

1. Policy Statement

Good attendance is vital to a student's ability to learn. If days are regularly missed, then continuity of learning and progress are significantly hampered as students find it difficult to catch up with missed work. Absence rates above 10% should be regarded as a major cause for concern. However, there are more legitimate reasons for absence and some degree of flexibility is required depending on the cause of absence. For this reason, the school distinguishes in its response to absence between authorised absences and unauthorised absences or truancy.

2. Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that:

- To ensure that students are attending all classes and activities that result in their understanding of the curriculum and the subjects being taught.
- To set out the School's expectations in relation to full attendance at School by all students without exception, through a clear policy and effective communication with Parents/Guardians.
- To encourage students to attend all classes in a timely manner, so that they maximise the educational benefit of being in School.
- To ensure that unauthorised absences are dealt with firmly and effectively.

3. Practice and Procedure

3.1 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, **attendance** refers to the total number of school days attended by the student during the school year based on the School calendar.

=For the purposes of this policy, **absence** refers to the days when students fail to attend School. A student who does not miss a single class throughout the year is said to have a 0% absence record or a 100% attendance record.

In compliance with the Ministerial Decree, No. (820) of 2014 on Registration Terms for Students: A student is considered **absent** in the case that (s)he is absent from one or more sessions in a period of one day.

3.2 Absence and Late Procedures

- Gate opens at 7:20 am and closes at 7:50 am. All late pupils (after 7:50 am) to go through main reception
- From 7:50 Main Reception staff will give Year 1 to Year 6 and Secondary pupils a late slip to take to class
- From 7:50 FS Reception staff will give EYFS pupils a late slip to take to class
- All late children to be recorded on late list by admin staff. Admin team will update registers on iSAMS by marking in late pupils by 8:30
- If a pupil arrives at the classroom without a late slip, the pupil (or the TA for younger pupils) must return to the main Reception to collect a late slip and be marked into the register
- FS administrator will run an absence report each morning for admin staff to email/call absentees report to be sent to SLT and ESLT.
- Allocated staff will visit Primary classrooms/contact Secondary staff to check that face to face pupils have not arrived in school.
- Day 1 of absence: Reception staff will email and call parents of absent pupils
- If parents do not answer, a follow up call(s) will be made later in the day. Register to be updated with absence reason. If teacher/tutor receives a reason for absence must add to iSAMS
- If a parent has been non contactable, Reception staff will send a formal email at the end of the day, to state they that the child's absence has now been marked as unauthorized and include the ADEK guidelines – i.e. that a warning letter will be sent after three days of unexplained absences
- On the second day of absence class teachers and tutors to contact parents through email/Class dojo to complete a pastoral check
- FS administrator to run a weekly report to flag repeat absences and lates.
- Reports to be reviewed by FS Administrator and shared with SLT members before any warning letters are issued.
- Warning for lateness to be issued (upon SLT approval), after five late instances.

3.2 Informing parents

At the beginning of the academic year, the School issues to Parents / Guardians its ADEK-approved attendance policy setting out procedures to deal with absences and to ensure that students punctually and regularly attend School and all lessons, and that all attendance data is accurately recorded.

3.3 Procedures to promote punctual attendance and reduce absence

Students are expected to attend School on every school day as specified in the School calendar. In order to promote good practices and attitudes with regards punctuality and attendance, the following procedures are in place:

- Student and parent handbooks advise students to be punctual every day in order that they attend morning tutor period and attend classes on time.
- Teachers maintain a record of attendance by students for every lesson on the school MIS (iSAMS)
- The School maintains accurate daily attendance data for each student, including timely or late arrival to School.
- Parents / Guardians are encouraged to make every effort to ensure that their children attend School on every school day and to ensure that they arrive on time.
- If students need to be absent from School for a particular day, Parents/Guardians are asked to inform the School accordingly (see [3.4.6 School Notification of Absence](#)).
- When a student returns to School following an absence, Parents/Guardians are asked to send a signed note to the School indicating the reason for the student's absence.
- Students are responsible for completing all assignments missed during their absence ([3.4.4 Responsibilities to Completing Missed School Work](#))
- Parents/Guardians should seek to ensure that family vacations take place during scheduled School holidays.
- The School encourages students through rewards for good attendance and punctuality to attend all classes in a timely manner, so that they maximise the educational benefit of being in School.
- The School ensures that unauthorised absences are dealt with firmly and effectively.

The school administration assumes the responsibility of recording daily attendance of registered students for each session.

The School will seek to achieve low absence rates by:

- Following up on all unexplained absences immediately.
- Providing a safe, caring and engaging learning environment that encourages and stimulates students.
- Recognising and rewarding excellent or improved student attendance.
- Implementing strategies and programs to address attendance problems for individual students.
- Providing clear and specific information about the rules and consequences of poor attendance to Parents/Guardians, students and School staff.

3.4 Types of Absences

3.4.1 Authorised Absences

Policy 55 on Absence in the Abu Dhabi Private Schools Policy and Guidance Manual defines that the following absences may be deemed ‘**authorised**’ when confirmed by a signed letter from Parents/Guardians or by way of official documents:

- Illness.
- Death of first or second degree relative.
- Scheduled doctor appointments.
- Official community task.
- Mandatory appearance before an official body.
- Essential urgent family travel for matters such as medical treatment or the death of a family member.

3.4.2 Unauthorised Absences

The following types of absences are to be regarded as unauthorised:

- Shopping trips.
- Unnecessary travel.
- Other types of absences not included in the authorised absences list.

3.4.3 Truancy

Students are considered to be truant if they are absent from School without their Parents’/Guardians’ knowledge or consent, or if Parents/Guardians have colluded with the student so that they are absent without authorization. Truancy is an unauthorized absence, and Schools must immediately inform the student’s Parents/Guardians of incidents of truancy and shall hold discussions with them and the student and closely monitor the student’s attendance.

3.4.4 Responsibilities to Completing Missed School Work

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 completion of the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the absence.

3.4.5 Adverse Weather

School administration will excuse students for being late in the morning during days with adverse weather conditions (e.g. heavy fog).

3.4.6 School Notification of Absence

Parents/Guardians who plan to have their children miss several days of School are required to notify the School at least ten days before the anticipated absence, in order to allow teachers time to prepare the list of assignments that will be missed during the absence.

The student or Parent/Guardian is responsible for contacting the School administration to learn of all assignments and tasks given to the student. These assignments must be completed by the student and returned to the relevant teachers either before leaving or shortly after returning from the absence.

3.4.7 Student Suspension/Expulsion for accumulated absences

Compliant with article 19 of the Ministry of Education Ministerial Decree No. (820) of 2014 on 'Admissions and Enrollment Registration Terms for Students', Students can be expelled from the School in the following cases:

1. Unexcused absence exceeding **ten consecutive days** or **fifteen inconsecutive days** during the academic year.
 - a. Prior to expulsion the student must receive three official warnings at a rate of one warning for each three days of absence.
2. Based on recommendation of a school based educational committee with the approval of ADEK

4. Assessment and Record Keeping

Notification of Absence and letters relating to requests for approved absence are kept on the School Management Information System. Data, including reports communication and any sanctions or rewards, relating to punctuality, attendance and absence are all kept on the relevant sections of the School MIS related to each child.

5. Staffing and Resources

5.1 The School's Owner and Board of Trustees:

- Ensure that the School implements robust and rigorous practices with regards Attendance, Punctuality and Absence.

5.2 The Principal

The Principal:

- Develops, implements and regularly reviews the School's policies and procedures for promoting good attendance, and follow up on excessive absence including truancy, and ensure full compliance with ADEK requirements.
- Ensures that the School's attendance policies and procedures are implemented and adhered to.
- Ensures effective administration of student attendance and recording daily attendance at all lessons
- Ensures full compliance with ADEK requirements.
- Ensures that the School's policies and procedures for promoting good School attendance are implemented and adhered to.
- Works with the Government Relations Executive to regularly report to the relevant ADEK division on student attendance
- Addresses and limit excessive absences including truancy, as per ADEK's requirements, and seeks to identify the root causes of such behaviour.

5.3 Heads of School

Heads of School establish procedures aligned with this policy together with administrative departments in order to:

- Ensure effective administration of student attendance and recording daily attendance at all lessons
- Provide clear information about the consequences of poor attendance to Parents/Guardians, students and School staff in handbooks
- Set procedures for dealing with poor attendance and tardiness.
- Recognise students with exemplary attendance records.
- Develop, implement and regularly review the School's policies and procedures for promoting good attendance
- Follow up on repeated absence, including truancy, and ensure full compliance with ADEK requirements.

5.4 The School Administration

The School Administrative departments, under the direction of the Heads of Schools:

- Ensure that communication with parents regarding attendance and punctuality is relayed in a timely manner in accordance with this policy

5.4 Teaching Staff and Tutors

Teaching staff will:

- Keep accurate records of lesson attendance (in Secondary School) and of morning and afternoon attendance

6. Associated documents

- ADEK Private Schools and Policy Guide: Chapter 14, Policies 54 and 55 on Attendance and Absence, Corresponding to Articles 59 and 60 of the Organising Regulations
- Ministry of Education Decree No. (820) of 2014 on Registration Terms for Students

7. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Principal and Vice-Principal and in discussion with the Heads of School and School Administration. It is forwarded to ADEK for approval post each update.

8. Approved by

Principal on behalf of the School: _____

Chairman of Governors: _____

Change History Record

Version No.	Description of Change	Owner	Date of Issue
1.0	Adoption of Policy	Principal / SLT	Aug 2015
2.0	Revision of Policy	Principal / PRE	Oct 2015

3.0	Revision of Policy	Principal	May 2016
4.0	Revision of Policy	Administrator	Mar 2018
5.0	Significant changes to align more closely with ADEK Private Schools and Policy Guide: Chapter 14, Policies 54 and 55 on Attendance and Absence, and the Ministry of Education Decree No. (820)of 2014 on Registration Terms for Students	VP	May 2019
5.1	Minor updates on the Absence and Late Procedures	Lynne Thompson – Head of Wellbeing	Sept 2021
5.2	Review and Revision of the Policy	Lynne Thompson – Head of Wellbeing	Jan 2022
5.3	Review and revision of the policy	Elizabeth Clancy – Deputy Head Pastoral	Aug 2022

9. Appendix 1: Procedures for Staff to Ensure Good Attendance, Punctuality and Attendance

9.1 Introduction

Amity International School believes good attendance is vital to a student's ability to learn. Having a good education helps give students the best possible start in life. If days are regularly missed, then continuity of learning and progress are significantly hampered as students find it difficult to catch up with missed work.

However, there will be absence times that demand sensitivity and we acknowledge that adaptations need to be made. In some cases pupil's lateness and absence may be being condoned at home or be out of the pupil's control. In these cases it is essential that the child is not made to feel guilty or inadequate.

School staff should set an example and ensure they arrive at lessons on time and demonstrate the value given to time in school. They should also demonstrate an understanding of the individual's personal circumstances whilst encouraging and expecting students to arrive punctually and ready for work. Good personal organisation and time-keeping are part of our ethos.

9.2 Expectations of Teaching Staff

- Encourage prompt arrival at school
- Encourage regular attendance
- Ensure routines are in place for monitoring attendance and for early identification of any difficulties
- Respect and appreciate variation in lifestyle may place different demands upon students and their families
- Identify trends in attendance and punctuality.

In order to achieve this, class teachers and tutors should:

- Complete the register every morning by 8.00am
- Keep an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by students and their parents
- Informing the Head of Year and Head of School where there are concerns

Heads of School and other delegated members of school management;

- Organise an individual student monitoring and reward system for target students
- Emphasise with students the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Discussing attendance issues at parent evenings and parent-teacher consultations when necessary
- Set an example by arriving promptly to lessons

9.3 School Administration

The Administration Team is responsible for:

- Promptly checking the completion of registers on a daily basis
- Following up promptly with teachers who have not completed registers
- Running a daily attendance report and ensuring this is accessible in the event of an emergency evacuation
- Ensuring unexplained absences are followed up with a call or email to ensure we can account for all students' whereabouts
- Ensuring Late Slips are completed and the lateness is entered on the Register
- Following up specific requests from staff for information regarding attendance including running reports and statistics
- Monitoring individual attendance on a weekly basis where concerns have been raised
- Preparation of 100% attendance certificates at the end of each term.
- School administration will excuse students for being late in the morning during days with adverse weather (e.g. heavy fog)

The Administrator is responsible for:

- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues using a 3 step system:
 - Calling parents in the case of unauthorised absence to determine cause of absence.
 - To update the School MIS system with reasons for absence
 - To alert Heads of School with regards regular unauthorised absence weekly
 - After 3 consecutive unauthorised absences, provide a written reminder to parents (following Head of School approval) of the student obligations regarding attendance and the implications in accordance with the School's Attendance and Absence policy should they be consistently absent (3.4.7 Student Suspension/Expulsion for accumulated absences)
 - To encourage written permission for authorised leave from parents

9.4 Positive Encouragement of Attendance

In order to encourage regular attendance, the school operates the following rewards:

- Individual students with 100% attendance in any term receive an Attendance Certificate.

9.5 Parental Responsibilities for Student Attendance and Notifying School of Absence

Parents are informed via the Parent handbook that they have a responsibility and a duty to ensure their child attends school. Parents / Guardians who plan to have their children miss several days of school are required to notify the school at least ten days before the anticipated absence, in order to give teachers time to prepare a list of assignments that will be missed during the absence.

The Parents / Guardians are also responsible for:

- Contacting the school administration to learn of all assignments and tasks given to the student.
- Informing the school by 8.00am that their child is absent, on each day of absence and providing a reason.
- Providing the school with a written reason for absences longer than 1 day, if the absence is not sickness related
- Making sure students attend school every day possible and arrive on time.
- Sending students to school even if they feel a little unwell, e.g. headache or sore throat. The school nurse will always contact parents if the situation deteriorates.
- Helping students to understand the importance of going to school and showing disapproval of missing school
- Making all appointments outside of school time e.g. dentist / doctor. In the event of this not being possible, parents are asked to inform the school of the appointment prior to the appointment date. The school may request to see an appointment card.
- Asking permission well in advance if a request is being made to miss school for a special occasion such as a family wedding.
- Informing the school if they are planning to take family holidays in school holiday time. If this is impossible, then a holiday request, in writing, must be made at least 2 weeks prior to the holiday date. It is a senior member of staff's decision as to whether the request will be granted. Previous attendance patterns will be taken into account.

Additional holidays will not, by default, be authorised.

9.6 Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Parents and Staff should be aware that absence will be accepted for the following reasons:

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- Sickness which should be proved by a medical certificate if more than 2 days in length.
- Close family bereavement up to a maximum of five days.
- Scheduled doctor appointments.
- Official community task.
- Mandatory appearance before an official body.
- Essential urgent family travel for matters such as medical treatment or the death of a family member.

Parents should be aware that it is not acceptable to take students out of school for the following reasons:

- Shopping trips.
- Unnecessary travel.
- Birthdays
- Ramadan
- To visit a relative
- To entertain visiting relatives and friends
- Other non-essential reasons

9.7 Action and Sanctions for Unauthorised Absence

The following action will be taken by the school for unauthorised absence:

- If no explanation is provided by 8.30am, a phone call will be made to ascertain the reason for the absence
- Students whose attendance falls below 96% or following 3 occurrences of unauthorised absence in the duration of the year, will receive a phone call and letter reminding the parent of the importance of attendance and the implications should their attendance continue to be poor. They will be invited should they wish to a meeting with the Head of School or other delegated member of staff to discuss their attendance
- Students with frequent authorised “odd days” off from school will have their attendance patterns carefully monitored
- Parents who fail to co-operate with the school to ensure good attendance will be considered in breach of the Home-School Agreement and may have the school place withdrawn or may result in students not being entered for exams or not promoted to the next year group
- Unauthorised absence exceeding ten consecutive days or 15 non-consecutive days during the academic year may be prone to expulsion. This is on condition that the parents of the student

have received three official warnings at a rate of one warning for each three days of absence and it should be approved by school Principal and ADEK, and the parent should be informed.

9.8 Catching up work missed as a result of absence

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 completion of the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the absence.

9.9 Punctuality

Lateness disadvantages students as they miss the initial teaching and instructions for the day/lesson. This can cause stress and embarrassment for a student as they walk into a class when learning has started.

Parents are asked to ensure students are at school in plenty of time for the start of the school day.

In the Secondary School, students are expected to be responsible for ensuring that they arrive at their lessons on time. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that students are released from lessons/activities in a timely manner so that they have ability to arrive at their next lesson on time. There is a scheduled five minute change over between lessons to accommodate this.

If students arrive after the starting time of school, they must report to the Reception area where the arrival time and the reason for the lateness must be recorded by the school Receptionist and an “I am late” card is issued before the student goes to class.

Teachers should check that the student has picked up one of these cards before permitting them into the classroom as it is indicative that the student has been added to the fire roll.

Appendix 2 – Draft letter to parents post 3 unauthorised absences

Date

(Arabic version available)

Dear Parents

RE: Student Attendance

Our records show that <child's name> has had <xx> unauthorised absences during this academic year.

Amity International School believes good attendance is vital to a student's ability to learn. Having a good education helps give students the best possible start in life. If days are regularly missed, then continuity of learning and progress are significantly hampered as students find it difficult to catch up with missed work.

For safety reasons, it is imperative that our school can account for all students' whereabouts every day and we ask that parents contact the school to advise us of any student absence and inform us of the reason for your child missing school.

Should your child be absent due to medical reasons, please notify Reception or the Class Teacher and provide a Medical Certificate where required to ensure our records can be amended.

Please ensure <child's name> arrives to school every day, on time and prepared for lessons.

Please note that the School follows the policies and guidance of its regulator ADEK, and the decrees of the Ministry of Education in order to encourage student attendance and prevent student absence and in doing so, it is not only compelled to inform ADEK of student absence but also required to remind Parents in writing that a child's place at the school could be brought into jeopardy in the instance of repeated absence. For further information, we refer you to the School's Policy on Absence and Attendance and the information contained within the Parents' Handbook on this matter.

We will continue to monitor attendance and should there be a further concern, an appointment will be arranged for you with a member of our administration team.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to speak with our PRE.

We thank you for your continued support.

Appendix 3 – Letter in response to poor punctuality

Date

(Arabic version available)

Dear Parents

RE: Student Punctuality

Our records show that <Child's name> has been late to school on <xx> occasions this year.

Amity International School believes lateness disadvantages students as they miss the initial teaching and instructions for the day. This can cause stress and upset for a student as they walk into a class when the school day has started. Having a good education helps give students the best possible start in life. If students are regularly late, then continuity of learning and progress are significantly hampered as students find it difficult to catch up with missed work.

The morning National Anthem is also an important part of celebrating our host country with our whole school community. Please ensure <child's name> arrives to school every day, on time and prepared for lessons.

We will continue to monitor your child's punctuality and should there be a further concern, an appointment will be arranged for you with a member of our administration team.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the School administration who will direct your inquiry appropriately.

We thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Head of School