

British Overseas School Policy:

Attendance



The Aim of the Policy

At the British Overseas School we expect students to be at school and in their classes when required. The aim of the Attendance Policy is to give students, parents and staff a clear indication of the importance that the Board of Governors and senior management place on school attendance and punctuality as fundamental requirements of an effective and meaningful education for each student.

The correlation between school attendance and educational success is irrefutable. This applies not only to academic work but also to the moral, social, psychological and physical development of our pupils. The school has adopted the following policy with these principal aims:

1. To ensure that pupils derive the maximum benefit from the school's curriculum and extra-curricular activities and that they are given the opportunity to develop their full potential..
2. To ensure that all pupils receive equal treatment and equal opportunities and that they are not disadvantaged through others' absences.
3. To minimise disruption to the work of the teachers and other pupils and ensure that teachers are able to progress through the programmes of teaching, assessment and revision at the appropriate rate.
4. To foster self-discipline and a sense of autonomy in our pupils.
5. To inculcate sound working practices and attitudes for later life and to develop responsible social behaviour, in particular, to ensure that pupils become punctual, reliable, considerate and courteous higher education pupils and employees.
6. To prevent pupils cheating and gaining an advantage over other pupils by taking additional time off to complete coursework and other assessment requirements.
7. To ensure that all pupils participate in and contribute to the wider life of the school and to ensure that they do not become isolated or unconnected to the ethos of the school through non-attendance at whole-school activities and events, sports days, beginning & end of term events etc.
8. To combat simple truancy.

The School distinguishes between two types of absence:

Authorised absence:

This is an absence accepted as legitimate by the school and recorded as an authorised absence in the attendance register. The following reasons for failure to attend lessons may be treated as authorised absences:

1. sickness or any unavoidable cause;
2. a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his or her parents belong;
3. school trips locally or abroad; other school events or competitions requiring leave from lessons;
4. external circumstances in which the parents believe the student's health is at risk by attending school;
5. leave granted by the Principal or by his/her authorised deputy.

Unauthorised absence:

This is an absence not authorised by the Principal, or his/her authorised deputy, which will be recorded as such in the school's attendance registers.

The school cannot prevent parents from withdrawing their children from school sessions but is under no obligation to accept a simple expression of parental wishes as constituting authority for absence. The recording of an absence as authorised or unauthorised is at the discretion of the Principal or his/her authorised deputy.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of the types of absences which will be, or are likely to be, recorded as *unauthorised*:

1. extensions of family holidays at the beginnings and ends of terms or extensions of half-term breaks and other short closures;
2. family holidays in the middle of a term or half-term;
3. early departures for summer camps or other such leisure activities;
4. family occasions which could be arranged within school holiday times;
5. birthday parties and similar family celebrations which could be held at the weekend before or after the anniversary;
6. accompanying siblings or other family members on non-essential or non-emergency trips or outings;
7. trips deemed 'educational' by parents but not accepted as being so by the school;
8. other types of absence the Principal deems to be non-essential or to be avoidable.

Truancy and wilful absence from school activities is automatically unauthorised absence. The school is obliged to report the total percentage of unauthorised absences in all reports, references (such as those required by universities and other schools).

All absence and punctuality data is reported to Head of Secondary on a fortnightly basis. Severe cases are reported earlier.

It is not the School's policy to provide additional material for children who are absent from school.

Parental Procedures in the Case of Child/Student Absence

- a) **Inform:** On days when a child/student is absent, their parents or guardian must ring the office, between 07:30 and 8am, to inform the School of the absence and the reason for it. Upon their return, the student must bring a letter from their parents.
- b) **SMS notification of absence:** By the end of first break each day a school administration officer will call the parents of any child/student who is absent asking that they provide a note to explain the absence. We do this to ensure parents are aware that their children are not at school.
- c) **Planned absences:** Where parents can foresee an absence, parents should apply in writing to the Principal through the relevant Form Tutor, Class Teacher or the Principal's PA. The specific nature of the absence and some explanation to support the application is necessary. The application will be considered on its merits and authorised or not as the case may be.
- d) **Unforeseen absences:** In instances where absences are unforeseen (e.g. illness, accident, etc.), the school must receive an explanatory note from the parents upon the pupils return to school or within three days – whichever is sooner. The note will certify their absence and, for the purposes of our records, giving a brief explanation of the reasons for the absence. The school will treat all parental notes with due regard and respect but is under no obligation to accept a note as the basis for recording an absence as authorised. *The school reserves the right to ask for further information or for medical certificates to support the note where this would be helpful.* Absences which are not covered by a valid note and/or medical certificate will sit on the record as unauthorised absences.

If a student's attendance falls below 95%, parents will be contacted via a letter/email to express concern. If there is no subsequent improvement or if the attendance figure is below 90% *for any reason*, at the first attendance check of the year, parents will be asked to attend a meeting with relevant member of the senior leadership team to discuss this and to try and rectify the situation. In cases where no improvement is seen, the student's position at the school will be reviewed by the Principal and the pupil **may lose their place at the school.**

In the case of a student losing their place at the school, parents may appeal the

decision, in writing, to the Board of Governor's Disciplinary Committee within three days of the decision – submitting their justifications for the absences. The Committee will issue a decision on the appeal within three days of receipt of the appeal. During this process the student will be suspended from school. Only if the Committee accepts the parents' submission as reasonable will the student regain their place at the school.

If the decision to exclude the student from the school is upheld, the student will not be entered for, or will be withdrawn from, public examinations. They will not be eligible for a school "graduation certificate". Should the child lose their place at the school, there will not be any refund of tuition or examination fees.

Poor attendance could result in a loss of privileges and impact participation in school activities and trips.

Failure to Inform

Absence for more than five days without adequate explanation, even after a written request, may result in the student being considered to have been **withdrawn from the School**. The pupil may be re-admitted, at the Principal's discretion, only if the absence is later justified and if there was an acceptable reason for not informing the School. Re-admission will also depend on the availability of a school space.