

Attendance Policy



Al Mawakeb School

Attendance Policy for AMK¹

1. Primary Values

Responsibility, Respect, Punctuality, Safety, Commitment, Trust, Reliability, Care, Support, Partnership.

2. Rationale

Al Mawakeb School Al Khawaneej (AMK) believes that regular attendance is key to achieving higher student attainment. The AMK Attendance Policy outlines the school's approach to ensuring the proper management of student attendance, tardiness, and absenteeism. Through this policy, and in line with KHDA inspection standards², the school will take measures to ensure that attendance is at least 98% and that almost all students arrive on time. The school will work in partnership with parents to achieve and maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality, thus allowing students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities presented to them.

3. Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to:

- 3.1 Ensure attendance and punctuality is a top priority for the entire school community.
- 3.2 Consistently maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality in order to achieve 98% overall attendance.
- 3.3 Maximize learning opportunities and student engagement by reducing unauthorized absences and the number of persistent absentees.
- 3.4 Work in partnership with parents to encourage and improve their child's attendance.
- 3.5 Ensure that unauthorized absence is dealt with firmly and effectively.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 Attendance is mandatory for all students on all school days specified in the school calendar.
- 4.2 Students shall arrive to school punctually every day at the set time, attend morning assembly and all classes on time.
- 4.3 The school shall maintain accurate student attendance records for all classes and activities, during and after normal/regular school hours.
- 4.4 The school shall follow up on all unexplained absence immediately.

¹ This policy has to be read in conjunction with the following policies: Reporting to Parents Policy and Student Behavior Policy.

² UAE School Inspection Framework 2015-2016, p. 36-38, p. 78-80

- 4.5 The school shall not tolerate tardiness as it interrupts the learning process for other students in class.
- 4.6 Tardiness and absence shall be reported on the student report card.
- 4.7 Students shall stay within the school premises during the school day, unless given permission to leave by the Head of Section.
- 4.8 Persistent tardiness and absenteeism will result in disciplinary measures.
- 4.9 All absences must be justified by parents; the school shall then decide whether or not it shall authorize the absence.
- 4.10 The student shall have the right to retake exams only if an absence is authorized or a tardiness is excused. Any missed classwork, assignments and assessments are the student's responsibility.
- 4.11 Students requiring any recurring regular or extended-time absence for any reasonable purpose (e.g., injury, chronic medical issues, regular medical treatments, personal or family issues, etc.) shall be accommodated with special assistance on condition of verification by a medical or legal professional.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Responsibilities of Parents³

All parents are expected to:

- a. Implement the school's attendance policy.
- b. Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- c. Cooperate with the school in its drive to maintain high levels of attendance.
- d. Inform the school if their child will be absent from school on a particular day(s).
- e. Fill and submit the Absence Excuse Form, or a letter of absence to the administration detailing the reason for any absence along with the supporting documents when required.
- f. Attend meetings to discuss issues concerning their child's attendance.
- g. Seek to ensure that family vacations take place during scheduled school holidays.
- h. Contribute to the development of this policy.

5.2 Responsibilities of Students

All students are expected to:

- a. Abide by the school's attendance policy.
- b. Maintain regular attendance and punctuality.

³ KHDA Parent-School Contract

- c. Stay within the school premises during the school day unless given permission to leave by the Head of Section.
- d. Complete all assignments missed during their absence.

5.3 Responsibilities of the Teacher

The teacher shall:

- a. Implement the school's attendance policy.
- b. Accurately record and monitor attendance for every period.
- c. Implement the attendance protocol for students tardy to class during the school day.
- d. Report to the Head of Section any case of absence or tardiness they believe should be investigated.
- e. Take measures to promote student attendance and punctuality.
- f. Prepare assignments, make-up exams and quizzes for students who have authorized absences.

5.4 Responsibilities of the Head of Section

The Head of Section shall:

- a. Implement the school's attendance policy.
- b. Monitor student attendance and ensure accurate attendance data is entered into the school's Student Information System (SIS) on a daily basis.
- c. Arrange meetings with parents to address any concerns or issues related to attendance.
- d. Investigate the reason for unauthorized absences and take appropriate action.
- e. Report to the Principal concerns over excessive tardiness or absenteeism, as deemed necessary.

5.5 Responsibilities of the Principal

The Principal shall:

- a. Ensure the proper implementation of the policy.
- b. Ensure that students and parents are made aware of the attendance policy and procedures, their impact on student learning and progress and consequences of poor attendance and tardiness.
- c. Ensure that all staff are made aware of the statutory obligation to keep accurate records of all students' attendance and punctuality.
- d. Promote good attendance and follow up on excessive tardiness and absenteeism.
- e. Ensure that unauthorized absence is dealt with firmly and effectively.

- f. Be available to discuss with parents any issues or concerns related to attendance.
- g. Contribute to the development of this policy.

5.6 Responsibilities of the School Governing Body

The school Governing Body shall:

- a. Approve the reviewed school's attendance policy on an annual basis.
- b. Ensure the policy meets regulatory requirements.
- c. Oversee the implementation of the policy.
- d. Identify infringements and address them.
- e. Seek parents' feedback to guide further development of this policy.

6. Procedures

6.1 Managing Attendance

6.1.1 Monitoring Attendance

- The teacher records attendance at the start of every class on the Student Information System (SIS).
- The Head of Section (or designee) checks and verifies student attendance within 10 minutes after the start of the first period.
- The Head of Section notifies parents of non-attending students through the SIS email system, as soon as the attendance is verified (not later than 20 minutes from the start of the first period).
- The teacher informs the Head of Section immediately of students who are in school but not present in class.
- The Head of Section investigates the circumstances surrounding the tardiness or absence and applies the Student Behavior Policy rules in case of truancy.

6.2 Managing Punctuality and Tardiness

6.2.1 Definition:

As defined in the KHDA Parent-School Contract, tardiness, refers to being late in coming to school at the start of the school day, and to instances of being late to lessons within the school day.

6.2.2 Monitoring Punctuality and Tardiness:

The school will follow the Attendance Protocol to monitor punctuality and attendance. The protocol identifies the disciplinary measures for recurring tardiness.

6.3 Managing Authorized and Unauthorized Absence

6.3.1 Definitions: As defined in the KHDA Parent-School Contract, absenteeism refers to the frequent or habitual absence from school or from lessons without a valid medical or family related excuse.

6.3.2 Managing Authorized Absences

- In case of a regular absence the following procedure shall be followed:
 - Parents shall inform the school of the reason for their child's absence either before or on the first morning of any absence.
 - Upon return, students submit an Absence Excuse Form to the Head of Section, or a signed letter detailing the reason for absence along with the supporting documents if required.
 - If the absence is authorized, the student is allowed to make up for any exams that were missed.
- Below are some acceptable reasons for the authorization of an absence:
 - Illness
 - Exceptional family circumstances such as death of a first-degree or second-degree relative
 - Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
 - Official community task
 - Adverse weather conditions (e.g., heavy fog) or accidents
 - Mandatory appearance before an official body
 - Off-campus standardized exams
 - Urgent family travel for medical treatment or another emergency
- For illness-related absences, a medical report may be requested in the following cases:
 - The student is absent for more than one school day due to illness.
 - The student's attendance is below 90%.
 - The student is regularly absent from school due to illness.
- All routine (non-emergency) medical appointments should be made outside school hours, whenever possible.
- In case of an unavoidable medical/dental appointment, evidence of this appointment should be provided.
- In case of an extended-time absence:
 - Parents are required to notify the school at least ten days prior to the anticipated date of absence.
 - The student and/or the parent are responsible for contacting the school administration to learn of all assignments and tasks required from the student during the absence.

- The student must complete and return all assignments to the relevant teachers either before leaving or shortly after returning from the absence.
- Failure to provide evidence may result in the school categorizing the absence as unauthorized.

6.3.3 Managing Unauthorized Absences

- The following are some types of absences which are regarded as unauthorized:
 - Unjustified absence
 - Lack of parent justification for absence
 - Unnecessary travel or excursions
 - Other types of absences not included in the authorized absences list.
- If an absence is unauthorized, the following steps are taken:
 - The first four incidents of absenteeism occurring in a short period of time (e.g., a month) will result in a written warning and parents will be notified.
 - After a student has accumulated seven unauthorized absences:
 - The Principal and the HoS shall assess the issues involved and meet with the parents to discuss the student’s ability and challenges in order to successfully progress through the current grade level.
 - Parents and students are asked to sign a written pledge stating a commitment to resolve the situation.
- If absences persist, the school may decide to apply one or more of the following sanctions:
 - Community hours at the school
 - Temporary suspension for up to three days and an immediate “F” is entered as the student’s grade in case an exam or quiz is missed
 - Placement on Probation for Registration for the next year
 - If a student’s attendance drops below 80% then he/she may be denied registration for the next academic year.

6.4 Follow-up

- The school will conduct a follow-up, which aims to identify underlying causes affecting attendance, and accordingly help to determine the support needed for the student to comply with attendance expectations.
- The school will arrange a meeting with parents to identify the related issues and to plan for improvement.

6.5 Counseling:

- If the underlying cause for attendance concerns is a behavioral, health or social issue such as anxiety, depression or bullying, the school may refer the case to the school's Social Counselor. The Counselor collects and analyzes relevant information to devise an appropriate action plan for referred students and their families.
- If poor engagement in learning or underachievement is identified as the underlying cause for the student's poor attendance, an Individual Education Program (IEP) is created to cater for the individual learning needs of the student and to improve attendance.

7. Policy Review

The Attendance Policy will be updated regularly by the Principal and the leadership team and will be shared with all stakeholders.

Attendance Protocol

By 8:15 AM (Mon. – Thur.) / 7:15 AM (Fri.)
students arrive to school.

8:20 AM / 7:20 AM, playing the UAE National Anthem

8:25 AM / 7:25 AM, all students are in class.

8:30 AM/7:30 AM, period 1 starts for all students.

By 8:40 AM / 7:40 AM, student attendance is checked and verified (taken by **Head of Section** / Designated Person)

Head of Section will verify and cross check for late / delayed students or those who may be involved in activities outside the classroom (trips /student tests/exams)

After 8:40 AM/7:40 AM Teachers will report any additional student tardiness/absence to **Head of Section**

By 8:50 AM / 7:50 AM, attendance data is entered on Student Information System and parents are notified of their child's nonattendance by email.

2:15 PM / 11:40 AM - End of regular school day

2:30 PM / 11: 55 AM – If a child is not collected, notification is sent to parents.

(Mon. to Thurs.)
2:30 PM After-school activities start.
2:40 PM Parents notified of their child's nonattendance.
3:15 PM After-school activities end
3:25 PM If a child is not collected, notification sent to parents.

Monitoring Attendance and Tardiness:

- For Monday through Thursday, school gates open at 7:30 AM and close at 8:15 AM.
- On Friday school gates open at 6:40 AM and close at 7:15 AM.
- All students should be present in the playground by 8:15 AM (Monday through Thursday) and by 7:15 AM on Friday to attend the morning assembly.
- Classes begin at 8:30 AM (Monday through Thursday) and at 7:30 AM on Friday. Only in the cases of adverse weather conditions, special situation, or force majeure, the school administration may excuse students for being late in the morning.
- Students arriving after 8:15 AM (Monday through Thursday) and after 7:15 AM on Friday will be considered late.
- Arrival between 8:30 AM and 8:40 AM (Monday through Thursday) and 7:30 AM and 7:40 AM on Friday will result in a verbal warning issued to the student with the risk of not being admitted to the first period. If repeated, this will lead to the accumulation of 2 points on the behavioral point system.
- In the event of an assessment, the student will be allowed to enter with permission from the Head of Section but will not be given additional time.

The following procedure applies to Grade 5 – 12:

- Each unexcused late arrival will result in the accumulation of 2 points on the behavioral point system, with the risk of not being admitted to the first period.
- After the verbal warning, an incident of tardiness in a short period of time will result in a written warning.
- If tardiness is repeated in a short period of time, it will result in a written warning and parents will be called for a meeting with the SLT to address and resolve the issue. They will also sign a letter of commitment.
- If tardiness is repeated in a short period of time (a month or a quarter), it will result in a one-day suspension from school.
- If tardiness persists after a suspension, the following procedure will be followed:
 - The first incident will result in a written warning.
 - The second incident will result in a letter of warning and parents will be called for a meeting to sign a letter of commitment.
 - The third incident will result in a suspension of up to 3 days and the student will be denied registration in school for the next academic year.