

Pupil Attendance & Punctuality Policy - Primary

Last Reviewed Date: 8th June 2026

Reviewed by: DHOP-Pastoral

Next Review Date: 8th June 2027

Introduction

This policy is underpinned by the NISL Flourishing Framework, which provides the shared foundation for character development, wellbeing, belonging and excellence across the school community. Through high expectations, positive relationships and a commitment to inclusion and safeguarding, we seek to create a safe, respectful and purposeful environment in which every pupil and member of staff can flourish.

We at NIS Lagoon believe that regular attendance is vital because it establishes a safe routine, builds a profound sense of communal belonging, and provides the baseline for holistic flourishing. Pupils make the greatest progress and achieve the best results when their attendance is regular and uninterrupted.

We believe that a pupil's wellbeing is positively affected by consistent attendance whilst also recognising the need to support families in establishing low anxiety, predictable morning routines so that the benefits of good punctuality can positively develop their child's character.

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, an average of 6 days per term. The school, will offer support to families from the Deputy Head of pastoral (DHOP-P) and School Counsellor to prevent a pupil's progression to their next year group being impacted.

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.

Purpose of the Policy:

- To support families with their child's attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all parties are aware of their responsibilities.
- To ensure high levels of attendance, in order for pupils to achieve outstanding levels of well-being, achievement, progress and personal growth.

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The Attendance Framework Pillars

To ensure absolute harmony with our whole-school Flourishing Framework, all primary practitioners and leaders shall approach attendance and punctuality through the following four pillars:

- **Wellbeing and Belonging:** Every morning greeting must offer warmth, confirming to the pupil that their presence is valued and that they belong. We recognize that a child's absence or chronic lateness is often an unmasked indicator of underlying distress, anxiety, or changing circumstances at home or in the community.
- **Support and Restoration:** Where attendance begins to falter, our response is supportive rather than punitive. We proactively partner with parents and caregivers, using collaborative reflection to identify difficulties, build positive morning routines, and restore consistent school connection.
- **Character Development:** We teach children that showing up for themselves and their peers is a core element of shared responsibility, collaboration, and personal accountability. We foster self-regulation by encouraging children to take pride in their daily contributions to their class community.
- **Culture and Conduct:** We maintain clear, predictable, and exceptionally high expectations for attendance. We monitor patterns rigorously to ensure early intervention, ensuring that tracking metrics serve as triggers for care and support, rather than vectors for isolation or public shaming.

Rights and Responsibilities

Attendance at NIS Lagoon is the responsibility the whole school community – pupils, parents and all staff.

Pupils

- While all pupils are expected to attend school and lessons regularly and punctually whenever possible, pupils who experience attendance or punctuality 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, DHOP-P or School Counsellor.
- Pupils who have 100% attendance (excluding Justified Absences) in a term will be recognised with certificates and on the Attendance display board as well as via Class Dojo School Story.

Parents

- While parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn as often as possible, the school will offer support when required.
- If a student is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school as soon as possible via Class Dojo, e-mail or by telephone. Medical certificates must then be produced on the pupil's return to school so absences can be authorised. 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.

School

- NIS Lagoon recognises that persistent absences or poor punctuality may be due to safeguarding or family issues and will offer support through the DHOP-P or school Counsellor if required.
- In strict alignment with our child protection mandates, NIS Lagoon views persistent absenteeism (attendance below 90%) or unexplained consecutive absences as serious potential indicators of vulnerability, extra-familial harm, or child neglect. Staff must remain consistently vigilant to the reality

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that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) face heightened vulnerability factors, and their attendance must be evaluated with a trauma-informed lens.

- Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff, not just teaching and pastoral staff, and consistent logging of attendance concerns on CPOMS or to the DHOP-P ensures pupil safeguarding.
- NIS Lagoon will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and to support parents regarding persistent absenteeism or tardiness.
- Parents whose child's attendance is a cause for congratulations or concern will be contacted first by the Class Teacher, then the Year group Team Leader and finally the Deputy Head of Pastoral. Reception staff may be asked to do this by telephone.

Expectations

NIS Lagoon Campus (in line with the Ministry of Education guidance) 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

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.

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:

- In advance of any planned absence.
- Immediately following any unplanned absence.
- 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.

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
- Pupil well-being issues – in which case the Class Teacher, DHOP-P or School Counsellor should be informed to support the pupil and family.

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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 (without consultation with the School counsellor)
- Absences due to birthday 'treats'

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 absence, they should inform their Team Leader or the DHOP-P immediately.

The school will never allow a child's absences to go unnoticed or build up without proactive contact. All patterns of chronic absence, sudden attendance drops, or unreturned contacts must be communicated with the DHOP-P, and the School Counsellor or DSL, to ensure a holistic, protective wrap-around around the child.

Consecutive Absences (without authorisation or any notification from parents)

STEP 1 (CT): 2 Days absence: Class Teachers will contact the family specifically to enquire about the child'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.

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)

Weekly: 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 previous week offering support to improve attendance or punctuality and reminding of the need for medical documentation.

Half Termly: 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 which may affect a pupil's progression at the end of the year.

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Termly with School Reports (SMT): Parents will receive in termly reports, a letter praising 100% attendance or regarding concerns about attendance or punctuality. Should there be a concern about both attendance and punctuality the DHOP-P will request a parent 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.

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

Late to registration period after 7.10

- Pupils arriving on the school premises after 7.10 a.m. go straight to class and inform their teacher.
- The Class teacher will mark the student as ‘L’ on SIMs and the time if tardiness is persistent.

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.
- Every three lates past 7.30 a.m. without good reason equates to one unauthorised absence.

Procedure for Regular lateness

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

- **STEP 1 (CT): Weekly:** If a pupil has 3+ times late in a week Class Teachers will inform the parents by email to remind them of the number of lates their child has had the previous week and to offer support.
- **STEP 2 (SMT): Half termly:** If no improvement that half-term the DHOP-P meets parents to share concerns and offer support - **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 to ensure there are no safeguarding concerns.

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.

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.

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.

Attendance & Punctuality Procedures

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.