tutor/Class Teacher's responsibility to message the parents to inform them that the child has either not arrived at school using the template below:

Day 1

Good morning, I hope you are well.

You are receiving this message 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 FORM TUTOR/CLASS TEACHER NAME

Day 2

Good morning, I hope you are well.

Further to my message yesterday, we are still requiring a reason for your child's absence from school. They are currently being marked as unauthorised.

We want to ensure that they are safe and well, and if there is anything we can do to support them returning to school, please let me know.

Thank you for your support,

ADD FORM TUTOR/CLASS TEACHER NAME

Once these messages have been sent, the Teacher must ensure that the code 'N' remains on SIMS until more information has been given by the family.

If a student who is expected in school arrives late to school, the 'N' code will need updating to 'L'. If they have attended the late room with SLT, this will be done by reception.

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 shared above.

This process outlined above must be completed **every day** and it is the Assistant Head Teachers' responsibility to ensure their Tutor Team/Class Teachers are following this procedure.

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.

For continuous absenteeism, the following actions must be taken and communications shared:

Three Consecutive Days or More- Social Worker

The school social worker will then contact the family if a student has accrued three consecutive absences. This is following up on the previous message and should only be done if we have not heard from the parent regarding the reasons for absence.

This will all be tracked on the Tier 1 Tracker, managed by the social worker.

For known vulnerable students with attendance issues, staff should escalate their concern to the DSL who will seek further guidance from SSC and ensure contact is made.

If we have not had contact for 5 consecutive days with any student, the school social worker will refer the case to our Guard platform as a safeguarding concern.

Unauthorised Absences	Action	Person Responsible
Day 1 and 2	Messages sent from Class Dojo	Class Teacher/Form Tutor
Day 3	Social worker will begin to track student, this may involve contacting the teacher, checking Guard, checking Tier 1 Register, and contacting home.	School Social Worker
Day 5	Add to guard as a safeguarding concern. Social Worker to continue to contact home.	Class Teacher/Form Tutor - Add to Guard Social Worker- Continue to follow up with Tier 1 students.
Percentage below 75% within a half term	Parent meeting and attendance plan. MOE warning letter with both student and guardian to sign.	Social Worker and AP Pastoral
No improvement in second half term	Further MOE warning letter and points deduction. Could lead to permanent exclusion.	Social Worker and AP Pastoral