



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Ratified by RAK Academy Board of Governors on 4 December 2019. Document No. POL17.041219.A.

1. Rationale

RAK Academy (RAKA) family of schools is committed to providing a full and effective educational opportunity for all students. RAKA recognizes the importance of regular and punctual attendance being a foundation for academic achievement which underpins all aspects of personal development. Students should be aware of the importance of best possible attendance, recognising the link between their attendance and achievement, leading to improved performance not only in school but throughout their lives.

It is the ambition of RAKA to ensure that all students have a minimum average annual attendance of 94% as this meets the minimum expectation by the [Ministry of Education](#) through the UAE Unified School inspection Framework. There are 190 school days per year and therefore 94% attendance means that no more than 11 days of school are missed per year.

2. Purpose

Good attendance can only be achieved through a partnership between school, home and the student. This policy describes the expectations around school attendance and punctuality. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders involved with the partnership, as well as the strategies for challenging poor attendance and bringing about its rapid improvement.

3. Policy Statement

Our aim is to ensure that students arrive at school and to lessons on time. We strive for attendance that is consistently outstanding for all groups of pupils. RAKA is accountable to the quantitative attendance measurement thresholds as stipulated by the [UAE School Inspection Framework](#) (please see table below).

Outstanding	98%
Very Good	96%
Good	94%
Acceptable	At least 92%
Weak	Less than 92%
Very Weak	Less than 90%

4. Expectations

4.1 Attendance

All students are required to maintain a school attendance of 94% or above. This equates to students missing no more than 11 school days per year. In order to successfully graduate from one school grade to the next, a student must have a minimum attendance of 94%. Should a student finish the year with less than 92% attendance, their academic grades will be used to consider whether they will be required to repeat the grade as detailed in the RAKA Graduation Policy. This decision will be made by the Head of School, based on recommendations by the Senior Leadership Team.

5. Persistent Absenteeism

Persistent absenteeism is defined as unauthorised absence from school for 10 consecutive days (less than 94% attendance) or 15 non-consecutive days (less than 92% attendance) within an academic year. As stipulated in UAE law, RAKA will exercise its right to permanently exclude a student from school, should their unauthorized school absence exceed 10 consecutive days or 15 non-consecutive days, in line with the RAKA Exclusion Policy.

6. Authorised Absence (determinant of graduation / promotion consideration)

Absence is considered 'authorised' in the following cases:

1. Illness that is documented by an attested doctor's report.



2. Travel outside of the UAE for the purpose of accompanying a relative of first degree during medical treatment under condition of proof (via an official attested certificate). The period must not exceed 30 days during an academic year. Evidence of being outside the UAE must be attested by the UAE embassy in that country.
3. Patriotic duties assigned to the student by an Official Government Entity and documented accordingly
4. Appearance before an official organisation or association under condition of proof via official documentation.
5. Death of a relative of the first and/or second degree, for a maximum of three days.

(MOE: 2014) Unless categorised as per section 6, absences will be logged as unauthorised.

7. Punctuality

7.1 Late to School

Students are deemed as being late to school, should they arrive after 7:45 am in secondary and 7:50 am in primary (Pre-K 9:10 am). Students arriving after this time will need to sign in via the reception. Students arriving after 8:15 am without good reason, documented in a note signed by a parent or legal guardian, will be recorded as having one whole session of unauthorised absence (i.e. half a day). The student will be issued a C3-Late and will be subject to the required sanction as per the Behavior to Achieve policy.

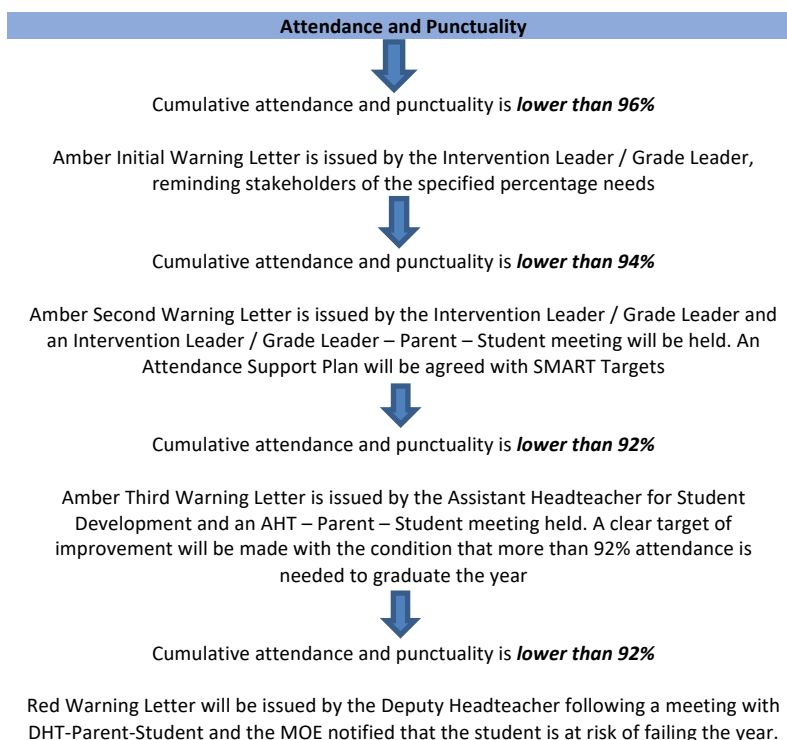
7.2 Late to Lesson (Applicable to ISK only)

Students are deemed to be late to lesson should they arrive after the second bell, which will ring on the fifth minute of each lesson. Students arriving after this time will be issued a C3-Late and be subject to the required sanction as per the Behavior to Achieve policy.

8. Strategies to communicate low attendance

Student cumulative attendance will be recorded on the termly progress reports. The “Red, Amber, Green” system aims to keep parents and students aware of the status of their attendance. The codes are as follows:

Red	92% or below	Unacceptably low attendance
Amber	93% - 94%	Cause for Concern
Green	95% or above	Satisfactory





9. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of RAKA have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. Each school has the responsibility for the duty of care of all children within the school site from 15 minutes before their morning starting time until 10 minutes after the school day ends, with the exception of organised after school activities.

All staff will be actively engaged in raising attendance levels. This will involve fostering good relationships between pupils and staff, being aware of the causes of poor attendance and ensuring that the curriculum is relevant and appropriate.

RAKA will place a high priority on conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents play a vital role and that there is a need to establish strong home school links so that we can work together whenever there is concern about attendance.

9.1 Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for implementing policies and procedures, and may delegate aspects of its day to day implementation and management to a designated member of the school's leadership team.

The Head of School and staff will ensure that there is no differential application of the policy and procedures on any grounds, particularly ethnic or national origin, culture, religion, gender or people of determination.

9.2 Class Teachers / Form Tutors

The first duty of all form tutors / class teachers is to keep a regular and accurate register of attendance and to notify the Intervention Leader / Grade Leader when there are concerns. In undertaking this primary duty teachers must;

- Complete the registration within 10 minutes of the class starting.
- Accurately record whether a child is present, absent or late
- Record the number of minutes late
- C3Late must be inputted into ISAMS (no later than the end of the school day) for a student arriving more than 5 minutes late to lesson.
- Analyse class attendance trends and inform the Intervention Leader / Grade Leader, where there may be concerns.
- Discuss attendance issues with parents as required
- Emphasise the importance of good class attendance

9.3 Administration Personnel (Deputy Headteacher Personal Assistant)

The Administration Personnel will:

- Ensure the accurate and timely completion of class registers
- Produce daily reports to the Deputy Headteacher, highlighting staff who have not completed their register as required
- Monitor registers taken during registration and at the start of Lesson 5 to track student attendance
- Answer parent calls/messages regarding explanations for student absence and record these along with evidence of student absences as a 'Note' on each student's ISams file. This should be done on the same day as the absence
- Produce weekly attendance and punctuality reports for key stakeholders, alerting Tutors / Class Teachers, Intervention Leaders / Grade Leaders and SLT when there are concerns about poor attendance
- Conduct all the administration in support of the Academy's Attendance Policy (producing letters to send home, certificates and any other necessary paperwork)

9.4 Intervention Leaders / Grade Leaders

It is the role of the intervention leader / Grade Leader to maintain awareness of attendance patterns of their cohort and the particular circumstances of students with attendance issues, intervening where necessary. The Intervention Leaders / Grade Leaders will support Form Tutors / Class Teachers in encouraging students to maintain good attendance and improve it where necessary.

The Intervention Leader / Grade Leader will issue an Amber Initial and Second Warning Letter to parents for students whose attendance is below 96% and 94% respectively as per section 8.



The Intervention Leader / Grade Leader will meet with parents and students whose attendance is below 94%, triggering an Amber Second Warning Letter (Section 8.). They will draw up an Attendance Support Plan with agreed SMART Targets, which will subsequently be monitored by the Intervention Leader / Grade Leader and Tutor / Class Teacher.

The Intervention Leader / Grade Leader will be expected to formally present a statistical analysis surrounding their cohort's attendance, outlining the issues, actions and impact involved. This will be presented to all Intervention Leaders / Grade Leaders fortnightly in the presence of the Assistant Head Teacher for Student Development.

9.5 Assistant Headteacher for Student Development

The Assistant Head Teacher for Student Development is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy. They will develop and implement the strategies for communicating low attendance (Section 8.) in an effort to bring about improvements and secure an overall average school attendance of higher than 94% per academic year.

The Assistant Head Teacher for Student Development will issue Amber Third Warning Letter when attendance is less than 92%.

9.6 Parents

Parents have the responsibility to read and support this policy on attendance and punctuality. It is the parents' responsibility to promote their child's attendance and punctuality and abide by the timings set by the school for the start and the end of the school day. Parents are required to understand and uphold the school's policy which states that continued tardiness and absenteeism will result in disciplinary measures and will affect the students' chances of enrolment for the upcoming academic year (please see graduation and promotions policy).

RAKA expects the following from all parents to support the students' attainment and progress:-

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment
- Contacting the Administration Personnel by 8:00 am (9:15 am for Pre-K) on the first morning of absence
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we require evidence from the doctor or hospital (Appointment email/ SMS)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time only if absolutely necessary, as these are not automatically authorised
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with
- It is the parent's responsibility to acknowledge if they receive a warning letter

9.7 Students

Students are expected to take responsibility for their own attendance and punctuality and will be made fully aware of the school policy, procedure and expectations.

10. Requesting Term Time Absence

Good school attendance is the most important factor in achievement at school and we are committed to helping every student achieve their full potential. Any absence from school disrupts a student's learning. Missing lessons damages a student's self-confidence and understanding.

There is no entitlement for parents to remove their child from school during term time. Unless their reason falls under a category covered by section 6, requests for absence shall generally be denied and unannounced absences shall be deemed as unauthorized by the School. The Deputy Head of School or the Head are sole competent in evaluating requests or absences, and in rendering the corresponding decisions.

Parents wishing to claim exceptional circumstances as a reason for taking their child out of school during term time should be given the school's request form and return it to the PA to the Deputy Headteacher at least 14 days before the proposed absence.



11. Leaving School Early

Parents wishing to sign their child out of school before the end of the school day, will need to request permission from the school's Deputy Headteacher. If granted, the student will be allowed to leave the School without administrative consequence. If the request is not granted, but the parent or legal guardian insists on the release of their child, the school shall release the student under the sole responsibility of the parent or legal guardian. The absence shall then be recorded as one whole session of unauthorized absence (i.e. half a day), which will be added to the student's cumulative attendance record for the academic year.

The School shall only release a student under the age of 16, if the Student is being picked up from school by a parent or a person authorized by them in written. The Headteacher or their Deputy are sole competent to decide if the safety conditions are met to release the student. In all cases, the parent or legal guardian is fully responsible for the child as soon as the child leaves the school premises.

Upon request to sign out their child early, parents will be notified by the PA to the Deputy Headteacher as to their child's current attendance and made aware of how close they are to the various attendance thresholds set out in Section 8 of this Attendance Policy. This will be recorded as a 'note' on the students ISAMS file by the PA to the Deputy Headteacher.

12. Hours of Lost Learning

When staff talk about attendance percentages with parents or students, it can be difficult for them to understand why there are concerns. A student with 89% attendance at the end of an academic year will have missed 21 days of school (over four school weeks of learning missed). Whilst 89% is a positive achievement in an examination/test, 89% attendance would warrant a significant level of concern and is classified as very weak as per the [UAE School Inspection Framework](#).

Descriptor	Threshold Attendance	Actual Attendance (Days)	Whole Days of Absence	Hours of Lost Learning	Average IGCSE Grade
Satisfactory	100%	190	0	0	B
	99%	188	2	12	
	98%	186	4	24	
	97%	184	6	36	
	96%	182.5	7.5	45	
Cause for Concern	95%	180.5	9.5	57	C
	94%	179	11	66	
	93%	177	13	78	
	92%	175	15	90	
Unacceptably Low Attendance	91%	173	17	102	E
	90%	171	19	114	