

Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

The GEMS Founders School – Dubai South (GFD) attendance policy has been developed as a part of the school’s commitment to providing a supportive learning environment which enables all students who have chosen to study with us to achieve their full potential.

2. Purpose of policy

Attendance is a key component in student progress and achievement. Regular attendance and academic achievement are closely linked. Students who actively participate in their learning by attending all classes regularly are more likely to:

- enjoy a rewarding experience in which their knowledge, skills and abilities are developed
- successfully complete an academic year
- achieve better results

Through this policy we aim to:

- improve students’ achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality
- aim for outstanding levels of 100% attendance
- create an ethos in which outstanding levels of attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school and the wider school community
- raise awareness of parents, carers and students about the importance of outstanding levels of attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child’s education
- ensure that GFD meets the KHDA requirements of Federal Law Articles 47 & 48

3. Parental agreement

It is important that parents, students and the school must work together to improve and maintain high attendance/punctuality rates. Students’ absenteeism and tardiness affect the school’s ability to provide effective educational services. The achievements of consistently absent or late students can disrupt the learning experiences of other students in the school.

The responsibilities of parents include:

- actively promoting their child’s attendance and punctuality and abiding by the timings set by the school for the start and the end of the school day
- understanding and following the school’s attendance policy
- understanding that continued lateness and absenteeism may adversely affect a student’s chances of re-enrolment for the following academic year

4. Procedures

Late arrivals:



It is an expectation that students arrive punctually at school ready to learn. Persistent lateness will be followed up by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Naturally, we understand that there may be infrequent situations when delays are unavoidable.

The school is open for students from 7.30am. Late arrival is marked from 7:55am and if a student arrives after this time, they must go immediately to the school's main reception to have their student ID badge scanned. This will ensure their presence is entered into the school attendance system. This is an important safeguarding step and ensures that students are marked as present. It is therefore necessary that students have their ID badge with them at school every day.

Late collections:

If a student is collected at the end of the day, parents are expected to be at the collection point by the times shared. Our teachers have commitments once the students leave, therefore continual lateness cannot be accommodated. If a parent is more than 10 minutes late, they must call the school reception/inform the class teacher. Parents have a duty of care to collect their children on time at the end of the day. If a parent is experiencing difficulty collecting their child/children regularly on time, they should talk to the school transportation service regarding bus routes to your locality or seek support in making alternative arrangements. Persistent late collection is considered a safeguarding issue and will be dealt with appropriately.

Student absence:

Regular attendance and punctuality have a direct impact on student achievement. We carefully monitor attendance and follow-up all unexplained absences. The GFD leadership team will carefully consider a parent's request for approved absence and take into account their child's current educational needs and previous attendance record. If a child is absent for any reason, **parents should send an email to the class teacher/form tutor stating the reason for their child's absence.** If possible, please give the expected date your child will return to school. Ministry guidelines state that a child's school place can be withdrawn following 20 consecutive or 25 non-consecutive days of unauthorised absence. The target attendance is 100% with the minimum expectation of 96%. If a student is marked as absent without reason in the school register, parents will be contacted by the school. Attendance will also be reported on student's school reports.

Absence is recorded by the school in two ways:

Authorised Absence

This is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. For example:

- genuine illness of the student
- circumstances such as bereavement of an immediate family member (exceptional leave)
- a curriculum-related enrichment activity such as representing a region or country in a sport

Unauthorised Absence:

This is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's exceptional leave request.

Examples of when absence will be recorded as unauthorised are:

- holiday taken in term time



- family celebrations
- requesting leave for religious observance which can be otherwise taken during school holidays

If your child is not in school and we do not have a reason for the absence, your child's class or form teacher will contact you to find out the reason.

Sickness:

If the reason for a student's absence is that they are unwell, they should be kept at home until they are well enough to return to school. This is particularly important to help prevent the spread of communicable disease. Parents should email their child's class/form teacher and copy in academic support at academicsupport_gfd@gemsedu.com before 7:30am explaining their child's illness/reason for absence. A medical/doctor's note is required for any absence due to illness extending more than two days.

Physical Education is an important part of our curriculum, and all students should participate unless there is a valid medical reason, in which case you must provide a medical certificate. Generally, it is the school's view that if a child is not well enough to take part in their Physical Education lessons, they should not be in school.

Exceptional leave:

Planned absence from the school is actively discouraged and should only be applied for in exceptional circumstances. Medical appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours whenever possible. Parents should not automatically expect the school to approve requests for exceptional leave.

Applications for exceptional leave should be made in advance or as soon as possible by completing the online form on GEMS Connect. The online form can be found in the section of the portal titled Requests>Leave Requests. Requests for exceptional leave will only be considered upon provision of the requested information and documentation. Approval will be given for valid reasons only, such as a serious medical issue or a family bereavement. The school will approve a maximum of 10 days in any single academic year. The school will evaluate all requests on a case-by-case basis and all requests for leave should include supporting documents. Requests for additional holiday leave or leave to attend family celebrations will not be approved.

Early departure from school:

Early departure from school is not acceptable without a valid reason. We therefore encourage parents to make medical appointments outside of normal school hours. If it is essential for your child to leave the school before the end of the day, please follow the guidance below and note that **this will be marked as a half-day absence**.

- Send an e-mail to studentexitpass_gfd@gemsedu.com and the class teacher **before 10:30am for Foundation Stage students and before 12:30pm for Year 1 and above**. Please state the time you will be collecting your child and the reason they need to leave early.
- If your child uses the school bus, please follow the same process as above and include the STS representative in the email.
- Come to school at least 15 minutes before your expected departure time and allow enough time for a member of staff to collect your child from their class. It may take a while to collect your child and their belongings and bring them to you in reception, so please be patient.

