

Attendance Policy



At Hartland International School, we believe that regular attendance is essential for student success and wellbeing. This policy outlines our expectations, procedures, and support systems to ensure that every child and young person attends school consistently, maximises their learning opportunities, and develops lifelong habits of responsibility and commitment.

September 2026

Why is attendance important?

Excellent attendance at school is linked to better academic progress and attainment by ensuring students access a broad, balanced and knowledge-rich curriculum. It also ensures that students can benefit from the enrichment activities on offer at Hartland that promote good social and emotional development.

Parents have a duty to ensure that their child has an appropriate education. For most children in the United Arab Emirates this means full-time attendance at school.

How is attendance recorded?

Schools have a duty to take an attendance register daily. This is recorded on an electronic system called iSAMs. Where a student is absent from school the reason for this absence must be established as soon as possible and recorded on the iSAMs attendance record.

When should students attend school?

Students should attend on all school days as set out in the term dates available on the school website. The school gates open from 7:20am and students should arrive by 7.45am. Morning registration is taken between 7:45am and 7:50am. Students who arrive after 7:50am will be marked as late.

What should happen if a child cannot attend school?

Parents should inform school, by 7:50am, that their child is unable to attend by emailing attendance@hartlandinternational.com and include their child's class or form tutor by cc'ing them in on the email. If a child is absent for more than one day, parents should continue to update the school of the daily reason for absence.

Can a child miss school for a medical or dental appointment?

Wherever possible, medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours. Where absence to attend an appointment is unavoidable, the student should miss as little of the school day as possible. School should be informed of the appointment in advance and the student should be 'signed-out' at the time of the appointment by a member of reception staff who will hand the student over to a parent or guardian.

Can a child miss school for a family holiday?

The Principal is only able to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Hartland International School does not support the authorisation of term-time holidays. If a parent is determined to take their child out of school for a family holiday, then they should use the correct form (Appendix 1d) to request permission from the school in advance.

Who is responsible for attendance?

Leanne Miller is the School Attendance Officer. She is supported by the pastoral leads for FS and Primary (Eddie Brown) and Secondary and Sixth Form (Natalie Herbert).

Linked Documents and Guidance

The Federal Decree-Law No. (39) of 2022 on Compulsory Education ([2022-39.pdf \(moe.gov.ae\)](#))

DfE (September 2022) [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) - as a point of reference to good practice

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Section 1: The Principles and Legal Framework Around Attendance

We expect the highest level of attendance and punctuality from every student. High levels of attendance will provide the opportunity for each student to develop their full potential during their time at school. Parents, staff, students and those in governance must do all in their power to ensure this objective is achieved in line with the legal framework governing attendance and punctuality

The legal framework governing attendance

The Federal Decree-Law No. (39) of 2022 on Compulsory Education ([2022-39.pdf \(moe.gov.ae\)](#)) states that:

Education is a fundamental right of citizens and expatriate residents in the UAE.

Federal Decree Law No. 39 of 2022 on Compulsory Education (available in Arabic) obligates the parent or the legal guardian to send their children to school.

- For UAE citizens, education is mandatory from primary school until the completion of their schooling.
- For Expatriate residents, education is mandatory until they finish the primary stage.

The responsibility of providing education rests with the child's parent or the legal guardian.

The UAE provides free education to its citizens at all levels in the UAE.

Responsibilities of the parent/legal guardian

The responsibilities of the child's parent or legal guardian include:

- enrolling the child in an educational institution upon reaching the specified age at the beginning of the school year
- providing the necessary valid identification documents essential for the child's enrolment
- monitoring the child's academic progress and behaviour
- ensuring the inclusion of children of determination (children with disabilities) in the educational system.

Exemptions

The parent or legal guardian is exempted from enrolling the child in a school if:

- the child suffers from a disease or disability that impedes his/her ability to study
- a situation arises for the child or the parent/guardian preventing enrolment or completion of the child's education
- the child's registration from any educational institution was terminated.

Violations

Failure to enrol the child in school or adhere to the compulsory education period will result in a written warning from Ministry of Education (MoE) or one of the other educational authorities, within five working days from the date of non-enrolment or non-adherence.

If the violation continues for more than 10 working days after the written warning, MoE or the educational authority must report the matter to the Public Prosecution.

Penalties

Failing to enrol the child in school, the parent or the legal guardian will face imprisonment and/or a fine ranging from AED 2,000 to AED 50,000. The court will also obligate the parent or the legal guardian to enrol the child within a period it determines.

Continuation of the obligatory education stage

According to Article 14 of Ministerial Decree No. 820 of 2014 on Registration Terms for Students, the student's parent must write a personal commitment to the school stating that he is aware of the rules of the Obligatory Education Law and any other resolutions issued in this regard and that he undertakes to send his children to school during this 'Obligatory Education Stage'.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

Advisory Board Members of Hartland International School will:

- Review and agree the Attendance Policy regularly following advice from the Executive Leadership Team.
- Monitor the implementation of the Hartland Attendance Policy.
- Monitor school-level attendance against KHDA targets.
- Monitor local school attendance data and procedures for equal opportunity issues.

The Hartland Attendance Officer and Primary and Secondary Attendance Leads will:

- Review and revise the Hartland Attendance Policy regularly (in accordance with the review schedule).
- Monitor the attendance across the school to identify any patterns in the attendance of groups of students which may require targeted intervention. This will be through:
 - Monitoring the progress of attendance of all students.
 - Overseeing the attendance arrangements.
 - Working with school staff to ensure the efficient running of the attendance system.
 - Making periodic checks of the registers to monitor student absence.

- Making periodic checks on absence notes and the reasons for absence.
- Dealing with issues of inadequate registering.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff.
- Work with staff at Hartland to implement targeted interventions to improve attendance.
- Report to the Principal and Primary and Secondary Headteachers of School six times a year on school attendance.
- Report to the Advisory Board three times a year on school attendance.

The Primary and Secondary Headteachers will:

- Determine whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the school's official form, or absences which have taken place for which no request was made.

Tutors/Class Teachers will:

- Ensure that students are registered accurately.
- Follow up cases of unaccounted for absence or unacceptable notes.
- Inform the Headteacher of any signs of suspected truancy.
- Inform the Headteacher of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences and lateness.
- Make students aware of their attendance at regular intervals.

The Attendance Officer will:

- Check daily attendance/absence data into iSAMs.
- Prepare reports as required for the Primary and Secondary Attendance Leads and others.
- Contact parents on the first day of absence.
- Support targeted students.
- Use 'broken weeks' analysis to consider whether to advise targeted intervention where there are attendance concerns, especially early in the academic year when % attendance may be skewed by the low number of school sessions.
- Support the Primary and Secondary Attendance Leads in identifying which families may need to receive communication from the school due to their children's attendance or lateness levels. This might be through:
 - Phone calls to parents.
 - Awareness raising emails.
 - Formal attendance concern letters.

The Head of Inclusion will:

- Support students on the SEND register who have regular patterns of non-attendance.
- Be involved in any re-integration programme, where deemed necessary.
- Advise on or support with first day of absence calling for students with SEND.
- Ensure that SEND students on blended programmes have their attendance accurately recorded by informing the Attendance Officer of their schedule, ensuring sessions spent off-site for education purposes are marked as **"Educated Off-Site"** rather than as absences.

Students are required to:

- Attend all sessions in the school year unless they are ill or have an authorised absence ('Attending regularly' means registering before the attendance register is closed for the session).

Parents are required to:

- Be responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Make any request for leave of absence on the school's official leave of absence form.
- Email or telephone school on the first day of absence and any subsequent days.
- Plan holidays outside of term time
- Attend any meetings organised by the school to create an action plan to improve attendance

Section 3: Expectations and processes of managing attendance and following-up on unexplained absence.

Expected Attendance

The Law requires schools to be open to students for 182 days each year. Each day a legal register is taken in the morning. All registers are recorded electronically on a database called iSAMs. This information constitutes the legal attendance register for the school and is shared with the KHDA for their reporting and monitoring purposes. The time of the daily registration is from 7:20am to 7:50am.

Overall attendance is calculated on the legal requirement for students to attend 182 school days per year.

At Hartland International School, any student with below 90% attendance is categorised as Persistently Absent, and any student with attendance below 50% as Severely Absent.

Monitoring

Parents may request an up-to-date attendance report at any time during the school year. Please contact the Attendance Officer to request this.

The school will have regular checks to monitor attendance, including;

- Daily checks carried out by the attendance officer. Parents of students coded N (no reason yet provided) or O (unauthorised absence) for that day may expect a phone call and/or email from school to ask for an explanation for their child's absence.
- Attendance concern letters are sent to parents to inform them when their attendance falls below 95%, subject to consideration of individual circumstances.
- Students falling below 90% attendance, are placed into an attendance priority category. These students, and their parents may be asked to meet with a Senior Leader, where barriers to attendance will be discussed, targets set, and support agreed as appropriate to improve attendance.
- Regularly through each term, the attendance officer will analyse data patterns of attendance across the school by student groups to highlight areas for improvement.
- At the end of each academic year, registers are reset, and attendance is started again for the next academic year. However, attendance concerns will be considered on a rolling 12-month basis.

Lateness Procedure

Children who arrive to school after 07:50am must enter school through the main doors and check-in with the Reception Staff on duty. This is to ensure that registers are updated correctly and children who have arrived at school after registers close are still marked as present for health and safety reasons. A member of the Reception Team will record this late, including the time of arrival to go onto iSAMs.

Signing-out

There must always be an accurate record of all students on-site. Students must sign-out if they are leaving the school site.

Staff will follow normal safeguarding procedures to ensure the safety of students leaving the site. No students should leave the site during the school day without a responsible adult designated by the parent or carer with the exception of 6 form students who may leave in a taxi if the school has received an email or telephone call from the parent or guardian to confirm this arrangement. Students should be signed out at Reception to the adult by a member of office staff (or a teacher if there are no office staff available). A reason for the children leaving should be noted on iSAMs.

Long-term Medical Absence

When a student is absent because of long-term illness, or an underlying health condition, an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) may be written alongside the parent and other appropriate stakeholders. This should

provide a structure for the student to be re-integrated back into the classroom. An IHCP should only be completed once diagnosis is confirmed and the prognosis given by the medical team supporting the student.

Section 4: Absence, Persistent and Severe Absence and support for students and parents

Absence

We understand that students may be genuinely absent for obvious reasons, including: poor health or illness; bereavement; and other exceptional circumstances. Parents are required to inform the school as soon as possible of their child's absence. They must also give a reason for the absence. Students missing registration will be initially coded 'N' (No reason given), until an explanation has been given from the parent. It can then be changed to the appropriate code, for example 'I' (Illness). 'N' marks should be changed to 'O' (absent without authorisation) after 5 days if no reason has been identified for the absence. Where a student becomes persistently absent (less than 90% attendance) due to illness, then the school may invite parents to provide medical evidence for any further absence. Medical evidence may include items such as a doctor's notes or certificates or hospital appointment letters.

Leave of Absence

The Principal can only grant leave of absence in very exceptional cases. Headteachers should make decisions with due regard for the individual circumstances and attendance profile of the pupil concerned. Should families wish to apply for leave of absence, a request form can be collected from the Attendance Officer at least two weeks prior to the date leave is required. The form should be returned to the Attendance Officer, who will consult with the Principal. Parents will be advised of the outcome. Should parents wish to appeal, this should be addressed in writing to the Principal.

Support for students not maintaining expected levels of attendance

Students will receive a graduated level of support to meet their need for improving attendance. The most effective support is when clear lines of communication are established between all parties involved. The strategies we can employ will include (but are not limited to the following)

Attendance below 95% (Attendance Concern) the school will follow a graduated response:

- Awareness Raising Email – the attendance officer will email parents to inform them that there is a concern around their child's attendance.
- Stage 1: A formal letter will be sent from the student's Head of Year to the parents to inform them that their child's attendance continues to be a concern and offer a meeting if the parents would like one.
- Stage 2: A formal letter will be sent from a member of the Senior Leadership Team inviting the parent in for a formal meeting to discuss their child's attendance at school and set up an action plan to improve attendance.

The school will take individual circumstances into consideration before sending any correspondence to parents. The review process will be done in a timely manner to give families time to improve attendance before further intervention from the school is considered.

Section 5: Parental Guidance for Holiday Requests

Hartland International School believes that students benefit from full-time attendance at school so that they can access a broad, balanced and knowledge rich curriculum that promotes academic progress and attainment. Excellent attendance also ensures that students can benefit from the extra-curricular activities on offer at school that promote good social and emotional development. As such, Hartland does not authorise requests for term-time holidays.

What parents should consider

Hartland International School recognises that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term time leave for their children; this is not considered to be 'exceptional circumstances.' It is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time. Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the work they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations. Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while children of all ages may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.

Any absence from school may lead to a child experiencing problems, such as difficulties securing basic skills of reading, writing and maths which are fundamental to progress through out school. However, absence at certain times of year can be particularly problematic, e.g.

- Closeness to exams or tests
- During GCSEs, A-levels and other examination courses
- During the first year at a new school
- At the beginning of a new school term

If the school refuses a request for term time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Other absences from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but these should be arranged out of school hours if possible)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations

Other absences from school will not be authorised, for example:

- For any type of shopping
- Looking after siblings or parents
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Because holidays are cheaper in term time
- More than one day for a family wedding

Review of Policy

Date for next review

September 2027

Relationship to other policies, guidelines and statements

Signed.....
School Principal

Date.....

Appendix 1a – Attendance Awareness Email from Attendance Officer

Dear XXXXXXXXX

I am emailing you to raise your awareness of XXXXX's (child's name) attendance so far this academic year. At present, their attendance is XX%. Good attendance is 96% or better. I felt it was important to make you aware of this formally as it is easy for a child to miss sessions and fall below the good threshold without realising the overall impact on attendance.

If there are any specific reasons that are impacting on attendance, please do speak to me so that I can support you further.

Thank you for continuing to work with us to support your child's education at Hartland.

Yours sincerely,

[Name and role]

Appendix 1b – Stage 1 Attendance Concern Letter from Head of Year

Date

Dear

Stage 1 – Attendance Concern Letter

Excellent attendance is important in ensuring that students are safe and able to access the opportunities at school that lead to success. Indeed, there is considerable research that shows the direct correlation between attendance and academic outcomes and achievement.

In line with the KHDA guidance, the attendance target for all students at Hartland International School is 96%. This means having no more than 8 days of absence across the school year.

According to our records, Name's attendance has dropped to XX%. This is shown on the copy of Name's Registration Report which I have enclosed for your reference.

It is important that we understand the reasons for Name's absence and any barriers or difficulties that they face in attending school. We want to work together with you, to ensure that Name can attend school regularly and achieve success.

We will continue to monitor Name's attendance in line with the school attendance policy. However, if you would like to meet to discuss Name's attendance, please get in touch by email and I will be happy to make an appointment so that together we can improve this target.

Yours sincerely,

[Name and role]

Enc. Registration Certificate, Year to Date

Appendix 1c – Stage 2 Letter from Senior Leader

Date

Dear

Stage 2 – Persistent Absence Letter

I am writing in relation to name's current attendance.

At Hartland International School, we have high expectations of everyone in our school community with regards to attendance and punctuality. This includes expectations of staff, parents and students, all working together to ensure that we have outstanding attendance across the school. As we set challenging targets for our students to aspire to, every absence will impact upon the ability of children to maximise their potential. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive a full, uninterrupted education and the school has a statutory duty to check for reasons of absence.

The attendance target for all students at Hartland International School is 96%. This means having no more than 8 days of absence across the school year. Since our letter of date, Name's attendance has dropped to XX%. They have had XX sessions of absence. I have enclosed a copy of Name's Registration Report for your reference.

In line with the school attendance policy, we invite you to a meeting where barriers to attendance can be discussed and solutions offered. I have set a provisional date and time for us to meet. Please confirm with me by email if you are able to attend.

Research shows that attainment, achievement and attendance are closely linked and best attendance at school naturally supports children in achieving the best possible outcomes. As a school, we are committed to working with you in ensuring that Name attends school regularly and reaches their potential. I look forward to discussing this further with you.

Yours sincerely,

[SLT Name and role]

Appendix 1d - Leave of Absence Request Form



Student Leave of Absence Request Form

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive a full, uninterrupted education and the school has a statutory duty to check for reasons of absence. A parent can request a leave of absence for an *exceptional circumstance*. It is up to the school to decide whether this will be authorised by examining the child's academic progress and current and previous attendance history.

The norms of attendance set by Hartland International School in compliance with KHDA remain of utmost importance, which require a minimum of 95% attendance in an academic year.

Student (s) Full Name	Year/Class

First Day of Leave	Last Day of Leave	Total Number of Days	Expected Return Date
<i>Exceptional Reason for Request</i>			

Name of Parent	Parent Signature	Date

FOR SCHOOL OFFICE USE ONLY

Student (s) Name	% Attendance	C	GP	EK	M	N
			H/G	I		

Approved	Action Required
Not Approved	Reason for Disapproval

Head of Primary/Secondary:

Principal: