



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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0.1	Attendance and Punctuality Policy	Final	Phase Leaders	Principal/Vice Principal	August 2024	August 2025
	Regional Director		Principal			Vice Principal
	Head of Foundation Stage		Head of Primary			Head of Secondary

Policy Statement:

Newlands School believes strongly in the importance of good attendance and its links to student attainment and progress, as well as developing a positive attitude towards learning. The school has high expectations of attendance for all students, whilst recognizing that there may be unavoidable circumstances which could cause a student to be absent or late.

Evidence shows that both lateness and poor attendance have a detrimental effect on a child's educational attainment and life chances. It may also make it more difficult for them to make firm social bonds with other children.

The National Foundation for Educational Research in the UK (www.nfer.ac.uk) has shown that there is a significant association between absence and attainment and that there is also evidence that there may be critical thresholds of absence linked to significantly lower performance outcomes. Furthermore, 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 also 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 education adviser, said that pursuing an education is the right of every child and this is supported by His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. AIMS

Parents are requested to inform the school about any absence, lateness or early leave in advance.

This policy allows Newlands School, to meet the obligations that are set out by the governing bodies to ensure the following:

- Ensuring that every student has access to full-time education
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Acting, where necessary, to address any patterns of absence

This policy also provides clear guidelines and support to our parents to ensure that they are aware of their duty in promoting regular and punctual attendance of their children.

Newlands School, in conjunction with the KHDA, is required to monitor all students' attendance, regardless of the age of child or year group and is expected to achieve targets of at least 98% attendance throughout the academic year.

1. GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential and therefore we expect children to attend school every day. The attendance for all children is monitored daily, with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained.

Each child's attendance is summarised in line with KHDA guidance as:

Outstanding Attendance is at least 98%

Very Good Attendance is at least 96%

Good Attendance is at least 94%

Acceptable Attendance is at least 92%

Weak Attendance is less than 92%

Very Weak Attendance is less than 90%

As there are typically 182 days in a school year, each day accounts for 0.55%. If a student has just 4 days off per term their attendance will be less than 94% (Good).

A student's non-attendance to school is classed as an absence regardless of whether it is authorised or unauthorised.

2. ABSENCE

Absences may be authorised or unauthorised. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will consider each application individually and the absence will only be authorised if the student is absent with permission from the Principal or Vice-principal.

When a child is absent, parents should contact the school before 07:30 am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence using the following channels:

- Telephone call to reception on 04 282 1200
- E-mail the class teacher or a message on Class Dojo/ E-praise

Absence recording:

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the Paradigm register. Teachers use different codes to show the nature of the absence on the register. In the event that the class teacher or the receptionist is not made aware of the reason for the absence, an Unauthorised code will be used. If communication from the parent is received to explain the absence after the day of absence, then the register will be amended appropriately.

As part of our safeguarding procedures, the school will endeavour to contact the parent, or other emergency contacts, if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence.

It is the responsibility of the parent / guardian to inform the school of each day of absence and whether the absence will extend to include more than one day.

3. AUTHORISED ABSENCE

An authorised absence requires prior permission from the Principal or Vice-principal. Parents should apply in advance to the Principal/SLT to request an authorised absence during the term. The Principal will consider the application based on the following:

- The age of the student
- The nature of the proposed absence
- The timing of the proposed absence
- The attendance pattern in the present and previous academic year
- Where attendance is lower than 96% or where the absence would take attendance below 96%
- The student's progress
- Any assessments and examinations occurring during the proposed absence period

As a first step, parents must contact the homeroom teacher/ tutor with their request for authorised absence. The Principal/ SLT will consider the request and if approved, the school will provide the parents with a written approval.

Absence may be authorised for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Illness:** from the third day of medical absence, parents should submit, by email to the school Reception, supporting medical documentation, which will then be shared with the School Clinic for their review and follow-up as appropriate. If your child is absent due to vomiting, then they should not return to school for the next 24 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.
- **Religious Observance:** the school respects all parties' rights to observe and celebrate religious occasions and follows Knowledge and Human Development Authority ("KHDA") guidance with respect to appropriately registering such absences.
- Family bereavement or wedding;
- Emergency holiday or other family leave - all other family holiday absences will be regarded as an unauthorised absence
- Educational activity or visit;
- Sports activity;
- **Medical Appointments:** parents are encouraged to make medical appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the student should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment;
- Unavoidable cause preventing the student from attending school.

4. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Absence not supported with a valid medical or family related excuse, that has not been communicated to the school or prior approval sought from the Principal will be categorised as 'unauthorised absence'. Unauthorised absences will be monitored and may be addressed with the parent/guardian.

If a student has more than 20 consecutive days or a total of 25 days unauthorised absence in an academic year, and the school reserves the right to review the student's re-enrolment for the next academic year.

5. EARLY PICKUPS

Should a student need to leave school before the end of the school day, parents are required to inform the school in advance either by email/telephone or Class Dojo/ E-praise. Parents are required to sign their child out with the reception staff prior to leaving. Parent lanyards must be worn for identification purposes. If a parent lanyard is not available then the parent will be required to provide a valid UAE ID at the security gate.

In the absence of prior notice being provided to both the teacher and the reception staff, parents will be required to wait in reception until a member of staff is available to fetch the child and bring them to reception.

6. MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. 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, where possible.

If the medical appointment is during the school day and the child comes to school before the appointment an early pickup request will need to be made directly to the teacher and the reception staff. This request needs to be made either by email/telephone or Class Dojo/ E-praise directly with the teacher. The teacher/teaching assistant will then make sure that the child is ready in reception by the agreed time requested by the parent.

Parents need to inform the class teacher and the school reception, by email/ Class Dojo/ E-praise should their child be absent due to a medical appointment i.e Dental / Doctor / Specialist.

7. LATE ARRIVALS

Students are required to arrive at school by the times identified in the School Handbook. Punctuality is a necessary trait that children need to acquire and therefore the school requests parents to support their children in arriving on time at the school and being collected on time at the end of the day.

Year Group	Arrival	Gates Close	End of School day	ECA End
EYFS	07:30-07:45	07:45	13:30	N/A
Year 1 – Year 12	07:15-07:30	07:30	14:30	15:20

A Student is deemed late if they arrive after 07:30 am. Students who arrive late must report to the staff member at the Main Reception. All Other access gates are closed at 07:30 am and late students will be redirected to the Main Reception where they will be recorded late on the school’s student management system (Paradigm).

A parent is deemed late to collect their child if they arrive after 3pm Monday – Thursday and after noon on a Friday. Parents should ensure all children are collected by 3:30pm at the latest on ECA days.

If a child is not collected by 12:30pm on a Friday, as per the parent-school contract, an approved fee of 80AED will be charged and added to the parent’s account.

The School will also take weather, significant traffic incidents, and any other extenuating circumstances into account when they occur and not register students that may be affected by them in the late register.

No bus students will be registered as late if they have travelled by bus to the school.

If students are late due to early morning appointments, parents may be required to send supporting evidence to the school’s Reception for recordkeeping.

8. MONITORING AND REPORTING

The school will, under the supervision of the Phase Leaders and the Pastoral Team, ensure that students’ attendance is closely monitored. Each case will be considered and analysed individually in regular attendance meetings; significant concerns will be reported to the Principal; and further appropriate actions will be taken to reduce absenteeism and tardiness.

The school is committed to maintaining regular communication with the parents, and to working alongside to ensure that students attend school regularly and on time.

Key members of staff have the following responsibilities:

- **Teachers** are responsible for completing attendance registers by using the school’s student management system (Paradigm) and sharing any relevant attendance-related information with the school Reception/ Attendance Officer, who will then ensure that the register has been completed correctly.
- **Reception / Pastoral Team** will act as the school attendance officers. They are responsible for monitoring and responding to student absences without notification, lateness and early leave by

following up daily with parents; updating the attendance module on Paradigm; requesting early leave approvals to the relevant Head of School where applicable; liaising with Teachers, the School Clinic and other stakeholders, as appropriate; drafting reports with relevant information for review by the Heads of School; participating in attendance meetings; and ensuring records are kept safely.

- **The School Nurse** is responsible for following up and monitoring the attendance of students with medical issues **after three days of absence**. This should include maintaining records of medical certificates and reporting back to the Heads of School and other key stakeholders, as appropriate.
- **The Principal** is responsible for authorising absence from the school, and reporting attendance information or concerns to the relative authorities and/or the KHDA as required.

9. ATTENDANCE LETTERS AND PROCEDURE

Attendance meetings will be held between relevant members of staff including (but not limited to) the Principal, Heads of Department, Phase Leaders, Pastoral staff and other key stakeholders, as appropriate, to discuss attendance and lateness issues; and to work towards developing and implementing strategies to improve attendance.

10. MANAGING LATENESS AND ABSENTEEISM

All Parents are required to sign a KHDA parent-school contract upon joining the school and have an obligation to adhere to the measures put in place with regards to attendance and punctuality. In managing lateness and absenteeism, the school will demonstrate sensitivity to the particular needs of Students of Determination and their parents.

Below is the implemented procedure for the management of lateness and absenteeism.

Frequency / Offence	Action /Implications to Parents
Unauthorised Absence	
First four (4) instances of absence within a term without a valid medical or family-related excuse. Trajectory of 93% annual attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Warning 1 - Notification sent to parents and students from the Pastoral Team to improve attendance. • Highlight concern for current report detailing % of late arrival and total days late. • Communicate KHDA requirements and school policy. • Communicate parental responsibility. • Implement any necessary support measures.
Additional three (3) instances within a term (total 7 absence days in a term). Trajectory of 88% annual attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Warning 2 - Serious concern letter sent to parents from Phase Head. • Parent notified and may be requested to attend a meeting • Written undertaking to be signed by a parent to improve attendance/ attendance improvement contract put in place.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement any necessary support measures. • Instances noted on student file and report.
Any further incidences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Warning 3 - Final written notice to announce re-enrollment risk if no improvements are made. • Meeting with the Principal or Vice-principal. • Relative authorities informed if appropriate.
Late Arrival	
<p>First five (5) instances of lateness within a term</p> <p>Trajectory of 92% punctuality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Warning 1 – Notification sent to parents and student from the Pastoral Team to improve punctuality. • Highlight concern for current report detailing % of late arrival and total days late. • Communicate KHDA requirements and school policy • Communicate parental responsibility • Implement any necessary support measures.
<p>Additional Three (3) Instances within a Term (total of 8 late days in a term).</p> <p>Trajectory of 87% punctuality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Warning 2 - Serious concern letter sent to parents from Phase Head. • Parent notified and may be called to a meeting • Written undertaking to be signed by a parent to improve on Punctuality/ punctuality improvement contract put in place. • Implement any necessary support measures. • Instances noted on student file and report.
Any further incidences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Warning 3 - Final written notice to announce re-enrollment risk if no improvements are made. • Meeting with the Principal or Vice-principal.

11. MODIFICATION OF SCHOOL TIMINGS

In certain circumstances, the Principal, upon the approval of the school’s Board, may modify school timings to meet the needs of particular students. This will be announced to parents through any suitable means of communication (e.g. school newsletters, email or the school’s parent portal).

When Students of Determination are on a part-time schedule or outreach placement, attendance targets will be set with the KHDA’s guidance.