



# **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

September 2024

## Introduction

Every opportunity at Royal Grammar School Guildford Dubai is a learning opportunity, from the first step taken into school each morning and beyond. Parents and all staff at RGSGD must work in partnership to ensure that children (unless ill) are present and on time to experience, have fun and thrive in every aspect of school life. At RGSGD it is our expectation that children attend all school days throughout the year, and we will work with parents to ensure their full understanding and support of this.

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 odd day off here and there soon mounts up, as does late arrival resulting in missing lesson time in the morning, and these have a significant impact on learning.

The National Foundation for Educational Research in the UK ([www.nfer.ac.uk](http://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 and endorsed 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 DSIB guidelines for attendance are as follows:

Attendance %	DSIB guideline
≤ 98%	Outstanding
96 – 97%	Very Good
94 – 95%	Good
92 – 93%	Acceptable
90 – 91%	Weak
≥ 90%	Very Weak

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.

Therefore, all parents should ensure that their child is at school on time every day of the school year except for during a period of illness. The reason for an absence must always be communicated to the school.

## Aims of this attendance and punctuality policy

- To improve the overall percentage attendance to **98%** for all pupils at school.
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the School including pupils, parents, teachers, and governors.
- To provide support, advice, and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.
- The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.

## What do parents need to do if a child is sick?

- If a child is sick, parents should email the absence team at [absent@rgsgd.com](mailto:absent@rgsgd.com) to explain the absence before 8 am.
- Alternatively, parents may call the school by 8 am on 04 446 4333 and select option 5 to leave a message giving the reason for their child's absence.
- After 48 hours of absence a sick note from the Doctor or prescription confirming diagnosis is required. Absences of more than 48 hours without the support of a sick note will be marked as unauthorised.

\*Covid-19: If your child displays any symptoms related to Covid-19, must follow the DHA quarantine period. For further information, see the DHA guidance documents.

## Marking the register

- It is the Class Teachers' or Tutors' professional responsibility to accurately record daily attendance by filling in the electronic register, using the appropriate registration codes at the beginning of each day, by 7:50 am. The register must then be saved and closed.
- No child should be left unregistered at 7.50 am. All children should be marked as present or absent, even if the reason is unknown.
- The following attendance codes should be followed:

iSAMs Attendance Codes	Code Explanation
N	No Reason Yet Provided For Absence [N]
I	Illness with a note (approved)
M	Medical/dental appointment
G	Family Holiday (Not agreed)
L	Illness with no approved note
Q	COVID close contact- isolation/absent (Office to mark OOS)
R	Religious observance (approved)
V	Educational visit or trip (Office to mark OOS)

- If we have been notified by the parent their child is sick – "I – an illness with a note (approved)" will be used. This applies for two days.

- If the child is still away after two days but no sick note is received – the code “L – an illness with no approved note”. The Class Teacher must then email the parent to remind them that a doctor’s note is required.
- Absences due to medical/dental appointments or for religious observances are marked as such.
- If a child is absent from school but able to work, for example, due to a KHDA directive or option to study from home, that child will be marked as present and the “DL-distance learning” option will be recorded.
- If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, Reception will contact a parent via telephone, to ascertain the reason for their child’s absence and will record it on iSAMs.

### **Punctuality**

- William Shakespeare famously said, “Better three hours soon than a minute late”, implying that one would rather be early and wait than be late. The importance of punctuality, if taught to children at a young age, will help them in the long run. From self-confidence to better preparedness in academics.
- All children should enter the school at the designated drop-off points at the designated times as set out below:

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Early Bird Timing: Must be pre-booked via SOCS</b>	<b>School Arrival Timing</b>
EYFS	7:00am to 7:30am	7:30am – 7:50am
Years 1 and 2	7:00am to 7:30am	7:30am – 7:50am
Years 3 and 4	7:00am to 7:30am	7:30am – 7:50am
Years 5 and 6	7:00am to 7:30am	7:30am – 7:50am
Year 7	7:00am to 7:30am	7:30am – 7:50am

- All gates will be closed at 7:50 am following the National Anthem and children arriving after this time will be marked as late.
- If a child is persistently late (10 or more occasions) the parents will be contacted by the class teacher and receive a formal letter informing them of the school’s concerns. If lateness continues, then the parents will be invited to meet with the Assistant Head Teacher or Deputy Head for the phase.
- The gates at the Early Years and Prep entrance are locked at 7.50 am. So, children arriving at school after this time should enter by Gate 1 and register at the main reception before going to class. Children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 will be escorted to class by our designated carers.
- If KS2 or KS3 children arrive after 7:50 am they will be marked in by the main reception and reminded about where their class is.
- Children sign in at reception and take a yellow “signed in” slip with them to class and give this to their class/subject teacher. The additional layer ensures both reception and the class teacher are monitoring the children who are present.

### **Monitoring attendance:**

- Registers are updated as parents' email or ring-in with sickness information.
- All emails or messages received from parents explaining reasons for absence will be forwarded by the absence team to the teacher and the clinic team where appropriate.
- Where no reason for absence has been given, the absence team will ring the parents of absent children and update the registers.
- Deputy Head and AHT will monitor attendance and Class Teachers and Tutors will be vigilant with regard to poor attendance and/or punctuality and follow up with parents to discuss concerns where necessary.
- The bus registers for buses arriving after the close of class registers will be passed to the absence team for them to update the school attendance register.

### **Procedure for Managing Pupil Absence and Lateness at RGSGD**

- Episodes of persistent lateness and absence will be managed as follows:

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- When this procedure is followed records will be kept of all communications so that if a case needs to be escalated to the KHDA there is an evidence trail of what the school has done to encourage punctuality and attendance.
- This documentation includes emails, meeting notes and signed pledges which should also be made available, along with the attendance record from iSAMs, whenever a meeting takes place.
- Such documentation should also be uploaded to the child's iSAMS record for future reference. (Copies of the Meeting record sheet and the pledge are in TEAMS - Attendance and Punctuality).

### **Holiday Absence**

- Parents should make every effort to book all family holidays during the KHDA-approved school holidays. Given the large expat community, it is understood that there may be times when it is unavoidable to book a holiday during term time.
- Family holidays during term time must be notified to the principal via francesca.balderson@rgsgd.com and will be recorded as "G - family holiday (not agreed)".

### **3 Day Absence without Contact**

- When children are absent from school for 3 days or more without contact and the parents have not responded to phone calls or emails, the absence team and Class Teacher or Tutor will escalate to the AHT.

- In turn they will inform the Principal who is required to email KHDA to notify them that parents have not made the school aware of the reason for absence. KHDA will contact the parents directly and Child Protection may be contacted.

### **Children leaving school early**

- If parents collect their children early from school, they must complete the “Early Leavers” book at reception before their child will be collected from the classroom or clinic by a member of admin staff. As the child is handed over to the parent by the reception team, parents will be given an exit pass to hand to the guard on leaving the premises.
- If the child normally uses the bus, Reception must inform the bus coordinator that the child has gone home.
- Details of children going home early are recorded in the “Early Leavers” Book, kept at the front desk, before being transferred to the ISAMS register. This register is then analysed at the end of each month by the reception staff and any child regularly missing time will be notified to the child’s Class teach / Form Tutor.

### **Late Pickups**

- All children should be collected at the designated collection points at the designated times as set out below for Monday to Thursday:

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>School Departure Time</b>	<b>ECA collection time</b>
EYFS	2.00 – 2.15pm	3.00pm
Years 1 and 2	2.45pm – 3.00pm	3.45pm
Years 3 and 4	3.30pm – 3.45pm	4.30pm
Years 5 and 6	3.30pm – 3.45pm	4.30pm
Year 7	3.30pm – 3.45pm	4.30pm

- Children not collected 10 minutes after the designated pick-up time at the end of school day will be taken to After School Care (ASC) and the child’s parents called by Reception to collect them from ASC by calling the relevant number.
- EYFS and Year 1 and 2 children not collected at the designated pick-up time at the end of ECAs will be taken to (ASC) and the child’s parents will be called by Reception to collect them from ASC by calling the relevant number.
- ASC numbers are as follows:
  - 0523 350 9115 (FS1)
  - 058 217 9154 (FS2)
  - 052 425 7196 (Year 1 & 2)
  - 052 374 3606
- Children not collected at 4.30pm from the designated pick-up at the end of ASC/ECAs will be taken to reception and the child’s parents will be called by reception to collect them from reception.

- Persistent late collections will mean the parent will be contacted by the AHT to discuss our concerns.
- If children still remain after 5:00pm, and we are not able to contact the parents or carer, the police may be phoned.

### **Rewarding attendance**

- RGSGD also believes pupils should be rewarded for Very good and Outstanding attendance.
- Each week the attendance for all classes will be monitored and the class or tutor group with the best attendance in that year group will receive a certificate.
- At the end of each term pupils with 100% attendance will also receive a certificate and all those pupils with 100% attendance at the end of the Year will be rewarded.

**Review date:** September 2026

## Letters examples

To the parents of

10 DAYS ABSENCE.

At Royal Grammar School Guildford Dubai, we do our utmost to ensure children in our care are given every opportunity to succeed.

Good attendance habits start at an early age. At RGS GD we ask for your support to ensure your child goes to school regularly and on time. This helps them develop a positive view of school and the importance of attendance.

Your child has been recorded as having had ten or more days absent this academic year. We understand that there are times when such absences are unavoidable. However, as a school we also have a responsibility to work closely with families to ensure that children's attendance is as close to 100% as possible. The school attendance records are monitored annually during the KHDA inspection.

We would be extremely grateful if you could ensure that xxxxx attends as regularly as possible from now on and we are here to support this if you need a meeting.

Please note that 15 days' absence in a year may trigger a meeting with xxxx (Class Teacher) and or xxxx (Head of Year x).

Thank you, as always, for your understanding and support in this matter. If you have any further queries, please contact your child's teacher directly.

Kind Regards

XXXX

Class Teacher / Tutor



To the parents of

15 DAYS ABSENCE.

At Royal Grammar School Guildford Dubai, we do our utmost to ensure children in our care are given every opportunity to succeed.

Good attendance habits start at an early age. At RGS GD we ask for your support to ensure your child goes to school regularly and on time. This helps them develop a positive view of school and the importance of attendance.

Evidence shows that poor attendance has 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.

Furthermore, we are supported in this 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.'

Xxxx (name of child) has been recorded as having had fifteen or more days absent this academic year. We understand that there are times when such absences are unavoidable. However, as a school we also have a responsibility to work closely with families to ensure that children's attendance is as close to 100% as possible.

Because of our concerns about xxxx attendance we will contact you at the start of next week to arrange a meeting to discuss the situation with myself and xxxxxx (Class Teacher).

It is extremely important that you attend this meeting and also ensure that Xxxx (name of child) attends as regularly as possible from now on.

Kind Regards

XXXX

Assistant Head Teacher or Year 7 Progress Lead

To the parents of

20 DAYS ABSENCE.

At Royal Grammar School Guildford Dubai, we take the issue of children's attendance extremely seriously. Evidence shows that poor attendance has 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.

Furthermore, we are supported in this 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.'

Xxxx (name of child) has been recorded as having had twenty or more days absent this academic year. We understand that there are times when such absences are unavoidable. However, as a school we also have a responsibility to work closely with families to ensure that children's attendance is as close to 100% as possible.

Because of our concerns about Xxxx (name of child) attendance I would like to arrange a meeting to discuss this situation.

It is extremely important that you attend this meeting and also ensure that Xxxx (name of child) attends as regularly as possible from now on.

Kind Regards

XXXXXX

Deputy Head of Prep or Deputy Head Senior

To the parents of

#### 25 DAYS ABSENCE

At Royal Grammar School Guildford Dubai, we take the issue of children's attendance extremely seriously. Evidence shows that poor attendance has 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.

Furthermore, we are supported in this 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.'

Your child has been recorded as having had 25 or more days when they have been absent from school. As this is now having a direct impact on the progress of your child's learning it has been raised as a concern.

I am contacting you because of our concerns about xxxx attendance would like to arrange a meeting with me to discuss this situation.

We understand that there are times when such absences are unavoidable, however as a school we also have a responsibility to work closely with families to ensure that children's attendance is as close to 100% as possible.

It is extremely important that you attend this meeting and also ensure that xxxxxx attends as regularly as possible from now on.

Kind Regards

Principal