

ATTENDANCE POLICY

POLICY ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Title:	Attendance Policy
Identifier:	PDB_2.1
Date of Last Review:	August 2020
Status:	Statutory
Committee:	Leadership
Leadership Lead:	Assistant Principals Personal Development, Behavior and Wellbeing
Review Process:	Every two years
Location:	Website
Reviewed and approved:	August 2020

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

At GEMS World Academy (GWA) we aim to meet our obligations with regards to attendance and punctuality by:

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

We shall also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children attend the Academy regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Excellent attendance to school leads to high grades, good records and better references for young people's futures. A poor attendance record to lessons means that students miss key ideas and skills needed to achieve their expected academic progress. GWA takes attendance very seriously and will not tolerate any absence without good reason. The attendance register is therefore an important tool in the work of the Academy to drive up standards and student attainment. It helps us identify students who might need extra support to catch up on learning (linked to progress information) and to take action to tackle poor attendance through the protocols outlined in this policy.

The Academy, in conjunction with KHDA, has attendance targets of at least 98% overall. KHDA Attendance Guidelines include: Absence of more than fourteen days consecutively or a total of twenty one days in a school year may result in the child not being enrolled for the next academic year. The expectations placed on students, however, is that they attend 100% of sessions.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Local Advisory Board (LAB)

- Monitors attendance figures for the whole Academy on a consistent basis
- Holds the Academy's Senior Leadership Team to account for the implementation of this policy

The CEO / Principal

- Ensures this policy is implemented consistently across GWA
- Monitors Academy level absence and reports to the LAB

The Senior 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 student attendance

Teaching Staff

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately and registers are submitted **within 10 minutes**
- 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
- Liaise with parents and other relevant stakeholders to address issues acting as barriers to students' attendance
- Support students with absence to engage with their learning once they are back at the Academy

Divisional Secretaries

- Monitor attendance data at the Academy and individual student attendance data
- Ensure ALL registers have been taken and any staff who do not take registers will be dealt with according to the failure to take register policy below
- Contact parents of absent children where no contact has been made daily
- Keep a record of students who arrive late/leave the Academy early
- Work with the Academy's pastoral team to tackle unauthorised and persistent absences

Parents/carers

- Ensure that their child/ren receive/s a full-time education and those children registered at the Academy attend regularly and punctually
- Inform the Academy of any absences as set out in Appendix B
- Discuss with the form tutor any planned absences well in advance
- Support the Academy with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Avoid taking their child out of the Academy for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- Only request a leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstances

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

An accurate and consistent registration system throughout GWA to monitor absence and lateness is essential in order to enable 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 “/” (present), “L” (Distance Learning) and “N” (absent) when entering registration data into iSAMS. All other registration codes (i.e. the authorising of absence for specific reasons) should only be entered by the attendance team.

Students should arrive no earlier than 7.45am, but are required to be in their first lesson by 8.00am each day sharp (Morning Registration). To allow students sufficient time to get from the entrance of

the Academy to their classroom, the entrance is closed at 8.28 am and students arriving after this time are marked as late by the attendance team. If a student is late to Morning Registration, the teacher will mark the register for that student as L (late before registration closed). Any student failing to attend Morning Registration must be marked as absent (N).

If a student fails to show for Morning Registration but arrives during period 1, the student must sign in with an Attendance Technician who will amend the Morning Registration absence to L. If the student arrives after 8.30am without an authorised reason, they will be marked as U by the Attendance Technician, i.e. 'late after registration closed'. The Attendance Technician will log the reason for lateness, and update the Academy register accordingly. The student will be required to attend detention, based on infraction.

In Primary, AM registers are taken during Morning Registration, and PM registers are taken at the start of Period 7.

In Secondary, registers are taken every lesson. All registers must be taken **within 10 minutes** of the start of each period via the Academy management information system iSAMS.

In the event a member of staff is unable to take a register via iSAMS, they must send an email register, or a paper register to the attendance team.

Failure to Complete Register

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 Technician, cc'd to the relevant Director of Learning
2. Second instance - an email reminder will be sent to the teacher by the Attendance Technician, cc'd to the relevant Director of Learning. A formal discussion will take place with the Director of Learning to support the staff member with strategies to ensure register completion
3. Third instance - a disciplinary letter will be issued by the Principal and placed on the teacher's record for a period of six months.

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

Absences

A child not attending the Academy without an acceptable cause is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If a child is absent or is planning to be absent from the Academy, the parent must follow the guidelines in Appendix B.

If a student has been marked absent, the Academy will attempt to make parental contact on the day to ascertain the reason for absence/lateness and enter the appropriate code using the guidelines above. The parent will be reminded of the importance of contacting the Academy Attendance Technician 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 Academy would alert the appropriate agency.

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

Unplanned Absence

Parent/carers must notify the Academy on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8:30 am or as soon as practically possible Absent Excusal Form on the iSAMS Parent Portal or phone the Academy on **04-3736373**

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the Academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the Academy may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the Academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

STUDENTS CAUSING A CONCERN

Concerns about a student's attendance and/or punctuality 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 appointments
- if a parent fails to obtain permission for a family holiday or leave of absence during term time
- if a student's attendance falls below acceptable levels
- if a student is failing to attend 1:1, loss of personal time and/or internships
- a high level of unauthorised absences
- persistent lateness
- authenticity of absence/lateness notes

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

- Attendance and punctuality reports with associated rewards/sanctions
- Setting specific attendance and punctuality targets and goals for achieving these targets
- Phone calls or letters home – acknowledging positive or negative performance
- Printouts of attendance certificates to inform parents where there are concerns, as well as routinely checking them
- Meetings with parents to set up fixed period attendance/punctuality target monitoring

- Loss of personal time
- GWA Inclusion Team referral
- Mentoring support inside the Academy for 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)	Form Tutor calls parents/carers to let them know that the Academy will be monitoring the child's attendance for the next two weeks.
Step 2 (no significant improvements in two weeks)	Form Tutor calls parents/carers to let them know that the 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)	Form Tutor 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 Academy 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 which could be taken against them if attendance does not improve; the student goes on a Grade Leader report.
Step 5 (attendance has not improved within 4 weeks)	The Assistant Principal 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 end up in impacting their promotion to the next year. GWA Inclusion Team (GWAIT) Referral is made.

GWA INCLUSION TEAM REFERRALS

If the early strategies above do not improve a student's attendance/punctuality and his/her attendance falls below 90%, then a referral to the GWAIT is necessary.

If a student's attendance falls below 90%, a letter will be sent home informing parents that any further absences will not be authorised unless documented evidence is provided. The GWAIT will advise on further intervention.

A referral to KHDA may be considered when attendance falls below 85% or if your 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 THE REGISTERS

The Academy 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 unauthorised absence and only if both the KHDA and the Academy have located the student or made reasonable enquiries
- Parents/carers have withdrawn child from the Academy and have given written notice that child will be educated otherwise than at the Academy
- 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 the Academy 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 Phoenix Classroom, the student and parent portal.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

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

Links with other policies

Safeguarding Policy

Appendix A: Attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the Academy
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the Academy
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the Academy
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		

C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	The Academy has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the Academy

Code	Definition	Scenario
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	The Academy is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
K	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at the Academy after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Q	Withdrawn from Lesson	Student withdrawn from regular classes
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The Academy site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the Academy
#	Planned Academy closure	Whole or partial Academy closure due to rain days and other events.

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 the A Academy, or the parent/carer would like to request a leave of absence.

Parents/carers can contact the Academy via Absent Excusal Form via iSAMS Parent portal or phone the Academy on **04-3736373**.

Reason for Absence	Parental Responsibility	Sanction	Attendance Code
Student is likely to arrive late to the Academy after 8.28 am	Parent/carer must notify attendance before 8.30 am	After school Late detention (Students may be excused from late detention in exceptional circumstances)	K – Arrived at the Academy before registration closed
Student is likely to arrive late to the Academy after 8.28 am	Parent/carer must notify attendance before 8.30 am	After school late detention (Students may be excused from late detention in exceptional circumstances)	U – Arrived at the Academy after registration closed This will count as unauthorised absence for the whole of the morning
Student is ill and therefore will not be able to attend the Academy	Parent/carer must notify attendance before 8.00am each day of absence (The Academy can request parent/carer to provide medical evidence to support illness)		I – Illness (Student may be marked O/unauthorised absence if insufficient medical evidence is provided by parent/career)
Student has a medical or dental appointment, or need to leave the Academy for a medical appointment	Parent/carer should avoid making appointments during Academy hours as this affects student attendance. Parent/carer must provide a medical note to attendance at least 5 working days before the appointment.		M – Medical or Dental appointments (Student will not be allowed to leave the Academy/ be marked O if a sufficient medical note has not been provided or provided late)
Student is going on holiday during term time	The Academy will not authorise any holiday during term time. Leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Death of a close family member 	A notice regarding cause for concern outlining possible	O – Unauthorised absence where parent/carer has failed to notify the Academy G – Unauthorised Holiday where parent/carer has

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a member of the student's immediate family has a serious or life threatening illness • Where a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis <p>In such cases parent/carer must write to the Divisional Principal at least 15 working days before the holiday for the Academy to consider the request on a case by case basis</p> <p>If leave/holiday is granted, no more than 5 working days in any year will be authorised</p>		<p>notified the Academy and request has been denied or holiday is in excess of the period determined by the Academy</p> <p>H - in exceptional circumstances where holiday request has been approved by the Principal</p>
Death or illness of a family member	<p>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</p>	These will be considered on a case by case basis.	<p>C – Leave of absence authorised by the Academy</p> <p>O - Unauthorised absence where leave has been denied or student is absent for more than 5 working days</p>
Student has an interview at another school	<p>Parent/carer and students should avoid making appointments during the school hours as this affects student attendance</p> <p>Where this is not possible request for leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances</p> <p>Leave will automatically be declined if the student</p>	A note of concern may be issued in cases where absence has not been authorised by the Academy	<p>J - Interview absence authorised by the Academy</p> <p>O - Unauthorised absence where leave has been denied</p>

	is not in year 10 and having an interview with a sixth form or college		
Student needs to leave the Academy before the end of the school day	Parent/carer should follow the guidelines stated above depending on the circumstances. Where leave is granted parent/carer must be contacted before the Academy is able to allow the student to leave the premises Students will not be allowed to leave the Academy for any other reason unless in exceptional circumstances		