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# **Kassim Darwish Grammar School for Boys**

## **Attendance Policy**

## **SECTION 1: ATTENDANCE**

### **Aims of Policy:**

- To ensure that the school follows the regulations and guidance from the Department for Education, Schools and Families (DfE) for recording attendance and punctuality.
- To outline the procedures to a) accurately record and monitor the attendance and punctuality of students, b) act early to address patterns of absence.
- To outline the strategies and systems used to reinforce the school's expectation for all students to achieve a good attendance record of at least 95% and are punctual to their lessons.

### **Key Principles:**

#### **School**

It is a legal responsibility for the school to:

- Record absences and late arrivals on a student's annual report,
- Inform the Local Education Authority if a student does not attend regularly.
- The school will inform the appropriate Local Education Authority if:
  - A student has a low attendance of **85% or below**, or
  - A student has been absent without authorisation from the school for ten or more school days consecutively.
- The school will liaise with outside agencies, such as the Education Welfare Service, as required in order to ensure that all students attend school regularly.
- The school will communicate to parents its expectation with regards to student attendance regularly.
- Students will be encouraged to strive for high levels of attendance by using the Rewards Systems:
  - Certificate and House points awarded to individual students who have 100% attendance each term,
  - Certificate awarded to the form with the highest levels of attendance each term,
  - An entitlement to the annual rewards trip 'free of charge' for any student who has 100% for the whole academic year.
- All students are expected to stay on the school premises during break and lunchtimes.

## **Parents**

It is a legal responsibility on parents to ensure that their child attends school regularly (Section 7, Education Act 1996).

**Parents are advised NOT to make non-emergency medical and dental appointments during school hours.**

**Parents are advised to make holiday arrangements within the school holiday periods.**

## **Attendance Registers**

- A register will be taken at the following times of the school day:
  - Morning (1<sup>st</sup> session) and afternoon (2<sup>nd</sup> session) by the **form tutor**
  - At the beginning of each lesson by the **subject teacher**
- Once an unexplained or unexpected absence is followed up (see section d) and the reason is established, the register will be amended by the Attendance Officer using the appropriate code.
- It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to ensure that all registers are completed fully and accurately. They will be checked on a daily basis and the Attendance Officer will act immediately upon any unexplained absence.
- Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for a period of **three years** after the date on which the entry was made.

## **School's Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance**

### a) **Definition of an Authorised Absence**

An 'authorised absence' is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student to be absent, or the school has accepted an explanation offered afterwards by parents as satisfactory justification.

- Acceptable reasons for absence are usually limited to illness or bereavement.
- It is the decision of the school as to whether an explanation for an absence is satisfactory or not.

### b) **Reporting an Absence – First Day Contact**

The purpose of the 'First Day Contact' is to:

- Enable parents to inform the school at the earliest opportunity that their child is unable to attend school, the reason for this and the expected date of return.
- Enable the school to contact parents to notify them that their child has not arrived to school.
- Registers will be checked by the 'Attendance Officer' **no later than 9.30am** and students who are 'first day absent' will be identified.
- If the parents of a student who is 'first day absent' have not already contacted the school, the Attendance Officer will contact the parents via telephone on the **same day by**

**10.00am.** If contact has been unsuccessful, a text message and/or email will be sent to the parents requesting them to call the school immediately to explain their child's absence.

- **An absence will remain unauthorised until a valid explanation provided by the parents has been accepted by the school.**
- If a student arrives in school **after 9:30am**, he will be recorded as absent for the morning session. The only exceptions are travel disruption due to an accident or severe weather conditions.

c) **Record of Communication with Parents In Relation to Absences**

- For the complete duration of absence, parents are required to provide a valid explanation. This can be given in the following ways:
  - Telephone the school office.
  - Email the school office.
- An appointment letter for medical or dental treatment should be shown to the Form Tutor or a member of the office staff **in advance**.
- A letter inviting a student to an interview or an assessment linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment should be shown to the Form Tutor or a member of the office staff **in advance**.
- On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of a student **returning** to school after an absence, the Attendance Officer will inform the Head of Year if an explanation for his absence has still not been provided to the school.

d) **Following Up Absences**

<b>Day of Absence:</b>	<b>Follow Up:</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> day</b>	<p>If parents have not already contacted the school, a member of the office staff will contact the parents via telephone on the <b>same day by 10.00am</b>.</p> <p>If contact has been unsuccessful, a text message and/or email will be sent to the parents requesting them to call the school immediately to explain their child's absence.</p>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> day</b>	<p>If the student is absent for <b>2 days</b> and the office has failed to contact parents, then the Attendance Officer will inform the Head of Year.</p> <p>The Head of Year will send a letter to parents (by recorded delivery) urging them to notify the school of the reason for their child's absence.</p> <p>If the parents have still not contacted the school <b>within three school days</b> on the date of the letter, the Attendance Officer will inform the Head of Year and the Head teacher.</p>
<b>11<sup>th</sup> day</b>	<p>If the school has NOT been able to trace the child after <b>10 days</b>, the Attendance Officer will notify the CME (Children Missing Education) department of the local authority.</p> <p>The Head Teacher will send a second letter to parents (by recorded delivery) urging them to notify the school of the reason for their child's absence.</p> <p>If the parents have still not contacted the school <b>within two school days</b> on the date of the letter, the student may be <b>removed from the school's admissions register</b>.</p>
<b>20<sup>th</sup> day</b>	<p>If the school has NOT been able to trace the child after <b>20 days</b>, then the school will <b>remove the child's name from its roll on the 21<sup>st</sup> day</b>.</p> <p>The Attendance Officer will report the student to the CME (Children Missing Education) department of the local authority as "missing."</p>

e) **Safeguarding Concerns**

If school staff have any safeguarding concerns regarding a student's absence, particularly on repeated occasions, then the school's normal safeguarding procedures must be followed (See 'Safeguarding Policy'). They should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual student to decide as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

f) **Medical or Dental Appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment will be recorded as an 'authorised absence.' In cases where it is not possible for parents to make appointments out of school hours, students should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

**To take the rest of the day off, before or after a dental appointment, will NOT be accepted as a valid explanation for an absence**

g) **Prolonged Absences**

- If a student is absent for **ten or more consecutive days** due to a health related issue, the parent must provide the school with medical evidence. This can take the form of doctor's notes, prescriptions or appointment cards.
- For a prolonged absence of **ten or more consecutive days** due to a medical reason or bereavement, the Head of Year will liaise with subject teachers to support the student and ensure that he is able to catch up with any missed work. He will also be provided with any other information, such as a trip letter, which was shared with students and/or parents during his absence.

h) **Attendance which is a Cause for Concern**

A student's attendance record may be identified as a **cause for concern** if:

- Absence on a particular day of the week is **repeated** on a regular basis.
- Several days of absence due to medical appointments in cases where the school has not been informed of any particular health condition of the student.
- Student fails to return to school at the end of an 'authorised' leave of absence.
- Student goes on holiday **without** gaining school permission.
- Student's attendance falls below 95%.
- For any of the above circumstances, the school will communicate with the parents to raise these concerns. Following this, significant improvements in the child's attendance record will be expected to be made and this will be monitored by the Head of Year.
- If the student's attendance remains a cause for concern, then the parents will be invited to a meeting with the Head of Year to discuss the matter.
- If the student's attendance does not improve significantly despite the school's repeated attempts to address this concern, then the parents may be asked to withdraw their child from the school. This is at the Executive Head Teachers discretion.
- The school will work in partnership with external support agencies by providing relevant information, in accordance with current data protection regulations, to support families where there are serious concerns regarding attendance.

i) **Unauthorised Absence**

An 'unauthorised absence' is where the school is **not** satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

An absence is classified as 'unauthorised' in the following cases:

- The school has not given prior approval for the absence,
- The school has not been provided with an explanation for the absence,
- The school has not been satisfied with the explanation given for the absence,

- A student takes leave of absence without obtaining prior approval from the school. This may be due to the request being declined or due to failure to follow the school's procedures for submitting a request for leave of absence,
- A student fails to return to school on the date agreed by the Head teacher and so is kept away longer than was authorised. This includes an extension/excess of an authorised holiday period.

j) **Truancy**

Truancy from school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and will also warrant a sanction of a serious nature (see 'Behaviour & Discipline Policy').

Truancy includes a student failing to attend a lesson without the **prior** permission of the teacher or if a student leaves the school site at any point of the school day without prior authorisation from the school.

k) **Risk Assessments**

A **risk assessment** will be carried out for any student who returns to school after a prolonged period of absence due to ill health.

l) **Infectious Illnesses**

All cases of infectious illness in the home should be reported to the school immediately by telephone to allow school to make a decision on whether to inform other parents of the risk, should there be more than three cases in school.

If a student has been absent with an infectious illness, parents should send in a medical certificate on his return. This should state the nature of the illness and it should certify that the student is free from the infection.

m) **Application for Leave of Absence Due To Exceptional Circumstances**

The school does not authorise a leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Each application will be considered on an individual basis. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head teacher's discretion.

- When requesting a leave of absence, parents must complete an 'Application for Leave of Absence' form (which can be obtained from the school office) and submit it to the Attendance Officer.
- Parents must also adhere to the following:
  - All sections of the form must be **completed before** it is submitted.
  - The form must be received at **least ten school days before** the date of leave stated on the form.
  - The form must be received by the Attendance Officer **before any bookings are made.**
- Parents should be aware that leave of absence may not be authorised:
  - If a student's attendance record is a cause for concern,

- If the date of leave is close to or during the school's internal assessment periods or external examination period,
  - If the date of leave is during the period of Work Experience,
  - If the school is not satisfied that the individual facts and circumstances, provided by the parent on the application form, warrant the leave.
- Where a leave of absence has been granted, the Head teacher will determine the number of days a student can be away from school. A **date of return to school** will be agreed upon and stipulated on the 'Application for Leave of Absence' form.
  - If the student fails to return to school on the agreed date, it will result in the following:
    - Any days of absence in excess of those which were authorised by the school, will be recorded as **unauthorised**. The stages outlined in section d) Following Up Absences, will be taken.
    - Parents will be contacted on the first day of the **unauthorised** absence as explained in section b) Reporting an Absence - First Day Contact.
    - **All unauthorised absences will incur a fine of £50 per day per student. Students may not be allowed to return to school until the fine has been paid in full.**
  - In case of a flight delay or cancellation, parents must provide valid evidence of this on the first day of their child returning to school.
  - **The school cannot give retrospective approval for a leave of absence. If the parents did not apply for the leave of absence in advance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.**
  - The school reserves the right to remove a student's name from the attendance register if he has an unauthorised absence of **ten or more days** beyond the agreed date for his return to school. In such circumstances, parents are expected to pay a term's fee from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the unauthorised absence. This is at the Head teacher's discretion.

## **SECTION 2: PUNCTUALITY**

### **Key Principles:**

#### **a) School**

The school strongly discourages late arrival to school and will seek an explanation from the parent.

All students are expected to attend school on time as it teaches them self-discipline and time management. It also ensures a calm and orderly start to the school day.

The school will communicate to parents its expectation with regards to the punctuality of students regularly.

#### **b) Parents**

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child attends school **on time**.



## **Morning Registration**

The first registration takes place at **8.40am**. If a student arrives after 8.40am, he will be marked 'late' in the attendance register.

If a student arrives after morning registration has ended, he needs to sign in at the school office and proceed quickly to his lesson.

If a student arrives after 9.30am, then he will be recorded as 'absent' for the morning session. The only exceptions are travel disruption due to an accident or severe weather conditions provided that this information is communicated to the school by the parents.

### **c) Punctuality which is a Cause for Concern**

A student's punctuality record may be identified as a **cause for concern** if:

- Punctuality on a particular day of the week is **repeated** on a regular basis.
- Student regularly arrives late to school and his punctuality falls below 95%.
  
- In either of these circumstances, the school will communicate with the parents to raise these concerns. Following this, significant improvements in the child's punctuality record will be expected to be made and this will be monitored by the Head of Year.
  
- If the student's punctuality remains a cause for concern, then the parents will be invited to a meeting with the Head of Year to discuss the matter.

### **References:**

*Manchester City Council Children Services Protocol for Penalty Notices, January 2013*

*DfE Guidance for School Attendance, September 2018*

*Manchester City Council Children Missing Education, September 2016*

*Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023*

<b>Date</b>	June 2023
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Mrs F Bani
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