ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Policy Owner	Head of School
Approved by	Ms Sapna Changrani (Head of School)
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1. RATIONALE

Regular school attendance and punctuality are crucial for achieving success academically. Even occasional absences can add up and significantly impact a student's learning progress. Therefore, it is important for parents to ensure that their child attends school every day during the school year, except in cases of illness or unavoidable circumstances. When a child is unwell, parents should promptly notify the school by sending an email to the Form Tutor and explain the absence. Parents also have an option to submit excusals through the toddle family application.

Consistently arriving at school on time is equally important, as being late results in missing the morning registration and disrupts the learning of the whole class.

Our policy is applicable to every child enrolled in this school, and it is accessible to all parties involved. Children who consistently arrive late or are frequently absent quickly start to lag in their educational progress and often develop significant learning deficiencies that will hinder their advancement and their capacity to achieve age-appropriate learning standards.

Research shows that missing 10% of the school year can reduce a student's achievement by half a year, and missing 20% by a full year. Dubai Scholars holds itself to the highest standard: our whole-school attendance target is 98% for every student.

2. KHDA REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND ATTENDANCE BENCHMARKS

Dubai Scholars operates under the regulatory framework of the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) and is inspected by the Dubai School Inspection Bureau (DSIB). Attendance is an explicit performance indicator in DSIB inspections and contributes directly to the school's overall rating.

The KHDA has set the following attendance guidelines, which are reported each term and scrutinised during DSIB inspection visits:

DSIB Rating	Attendance	Max Days Absent	Implication
Outstanding / Excellent	98% or above	3 days or fewer	Highest DSIB recognition
Very Good	96% – 97%	Up to 7 days	Commended at DSIB inspection
Good	94% – 95%	Up to 11 days	Meets DSIB Good standard
Acceptable	92% – 93%	Up to 15 days	Minimum acceptable threshold
Cause for Concern	Below 92%	15+ days	KHDA escalation; non-promotion risk

The 92% KHDA Threshold

Attendance below 92% is considered unacceptable by KHDA. A school year at Dubai Scholars comprises approximately 180–182 instructional days, so each day represents approximately 0.55% of the academic year. Where a student's attendance falls below the 92% threshold, the school is required to notify KHDA and take documented action.

Students with more than 15 unexcused absences during the academic year will be placed on a formal attendance support plan. In line with the KHDA Student Placement Guidelines, no student will be retained, advanced or have their year group changed without prior written approval from KHDA.

⚠ KHDA Escalation Thresholds

- **15 or more unexcused absences in an academic year:** referral to KHDA; formal attendance support plan and alternative pathway agreed with parents.
- **20 consecutive unauthorised school days absent:** the school will offer an alternative pathway to re-engage the student. If this is unsuccessful, the case is referred to KHDA for a decision on the student's place.
- **25 or more non-consecutive unauthorised days absent:** the school will offer an alternative pathway to re-engage the student. If this is unsuccessful, the case is referred to KHDA for a decision on the student's place.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This attendance policy ensures that all staff in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance. Specifically, Dubai Scholars aims to:

- Improve students' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve 98% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness among parents and students of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Work in partnership with students, parents and staff so that all students realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in dealing with regular absence.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially Class Teachers and Form Tutors, in promoting good attendance.

4. PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and students.
- Ensuring that parents have a clear understanding of the responsibility placed on them to ensure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality, appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting students who have been experiencing difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.
- Reporting attendance statistics to KHDA as requested.
- Ensuring all staff raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Senior Leadership Team for timely action.

5. ATTENDANCE AND ASSESSMENT — THE 5% WEIGHTING

At Dubai Scholars, attendance is not only a regulatory requirement — it is an integral component of the school's assessment and reporting framework.

5% Attendance Weighting in Assessment

Dubai Scholars includes a 5% attendance component within the overall assessment grade reported to parents each term and at the end of the academic year (as a part of the summative assessment – where applicable). This reflects the school's belief that consistent presence is itself a measurable learning behaviour and a marker of student engagement. This weighting applies to all year groups from Year 1 through Year 13.

How the 5% is calculated:

- Students with 98% attendance or above receive the full 5%.
- Students with 96%–97% attendance receive 4% (Very Good band).
- Students with 94%–95% attendance receive 3% (Good band).
- Students with 92%–93% attendance receive 2% (Acceptable band).
- Students with attendance below 92% receive 0% for this component and are flagged for KHDA reporting.

The 5% attendance component is reported alongside subject grades on all term reports issued via Toddle and is visible to parents at all times through the Toddle platform.

6. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from the parent. Only the school can authorise an absence — parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Authorised absence consists of:

- Medical leave — only when a medical certificate is produced within 2 working days of the child returning to school.
- Leave for Hajj — up to 10 days.
- Leave for bereavement (death in the immediate family) — 3 days.
- Significant religious observance not covered by school holidays, approved in advance by the Head of School.
- Emergency family circumstances, at the Head of School's sole discretion.
- COVID-19 or communicable illness as directed by the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) — recorded as B (Educated Offsite) and does not count against the student's attendance percentage.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, or where the absence is without good reason even with the support of a parent. Unauthorised absences include:

- Family holidays taken during term time without prior written approval from the Head of School.
- Absences for shopping, leisure, or non-essential activities.
- Repeated absences without medical documentation.
- Absences where the parent has not contacted the school.

7. REGISTRATION

The school day begins at 7:10 AM for Years 1–13 and at 8:15 AM for the Foundation Stage. Students are expected to be in school on time, with exceptions for Post-16 students as communicated by the Phase Head.

Each class teacher or form tutor (FS–Year 13) and subject teacher (Years 12–13) is responsible for keeping an accurate attendance record in Toddle. Every student's absence must be recorded during the registration period.

An email notification is sent to the respective parents (Years 1–11) at 7:30 AM if a child is marked absent. For the Foundation Stage, notification is sent at 8:30 AM. The form tutor will first send an email to the parent, followed by an SMS. If there is no response, the form tutor or receptionist will make a telephone call to the parent before the end of the school day.

8. LATENESS AND PUNCTUALITY

Once the gates are closed at 7:20 AM, the only way to enter school is via the school office (for students travelling independently). Any student arriving from 7:21 AM onwards will be marked Late (L) in the attendance record.

> ⚠ **Lateness Counts Towards Absence**
> Every three (3) incidents of lateness are counted as one full day of absence and will affect the student's overall attendance record and 5% assessment component.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness, parents will receive written notification advising them of the concerns. The school will provide opportunities for parents to seek support and advice to address these issues. Persistent lateness may be escalated in line with the intervention framework in Section 10.

9. REPORTING AN ABSENCE

Parents should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When notifying the school of an absence, parents must provide a clear reason. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised — a decision which rests with the Head of School and Phase Heads.

Notification must be made via one of the following channels:

- Via Toddle (preferred) — Using the excusal option, wherein the parent can upload the necessary files/ documents.
- By emailing the class teacher or form tutor.
- By telephoning the school reception.

Medical Documentation Requirements

- One day's absence: a parent's explanation via email or Toddle excusal is sufficient.
- Two or more consecutive days: a medical certificate or DHA-registered doctor's note is required within 2 working days of the student returning. Excusal must be submitted using toddle with relevant documents uploaded.
- Medical appointment (in school time): evidence from the doctor or hospital (appointment email / SMS) is required and uploaded using Toddle excusal.
- Extended illness (5+ days): a medical report and, where relevant, a return-to-school plan should be submitted to the Phase Head. This should be reported on toddle with relevant document uploads.

Where no notification is received, the absence will be marked Unauthorised (U). Repeated failure to notify the school will be escalated in line with Section 10.

10. MONITORING AND INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK

Dubai Scholars monitors attendance weekly for every student across all year groups. Attendance data is reviewed by Phase Heads and reported to the Head of School monthly. The following staged intervention framework applies to all students, with the priority always being to understand the barriers to attendance and support the student:

Stage	Trigger	Lead	Action
Stage 1	3–5 days absence in a term	Class Teacher / Form Tutor	Pastoral check-in; parent contact via email / Toddle
Stage 2	6–9 days absence in a term OR attendance below 94%	Phase Head / Deputy Phase Head	Formal attendance letter; meeting offered; monitoring plan
Stage 3	10–14 days absence in a term OR attendance below 92%	Head of School / DSL	Written warning; KHDA notification; attendance support plan communicated in writing
Stage 4	15+ unexcused days (cumulative) OR 20 consecutive days absent	Head of School + KHDA	KHDA referral; alternative pathway offered; any decision on the student's place or year group rests with KHDA; DSL / child protection review where relevant

11. REQUESTS FOR PLANNED ABSENCE

All requests for planned absence during term time — including family travel, extended holidays, or participation in approved external events — must be submitted in writing to the Phase Head at least ten

school days in advance. The Head of School has sole authority to approve planned absence requests, and approval will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

> ⚠ **Family Holidays During Term Time**
> Dubai Scholars strongly discourages family travel during term time. Holidays taken without the prior written approval of the Head of School will be recorded as Unauthorised and will count towards the KHDA non-promotion threshold. The school is unable to provide advance work for unapproved absences.

12. ATTENDANCE RECORDING AND REGISTER CODES

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised in Toddle, the school's Management Information System. The following register codes are used, in line with KHDA guidance:

Code	Description	Notes
P	Present	Student is in school and in class.
AA	Authorised Absence	Absence with an accepted explanation from a parent or guardian.
U	Unauthorised Absence	Absence with no valid explanation or prior approval.
L	Late	Student arrived after the designated start time.
B	On the Bus	School bus - delay in arrival.
ML	Medical Appointment	Student released from school for a medical or dental appointment.
OP	Educational Trip	Student absent from class due to an approved school activity. 1. Participation in Sporting event - Organised by the school 2. On school Trips - Local & international. 3. Participation in Local / International Competitions 4. Participation in Community Outreach Programmes
DLA	Distance Learning Absent	Student was absent and did not attend the online session.
DLP	Distance Learning Present	Student attended school learning remotely / online.

Attendance data is reported to parents each term through Toddle. Term-to-date and year-to-date percentages are visible to parents at all times. Whole-school attendance data is submitted to KHDA each term.

13. RESPONSIBILITIES

Students

We expect all students to:

- Ensure consistent attendance in school, whether in-person or online, and always arrive or log in punctually for both school and lessons.
- Come prepared and adequately equipped for the day's learning activities.
- Actively engage and participate in all lessons.
- Adhere to the appropriate protocols for attendance and punctuality.
- Take responsibility for completing any assignments or tasks assigned by the school during an approved absence period.

Class Teachers and Form Tutors

We expect all class teachers and form tutors to:

- Keep an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for poor overall attendance, variances in patterns of attendance, and unusual explanations for absence.
- Contact parents of absent children where no notification has been received.
- Follow up absences with immediate requests for explanation via email or Toddle.
- Inform the Senior Leadership Team where there are concerns and act upon them.
- Monitor follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasise with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.

Parents and Guardians

We expect parents and guardians to:

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented by illness or a medical appointment.
- Inform the reception, class teacher or form tutor on the first morning of any absence via email or Toddle.
- Inform the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time and provide evidence (appointment email/SMS) for the absence to be recorded as authorised.
- Make requests for authorised absence in term time only where absolutely necessary, understanding that these are not automatically authorised.
- Collaborate with the school to address and resolve issues whenever feasible, with the ultimate goal of maintaining strong attendance.
- Talk to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and addressed.

Phase Heads

- Monitor weekly attendance data for their phase and identify students of concern.
- Lead Stage 2 interventions, including parent meetings and monitoring plans.
- Determine, alongside the Head of School, whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

- Escalate persistent concerns to the Head of School.

Head of School

- Hold overall accountability for the school's attendance performance against KHDA benchmarks.
- Hold sole authority to approve or decline requests for planned absence during term time.
- Lead Stage 3 and Stage 4 interventions, including formal KHDA notifications.
- Report whole-school attendance data to the Board of Governors and KHDA as required.

14. ATTENDANCE AND SAFEGUARDING

Unexplained or persistent absence may be a safeguarding concern. Dubai Scholars' Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is informed whenever:

- A student is absent for five or more consecutive days without a satisfactory explanation.
- A pattern of absence coincides with known safeguarding concerns.
- A student cannot be located, and the school is unable to contact the parent or guardian.
- Absence is suspected to be linked to domestic issues, child labour, or early marriage.

In all such cases, the DSL will follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. KHDA and, where appropriate, the Dubai Child Protection Centre may be notified.

15. CELEBRATING ATTENDANCE

Dubai Scholars uses positive recognition to celebrate strong attendance across all year groups:

- Weekly form/class attendance is displayed on Toddle and celebrated in phase assemblies.
- Certificates of recognition are issued each term to students who achieve 100% attendance.
- Students maintaining 98% or above attendance across the full academic year receive a Principal's Commendation at the end-of-year celebration.
- Phase-based challenges and incentives are run each term to encourage consistent attendance and punctuality.

16. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if KHDA regulations change, MoE guidelines are updated, significant incidents require policy revision, or new data protection or safeguarding requirements alter how attendance records are managed.