



## Attendance Policy

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the attendance requirements that must be included in the school-based attendance procedures for all Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) schools.

Students are expected to attend school on every instructional day in the ADEC school calendar. Excellent school attendance is essential for the best possible student learning. It is the duty of parents/guardians, teachers and all other school staff to ensure that students attend school every day.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others

### Absence

#### Authorised Absence

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

- Personal illness
- Scheduled doctor appointment
- Death of a very close relative: for three days only
- Taking part in an approved public performance or sports event
- Study leave
- On a field trip or educational visit
- Official community task
- Mandatory appearance before a governing body
- Essential, urgent family travel (i.e. medical treatment, death of a close family member).



Request for absence in term time must be made by parents/guardians, using the school's "Request for Term Time Leave" form (see Appendix D) at least ten school days in advance wherever possible and accompanied with appropriate documentation where appropriate (e.g. medical certificate).

If an absence is authorised, the student has the right to make up the work and tests that were missed. If an absence is unauthorised, the school will agree with the Parents/ Guardians on the appropriate course of action pending the completion of the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the absence.





### Unauthorised Absence

A student's absence from school for more than half of the school day without the provision of a valid excuse is considered an "unauthorised absence".

Examples of unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:

- Shopping trips
- Holidays and vacations
- Appointments without prior approval
- Social events
- Non-urgent family travel
- Other reasons not included in the "Authorised" list



Truancy: Students are considered truant if they are absent from school without their parent/guardians' knowledge or consent. Truancy is considered an unexcused absence. Schools will give written notice to parents/guardians when their child has been truant. Issues of repeated truancy will require the parents/guardians to meet with school officials in accordance with the school's Behaviour Management Policy

### Absence notification

If a child is unavoidably absent from school on any given day, parents must inform the class teacher / form tutor of this absence no later than 7.00am on that same day of absence - (whether the child travels to BIS Abu Dhabi by school bus or not). The email ' subject' should clearly be marked as 'Absence.'

Teachers will check their email from 7.15am to 7.35am. If, for some reason, parents are unable to email by 7.00am, then they should make contact with a member of staff at the main reception desk no later than 7.45am.

If a child travels to school in the morning by bus, parents should also make contact with the Support Assistant via her mobile phone and no later than 6.30am on that day.

Where there is no notification of the absence of a bus child on any given day, either via email to the class teacher or via phone message to the Support Assistant or main desk receptionist, it will be the responsibility of the Support Assistant or main desk receptionists to attempt contact with parents to follow this up. We aim to make contact by 9.00am – however this may not be feasible where the total number of unreported absences is high.

Students who are absent should be asked, on their return, to provide notes to explain their absence. If a student is absent from school for more than 3 days consecutively, without any prior notice, Form Tutors or Class Teachers should contact the parents to enquire about the absence.

The parents of students whose absence totals 10 days (authorised or unauthorised – or a combination) will receive a formal note from the Head of Year (See Appendix A)





The parents of students whose absence totals 15 days (authorised or unauthorised – or a combination) will receive a formal note from the Assistant Headteacher for Student Wellbeing. (See Appendix B)

The parents of students whose absence totals 20 days (authorised or unauthorised – or a combination) will receive a formal note from the Head of School informing them that their child's place in the school, or their automatic entry into the next year group is threatened by their poor attendance record (See Appendix C)

#### **Absence for illness & Medical Appointments**

- a) Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours
- b) An appointment card or verification by the doctor/ dentist/hospital is required
- c) If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment
- d) Medical certificates are required for absence greater than two days.

#### **Absence request**

Term time absence can have a serious impact upon the learning and progress of a child. For this reason, very careful consideration is given to:

- I) the impact upon learning for that particular child
- II) the impact upon other children (ie when the child returns and may require additional teacher support for the learning missed)
- III) the child's record of attendance and punctuality (BIS Abu Dhabi's target is 96% attendance. This equates to a maximum of 7 days absent)
- IV) the nature of the request ie, is it a truly 'exceptional' or unavoidable circumstance

No parent can demand leave of absence as a right. If however, due to unavoidable circumstances, parents need to take their children out of school, they should make a request at least 10 days before the absence so a list of assignments that will be missed can be prepared and the absence can be processed. (See Appendix D for the Absence request form)

Unless the circumstance is deemed exceptional or unavoidable, then it is unlikely that the holiday (term time) leave will be authorised.

The form can be collected in person from the receptionist on the main reception desk, e-mailed by the class teacher, or from our website.

The form can be completed by hand or downloaded and completed electronically and must be returned to the class teacher in the first instance, who should then forward requests to the Assistant Headteacher





for Student Wellbeing of Primary/Secondary. Any request which is made using an alternative format is unlikely to be authorised.

The school will not authorise requests if it means that a student will have had more than 5 days absent in one academic year.

Requests for absence of 6 days or more will be subject to approval of the initial 5 days only. The remaining days will not be approved. (See Appendix E)

Requests for absence in cases where the student is known to have already had more than 10 days of absence in the school year will be denied. (See Appendix F)

### **Consequences of Absences:**

#### ***Missing Assessments***

If a student misses an external test or examination due to an unexcused absence, credit will not be awarded for the missed test or examination and this will impact the final mark/letter accordingly.

#### ***Missing Assignments***

Students are responsible for completing all assignments missed during absences.

#### ***Referral to school counsellor***

If a student accumulates 10 unexcused absences during one school year, in addition to normal required procedures to address poor attendance, they shall be referred to the school counsellor. An intervention program to improve attendance, developed in consultation with the parents, which includes regular ongoing communication with parents, will be put in place.

#### ***Formal interview with Principal and Parents***

If a student accumulates 20 unexcused absences during one school year, the student and their parents/guardians must attend an interview with the Principal and school counsellor. At this time, the consequences of further poor attendance must be made clear to the parents and student. The intervention program must be revised and an agreement regarding attendance for the remainder of the school year must be negotiated and signed.

#### ***Referral to Academic Review Committee***

If a student accumulates 30 or more unexcused absences during one school year, they shall be referred to the school's Academic Review Committee with a recommendation that they be retained in the same grade the following year. If the student is 16 or younger and has already been retained twice previously, then they must be promoted to the next grade, with support from an ongoing intervention plan. If the student is older than 16 and has already been retained twice previously then they shall not be registered for the following year and shall be recommended for homeschooling.

Please note, tuition fees will not be refunded for absence.

The class teacher and form teacher are the teachers most likely to spot patterns of absence and poor punctuality.







### **Primary Punctuality expectation**

If children are regularly turning up to school late and, as a result, missing out on their learning, contact will be made with the student's parents to improve the situation by letter. (see Appendix G)

### **Secondary Punctuality expectations**

Students who are late for registration twice in one week will be expected to meet with their class tutor on the same day as their second late.

If improvements are not seen, contact will be made with parents and informed of the school's expectations. (See Appendix H & I)

### **The class / form teachers' role in promoting good attendance and punctuality**

All teachers play a part in encouraging good attendance and punctuality amongst our student body. Class and Form teachers are required to keep accurate records of attendance via the morning register, by registering each class every lesson (secondary school) and by keeping a watchful eye on punctuality to lessons.

1. Morning registers should be taken on the ISAMS computer system. Students are marked with '/' if they are present or 'n' if they are absent.
2. If a student arrives late, the register should be changed to an 'L'.
3. If a student is absent but the absence has been authorised in advance, the absence should be coded as 'C' (Other Authorised Circumstances) or 'H' (Family Holiday – agreed).
4. Where an absence is explained after the event in a note from parents, teachers should ensure that the note is given to Reception Staff who will re-code the absence.

A paper register is also taken by the form tutor. This register acts as the Fire Register in the event of a fire alarm or emergency. This register should be taken and left on the teachers' desk to be collected by the Fire Officer each morning (Secondary) or will stay in the classroom to be used in the events of a fire by the Class Teacher (Primary). Reception staff will alter the computer registers if students arrive late or if they receive additional notifications about student absence. (See Appendix J for list of codings).

### **Expulsion linked to attendance**

The school can expel a student when there is an unexcused absence for 10 days continuously, or 15 days non-continuously during the academic year. This is on condition that the school has already sent 2 warning letters to the students' Parent/Guardian. Additionally, the expulsion order must be issued by the School Principal and approved by ADEC, and the guardian is informed.

### **School day expectations**

#### **Beginning of school day**

Pupils are expected to arrive in school between 7:30 and 7:45am.

In the Primary school a whistle will be blown at 7:45am and the children will line up with their class, after the national anthem, they are taken into class by their teacher.





In the Secondary school, pupils can go straight to their form rooms from 7:30am and should aim to be there no later than 7:40am.

All pupils who arrive late must report to the main reception desk where they are registered, their reason for lateness is recorded and they are given a late slip which they should hand to their teacher. These slips are collected in each child's personal file.

When a child returns to school following an absence, parents will send a signed note or e-mail to the school indicating the reason for the child's absence.

Parents will schedule family vacations to coincide with scheduled school breaks.

### **End of school day**

#### **Primary**

Students will be delivered to their specific pick-up point within playground by 2:45. At this time, the gates will be opened by Security allowing Parents or supervisors in to pick up their child(ren). If a student is not collected by 3pm (we realise that there are rare occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes you to collect your child late) they are taken to the Late room where they are signed in by the Late room supervisors. In order for a student to be allowed to leave the Late room, a parent or supervisor must enter the Late room and sign out the student.

If a student is collected late more than 5 times in one half term, an e-mail will be sent informing parents of this with an expectation that improvements occur imminently.

If the trend continues, a meeting will be scheduled with the child's Teacher and Year Leader to improve the situation.

Should this not improve matters, a meeting with the Head of Primary will be take place. Discussions will specifically focus on whether the student should continue to attend the school or whether attending another school might be a better option.

Any children who are regularly late being picked up will be highlighted by the Receptionist monthly with an e-mail sent to inform the late student's teacher of the issue. (See Appendix K for letter examples)

### **Responsibilities**

To ensure the effective implementation of this policy

#### **Principals will:**

- Notify parents of school attendance policies and procedures
- Ensure accurate records are kept of daily attendance data for each student on a daily basis
- Ensure parents are notified if their child has been truant
- Communicate with parents/guardians to resolve issues of students with repeated unexcused absences.





- Refer students who accumulate more than 10 continuous unexcused absences during the school year to the Heads of Year, Year Leaders and Assistant Headteachers for Student Wellbeing.
- Refer students who accumulate more than 15 non- continuous unexcused absences during the school year to the school's Academic review Committee to determine the student's promotion status.

**School-based staff, including the school counsellor will:**

- Communicate with parents/guardians to resolve issues of repeated unexcused absences

**Parents/guardians will:**

- Ensure their child attends school according to the ADEC school calendar and times of the school day.
- Inform the school of their child's inability to attend school on days of absence.
- Provide a signed note and appropriate documentation for their child's excused absences.
- Schedule family vacations to coincide with the school breaks.

**Assistance**

For assistance or further information, please contact the Assistant Headteachers for Student Wellbeing at the following e-mail address.

[Enquiries@bisad.ae](mailto:Enquiries@bisad.ae)





Appendix A – Note to parents regarding 10 days absence

Dear Parent,

We note from our records that (student name) has now been absent from school for a total of (number of days) days. Attendance to school is a crucial part of making academic progress and we are concerned that (student name's) progress is being affected by his absence.

I would be grateful if you could do your utmost to ensure that (student name) does not miss any more days in school. If you have any queries at all about the school attendance policy, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Year Leader / Head of Year







Appendix B – Note to parents regarding 15 days absence

Dear Parent,

Further to our recent correspondence, we note from our records that (student name) has now been absent from school for a total of (number of days) days. Attendance to school is a crucial part of making academic progress and we are concerned that (student name's) progress is being affected by his absence.

The school is obliged to inform the local authorities (ADEC) of the names of students whose attendance is causing the school concern and I would therefore be grateful if you could do your utmost to ensure that (student name) does not miss any more days in school. If you have any queries at all about the school attendance policy, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Assistant Headteacher – Student Wellbeing







Appendix D

REQUEST FOR TERM TIME LEAVE

Parents - Please note that school attendance data are subject to ADEC inspection at any time. The school is obliged to inform ADEC of any concerns it has with regard to the attendance of individual students.

We strongly discourage students from missing any time from their studies as poor attendance is known to negatively impact upon learning.

Please fill out this form in BLOCK CAPITALS.

A separate Student absence form must be filled in for all siblings due to be absent from school.

Please note, that tuition fees will not be refunded for absence.

NAME OF STUDENT			
NAME OF CLASS			
NAME OF TEACHER			
REASON FOR ABSENCE			
START DATE:		END DATE:	

Please note that in accordance with school procedures:

- More than 10 days unauthorized absence will trigger a referral to the Assistant Headteacher for Student Wellbeing.
- More than 20 days unauthorized absence will trigger a referral to the Head of School and a request for a parent consultation.

PARENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

AUTHORISED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_





Appendix E – Response to request for more than 5 days absence

Dear Parent,

Thank you for your request for leave. I am sure that you can appreciate that good attendance is of utmost importance in helping students to make the best progress possible and as a result, the school is always reluctant to authorise term time absence.

According to ADEC guidelines the school is unable to authorise absences in excess of 5 days and the school is required to provide ADEC with the names of all students who have missed more than 5 days of school in any one year.

Therefore, on behalf of our Principal, I am writing to confirm that (student name) request for absence from (date) to (date) has been authorised for the first five days only.

Yours faithfully,

Assistant Headteacher – Student Wellbeing









Appendix G -

Appendix G can be viewed on the Z drive / Attendance 2015.16 / Letters to parents.





**Appendix H - Notice of concern regarding punctuality**

Dear Parent,

I wish to inform you that concern has been raised about (student name's) punctuality to school. It appears that (student name) has been late several times recently and this is beginning to impact upon (student name's) learning in class. Good punctuality is an important part of the learning process and I hope that in the coming weeks his / her record can be improved.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if there is anything that we can do to help in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Year Leader / Head of Year







Appendix J - codings.

Code	Description
#	School Closed
/	Present AM
B	Educated off site
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
F	Extended family holiday
G	Family holiday not agreed/excess
H	Family holiday agreed
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late
M	Medical / Dental appointment
N	No reason provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late after registration closed
V	Educational visit / trip
W	Work experience
X	Untimetabled session for non compulsory school-age pupils
Y	Enforced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll





Appendix K - **LATE COLLECTION STEPS FOR CLASS TEACHERS**

**Step 1: (Sent on behalf of Year Leader after 5 late collections)**

Dear Parent,

I am writing to inform you that your child has been collected late on 5 occasions this term. Although the school finishes at 2:45pm, all members of staff have further duties they need to undertake in order to plan and prepare for the student's future learning - having to wait in the Late room is hindering their ability to do this.

Please can ensure your child is picked up on time. Should you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact your child's class teacher.

Thank you for your continued support.

**Step 2: (Sent on behalf of Primary Head of Student Wellbeing after 10 late collections)**

Dear Parent,

Further to the last e-mail sent on \_\_\_\_\_ it is apparent that your child has been collected late on a further 5 occasions. As a result, we would like to schedule a meeting with you with regards to how we can improve the situation.

Please let us know a suitable time you are able to meet either this week or next.

We look forward to hearing from you.

**Step 3: (Sent on behalf of Head of Primary after 15 late collections)**

Dear Parent,

We encourage you to contact us at your earliest convenience regarding your child's late collection after school. Since our last meeting, the situation has not improved and we urgently need to discuss with you how we can reverse the current trend.

Please let us know a suitable time you are able to meet with us as soon as possible.

We look forward to hearing from you.

