

Policy No. 8.07

School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

MISSION

Inspiring Minds – Active and engaging learning with high expectations
Shaping Values – A Culture of respect, tolerance and open-mindedness
Building Futures – A World Class Education promoting individual excellence

Policy Statement

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. ISB is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 95% attendance or above for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good Attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between Primary school, Secondary school, and higher education, employment, or training

Students who fail to have a record of 85% attendance or below will be referred to the Primary/Secondary Leadership Team (PLT/SLT) and may incur the following consequences:

- Will be required to catch-up on all worked missed, and as a last resort will be asked to repeat the year
- Advised against taking any external examinations (IGCSE/O level or IB) at the end of the two-year course
- Safeguarding measures may be implemented

Understanding Types of Absence

Students are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised** absence is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised

- **Unauthorised** absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings, truancy before or during the school day, absences which have not been explained

The school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers.

1.0 Roles and Responsibilities

A member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will oversee, direct, and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Responsibilities of Staff

Monitoring of pupil attendance is the responsibility of: Teachers, administration, Heads of Year, the designated member of Leadership team.

- Teachers are responsible for marking the attendance registers at the beginning of each lesson and end of day the pastoral administrator is responsible for ensuring a record has been requested from the Parent/Guardian to explain pupil absence
- The pastoral administrator follows up any query concerning a student absent from school. This involves discussion with the Head of Year and/or Tutor and, if appropriate, immediate contact with the parent
- Registers are checked daily by the pastoral administrator and on a week-by-week basis by the Head of Year and/or Tutor
- A clear distinction is made between authorised and unauthorised absence. In the case of unauthorised absence, contact is made with parents. If this proves difficult additional support is sought from External Agencies
- The pastoral administrator meets with PLT/ SLT lead on a fortnightly basis to highlight problems and monitor pupils' return to school
- The pastoral administrator and Head of Year (HoY) or Class teacher/Tutor will follow up continued absence of more than three days, without notification from parents. Poor punctuality will be monitored and followed up where necessary

Responsibilities of Pupils

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- Arrive in school on time
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Ensuring is your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school may create an offence in law.

Parents will:

- inform the school on the first day of absence
- discuss with the tutor/class teacher any planned absences well in advance to support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or email on the first and subsequent days of absence
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance

2.0 Recording Attendance

- The register must be marked during Registration/Tutor time at the start of the day
- Registers are also taken for lessons (Secondary)
- Student are expected to arrive in Primary school by 7.20am and Secondary School by 7.10am
- Morning registration will take place during Registration/ Tutor Time
- Pupils that arrive after Registration / Tutor time will be coded as late
- Pupils arriving 7.25am must sign in at the school office

3.0 Lesson Punctuality

The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late, they can miss work time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing for the pupil leading to possible further absence.

4.0 Medical

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists' appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

What to do if my child is absent?

First and Second day absence

If your child is absent, you must contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence by emailing or calling the Primary or Secondary office or directly sending a message to your child's Class/Tutor via EduLink or Seesaw.

Third day absence or more

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school may treat this as a safeguarding issue.

5.0 Requests for Leave of Absence

All leave of absence requests are subject to ISB approval.

- The school may grant leave of absence during term time if there are exceptional circumstances, and this is not a regular occurrence. Parents/carers wishing to apply for a leave of absence need to inform the Primary or Secondary office and before making any travel arrangements
- When granting leave of absence, the school will take into consideration the extenuating circumstances related to differing calendars, religious or cultural elements, and challenges facing expatriate families and other communities based here in the host country

- If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be classed as unauthorised

Long term Leave of absence

Parents/ guardians can request a long-term leave of absence for the following reasons:

- Medical grounds such as extended sick leave
- Compassionate grounds
- Overseas postings

All requests must be on a *Leave of Absence Request Form* and have supporting evidence.

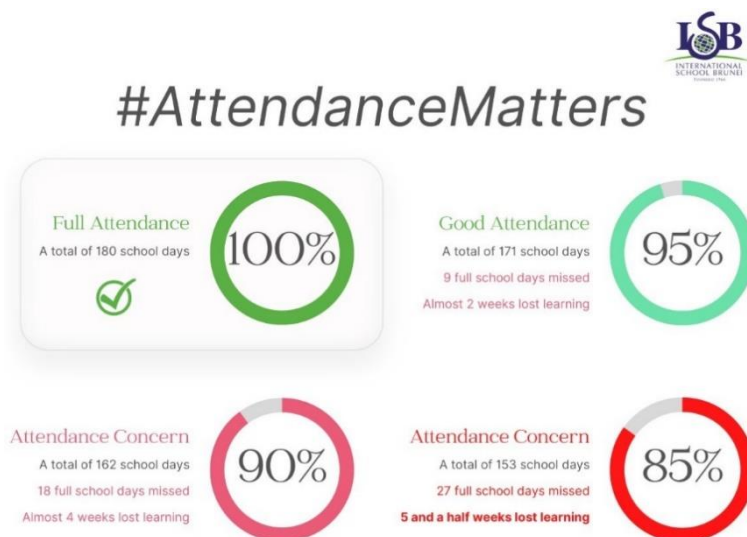
The terms and conditions of this request are:

1. All outstanding fees must be paid before the commencement of leave of absence
2. All resources must be returned once leave of absence request has been approved
3. Leave of absence will be granted to a maximum of 3 terms only
4. Parents who intend to withdraw their child/ren from the school for any reason must give at least one (1) term's notice in order to qualify for refundable deposit, subject to above

If your child is absent from ISB for one term or more, they will be required to undergo a meeting before rejoining the school and will have to complete any necessary entrance assessments. This is to ensure the required level of academic performance has been acquired during the period of non-attendance. Any sign of potential development delay will require the student to repeat the period of leave/absence in order to place the student's progress back on track. Students attending another school provision during this time must provide supporting evidence (for overseas posting only).

7.0 Procedure for promoting attendance and punctuality

The school will promote high attendance to students and parents in various ways (assemblies, Seesaw messages, website, letters home, social media, etc.) including the use of infographics (see below). Secondary specific interventions are shown in Appendix 1.



My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This

gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Contact your child's Head of Year or Tutor immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for several reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than leaving at the end of Year 13) parents are asked to complete a withdrawal form and liaise with the Admissions department and Primary/Secondary Office.

Absence through child participation in external events, competitions, performances, activities, religious reasons

Parents can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Head of Year to discuss the nature and frequency of the work,

The Head of Year or PLT/SLT will decide to authorise this, and they may wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

8.0 Record Preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance in line with current Brunei government regulations.

Monitoring and Review

ISB is aware of the need to regularly review our policies to consider new initiatives, changes in the curriculum or developments in technology.

<u>Linked policies:</u>	<u>Appendices</u>
8.04 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	Secondary Tracking and Monitoring Procedure
8.39 Data Protection Policy	
8.43 Mental Health and Well-being Policy	

Appendix 1: Secondary Tracking and Monitoring Procedure

Centralized tracking in Secondary:

Pastoral admin monitors and tracks weekly attendance and punctuality data on a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet is shared with all staff to keep Tutors, HOYs and SLT informed of students flagged.

Attendance:

Parents use EduLink – Absence Reporting to inform Pastoral admin of absence dates and reasons.

Pastoral admin updates absence reports on the 'live' daily tracking spreadsheet shared with Secondary staff.

Pastoral admin sends EduLink message (warning - below 90%) for absences without valid reason (medical, bereavement, special circumstances, etc) to students, parents, Tutor, HOYs and *record* messages on SIMs.

Pastoral admin will flag absence concerns (no contact from parents, no reasons given, etc.) to Tutors and HOY.

Tutors and HOY to follow up with flagged students and contact parents. Close monitoring of attendance. Meetings with parents are required to ensure the flagged student's attendance improves.

Punctuality:

Tutors check spreadsheet and speak to flagged students (2 lates in a week) to enforce expectations.

HOYs to reinforce expectations and run lunch detentions.

Pastoral admin will send EduLink messages to students, parents, Tutor, HOYs and *record* these messages on SIMs for:

- 2 lates in a week: Message 1 from Tutor to raise concern.
- 2 lates the following week: Message 2 from HOY about ongoing concern and issue a lunch detention.
- 2 more lates the following week: Message 3 from HOY to contact/discuss concerns with parents. Any further concerns will be escalated to Deputy Head.

Message 1 from Tutor to raise concern.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Re: Persistent lateness - concerns

Punctuality to 7.15am registration is a basic expectation for all students to manage their time independently. According to school records, your child has been late on at least two occasions this week. You can view your child's records on EduLink – Attendance – Statutory Academic Year. These records are included in School Reports.

When students arrive late, they miss out on important information and learning activities. This can significantly impact on your child's success in school, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving late and this is quite disruptive for the entire class, meaning other students' education is compromised. To benefit your child, inculcate good habits and improve their school records, we will monitor your child's punctuality closely. If this problem persists, we will put interventions in place. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything we can do to help improve your child's punctuality or if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,
 Form Tutor

Message 2 from HOY to issue a lunch detention.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Re: Persistent lateness – ongoing concerns

We are getting quite concerned. According to school records, your child is still persistently late for school and missing out on important learning activities and information. Punctuality to 7.15am registration is a basic expectation for all students to manage time independently and be ready to learn.

To support your child in meeting school expectations and benefit their learning and progress, we are putting interventions in place. Your child will be issued a detention during lunch on (date) at (time) in (venue) Your child must bring their pre-order lunch or home-packed lunch on this date. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Head of Year

Message 3 from HOY to contact parents regarding ongoing concern.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Re: Persistent lateness – serious ongoing concern

I am contacting you to discuss ongoing concerns regarding your child's persistent lateness to school which begins at 7.15am. Despite ongoing efforts with interventions, conversations and communications, your child continues to miss out on important information and learning activities. This lateness can significantly impact on your child's well-being, learning and success in school, regardless of ability.

Furthermore, when a student arrives late, it is quite disruptive for the entire class, meaning other students' education is compromised. I look forward to hearing back from you to discuss this matter in order to benefit your child's learning and well-being.

Yours sincerely,

Head of Year