

# **GESM School Attendance Policy**

for the English Secondary and IBDP/CP

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this Attendance Policy is to promote a culture of punctuality and responsibility among students, ensuring that they attend school regularly and understand the importance of their education. This policy adheres to the mandatory requirement of 182 school days as stipulated by the Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen (ZfA), as well as the number of days mandated by our affiliates, including Cambridge International Education, Pearson, and the International Baccalaureate Organization. These affiliations also emphasize the importance of consistent attendance for academic success and program integrity. In line with these standards, the Philippines Department of Education also mandates a minimum of 80% attendance, except in very specific situations such as prolonged health issues.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all students enrolled in GESM and outlines the expectations regarding attendance, procedures for reporting absences, and consequences for excessive absenteeism.

## **Attendance Expectations**

1. **Mandatory Attendance:** Students are required to attend a minimum of 182 school days each academic year, as mandated by the Department of Education and German authorities, as well as by our affiliates, Cambridge International Education, Pearson (200 hours) and the International Baccalaureate Organization (150 hours for Standard Level and 240 hours for Higher Level).
2. **Students are expected to attend school every day** unless there is a valid reason for absence. Valid absences include, but are not limited to, illness (with a medical certificate if prolonged), medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside school hours, family emergencies, bereavement of direct relatives, official government or immigration appointments, and participation in school-approved activities or competitions.
3. **Punctuality:**
  - Students must arrive at school by **7:30 AM**.
  - Punctuality is also expected in each subsequent class throughout the day. Late arrivals disrupt the learning environment and will be addressed accordingly.
4. **Participation:** Students are encouraged to participate in all classes and school activities to enhance their educational experience. This includes field trips, class trips, retreats, and other on-campus and off-campus events.

## Special Leave Requests

1. **Advance Submission:** Any request for special leave must be submitted in writing at least, whenever possible, one week in advance of the intended absence.
2. **Approval Process:** Special leave requests must be approved by the Head of Section or Head of School.
3. **Exceptionality:** Special leave should always be considered an exception and will only be granted under specific circumstances that warrant the absence.

## Reporting Absences/Tardiness

1. **Notification:** Parents/guardians must notify the school of a student's absence by marking them on Untis before 7:30 or by emailing the school office ([secretariat@gesm.org](mailto:secretariat@gesm.org)) by 7:30 AM on the day of the absence. Unnotified absences will be reported to parents by 8:00 am.
2. **Late pass:** Students who are late must secure a late pass from the reception before joining their first class.
3. **3. Documentation:** Absences due to illnesses that exceed three days must be documented with a doctor's note upon the student's return to school.
4. **Excused Absences:** The following reasons are considered excused absences:
  - Illness or injury
  - Medical appointments
  - Family emergencies
  - Other circumstances approved by school administration

**On Religious Observance and Cultural Celebrations** Outside of School-Scheduled Holidays: While we will always respect and accommodate the diverse backgrounds and traditions of our school community—including recognizing special holidays—we kindly ask all families to plan vacations according to the official school calendar. This is essential for maintaining academic continuity, meeting attendance requirements, and ensuring the smooth operation of the school for all students. The accumulation of missed days year after year, due to non-school holidays or personal travel, will have a significant impact on the students' performance, and the school cannot be held responsible for any negative effects resulting from these absences.

## Leaving School Early

The school day ends at 14:00 or 15:30. Full attendance of the day is expected.

1. **Emergency Situations:** Leaving school early must be for emergencies only.
2. **Notification:** Parents must notify the school of the need for their child to leave early.
3. **Approval Process:** The Head of Section or the Homeroom Teacher must approve the request for early departure. No official request from parents or guardian (email, SMS) means no early leave.

4. **Leaving Campus Early Form:** Upon approval, a "Leaving Campus Early" form will be issued by the Head of Section or the Homeroom Teacher, which must be completed and submitted before the student is allowed to leave.

## Clubs

1. **Scope:** This policy applies to club membership without exception.

## Communication of Topics Covered During Absences

*It is the responsibility of the student to catch up on missed work due to absences.*

1. **Emergency Absences:** The school does not provide hybrid classes for students who are absent. However, topics covered during emergency absences will be communicated by teachers via MS Teams.
2. **Non-Emergency Absences:** The option above does not apply to absences due to extra vacations or planned events that are not classified as emergencies or illnesses.

## Missed Assessment

1. **Missed Class Tests:** Students who miss class tests for valid reasons will have the opportunity to reschedule the test when possible.
2. **Missed Examinations:** Missed examinations may be rescheduled if approved by the Assessment Review Committee. In most cases a doctor's note is needed. For further details, please refer to the Assessment Policy.

***Missed external examination such as IGCSE or IBDP/CP will always be considered a no-show and result in a 0 grade.***

## Consequences of Unexcused Absences/ tardiness

1. **Unexcused Absences/tardiness:** An absence will be considered unexcused if the school is not notified ahead of time or if the reason does not fall under the excused categories.
2. **Notification:** Parents will be contacted for any unexcused absences/tardiness.
3. **Intervention:** When deemed necessary the school will implement an intervention plan, which may include meetings with parents, counseling, and support services.
4. **Disciplinary Action:** Continued unexcused absences/tardiness may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to:
  - Loss of privileges
  - Removal from IGCSE or IBDP/CP programs
  - Special contract

- Removal from school
- Referral to the appropriate authorities (Department of Education)

## Approved Leave vs Unauthorized Leave for Students

The school's attendance policy — particularly the careful approach to authorized leave requests — is not intended to interfere with family plans. However, as a school, we have a responsibility to provide a high-quality education, which begins with students attending their scheduled school days.

1. **Approved Leave:** Approved leave refers to absences that have been formally requested and granted by the school. Students who are granted approved leave can miss classes and other activities with the understanding that they will be provided with the support to make up for the missed time.

*Key Points about Approved Leave:*

- **Rescheduling Tests and Activities:** Students on approved leave are typically allowed to reschedule class tests, assignments, and other important activities (when possible). This ensures that they do not miss critical academic evaluations due to valid reasons for their absence.
  - **Access to Missed Lessons:** Students who take approved leave will receive information about the lessons and content they missed. This may be provided via online platforms, such as Microsoft Teams, or through direct communication with their teachers. This helps students stay on track with their studies despite their absence.
  - **Reasons for Approved Leave:** Approved leave may be granted for specific reasons, including:
    - **Health reasons:** If a student is unwell or undergoing medical treatment.
    - **Bereavement:** In case of the death of a close family member or loved one.
    - **Official reasons:** This includes appointments with official institutions such as embassies and government offices as well as school-related activities like conferences, competitions, or other educational events.
  - **Approval Process:**
    - Leaves are **only approved by the Head of Section or Head of School**.
    - To request approved leave, students must submit an official **Absence Information Request** form to the school.
    - This form must be submitted **at least 3 days in advance** of the intended leave. In urgent cases, students should contact the Head of Section or Head of School directly to seek approval.
2. **Unauthorized Leave:** Unauthorized leave refers to absences that occur without prior approval or valid justification. These absences are considered unexcused, and students may not be allowed to reschedule missed tests, assignments, or important activities.

*Key Points about Unauthorized Leave:*

- **No Rescheduling of Tests and Activities:** Students who take unauthorized leave will not be given the opportunity to reschedule missed class tests, assignments, or important activities. These students will be marked absent for any missed evaluations, which can affect their academic performance. This will not result in a score of 0, but rather the missed tests will not be factored into the overall assessment.

- **No Access to Missed Lessons:** In the case of unauthorized leave, students will not receive information about the missed lessons via Teams or any other platform. As a result, students will need to catch up on their own or may miss out on important content.
- **Extended Vacations:** Unauthorized leave may also include extended vacations, where a student takes time off beyond the official school holidays without prior approval. This type of leave is considered unexcused and may affect the student's ability to keep up with their academic responsibilities. This includes extended travelling for festivals other than those scheduled in the school official calendar.

### 3. Impact of Excessive Absences:

- **Missed Class Time and Grades:** If a student misses more than 20% of their class time (whether through approved or unauthorized leave), they may not receive a grade on their report card. This policy ensures that students attend enough classes to meet academic requirements. Excessive absences can significantly impact a student's understanding of the course material and their overall academic progress.

It is crucial for students to understand the difference between approved and unauthorized leave. Approved leave allows students to stay up to date with lessons and assessments, while unauthorized leave (including extended vacations) can have significant consequences on their academic standing. Students are encouraged to follow the proper process for requesting leave by submitting the **Absence Information Request** form at least 3 days in advance, and to communicate with their teachers and school administration to avoid any negative impact on their learning.

## Attendance Monitoring

1. **Record Keeping:** The school will maintain accurate attendance records for all students, ensuring that each student meets the mandatory requirement of 182 school days.
2. **Review:** Attendance records will be reviewed regularly to identify patterns of absenteeism and ensure compliance with the 182-day requirement.
3. **Reporting:** The school will inform parents if attendance or tardiness becomes an issue, as explained in this policy, including any concerns about meeting the mandatory attendance requirements.

## Conclusion

Regular attendance is crucial for student success. GESM is committed to supporting students and families in achieving excellent attendance in accordance with the minimum 80% attendance requirement for the school year as mandated by the Department of Education (DepEd) and the mandatory 182 school days required by the *Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen* (ZfA), as well as the requirements set forth by our affiliates, Cambridge International Education, Pearson, and the International Baccalaureate Organization. We encourage open communication between parents, students, and school staff to foster a positive and productive educational environment.

## Acknowledgment

By enrolling at GESM parents and students agree to adhere to this Attendance Policy.

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*For any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please contact the school administration at [secretariat@gesm.org](mailto:secretariat@gesm.org)*

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*Latest Revision: August 2025*