



# Attendance Policy

Review date	August 2025
Reviewed by	Stephen McKernan, Carl Bourke, Sarah Oliver Browning, Bronwyn Tocknell
Date of next review	August 2026



**CARE**

I respect the needs of my stakeholders. I ensure they feel listened to and cared for.



**ALWAYS LEARNING**

My open minded curiosity fuels my love for learning. I ask questions and listen so that I continuously learn and improve.



**EXCELLENCE**

I dream big, setting ambitious goals, delivering the highest quality and aiming to be the best at what I do.



**ONE TEAM**

I am a team player. I work with the bigger picture in mind. I put the team's needs ahead of my own.



## **GEMS Attendance Policy for GEMS Cambridge International School Abu Dhabi**

**Last Amendment:** August 2025 **Policy Review Date:** August 2026

### **Rationale:**

The Cambridge International School Abu Dhabi (CIA) believes that good attendance and punctuality are vital in enabling students to make the most of their learning opportunities and thus prepare them for the demand of adult life. This is done in line with ADEK's Student Administrative Affairs Policy (Section 2.1)

As a school we will do all we can to maximise attendance for all students. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

A parent or guardian may be at risk of committing child neglect and be subjected to a Safeguarding report being logged against the family if attendance falls below the recommended levels.

A child who is absent without cause for more than five days will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead of the school: DSL – Carl Bourke and Educational risk lead- Sarah Oliver Browning.

Persistent Absence will be actioned using the five-stage plan.

To this purpose, we give high priority to conveying to parents/guardians and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/guardians have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance and punctuality.

### **Purpose:**

To recognise that:

- Regular and punctual school attendance is vital if students are to benefit fully from the opportunities the school offers them
- Regular attendance makes learning easier
- The National Curriculum underlines the importance of continuity and progression in the learning process

- Students who develop good patterns of attendance and punctuality early on at school tend to continue in this pattern throughout their school life and beyond
- With good attendance and punctuality students will achieve better results, greater confidence, have increased self-esteem and develop useful skills for the workplace
- Students may become vulnerable through events such as bereavement, divorce or separation and we have support systems in place to guide our students

## **Expectations**

We expect that all our **students** will

- Attend school regularly and attend all lessons
- Arrive on time at school and to all lessons
- Be properly prepared and equipped for the days learning
- Be fully involved in all lessons
- Follow correct procedures for attendance and punctuality
- Carry out any work provided by the school during an authorised absence period

We expect that **Parents/Guardians**

- Recognise their legal and safeguarding responsibilities for promoting good attendance.
- Place a high priority on attendance and achievement
- Not allow their child to have time off school unless it is unavoidable
- Endeavour to keep health appointments out of school hours where possible
- Endeavour to keep holidays out of term time
- Inform a member of staff (usually Tutor or Class Teacher) of any reason or problem that may hinder their child from attending school
- Work with the school to resolve issues and ensure good attendance and punctuality
- Ensure their child is punctual to school
- Contact school by email to the Tutor or Phase Leader, on the first morning of absence, via email or GEMS connect App, preferably before 7.45am, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- In the event of the child contracting an illness or suffering an injury which would make an absence of 2 days or more likely, parents should inform the school immediately, provide a medical certificate and keep the school informed on progress.

We expect the **Tutor/ Class Teacher** will

- Set an example by having good attendance and arriving on time to registration.
- Take the register at 7.45am after the National Anthem has played.
- Take the register verbally and with the class in silence apart from answering their name
- Explain the need for and promote habits of regular attendance and punctuality with the group and individuals
- Accurately mark the register
- Ensure absence notes are received
- Record reasons for absence accurately on the register
- To contact home if a student is absent from school without a reason – **by the end of the first day of absence, email.**
- If there's no response by the end of the second day the Form Tutor/ Class Teacher **calls home.**
- Alert the Head of Year if a student has been absent for **3 days** and parents have failed to contact school or answer email, or phone call requests. The HoY will then follow up.
- Alert the HOY regarding any concerns about absence and punctuality if action they have taken proves ineffective
- Keep a record of all intervention
- Celebrate attendance and punctuality appropriately for the year group e.g. Displays, certificates, letters home, etc.
- Refer to attendance and lateness when writing report using the following language

<b>Attendance percentage</b>	<b>ADEK judgement</b>
At least 98%	Outstanding
At least 96%	Very good
At least 94%	Good
At least 92%	Acceptable
Less than 92%	Weak
Less than 90%	Very weak

We expect the **Head of Year** will:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality within his/her year group to ensure targets are met
- Collate an attendance and punctuality data sheet at least monthly and give to tutors to discuss with their tutor groups during registration
- Use a monthly attendance display to raise awareness
- Ensure all tutors are familiar with and apply the policy consistently
- Provide support for tutors as required
- Monitor and supervise the work of their tutor team in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality
- Use monthly data analysis to identify individuals and groups. The HOY will be looking for -
  - a) unauthorised absence
  - b) frequent short absences, particularly where a pattern emerges, e.g. every Thursday
  - c) Persistent lateness

Assign the students into the following categories –

- *Attendance*
  - 96 – 100% - GREEN
  - 94 – 96% - ORANGE
  - Below 92% - RED
  - RED – Class Teacher will send a Stage 1 Attendance letter and decide on the best intervention method according to the individual circumstances of each student.

*Punctuality*

- 96 – 100% - GREEN
- 94 – 96% - ORANGE
- Below 92% - RED
- RED – HOY will decide on the best intervention method according to the individual circumstances of each student

*Interventions may include:*

- A priority mentoring session with the tutor
- The HOY meets with the students to discuss any issues
- The school counsellor
- Letter home outlining concerns
- A parents meeting with tutor/HOY/Pastoral leader
- Keep a record of all interventions and monitor improvements in attendance and punctuality

## **Early Pick Up**

We recognise that occasionally situations arise that require a student to be picked up from school early. All early pick up requests must be made using the Early Release QR form.

Families will then be contacted on the day of early pick up to confirm who will be collecting the students.

Adults will be expected to bring EID as proof of identity.

Early pick-up will not be allowed between the times after 1.45pm Monday-Tuesday and 10.45am on a Friday. Abuse of early pick up procedure will not be tolerated.

## **Lateness procedures**

- A student is late if they arrive to registration after 7.45am (after the national anthem has been played).
- If a student is late but the register is still open, the student will get a late mark
- If the student arrives after registration (later than 7.55am) then they must sign in at reception and receive a late mark and late slip, the lesson 1 teacher to register the student
- Tutors must check that students in their tutor group have signed in late and received a late slip
- Tutors must keep a record of students who have been late and follow the lateness procedure
- On-going problems will be referred to the Head of Year who will give detention and discuss the problem with the student

## **Rewards**

Students who have improved attendance and/or punctuality will receive a letter home

Students with 100% attendance and no lateness will be rewarded at the end of each term and tutor groups with the best attendance will also be rewarded.

Heads of Year will decide on appropriate rewards for their year group, which may include

- Certificates
- Mention in the school newsletter
- Mention in a school assembly
- A letter home

## Sanctions

GEMS Cambridge International School Abu Dhabi (CIA) takes safeguarding seriously. When a pupil does not attend school, we will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason for absence and ensure proper safeguarding action is taken.

When a child is absent for an unknown reason, we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9 a.m. the school will endeavor to contact them that day by email.
- On day 2, If there is no response, the school will phone home and continue to try and contact the parents/carer using all available contact numbers.
- If it is difficult to contact families or attendance becomes an issue, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will become involved and work with families to improve attendance and set future expectations. Following the Five Stage Action Plan.

Failure to comply with the expectations set out, may result in: further action; a Safeguarding/Child Protection log will be made and a referral to the Abu Dhabi Child Protection Team will be made. This may result in further legal proceeding being taken against the family as outlined in: Federal Law 3 Article 31 *Every child has the right to education and will work on achieving equal opportunity for every child according to the laws in force. and Article 35.*

Federal Law 3 Article 35

*The person responsible for the care of the child is prohibited from subjecting him to ostracism, vagrancy, neglect or habit of leaving the child, not attaching the child to an educational institution or leaving the child .... Leaving the child in the event of absence from education without obligation during compulsory education stage.*

*Whoever violate the above shall be punished in accordance to Article 60 Federal Law 3 2016.*

## **Persistent or long-term absence**

If there is a pattern of long term or persistent absence then the school will follow a five stage action plan.

Stage 1 issued when attendance drops 94-90%

Stage 2 issued when attendance drops below 89%-85%

Stage 3 issued when attendance drops below 84%-80%

Stage 4 issued when attendance drops below 79%

Stage 5 and referral to Adek when student is under 70%

### **Stage 1**

If a child is absent without cause for more than a week then a stage 1 letter will be issued. For persistent absences where Attendance rate falls below 94% the stage 1 letter will be issued. A meeting regarding attendance concern made by Class Teacher. Meeting is held between, Class Teacher, Student and parent. In the event of Parents not attending or not acknowledging request for meeting then letter 1 can be signed in absence of parents. Letter 1 signed which gives minimum required attendance moving forward.

### **Stage 2**

Second concern, if concerns persist and attendance falls below 89% or there is no response after stage 1 email sent or Student has been missing from school for 2 weeks without cause. Stage 2 letter can be sent. Ideally meeting by HOY, Parent and Student where minimum required attendance has not been met. Sanctions may be imposed such as loss of privilege. Letter 2 signed. As in stage 1, where no engagement or lack of acknowledgement persists then letter can be signed in parents absence by HOY.

### **Stage 3**

Attendance rate Drops below 84% and/or missing from school for 3 weeks. Final Concern level before Safeguarding complaint is filed. Letter sent to parents asking for a meeting with Head of School, Parent and Student. Student is referred to Counsellor either internally or externally. Parent is warned that a concern of neglect through persistent absence will be filed in the GEMS Guard portal unless action is taken and attempt to meet with school to support attendance moving forward.

### **Stage 4**

Attendance rate falls below 79%, or a child is absent from school with no reason for 4 weeks. Meeting with Safeguarding Lead/Principal, parent and student. Letter to parents stating a concern has been raised by the school to ADEK / Abu Dhabi Child protection unit.

**Stage 5**

Attendance Rate falls below 70% or child is absent from school with no reason over a month. Letter sent to parents informing that a Safeguarding Concern has been raised to ADEK and Abu Dhabi Child Protection Unit. Student will either be blocked from re enrolling or student will repeat the year/non promotion.

**Appendices.**

Stage 1 Letter ( to be amended as required)

Date:

**Stage 1/5 Attendance Meeting**

To: Parents of Name                      Class:

**Present:**

Further to our email/ conversation/telephone call, we have met face to face to discuss the absence concerns for Name.

These concerns are in breach of the Schools Attendance Policy and wider Safeguarding Federal laws mandating regular attendance for all pupils.

**Key points discussed ( reasons for poor attendance)**

**Key points of support agreed in the meeting (how can school and family support)**

If name's attendance fails to improve, we will be obliged to take more serious action which will include a Stage 2 Attendance meeting with the Head of Year or Head of Department.

Thank you in advance for your continued support.

Kind regards

Member of staff holding the meeting:

Signature of the parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Class Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Stage 2 Attendance Letter

Date Stage 2/5 Attendance Meeting

To: Parent of Name Class:

### Present:

Further to our meeting, the school has placed Name on an attendance concern report. This is due to the ongoing low attendance rate which contravenes School Attendance Policy and Federal Law 3.

Name has now been absent ( Insert dates of absence and last date of attendance) with no explanation as to why.

Every Student is entitled to access to Education and it is mandated that all students regularly attend school in the ADEK Attendance Policy 2024 Private Schools Policy and Guidance.

### Key points discussed ( mitigating circumstances/ reasons for poor attendance )

### Key points/ support agreed in the meeting ( how can the school/ family support)

If Name attendance fails to improve the school will be obliged to take more serious action which will include a Stage 3 attendance meeting with Head of School and a formal safeguarding concern being made against the family on the GEMS Safeguarding Portal.

Thank you in advance for your continued support.

Kind regards

Name of HOY

Signature of the parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Head of Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Stage 3 Attendance letter

Date

Stage 3/5 Attendance Meeting  
Head of School

To: Parent of Name Class:

### Present:

Unfortunately, despite two meetings to support NAME 's attendance, there are still concerns about:

- Consistency
- overall attendance percentage
- non-compliance
- lack of engagement from family

### Key points discussed (mitigating circumstances)

### Key points/ support agreed in the meeting (how can school family & student support)

Our priority will always be to support the student to attend school regularly. We have previously offered  
XXXXXXXXXX

As attendance is still an issue it may now be an opportunity to look to external agencies to support. The school can provide details of external agencies that may be able to support the family.

If Name's attendance fails to improve within the next two weeks and then fails to maintain a good attendance record from then on, the school will have no choice but to log a Safeguarding Concern on the schools Child Protection and Safeguarding portal. This logs safeguarding concerns against students and or families that breach Federal Law 3.

Thank you in advance for your continued support.

Kind regards

Name of HOS

Signature of the parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Head of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Stage 4 Attendance Letter

Date:

**Stage 4/5 Attendance Letter**

Dear XXXXXX Family

Name:

SID:

I have been asked by the Principal to outline our Attendance and Safeguarding Policy with you.

As stated in our Attendance Policy and Federal Law 3 Article 30, students have the right to an education. Parents who do not support regular attendance at an educational establishment are in breach of the above policy and Federal law and are subject to a child protection report to be made against them. This could result in fines, imprisonment and or visa cancellation.

**NAME** has now been absent from education without cause for **XXXX**. Despite numerous attempts to meet with you/despite numerous meetings attendance remains a concern. Therefore a safeguarding concern has been logged on the Schools Child protection portal, against **name** and the family for failing to ensure adequate access to education.

Should **NAME** absence continue, the school has a legal obligation to report such safeguarding breaches to the Abu Dhabi Child Protection Team as outlined in our Attendance Policy and Federal Law.

Please make an appointment with the Head of School or XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX where we can look to try and support XXXXX moving forward.

If we do not hear from you by close of business XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX then we will have no choice but to elevate this concern to the Child protection Team at ADEK.

Kind regards

**Carl James Bourke**

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Vice Principal

Designated Safeguarding Lead

## Stage 5 Attendance Letter

Date:  
**Attendance Letter 5/5**  
**Safeguarding Team**

Dear XXXXXX Family

**Full Name: SID: 115005.....**

The school wrote to you on XXXXXXXXXXXX regarding your child's attendance. The letter stated that if there was no consistent change in the attendance that a report would be made to the Child Protection Unit in Abu Dhabi. Unfortunately the concerns still remain and communication from home is sporadic. We therefore have no choice but to refer these concerns to ADEK Child Protection Unit as outlined in our Attendance Policy and Federal Law

As stated in our Attendance Policy and Federal Law 3 Article 30, students have the right to an education. Parents who do not support regular attendance at an educational establishment are in breach of the above policy and Federal law and are subject to a child protection report to be made against them. This could result in fines, imprisonment and or visa cancellation.

Please make an appointment with the Safeguarding Lead XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX where we can look to try and support XXXXX moving forward. Kind regards

**Carl James Bourke**  
كارل جيمس بورك

**Vice Principal**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead**