

'An ever-evolving experience for ever-evolving learners, ensuring success today and preparedness for tomorrow'
Everyone Welcome, Everyone Belongs, Everyone Succeeds

At GEMS Jumeirah Primary School, we believe that everyone can achieve highly with equitable access to the right opportunities and support. As a World Class High Performance Learning school, we recognise and embrace the uniqueness of every child. We create an inclusive, nurturing environment, prioritising the psychological wellbeing of all, allowing children to feel happy, safe and confident. Children at JPS know that anything is possible for them and they aspire to be the best versions of themselves.

We meet the diverse needs of all children and their families to facilitate the best possible individual experience to ensure our learners excel beyond their potential flight path. Our bespoke, innovate curriculum is carefully designed and continually reviewed to:

- Guide learners in developing their values, behaviours and learner competencies to prepare them for success in an ever-evolving world
- Challenge learners and help them to discover their passions, talents and interests
- Provide leadership opportunities for all learners, allowing them to influence the direction of travel for key aspects of school

We are a diverse learning community, passionate about inspiring a love for learning in our children, staff and families. Our inclusive actions and behaviours are led by our core values of Kindness, Empathy, Respect, Hard Work and Resilience. This is clear through our acts of philanthropy and environmental sustainability. The JPS family is proud to lead the way in contributing positively to our local and wider community.

Introduction

Children's attendance and punctuality is taken very seriously at GEMS Jumeirah Primary School. Evidence shows that both lateness and poor attendance from as young as five years old can have a detrimental effect on a child's educational attainment and life chances. It may also make it difficult for them to make firm social bonds with other children. Occasional days off here and there soon add up, as does late arrival, resulting in missed lesson time. These have a significant negative impact on learning.

The National Foundation for Educational Research in the UK (www.nfer.ac.uk) has shown there is a significant association between absence and attainment, as well as evidence there may be critical thresholds of absence linked to significantly lower performance outcomes.

This is supported by the KHDA. The Parent School Contract states that parents have a responsibility for 'promoting their child's attendance' and that continued 'absenteeism will result in disciplinary measures and will affect the student's chances of enrolment for the upcoming academic year'.

The Ministry of Education for the UAE states that 'if a student is absent from school for 20 consecutive days or 25 non-consecutive days', the school can remove the child's place.

Additionally, Dr Malak Zaalouk, UNICEF's regional educational adviser, said that pursuing an education is the right of every child and this is supported by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

Ministry guidelines for attendance are as follows:

UNSATISFACTORY	ACCEPTABLE	GOOD	OUTSTANDING
Less than 92%	92 – 95 %	96 – 97%	98 -100%
14 days or more absent per school year	9 – 14 days absent per school year	5 – 8 days absent per school year	4 days or less absent per school year

All parents should ensure their child is at school on time every day that school is open, except when the child is too ill to attend. The reason for an absence must always be communicated to school via the Class Teacher, copying in info_jps@gemsedu.com

After 48 hours' absence, a medical note is required from a doctor. Absences of more than 48 hours without a doctor's note will be marked as 'unauthorised'.

Policy Aims

- o To ensure the school accounts for all children on a daily basis
- o To outline procedures and responsibilities
- o To ensure the school meets KHDA Bilo of Federal Law Article 47 and 48
- o To ensure parents and students are aware of the need for 'Outstanding' (≥98%) attendance, recognizing the link between attendance and achievement, and for 'Outstanding' (100%) punctuality.

Timings of the Day

Registration takes place each morning between 7:15am and 7:40am for all classes. **Registers close at 7:40am**, after the National Anthem at 7:35am. Children arriving after registers close are required to sign in as 'late' at Reception.

	Foundation Stage 1	Foundation Stage 2 to Year 6
Monday to Thursday	Drop-off: 07:15 – 07:40 Pick-up: 12:30	Drop-off: 07:15 – 07:40 Pick-up: 14:30 – 14:45
Friday	Drop-off: 07:15 – 07:40 Pick-up: 11:30 - 12:00	Drop-off: 07:15 – 07:40 Pick-up: 11:45 - 12:00

Attendance for all students is mandatory on all the days the school is declared open.

Daily Attendance Procedures

Daily recording of children's attendance is vitally important. It is essential to be aware of exactly who is in our care to ensure we can look after them should an emergency situation occur. The recording in detail of a child's absence is expected. As a school, we focus on being specific in our recording of not only when a child is in school, but why a child is not in school so we can find patterns and identify behaviours that can lead to interventions to help a child in their educational achievement.

- The daily registration period is between 07:15 and 07:40 and the information entered onto PHOENIX with appropriate codes (see attached).
- Parents are required to communicate with the school on days of absence.
- Unexplained absences are followed up immediately - **see First Response policy**.
- Any concerns about a child's attendance is dealt with, in the first instance, by the child's class teacher. If poor attendance persists, the information is passed onto the Head of Year/Department, who liaises with the Senior Leadership Team.

Requests for Leave

Families requesting leave from school **must** obtain **pre-approval** from the Principal – *Appendix 1*

Children will not be permitted to leave school during the school day, unless in an emergency. All appointments should be made outside of the school day or during holidays. If time is required in the school day, i.e. a child will arrive late or needs to be collected before the official end of the day because of an appointment that cannot be rescheduled, a Leave of Absence Form (Appendix 1), along with proof of the appointment/reason for leave, will need to be submitted to the Principal, in advance of the leave.

To safeguard our children and ensure learning is not disrupted, access to children during the school day is not permitted.

KHDA Parent Agreement

Students' absenteeism and tardiness affect not only the achievements of consistently absent or late students but also disrupts the learning experiences of other students in the school and negatively impacts the school's ability to provide effective educational services.

Likewise, the attendance of teachers is imperative to securing continuous and progressive learning experiences for all students at the school. The school will secure and improve teachers' attendance at all times and ensure that students are not left without a qualified teacher for long durations of time.

Parents, the students and the school must work together to improve and maintain high attendance rates.

As outlined in the KHDA Parent-School Contract, the responsibilities of parents include:

- Reading, ratifying and implementing the school's policy on attendance and punctuality.
- Promoting their child's attendance and punctuality and abiding by the timings set by the school for the start and the end of the school day.
- Understanding and upholding the school's policy which states that continued tardiness and absenteeism will result in disciplinary measures and will affect the students' chances of enrolment for the upcoming academic year.

In case of repeated tardiness and absenteeism, the KHDA state the following:

Offence	Frequency	Implications
Tardiness – this refers to being late in coming to school at the start of the school day and to instances of being late to lessons within the school day	The first five (5) incidents of tardiness in a short period of time such as a month or academic term	Written warning to student and notify parents. Tardiness will be noted in the students' progress report.
	Up to an additional three (3) instances of tardiness in a short period of time, such as a month	Parents and student to be called to a meeting with the principal or a designated person by the principal. Parents and student to sign a written pledge not to repeat the offence. Tardiness to be noted in students' progress report.
	Any additional incidents to the above	At the discretion of the school, decision might include one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community hours at the school or beyond. • Detention during school break or after school hours. • Temporary suspension for up to three days where the student will receive a "zero" on any test administered during suspension days. • A written notice announcing refusal to re-enroll the student in the school for the following academic year.
Absenteeism – this refers to frequent or habitual absence from school or from lessons without a valid medical or family related excuse.	The four (4) incidents of absenteeism in a short period of time such as a month or academic term	Written warning to student and notify parents. Absent days will be noted in the students' progress report.
	Up to an additional three (3) instances of absenteeism in a short period of time	Parents and student to be called to a meeting with the principal or a designated person by the principal. Parents and student to sign a written pledge not to repeat the offence. Absent days to be noted in students' progress report.
	Any additional incidents to the above	At the discretion of the school, decision might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community hours at the school or beyond. • Detention. • Temporary suspension for up to three days where the student will receive a "zero" on any test administered during suspension days. • A written notice announcing refusal to re-enroll the student in the school for the following academic year.

These decisions are endorsed by KHDA and consequences resulting from continued tardiness and absenteeism will be upheld by the Authority.

Monitoring of Patterns and Repeated Absence

- Absence is monitored by class teachers, in the first instance. Parents will be contacted by their child's class teacher if there is a concern.
- If poor attendance persists, the class teacher will inform the Head of Year, who will liaise with the Phase Leader then the Senior Leadership Team. Parents may be required to meet with the Principal or other member of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss their child's attendance.
- Where needed, the school will offer support to families and students via the Wellbeing team to ensure attendance remains at 'Outstanding'.
- If necessary, the Principal, in conjunction with GEMS School Support Centre, will follow Article 48 of the Bilo and can expel a student who is absent from school for no reason or for unacceptable reasons for 20 consecutive days or 25 non-consecutive days.

GEMS JPS School Attendance Options and Systems

- o Present
 - o Absent
 - o Illness
 - o Late School Transport
 - o Late Parent/Guardian
 - o Medical Appointment
 - o Time Away From School
 - o Educational Offsite Visit
 - o Exclusion/Suspension
 - o School Closed to Pupils
 - o Digital Learning (COVID)
 - o Authorised Leave
 - o Unauthorised Leave
- It is expected that the person responsible for registering students, according to the school's policy, will input the data using the Phoenix module. They will fill in the attendance form with their best knowledge.
- If 'Absence' is recorded, the school admin team or person responsible for following up will investigate the reason for this. This will be a phone call to parents – see First Response Policy.
- Once the reason for an absence has been established, the correct alternative code can be inserted to ensure the school has an accurate record of the student's attendance patterns. Monitoring these patterns may well identify if there is any need to consult parents or other school services to address any issues.
- In certain cases, the child will not be on the school premises, but will be recorded as present in the system. This is in cases where the student is participating in school-organised events or curriculum events, such as a sports competition. This is to recognise that the student is not absent from the educational programme and therefore they can be counted in overall student attendance figures required by the authorities. These are clearly identified in this document.
- All staff who have the responsibility to record the attendance of students during the school year are made aware of the content of this document and receive guidance, if necessary.
- JPS ensures that this policy on authorised and unauthorised absence reflects the current educational laws.

Codes Explained

Basic Set

- **Present** - The child is in the registration session and verified by a teacher or person responsible for taking the register. *This will automatically be entered into the Phoenix system if left blank.*
- **Absent without reason (unauthorised)** – Front of House team member makes a phone call home and the result of this call is recorded and fed back to the teacher. The teacher will then select the appropriate absence response.

Advanced Set

These are used to identify why a student is not present during a registration period. The school must do what is necessary to provide an accurate picture of the student's attendance and absence profile. Using these codes will facilitate this mandate and meet the requirements of the authorities and external inspection.

- **Late – School Transport** – School Transport Responsibility - This refers to a child arriving late to school because of an issue with the school bus provider. This could be because of traffic, a break down or student pick-up procedures. Identification of this will enable the school to address problems with the provider. *Once entered, the system counts child as present*
- **Late - Parent/Guardian** - This covers a range of reasons why the student arrives to school late because of personal/family reasons. These reasons could include a range of events, such as:
 - o traffic
 - o sleep in
 - o car breakdown
 - o missed bus and parents dropping student

These are not pre-authorised and are not known to the school until after the event occurs. The school is informed of the reason during or after the registration period. This could be through the parent/ guardian/ student informing the school on arrival or by phone, or through the school contacting the parent/guardian to discover the reason for absence/lateness. *Once entered, the system counts the child as present.*

- **Illness** - The student is too ill to be in school. This is valid if the parents have informed the school or the school has had to contact the parents. In each case, the parents must be made aware that they must contact the school to inform the school of when the student will return in advance. 'Illness' will be selected by the person recording attendance each time until informed of the student's return date. This avoids the school contacting parents each day a student is concurrently ill. Parents will only be contacted again if the student fails to show up on the date the school has been notified of by the parents. *The system counts the child as absent.*
- **Medical Appointment** - The student is not present during the registration period in the morning or the afternoon. This is valid if the parents have informed the school or the school has had to contact the parents. In each case, the parents must be made aware that they must clearly inform the school of when they expect the student to return to school. This is important to make staff aware that a pupil may return during a session. When the child returns, they must sign in using the school's system to ensure they become a part of the fire safety/emergency procedures regarding pupils/personnel who legitimately leave the premises for a period. The signing in/out sheet must be taken to the meeting point in case of an emergency. *The system counts the child as absent if the child is present during the registration period but the school knows the student will be leaving the premises later to go to a medical appointment.* It is very important to note that the child is present and should be marked accordingly. When the child leaves the school premises at the appointed time, they will sign out using the school's system and will therefore become a part of the fire safety/emergency procedures regarding pupils/personnel who legitimately leave the premises for a period. The school must have been informed of the medical appointment beforehand.

- **Time Away From School for Personal Reasons** (not medically related & authorised) - This could be used to identify a religious observance or an educational/musical/sporting examination arranged privately. This option is only used when the school is made aware of the absence and has sanctioned it. If it is not pre-arranged and agreed to by the school, it is marked as 'Unauthorized'. The importance in this distinction is to ensure school has done the necessary to ensure students are able to receive their educational entitlement. This will identify parents who remove their children for large parts of the school year or, in particular, the last month of the final term. A reasonable request would be to be absent for a week away from school only, however each request needs to be taken on a case-by-case basis and sanctioned by appointed personnel only. *The system counts the child as absent.*
- **Educational Off-Site Visit** - This denotes a school-organised off-site educational visit, including participation in school sporting/residential stays/cultural fixtures, in which the student is not present during the registration period. If the child leaves the school premises after a registration period, they must be signed out according to the school's system to ensure they become a part of the fire safety/emergency procedures regarding pupils/personnel who legitimately leave the premises for a period. *The system counts the child as present* (staff must be aware that the student will not be on the premises for fire/emergency reasons).
- **Exclusion/Suspension** - This is specifically for a school-mandated student suspension only. This could be related to inappropriate behaviour or non-payment of fee issues and has been addressed with the parents of the child involved. *The system counts the child as present for inspection/authority purposes* (staff must be aware that the student will not be on the premises for fire/emergency reasons). A student given a permanent exclusion will be removed from the register at the point of exclusion and will no longer be visible for registration purposes.

Emergency Set

- **School Closed to Pupils** - This is to record an emergency closure of the school. This could be because of authority mandate, public mourning, damage to the school from weather/fire, etc. or another factor/s outside the control of the school and its administration. *The system counts the child as present because the closure is beyond the student's/school's control.*

Summary

The only time a child is counted as absent for authority use is if they are:

- Ill
- Absent for a medical examination during a registration time
- Time away from school for personal reasons – not medically related
- Unknown reason and therefore unauthorized.

All other reasons can be attributed to an authorised absence from the school premises and are participating in sanctioned curricular activity. They are therefore counted as present for statistical purposes.

For consistency and accuracy for data presentation purposes, it is important that the content of this document becomes part of a new staff member's induction, if they are involved in recording attendance, and is reviewed with existing staff on a regular basis.

RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for implementing and maintaining accurate attendance records via Phoenix is with the Principal. Each school will determine individually on how to update the records.



Rachel Higgins

Principal/CEO

Appendix 1

JPS Student Leave of Absence Form

Before applying for leave during the school year, please be aware that:

- All time away from school (absence, illness, authorised leave, unauthorised leave) is officially reported on in End of Year school reports
- According to KHDA regulations, student attendance is rated the following:

UNSATISFACTORY	ACCEPTABLE	GOOD	OUTSTANDING
Less than 92%	92 – 95 %	96 – 97%	98 -100%
14 days or more absent per school year	9 – 14 days absent per school year	5 – 8 days absent per school year	4 days or less absent per school year

Date:	Student Name:	Class:
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Date of Requested Absence:

Start Date: _____ **End Date:** _____

Total number of school days to be missed: _____

Reason why an absence needs to be taken during term time: (to be completed in full)

Declaration – I understand that keeping my child off school for a longer time than agreed, without authorisation, will result in an Unauthorised Absence being recorded on my child's file.

Parent / Guardian Name: _____

Parent / Guardian Contact Number: _____

Signature: _____

Email address for notification of decision: _____

The following will be taken into consideration before authorisation is considered:

- Student's previous attendance history, including early pick-ups
- Age of student
- Nature of / reason for absence
- Whether or not parents are restricted by their employers re taking leave

School Use Only

Number of days absent so far:

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Details of previous leave requests: (no. of days, reason, authorised/unauthorised, date of return):

Authorised / Unauthorised

Principal Signature: _____

Class teachers will be advised and school registers will be updated accordingly.

Note: (If a student misses more than 20 consecutive or 25 non-consecutive days in a year, the school reserves the right to decline promotion to the next academic year group if the absences have affected their progress. All on-going absence, lateness or late pick-up issues will be reported to the **Dubai Police Al Ameen Childcare unit and KHDA.**)