



PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Student Attendance and Participation during Distance Learning* Guidelines for Private Schools is to ensure all schools are well informed to develop and implement policies that address the attendance and participation of students in a distance learning setting.

INTRODUCTION

Regular attendance for students establishes a strong foundation for academic achievement and underpins all aspects of personal, social and emotional development. The regular attendance of teaching staff is also a critical factor that contributes to student success. Student attendance is an essential element to a productive and successful school career and this is typically achieved in partnership between schools, students, teachers, and parents. The importance of attendance does not lose significance in a distance learning medium; it is the method of monitoring and determining attendance that may change.

In a distance learning setting, it is expected that schools systematically monitor and follow up on student attendance and participation to ensure both student presence and engagement. In a distance learning setting documenting that a student has logged on is not sufficient by itself to demonstrate academic attendance by the student. Schools should be able to demonstrate that a student has participated in class or actively engaged in learning-related activities. This is pertinent for establishing and maintaining a productive and successful distance learning experience for students.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of these guidelines are to:

- Supplement schools' existing attendance policies;
- Support schools in ensuring the attendance and participation of all students in a distance learning environment;
- Ensure there is a common understanding of the distance learning expectations regarding attendance and participation for schools, teachers, students, and parents;
- Ensure schools, teachers, students, and parents understand their responsibilities in ensuring student attendance and participation; and
- Ensure that schools and teachers are aware of potential issues and understand the ongoing monitoring requirements to support student attendance and participation.

Roles and responsibilities

1. School Principal

- 1.1 The school principal is responsible for ensuring the school has an attendance and participation policy with clear procedures in place during distance learning. The principal may delegate aspects of its day-to-day implementation to other staff as required.
- 1.2 The school principal should adhere to U.A.E. law which states that a student may be permanently excluded if he/she is absent from school for 20 consecutive days or 25 non-consecutive days within an academic year.





- 1.3 The school principal, in consultation with staff, is expected to undertake systematic monitoring of attendance and participation. This includes conducting regular reviews of the attendance and participation policy and procedures and adjusting them as required to ensure that the implementation is effective, fair and consistent.
- 1.4 The school principal and staff should ensure that a weekly review of student attendance and participation during distance learning is conducted to monitor patterns at an individual level and determine the appropriate course of intervention required.
- 1.5 The school principal is responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed by staff and implemented consistently and fairly.
- 1.6 The school principal is responsible for ensuring that alternative educational programs may be negotiated with students where attendance or participation is of concern. These support programs may include additional curriculum support, access to academic tutors or additional learning supports offered by the school environment.
- 1.7 The school principal should ensure that students with additional needs will be supported by the school. Contact with parents and the student should be maintained in a distance learning environment.
- 1.8 The school principal, as part of quality assurance measures, should designate teachers who can enter virtual classrooms to monitor lessons for student participation on an impromptu and unannounced basis.
- 1.9 The school principal and IT team are encouraged to use the school's learning management system to perform regular reviews of student participation in learning activities and coursework submissions to identify students that need support regarding their active participation.
- 1.10 The school principal should ensure that parents are aware of their role in ensuring their child/children's attendance and participation in the school's distance learning provision.
- 1.11 The school principal should ensure the school's contact details are readily available through the school's website for parents who wish to contact the school regarding their child/children's attendance and participation.
- 1.12 The school principal should ensure that students and parents understand how attendance and participation contribute to the student's end of year grades.
- 1.13 The school principal should ensure that all unauthorized absences for students and teachers are followed up by the school as a matter of priority.

2. Teachers

- 2.1 The teacher should ensure that school records for registering student attendance and participation are accurately recorded using the school's official processes.
- 2.2 The teacher should send out the student's weekly or daily schedule in advance so that students and parents are aware of the teaching and learning ahead.
- 2.3 Teachers should ensure that if student attendance and participation falls below the acceptable standards that additional support is provided for the student.





- 2.4 Teachers should contact parent/s of students whose attendance and participation is of concern and invite, through a virtual meeting, to discuss possible solutions.
- 2.5 Teachers are encouraged, if no improvement occurs, to discuss the matter with the parent/s and schools' leaders as required, in order to make a professional judgment as to whether the matter should be escalated.
- 2.6 Teachers are expected to monitor student submission of assignments through the school's learning management system to ensure active participation and that students are meeting the expected due dates.
- 2.7 Teachers are expected to follow up with students who are regularly failing to: participate in learning activities; submit assignments; complete class activities; and/or meet due dates. Teachers can follow up with parent/s to ensure that they have a full understanding of the situation and are able to follow up accordingly.
- 2.8 Teachers are expected to escalate through the appropriate channels within the school if students are regularly failing to submit assignments, complete online activities and other tasks on time, or failing to submit any work.
- 2.9 Teachers are responsible for documenting student achievement regarding the submissions of tests, student participation in interactive sessions, presentation of coursework or projects, and posting by a student in a discussion forum through the school's learning management system.

3. Students

- 3.1 Students are expected to use the school's learning management system and be prompt for the start of each session with the teacher, including daily registration.
- 3.2 Students are expected to participate in their distance classes regularly by completing activities such as, but not limited to, submitting assignments, completing worksheets, evidence of tasks, engaging in discussion boards and attending distance tutorials.
- 3.3 Older students, such as those in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3, are expected to take responsibility for their attendance and participation in a distance learning setting and will be made fully aware of the school policy, procedures, and expectations.
- 3.4 Students are expected to escalate concerns to their teacher should they feel that they are unable to participate fully in distance learning activities. For younger age children, parents are able to communicate concerns on their behalf.

4. Parents

- 4.1 Parents will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance and participation of their child/children for distance learning.
- 4.2 Parents should make themselves aware of their child/children's timetable for the day/week and ensure that they are following the schedule.
- 4.3 Parents are responsible for informing the class teacher if their child/children is/are ill and not able to register and participate in the day's learning activities at the earliest possible opportunity.

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REF: EFIA/PLCY -008/2022-24

Issue Date:05/04/2023

- 4.4 Parents may be required to provide supervisory support during assessments, in particular for a younger Cycle 1 student.
- 4.5 Parents should ensure that their child/children are able to access all work via the school's platform and systems, or other assigned learning resources.
- 4.6 Parents should raise any concerns regarding their child/children not being able to participate in learning activities to the class teacher at the earliest possible time

EFFECTIVENESS AND REVISION DATES

This policy was in effect from 1st May 2017 as Attendance Policy and revised on 1st May 2019 as Attendance Policy. It will be renewed in June 2021.

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Revision Date: 31/03/2024

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