



GENEVA ENGLISH SCHOOL

PRIMARY ATTENDANCE POLICY



1. POLICY STATEMENT

This Attendance Policy has been drawn up to clarify expectations of students in line with the Geneva English School's vision and ambition in ensuring that every student fulfils their individual potential. Excellent attendance and punctuality are critical to achieving academic potential and to ensure that students make progress. We expect students to aim for 100% attendance and punctuality and that all students and parents / guardians will work with us in achieving that aim.

GES maintains registers daily for all of our students and will follow the steps outlined below where attendance and / or punctuality are falling below the standards expected.

This policy is available to all parents / guardians to ensure an effective partnership.

We will also make our school registers available for inspection by any appropriate body at any given time and will also share attendance data with any appropriate body where we are required to do so. This could include the Canton of Geneva, Canton of Vaud or French authorities as well as inspection bodies such as ISI (International Schools Inspectorate) or ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate / COBIS (Council of British International Schools)

Where there are existing safeguarding concerns or where the school is worried about the safety of any student, and that student's attendance is poor, they have failed to attend school as expected or they leave the school site without permission the school will follow up immediately with parents / guardians and where necessary, the police and / or child protection services such as Service de Protection des Mineurs (SPMi).

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all sections of the school including all staff, all students and all parents / guardians.

3. DETAILS

Expectations

1. Parents / guardians are expected to enable their children to arrive at school on time.
2. The school day commences at 8h30 (students must be on site for 8h25 and lessons finishes at 15h30. Extra-curricular activities end at either 16h30 or 17h. The school opens daily at 8h and students should be on site by 8h25 in order to be on time and prepare for the day ahead.
3. Students are expected to attend all lessons punctually. Students who are late to lessons will receive a negative point (de-merit) if they do not have a valid reason.
3. It is important that parents / guardians understand that we are unable to supervise children outside of the school hours stated above and do not take any responsibility for students outside of these times. Only students enrolled in clubs remain our responsibility until the published end time of the club.

2. Parent Contact Details

1. It is a requirement that parents / guardians update the school in writing as soon as there is any change in contact details.
2. In addition, schools require the details of more than one nominated parent / emergency contact person per student. This is so the school can always speak with an adult who has responsibility for a student, especially at times of emergency or absence and a parent is not immediately contactable.
3. In the case that parents / guardians decide to leave their child in the care of another responsible adult, it is critical that the details of the adult and the length of time for the agreement are passed to the school using the schools official form for this purpose.
4. Students will not be allowed to attend school until these details are provided and the collection of this data form part of our yearly administration forms that are shared each summer.

3. Daily registration

1. The school is required to register students at least twice daily. Registers are taken at 8h30 (AM register) and at 13h40 (PM register). It is essential that all students are registered on both occasions.
2. At 8h25 students should be ready to enter their classroom in anticipation of the register being taken

4. Signing out during the school day

1. Every effort must be made to make medical / dental and other appointments out of school hours; if this is absolutely unavoidable, then parents / guardians should contact the office administrator by phone or email by the latest at the start of the school day of the impending absence. No student can self-report an absence.
2. The student, and authorised adult responsible for taking the student out of school, must sign out and back in with the office administrator who will record the reason for absence as reported by a parent and inform relevant staff.
3. If a child reports an illness during the school day, they must inform their teacher and report to the Office Administrator and / or nurse should they be on site. If it is determined that in the child's best interests they should go home, this will be arranged with parents, recorded in the sign-out book and the appropriate code entered in the iSAMS register.
4. For all children, from EYFS to including Year 13, a parent must always provide permission for a child to leave school.

5. Absence – notifying the school

1. First day of absence notification - If a student is unable to attend school through illness parents / guardians should inform the school by either emailing the office administrator **admin@geschool.ch**, or telephoning **022 775 04 40** on the first

day of absence before 8h25. Your child's teacher should also be copied into the email.

2. Second and third days' absence - If a student is absent for more than one day parents / guardians must contact the school in the same way, above, on a daily basis, so that the school is sure of the child's whereabouts.
3. Fourth day of absence and beyond - parents must provide a medical note from a doctor to explain the absence. This can be emailed to the office administrator who will record the end date of the medical note. On the following day we will anticipate the return of the child unless an updated medical note is provided.
4. Emergency Occasions - There are some occasions e.g. bereavements, family problems, etc. where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs. Please inform us of these circumstances via the channels described above.

6. Recording of Absence

1. Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

7. Authorised Absence

1. Parents / guardians cannot authorise absence; only school can do this.
2. Authorised Absence - Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the student to be away or where an explanation offered at the time of reporting the absence has been accepted as a satisfactory explanation.
3. In the case of an extended period of absence through illness or a medical issue, parents / guardians are asked to update the school of the student's health and establish whether it is appropriate for the child to engage with school work at home.
4. Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:
 - Illness, medical or dental appointments.
 - Days of religious observance.
 - Educational visit or trip.

- Study leave.
 - Work experience.
 - Exclusion.
 - Traveller child travelling.
 - Family bereavement.
 - Involvement in a public performance.
 - Off-site examination.
 - Competitive sports - school teams
 - Competitive sports programmes - absences are authorised following proof of level of participation and engagement in an organised and structured programme with training dates / competitions. The Head of School / Key Stage will work closely with the families of students who are enrolled in sporting programmes to minimise impact on academic progress.
 - Special occasions - the nature of such special occasions will be determined by the school on an individual basis.
5. Lateness - when the student arrives after the register has closed and offers a satisfactory explanation, for example -
- An accident on the way to school
 - Car breakdown / transport issue
 - A family emergency
 - A medical emergency
6. Excessive amounts of authorised absences - Excessive amounts of authorised absence may often be as damaging to continuity of learning and student wellbeing as unauthorised absence. The school will therefore only authorise absence sparingly and only after careful consideration, particularly where students have a history of irregular attendance.
7. Approved Educational Activity - Students who are registered off-site or dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, need not be marked as authorised absence, provided that such activities are:
- Educational nature;
 - Approved by the school;
 - Supervised.
8. These students may be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that for statistical purposes, for particular activities, such as field trips,

educational visits, and approved sporting activities they can be counted as 'present'. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded in the class register by use of the appropriate code. This is important to ensure that an accurate record of those students physically present on site at any given time is instantly available.

9. Disputes - Should school staff have reason to doubt that the explanation offered about a particular absence is not genuine; the absence should be treated as unauthorised. Parents / guardians have the right to challenge this decision by contacting the Head of School. Where disputes cannot quickly be resolved to the satisfaction of the parents / guardians the school's complaints policy and process can be used.
10. For Coding for authorised absences see Appendix 1.

8. Unauthorised Absence

1. Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the student's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.
2. If no message explaining a child's absence is received, and they are not marked present on the AM register the office administrator will contact parents directly in line with our safeguarding policy. Until contact is made, the assumption is made that this is an unauthorised absence and potential wellbeing concern / safeguarding matter. The office administrator will continue to attempt to make contact to establish that the child is safe. If contact cannot be established by 10h (90 minutes after the start of the school day) the Head of Key Stage / Head of School will be informed to determine next steps which could include contacting the local police.
3. Absence will not be authorised in the following circumstances:
 - The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (shopping, minding the house).
 - Family holidays (which are taken without the school's prior consent or knowledge and/or are in excess of any time agreed with the school).
 - Lateness when the student arrives after 8h45 and fails to offer a satisfactory explanation as per list provided above.

- Leaving the school site without parental permission communicated to the school via email or phone but where we can establish that the child is safe (KS5 only).
- When a parental request for permission to attend a special occasion has been declined.

4. Where there are concerns for a student's safety, or where there are existing safeguarding concerns and a child is absent without authorisation, school will make immediate contact with parents / guardians, determine whether to conduct a home visit and where necessary contact the police and / or child protection services.

6. Parents / guardians are able to check the attendance of their children on My School Portal.
7. If a parent removes a child without permission, the Head of School will arrange a meeting with parents / guardians to investigate the matter further.
8. Where there are concerns about potential parental abduction / removal from school, for example, during family law proceedings, then it is incumbent on parents / guardians to make sure school is in possession of copies of any relevant court orders so we can ensure the safeguarding of children.
9. GES will follow any local law, regulations, procedures in notifying the cantonal authorities where attendance has fallen below legal requirements.
11. For coding for unauthorised absences see Appendix 2.

9. If a child goes missing during the school day

1. If a student goes missing during the school day, the [Missing Child Policy](#), should be followed.

10. Persistent Absence

1. The parent of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the student regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from

school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

2. Responding to Persistent Absence - Where the school has concerns about excessive absence patterns this will have to be discussed with parents / guardians in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support.
3. A reminder letter will be sent to parents / guardians following 3 consecutive days or 5 days absence in any one half-term. (See Appendix 3 and 4)
4. Persistent absence is absence of 20% or more. An individual student is considered to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 80%, regardless of whether or not the absence has been authorised. In such cases parents / guardians will be asked to attend an attendance review meeting with the Head of School. (See Appendix 5). If the justifications for absence are inadequate, the school reserves the right to refer the matter to relevant local services
5. The school will always consider any safeguarding concerns that may be contributing / causing the attendance issues. The school will always share safeguarding concerns with local safeguarding partner agencies where the threshold to do so has been met.

11. Lateness

1. Parents / guardians must ensure that children arrive at school by 8h25 so that they are present for registration; this is done at 8h30 each day.
2. Students who arrive after 8:33 will be recorded as 'late for school' and this will be recorded on iSams.
3. Where a genuine reason (see list in 7.5) for lateness exists, this will be an authorised absence but where explanations are inadequate or the lateness becomes frequent, the Head of School will need to discuss this with parents / guardians to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support.
4. Responding to Persistent Lateness - Persistent lateness is lateness of 20% or more. Teachers will monitor lateness and will contact parents / guardians if it

occurs for 3 consecutive days or any 5 days within a half term. If a student's punctuality falls below 80% parents / guardians will be asked to attend an attendance review meeting with the Head of Key Stage.

12. Procedure to be followed by Staff when a student is not collected on time

1. Parents / guardians / carers must inform school if they are going to be late in collecting their child.
2. In the exceptional event that a child cannot be collected by 17h by a parent or nominated adult (and the child is not in a position to go home independently) school will ensure that the child is cared for safely by an adult who is known to the child. The school will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care to cause as little distress as possible. The school will inform parents / guardians/carers of procedures so that, if they are exceptionally and unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their children will be properly cared for.

Appendix 1- Authorised absence coding

The following codes to be used in iSAMS when recording authorised absences:

- Illness (I) - This code is used when a student is ill, and the school has been informed. Schools can request medical evidence from parents / guardians / carers if they feel the authenticity of an illness is in doubt
- Medical / Dental appointments (M) - This code can be used when the student needs to attend a medical or dental appointment, and the parents / guardians has informed the school. Parents / guardians / Carers are encouraged to arrange appointments out of school hours, but the school will authorise if confirmation of the appointment is provided.
- Approved sporting activity (P) - This code will be used in times of approved sporting activities in school times, i.e. training sessions, trials and sporting events.
- Educational visit or trip (V) - This code will be used in times of approved educational visits or events in school times, i.e. revision days, subject trips.
- Authorised circumstances (C) - This code will be used for any authorised non-medical reasons for a child's absence from school, i.e. family funeral.
- Study Leave (S) - This code will be used during mock and external examinations for students that have been given parental permission to work from home.
- Excluded (E) - This code will be used when a student has been excluded from school.
- Work experience (W) - This code will be used when a student is attending work experience.
- School closed to students (#) - This code will be used when the school is closed to students.
- No reason yet provided for absence (N) - This code will be used when the school has not been informed of the reason for a student being absent.
- Religious observance (R) - This code will be used when a student is absent for a religious observance.
- Pupil withdrawn from normal lessons (Q)
- Interview (J) - This code will be used when it has been agreed that the student can miss school to attend an interview or entrance exam.
- Family Holiday not agreed (G) - This code will be used when a student is on holiday, and it is not authorised.
- Educated off site (B) - This code is used when students are being educated offsite, i.e. a University Visit, or attendance at a non-sporting competition at a local school.
- Dual registration (D) - This code is used when a student is registered at another educational establishment, whilst still on the school roll.
- Pupil not yet on roll (Z) - This code is used if a student has been excluded and the parents / guardians are appealing, so the student stay on roll.

Appendix 2- Unauthorised absence coding

The following code to be used in iSAMS when recording unauthorised absences:

- Unauthorised absence (O) - This code will be used when the absence is not authorised.

Appendix 3- Absence correspondence with parents / guardians (As set out in policy, section 5)

Appendix 4 - Correspondence for concerning absence

This letter should be sent by the Office Administrator to parents / guardians if a student has 3 consecutive days or 5 days absence in a half term.

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian:

Attendance is an essential component to a student's academic success. Often, the number of days that students are absent accumulate without parents / guardians realising how many days have been missed.

This letter is to inform you that your child has accumulated 5 absences this half term / three consecutive absences this half term.

At this time, you and your child have an opportunity to work towards improving attendance without further intervention. However, if your child's absence falls below 80% the school will invite you to an attendance review meeting with the Head of School. We look forward to working with you to improve your child's attendance. Please contact us if there is any way that we can assist in this process.

Thank you in advance for your support and cooperation.

Appendix 5 - Correspondence for persistent absence

This letter should be sent by the Office Administrator to parents / guardians if a student has below 80% attendance in a half term.

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian:

Attendance is an essential component to a student's academic success. Often, the number of days that students are absent accumulate without parents / guardians realising how many days have been missed.

This letter is to inform you that your child's attendance is currently below 80% which according to government guidelines is an 'unacceptable' level.

Although your child's absences may have been authorised, any absence means a loss of contact time with the teacher and a loss of critical instruction. This is very difficult for a student to make up, even with parental help at home, and will need a clear plan for the student to ensure completion of missed work.

Research into the link between absence and attainment concluded that as the level of

overall absence increases, the likelihood of achieving key attainment outcomes at the end of a key stage decreases.

The Head of Key Stage will be in contact with you to arrange an attendance review meeting. We look forward to working with you to improve your child's attendance.

Thank you in advance for your support and cooperation.

Appendix 6 - Correspondence for persistent lateness

This letter should be sent by reception to parents / guardians if a student has below 80% punctuality in a half term.

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian:

Punctuality is an essential component to a student's academic success. Often, the number of days that students are late accumulate without parents / guardians realising. This letter is to inform you that your child's punctuality is currently below 80% which according to government guidelines is an 'unacceptable' level.

When students arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving late to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one student arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher, thus everyone's education is compromised.

The Head of Key Stage will be in contact with you to arrange an attendance review meeting. We look forward to working with you to improve your child's attendance.

Thank you in advance for your support and cooperation