

Pupil Attendance & Punctuality Policy - Primary

Last Reviewed Date: 6th June 2025

Reviewed by: DHOP-Pastoral

Next Review Date: 20th June 2026

1. Introduction

We at NIS Lagoon believe that pupils make the greatest progress and achieve the best results when their attendance is regular and uninterrupted. Punctuality is a crucial personal characteristic valued by the school and staff alike. For a pupil to succeed in the school environment, it is essential that a high level of attendance is maintained. It has been proven that there is a strong correlation between success and attendance.

We believe that a pupil's wellbeing is positively affected by consistent attendance. 'At NIS-Lagoon we have Growing Minds, Happy Hearts, Together We Thrive.

Good attendance and punctuality is also a sign of character which we aim to develop alongside our Character Education programme, Philosophy 4 Children programme, Qatar Values initiatives and our School Values of Personal Accountability, Support, Respect, Empathy, Transparent Communication, Honesty, Diversity, Environmental Awareness and Social Responsibility.

Good attendance also empowers pupils to take advantage of all we have to offer and become compassionate global citizens through all we have to offer at NIS Lagoon.

NIS Lagoon works for approximately 180 days per academic year. We, and the MOEHE, expect all pupils to not miss more than 18 days over the school academic year. 6 days per term. Please note that if your child is absent for more than 18 days, they may not be able to progress to their next year group in the next academic year in accordance with MOEHE guidelines..

At NIS Lagoon we want to put in place a clear, workable policy to monitor, improve and maintain good attendance. This policy will involve a partnership with the school, parents and the school's pastoral committee.

2. Purpose of the Policy:

- To ensure all parties are aware of their responsibilities.

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- To ensure high levels of attendance, in order for pupils to achieve outstanding levels of achievement, progress and personal growth.

3. Rights and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at NIS Lagoon is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents and all staff.

Pupils

- All pupils are expected to attend school and lessons regularly and punctually.
- Pupils who experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their Class Teacher, and, if the need should arise, from the Year Group Team Leader / Head of Year / Deputy Head of Pastoral / Principal.
- Pupils who have 100% attendance (excluding Justified Absences) in a term will be presented with certificates. Full attendance on a yearly basis will also be recognised at the end of year. 100% attendance is also recognised on the Attendance display board and via Class Dojo School Story.

4. Parents

- Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a student is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school as soon as possible in writing, via letter or e-mail or by telephone. Medical certificates must then be produced on the pupil's return to school.
- A pupil's absence from school will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation, and documentation, is forthcoming from the parent.
- Parents will be informed weekly of any concerns which may arise over a student's attendance or punctuality.
- Parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

5. School

- Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff; not just teaching and pastoral staff.
- NIS Lagoon will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently.
- Parents whose child's attendance is a cause for congratulation or concern will be contacted first by the Class Teacher, then the Year group Phase Leader and finally the Deputy Head of Pastoral at the end of each term. Reception staff may be asked to do this by telephone.

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6. Expectations

Newton International School Lagoon Campus (in line with the Ministry of Education directives) expects pupils to attend school for at least 90% of the time. This equates to half a day's absence every two weeks. If a pupil is absent for a whole day their attendance for that week drops to 80%.

National statistics in Qatar tell us that:

- Above 90% attendance – nearly all pupils achieve 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE
- Below 90% attendance – most pupils fail to get 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE

7. Authorised Leave of Absences (exceptional circumstances)

A leave of absence during term time will only be granted where an application is made **in advance** to the school and the school considers that it should be granted due to exceptional circumstances.

What amounts to 'exceptional circumstances' is a matter of discretion for the Principal and should be judged on a case by case basis (it is unlikely to amount to exceptional circumstance if it is claimed that a holiday abroad can only be afforded in term time or that a parent is unable to take leave during school holidays).

If the leave of absence has not been authorised by the Principal the parent may be given notice to attend a parent interview to explain the circumstances.

8. Notifying the School of Absence

The school expects that all parents communicate with them, either in writing or by telephone, giving a reason for the absence:

1. In advance of any planned absence.
2. Immediately following any unplanned absence.
3. During any absence expected to last more than three days.

Failure to comply with this requirement will mean that your child will have unauthorised absences on their attendance record and this could lead to a referral to the MOE.

Holidays taken during examination time, or in the terms leading up to examinations, will not be authorised. Qatari law states that parents do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time.

9. Some absences are considered unavoidable and may be authorised by NIS Lagoon. Examples include:

- Pupil was ill, or in hospital/having hospital treatment, and a medical certificate provided
- Pupil had an unavoidable medical/dental appointment in school hours
- Religious events (e.g. the Hajj)
- Family wedding or emergency

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10. Some absences are considered avoidable and will be left unauthorised by the school.

Examples include:

- Minor illness without a medical certificate
- Looking after the house or waiting for workmen/deliveries etc.
- Being on holiday, preparing for a holiday/trip or trip or collecting relatives from the airport/station
- Looking after brothers and sisters, including dropping them off at school or nursery
- Looking after a sick relative
- Helping with housework or family business
- Being unhappy or not getting on with others at the school
- Absences due to birthday 'treats'

11. Procedure for periodic and Regular Absences

CT = Class Teacher

TL = Team Leader

SMT = Senior Management Team

N.B. If Class Teachers have a concern about a pupil's regular absences they should inform their Team Leader or the DHOP-P immediately.

Consecutive Absences (without authorisation or any notification from parents)

STEP 1 (CT): 2 Days absence: Class Teachers will contact parents, via class email or by Class Dojo, to enquire after the pupil's well-being.

STEP 2 (CT): 3 Days absence: Class Teachers will remind parents, via class email or Class Dojo, of the need for authorization for the absence using a template letter. Please cc in the Attendance and Punctuality email address (a.pprimary@nislagoon.com).

Step 3 (Reception): 5 days absence: Primary Reception will run a 'Continuous absence' report from SIMs and contact parents to express concern about attendance and to inform them of the need for authorization of the absence upon the pupil's return.

STEP 4 (SMT): If no improvement over the half term: Reception will notify a member of SMT (DHOP-P) who will arrange a meeting with the parents. **Notification of Concern letter** signed.

Non-consecutive regular Absences (without authorisation or notification from parents)

The DHOP-P will run a weekly report on absences and punctuality on SIMs to monitor each year group's attendance. Each week Class Teachers will inform the parents of pupils with 3 or more absences or lates of the number of absences and/or lates for the

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previous week. Meetings will be held with parents 10%+ absences or punctuality if there is no improvement over a half term - a **Notification of Concern letter** signed or sent home.

Attendance and Punctuality Contracts

Once the ‘**Notification of Concern**’ letter has been issued the above procedures will still be followed. If there is no improvement or parent notification an **Attendance and Punctuality Contract** will be signed. If there continues to be no improvement then a 2nd, and then 3rd, A&P contact will be signed and a pupil's place could be at risk the following academic year.

Termly with School Reports (SMT): Parents will receive, in termly reports, a letter praising 100% attendance or regarding concerns about either attendance, punctuality or both attendance and punctuality. Should there be a concern about both attendance and punctuality; a more detailed letter will be sent home directly from the DHOS-P requesting a meeting the following term.

If a pupil does not bring a note to their Class Teacher within 2 weeks of their absence, the absence will be automatically marked as unauthorized, therefore please ensure that you contact parents promptly to remind them to provide the notification to Form Tutors or Reception after any absence.

12. Lateness to School: The registration period is 6.55 – 7.10 a.m.

Late to registration period after 7.10

- If pupils arrive on the school premises after 7.10 a.m. they must go straight to class and inform their teacher at what time they arrived at school.
- The Class teacher will mark on the register what time the student arrived at school and mark the student as ‘L’ on SIMs.

Late to school after 7.30am

- Students should go to their class and be marked as ‘L’ on the register
- Class Teachers should contact parents of any students who have three or more lates past 7.30 a.m. (see Step 1 below)
- Every three lates past 7.30 a.m. without evidence of good reason (i.e medical certificate) will equate to an unauthorised absence.

13. Procedure for Regular lateness

Class Teachers must contact parents and inform them of any concerns regarding lateness to school before it becomes a persistent incident and to identify possible truancy.

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- **STEP 1 (CT): 3+ times late in a week.** Class Teachers inform all parents, by email or Dojo, and remind them of the number of absences or lates their child has had the previous week and of the negative effects and disruption to learning caused by persistent lateness. Parents are reminded that 3x lates = 1 day absence and also about MOEHE guidance regarding absences over the year..
- **STEP 2 (SMT): No improvement the following month:** DHOP-P contacts parents in writing to share concerns.
- **STEP 3 (SMT): No improvement that half-term:** DHOP-P meets parents - **Notification of Concern** letter signed

If persistent lateness, a meeting will be held with the DHOP-P and **Attendance and Punctuality contracts** will be signed.

If a Class Teacher has concerns about a student's persistent lateness, e.g. more than 30 minutes on each occasion, they should notify their Team Leader or the DHOP-P of their concerns having also contacted parents in writing, via class email or Class Dojo.

14. Leaving Early:

If a pupil leaves school early with permission from parents, he/she needs to produce a medical certificate on return. Failing to do so, will result in an absence mark, on the day they left early.

15. Lateness to Lessons:

Pupils who show a pattern of lateness arriving to lessons (5 or more minutes) will receive a minor referral in line with NIS Lagoon Primary's Behaviour policy.

In Secondary, pupils late to lesson will receive a cross in their planner (not a stamp) and attend a 10 minute detention at the next break time/after school.

16. Truancy

- If any pupil absents themselves from the school building without permission, then the parents/guardians shall be contacted by telephone or e-mail by the Team Leader, Head of Year or Deputy Head of Pastoral. The student will receive a major referral and consequence in line with NIS Lagoon Primary's Behaviour Policy.
- A communication record of the contact with parents will be kept in the student's file.
- Truancy will be regarded as an unauthorized absence of at least a full day.

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Attendance & Punctuality Procedures 2025-26

Deepening Thinking



- Help pupils see that daily attendance builds confidence and lifelong learning habits.
- Use conversations to show how being on time sets the tone for a great day.

Role Model



- Model punctuality and positivity – your habits set the example they'll follow.
- Speak with pride about the importance of showing up early and being ready to learn.

Impact



- Celebrate small wins – being on time is a big deal for some learners.
- Reinforce that regular attendance and punctuality leads to stronger progress and better outcomes.

Challenge



- Gently support those who struggle – every step towards better attendance counts.
- Encourage a 'you can do it' mindset, especially when mornings are tough.

Engagement



- Build strong relationships so students feel excited to come to school.
- Work with families as partners in building good routines and daily success.

A child who is absent a day of school per week misses an equivalent of two years of their school life.

Recognise, praise and reward good attendance and punctuality.

Attendance & Punctuality is everyone's concern.

Enquire about the child's wellbeing (day 2 of consecutive absences).

Remind parents of the need for medical documentation so attendance is not affected (day 3 of consecutive absences).

Parents can complete a pupil absence Form at Reception to have some absences approved by the Principal.

Don't let a child's absences go unnoticed or build up with no action.

Weekly letters home if 3+ absences or late days.

Reception calls home regarding continuous absences.

DHOP-P can meet with any parent if you have concerns.

A pupil's progression to the next year group at NISL may be at risk due to poor attendance.

Ministry of Education guidelines are 18 days of absences per academic year. This does not include sickness or approved absences (with documentation).

If you have concerns about a student's attendance or punctuality contact the parents, and inform the DHOP-P as soon as possible.