

Attendance Policy

Vision: Grow - Flourish - Succeed

Mission: Together we inspire creative, mindful learners who value diversity, support one another and strive for success.

1. Introduction

The GEMS Founders 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.
- achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children and aim for outstanding levels of 100%
- 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 GEMS Founders School meets the KHDA Bilo 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 as we place great importance on developing punctuality as a sign of respect towards others in the community. Persistent lateness will be followed up by a member of the Senior leadership team and where needed, by the Executive leadership team. Naturally, we understand that there may be infrequent situations when delays are unavoidable.

The school is open for students to enter the building from 7.25am and students are expected to be in their **form class for registration from 7.40am**. Late arrival is marked from 7.45am and if a student arrives after this time, they must go immediately to the school's main reception or Primary canteen (rear of school) to collect a required late slip to take to their class to ensure their presence is entered into the school attendance system. This is an important safeguarding step and ensures that students are marked as present. If a child arrives at class and does not have the required late slip, they will be required to return to the school's main reception to complete this essential safety process.

LATE COLLECTIONS:

If a student is collected at the end of the day, parents are expected to be at the collection point by 2:20 pm. Our teachers often have meetings after school so if a parent is due to be 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 promptly at 2:20 pm 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. Persistent late collection will be considered a safeguarding issue and will be dealt with appropriately.

STUDENT ABSENCE:

Regular attendance and punctuality have a direct impact on pupil achievement. We carefully monitor attendance and follow-up all unexplained absences. The GFS 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 call the school reception by 7:30am on **04 519 5222** or send an email to the **class teacher/form tutor and academic support at academicsupport_gfs@gemsedu.com** 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 mentioned on student's school reports.

SICKNESS:

If the reason for a student's absence is that they are unwell, they should be kept at home until they are fit 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 the school reception 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 doctor's note. 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.

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_gfs@gemsedu.com** and the class teacher **before 10:30am for Foundation Stage students and before 12:30pm for Y1 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 copy Ms. Indu **indu@stss.ae** 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.
- You must report to reception so the receptionist can give you an exit pass. Our security team will not allow a child to leave the premises without this signed exit pass. Please note that it may not be possible to collect a student from their class after 1:30pm without prior notice.

PLANNED ABSENCE:

Parents should not automatically expect the school to approve all leave requests.

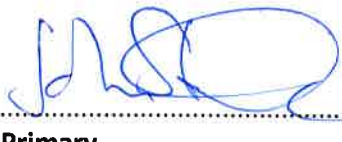
- Planned absence from the school is actively discouraged. Medical appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours whenever possible.
- Applications for absence for more than 3 days should be made to the Head of Primary - Mr. John Stapley (FS1 to Year 6) or the Head of Secondary - Mr. Ian Plant (Year 7 to Year 13) via a written letter. The letter should be signed and dated, with a contact telephone number and email address provided. The letter should be handed to the school reception desk at least two weeks before the leave has been planned, otherwise it will be considered as unauthorised absence. If you are not able to provide a physical letter you are required to send an email to Mr. John Stapley **j.stapley_gfs@gemsedu.com** or Mr. Ian Plant **i.plant_gfs@gemsedu.com** stating the reason for absence and all the above mentioned details. Please make sure you copy the academic support **academicsupport_gfs@gemsedu.com** in the email. All requests made should include supporting documents.
- Approval will be given for valid reasons only, such as a serious medical issue or a family bereavement up to 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 should include supporting documents.
- Request for additional vacation time will not be approved.

5. Monitoring of patterns and repeated absence:

Absence/lateness is monitored by class teachers, who will alert the school's senior leaders of any patterns of repeated absence. Senior leaders will contact and meet with the parents to discuss absence/lateness. Where appropriate, the school will offer support to families and/or students. Repeated absenteeism and/or lateness will result in measures that may affect a student's chances of re-enrolment for the following academic year.

6. Monitoring and review

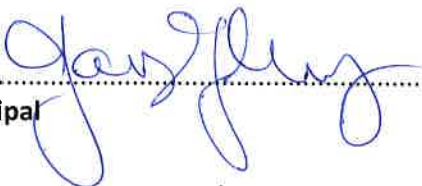
This policy has been discussed and agreed by the GEMS Founders School, Dubai teaching staff and leadership teams for implementation.

Signed 
Head of Primary

Date 6/9/2020

Signed 
Head of Secondary

Date 6/9/2020

Signed 
Vice Principal

Date 6/9/2020

Signed 
Principal/CEO

Date 6/9/2020

Policy review date: 1st September 2021