



**THE BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
ABU DHABI**

A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

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At BIS Abu Dhabi we aim to encourage and assist all students to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. Good attendance is essential for all students to reach their potential and take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. We recognise that good attendance is central to raising standards and securing excellent student progress; it enables students in our school community to maximise their learning.

- This policy aims to support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- This policy establishes the attendance requirements that must be included in the school-based attendance procedures for all Abu Dhabi Education and Knowledge Council (ADEK) schools.

Responsibilities & Expectations

- All students are expected to attend school daily and punctually, ready to learn.
- The school will provide a safe learning environment and maintain records of attendance according to legislation and guidance on a daily basis.
- Only senior leaders with directed authority from the Principal will authorise absence.
- The school will provide attendance details as part of the annual reporting to parents.
- Details of poor attendance/punctuality will be reported to subsequent schools.
- Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their child attends school. They do not automatically have the right to take them on holiday during term time.

Parents are informed at registration of the rules and consequences of frequent or unauthorized absence, as well as the importance of responsiveness in communication with the school.

- Parents are expected to ensure their child attends school daily, on time, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents must inform the school on the 1st day of absence at the latest by 7:30am, by telephoning the main reception or emailing the class teacher/tutor.
- Parents must give a reason for their child's absence. Parents will also maintain daily contact with the school until their child returns to school unless parents have been given a particular time of absence by a doctor, e.g. 3 days leave to recover from infectious illness. The duration of absence and reason will be made clear to the teacher or receptionist.
- Parents are requested to provide medical evidence for absence due to medical reasons.
- Registers can be monitored on a regular basis by ADEK. They may ask to meet with parents if attendance is not satisfactory.
- For students who use the bus we kindly request that parents contact the Support Assistant via the mobile phone number provided no later than 6:30am on the day of absence. This avoids other students being late for school because of unnecessary delays. This should be done for each day of absence.

If a student is absent the school will:

- Record any absences as authorised or unauthorised according to current ADEK guidelines (see Appendix 1).
- If notification is not received, the school will contact parents by 9:00am on the first day of absence and record the reply directly on to the school management information system (MIS).
- Contact parents requesting a reason for absence if it has not been provided.

Absence due to Medical Appointments

- We request that all medical appointments, if possible, are made outside of school hours.
- When this is not possible, we request that appointment cards or verification by the doctor/dentist/hospital is provided by parents.
- We expect that students will return to school directly after the appointment.
- If a medical appointment is known in advance parents must notify the school in writing. If an emergency appointment is made please phone the school reception by 7:30am or email the class teacher (primary) and Form Tutor (secondary).
- Notification must be given if a student needs to leave school during the day. The student will be provided with a yellow slip to confirm that they have been cleared to leave. This will then be entered on to the school management system.

Term Time Holiday

Term time holiday is not recognised as a valid reason to be absent – no leave of absence will be granted for this reason.

Exceptional leave of absence

- Parents may make an application for leave of absence for an exceptional circumstance.
- Senior leaders approved by the Principal will decide whether this application will be granted.
- Senior leaders approved by the Principal will decide the number of days granted for any leave of absence.
- Leave of absence taken without permission will be unauthorized.
- The school will decide what is deemed as an exceptional circumstance.
- Requests for absence in cases where students are known to have already had 10 days of absence in the school year will be marked as unauthorised regardless of the reason.

Start of the school day:

All students are expected to be in school on time and ready to stand and sing the National Anthem at 7:57am.

In the Primary School:

- Students are expected to arrive at school from 7:30am and must be in class by 7:40am.
- Registers close at 8:00am. If a child is not in class by 8:00am they will be marked as late.

In the Secondary School:

- Students are expected to be in their form room no later than 7:40am.
- Registers close at 7:45am. Any student not in class by 7:45am will be marked as late.

It is important that all students are safe and accounted for at all times during the day. Any student arriving after 8:00am will have to enter through the main gate and reception. Security will not allow them to enter through other gates. Parents whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by a member of school staff who will work with parent(s) to bring about a rapid improvement in punctuality.

End of the school day:

Primary students need to be collected promptly at the end of the school day by a known adult. Please note that late collection can impact school resources that are intended to enhance after-school activities (e.g. CCAs). Consistently late collection can affect both your child and the opportunities available to other students. With regard to late collection from CCAs, students who are consistently collected late will no longer be able to participate in that CCA.

Secondary students are allowed to exit the school independently at the end of the day. Some students will independently make their way to the car/taxi/driver and others will wait in the designated waiting area which has picnic bench seating. Students must agree collection points and arrangements with their parents.

All secondary students are required to leave the school premises at the end of the school day unless they are attending a pre-registered Co-Curricular Activity (CCA). Students who wish to remain on campus for independent study must be registered under a designated CCA located in either the library or the secondary canteen. Senior students may use the senior school area after school hours; however, they must sign in upon arrival in accordance with school supervision protocols.

Monitoring Attendance

- It is expected that students are in school 97% of the time (thus allowing for illness and the odd exceptional reason). Parents of students with less than 94% attendance will be notified.
- Registration details are transferred to an electronic database, which is a legal document.
- The school will follow up persistent lateness, all absences and students with low levels of attendance.
- The school will monitor attendance on a daily/weekly basis.
- Students with persistent absences, lateness and late collection will automatically be discussed with the School Attendance Lead and appropriate action identified and agreed.

Records

- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for the duration of a child's time at BISAD.
- Rates of attendance will be reported to the senior team on a regular basis and in the school performance summary.
- When attendance falls below 90%, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue. If it falls below 85%, parents will be invited to a meeting and the student will be made known to the School Attendance Lead.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

In accordance with Federal Decree Law No. (3) of 2016 (Wadeema), the school has a legal responsibility to report any suspected abuse or neglect to the Child Protection Centre. Unexplained or frequent absences may raise concerns and be escalated as potential child protection issues.

A student is classed as a 'Persistent Absentee' (PA) when they miss 15% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level damages any student's educational potential. We will work with parents to improve attendance rates quickly. Persistent absentees are monitored carefully through our pastoral system, this is combined with academic support where absence adversely affects attainment. All persistent absentees are automatically made known to the School.

Attendance Lead.

Where attendance is a serious concern (attendance below 85%) parents will receive 3 formal notifications from the school. If home and school cannot agree on an attendance plan that leads to a significant improvement in attendance, the 3rd notification will inform parents that the school will be escalating the concern to ADEK. If a student has more than 15% absence in a school year the school has the right to insist that the academic year is repeated.

Students can be removed from the school's registers for unexcused absence exceeding ten consecutive days or fifteen inconsecutive days during the academic year. Prior to being removed from roll parents will receive three official warnings at a rate of one warning for each three days of absence.

As per ADEK's guidance, if a student has persistent, unexplained absences, the attached form must be completed and submitted.

School Actions Required:

Escalate to CPC: Refer ongoing attendance concerns to your Child Protection Coordinator for intervention and report to ADEK: If unresolved, submit a detailed case study to ADEK's Child Protection Division cpu@adek.gov.ae Update eSIS: Upload the case file to the student's profile on eSIS. See appendix 6.

Rewards for Good Attendance

The school aims to ensure children develop an intrinsic love of attending school and develop their understanding of the importance that good attendance has on their life chances. In order to move towards this, we use rewards as a tool. This includes:

- Certificates celebrating children who have achieved 97% attendance or higher
- Certificates to reward children who have achieved 100% attendance for the end of the year
- Weekly class trophies that are awarded to the class in each year group of the Primary school for the best attended class.

Parents are reminded that attendance requirements, pick-up, and drop-off procedures, including early and late pick-up policies and potential charges, are clearly outlined at registration and available in the Parent Handbook.

Appendix 1 – Authorised Circumstances

Exceptional Circumstances

The school will actively seek to work with parents where there is a genuine difficulty with attendance.

Support strategies will be put in place for individual pupils where appropriate. When a student has an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send work home, so that the student can keep up with their school work where this is appropriate.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will review this provision and work with the family and any other service (e.g. hospital).

Authorised Absence

A student's absence from school will be considered 'authorised' only for the following reasons:

- Personal illness
- A scheduled medical appointment (that couldn't take place out of school time)
- Death of a very close relative
- Taking part in an approved public performance or sport event
- Study Leave
- A field trip or educational visit
- An official community task
- A mandatory appearance before an official
- Essential urgent family travel (i.e. medical treatment, death of very family member)

Request for term time leave must be made by a parent using the school's 'Request for Term Time Leave' form (Appendix 2) at least ten school days in advance and accompanied by appropriate documentation e.g. medical certificate.

Appendix 2 – Term Time Request Form

Appendix 3 – Attendance dropped to 94%

Dear Parent,

We note from our records that (student name)'s attendance has fallen below 94%. This is below the expected rates of attendance. Attendance rates at this level have a detrimental effect on a student's chance of achieving suitable academic progress.

I would be grateful if you could do your utmost to ensure that your child does not miss any more school. We understand there may be good reasons for this, and we are happy to work with you and discuss this further in order to improve the situation.

Yours faithfully,
Class teacher/Form Tutor

Appendix 4 – Attendance dropped to 90%

Dear Parent,

We note from our records that (student name)'s attendance has not improved since we last alerted you. It has now fallen to 90%. This will have a detrimental effect on your child's opportunity to make suitable progress. The school is also obliged to inform the local authorities (ADEK) of students that are causing concern because of low attendance rates.

I would like to have an opportunity to discuss this with you and explore how we can work together to make a rapid improvement in the rates of attendance for your child.

Yours faithfully,
Class teacher/Form Tutor
CC Year Leader/Head of Year

Appendix 5 – Attendance dropped to 85%

Dear Parent,

Your child's attendance has now dropped to 85%. Absence of 15% or greater is classed as persistent absenteeism. This means that the proportion of time away from school is having a detrimental effect on their progress and attainment.

Without significant improvement we are concerned that your child will not achieve the expected standards or make suitable progress.

I also have to alert you that if we are not able to secure an improvement and attendance continues to decline then your child is at risk of not being able to progress to the next academic year and will have to repeat this year or may not be offered a place for the following academic year.

I would like to meet with you at mutually convenient time to discuss this and work with you to put actions in place that will secure a rapid improvement in their attendance.

Yours faithfully,

Year Leader/Head of Year
CC Class Teacher/Form Tutor
CC Assistant Head (Attendance Lead)
CC Head of school

Appendix 6 – Flow chart to follow-up on ADEK Absence

ADEK Guidance:

The categories and their corresponding messages are as follows:

- Initial Absence Notifications: These messages will explain the impact of missing school and emphasize the importance of regular attendance.
 - 3 days of unexcused absence.
 - 6 days of unexcused absence.
 - 8 days of unexcused absence.
- Referral to ADEK: These messages will inform parents that their child has been referred to ADEK for closer monitoring, and further actions may be taken if the absenteeism continues.
 - 11-14 days of unexcused absence.
 - 15-17 days of unexcused absence.
- Notification of Further Action: This message indicates that the relevant authority will contact the parent to discuss the consequences of continued unexcused absences.
 - 18-19 days of unexcused absence
- Consequences and Final Action: At this stage, the message will inform parents that the relevant authority will take action and contact them to discuss the consequences of non-compliance with school attendance policies.
 - 20 or more days of unexcused absence

Student Absenteeism “Since the Beginning of the Academic Year”:

- The percentage of unexcused absences for both local and expat students.
- We will begin tracking student absenteeism for both local and expate students.
- Target: Maximum 5%

Chronic Absenteeism – Local Students with 20+ Unexcused Days “Since the Beginning of the Academic Year”

- The percentage of local students who have 20 or more unexcused absence days during the academic year.
- Target: Maximum 15%

Step-by-Step Guide for Absenteeism Follow-up and Actions

1. Review Absenteeism Report

- a) Open the absenteeism report.
- b) Look at the different columns for absenteeism:
 - i. Absent Students: This includes all students who were absent, whether excused or unexcused.
 - ii. Unexcused Absences:
 1. Unexcused (Overall): Percentage of total unexcused absences.
 2. Unexcused – Nationals: Percentage of unexcused absences for national students.
 3. Unexcused – Expats: Percentage of unexcused absences for expatriate students.
 4. Review Teacher Allocations (eSIS Data)

- a) A communication will be sent regarding missing or incorrect teacher allocations in the eSIS system by the BISAD attendance team.
- b) Attendance team must carefully review the email and correct any discrepancies in teacher assignments.

2. School Actions Required

- a) Adhere to Official School Calendar: Ensure the school operates according to the approved ADEK calendar.
- b) Attendance Improvement Plan: Develop and implement a plan for improving attendance, especially for students with repeated or extended unexcused absences. (Form tutor or class teacher level and log on CPOMS)
- c) Escalate Issues to CPC (Child Protection Coordinator): If parents are repeatedly keeping their children absent, escalate the case to the CPC for intervention.
 - i. Primary School CPC Contacts:
 - 1. Leah, Jane, or Heather. (based on the year group).
 - ii. Secondary School CPC Contacts:
 - 1. Ben, Stephanie, Vicky, or Sara (based on the year group).
- d.) Head of Year and CPC Collaboration: The Head of Year (HOY) will work in conjunction with the CPC to address the absenteeism issue and complete the document.
- e.) Report to ADEK: If the attendance issue remains unresolved at the school level:
 - i. Complete the required form.
 - ii. Submit it along with a detailed case study to ADEK's Child Protection Division at cpu@adek.gov.ae.
 - iii. Upload the case file to the student's profile in eSIS for official review.

3. Upload the Case in eSIS

- a. Once the case is reviewed and documented, upload the case file to the student's profile in the eSIS system.