



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Policy Purpose

The Oporto British School (OBS) aims to foster a positive work ethic and develop students' awareness of employers' and OBS's expectations with regards to attendance and punctuality.

High levels of attendance and excellent punctuality are both characteristics of students who achieve or exceed their potential. Research shows that poor attendance and punctuality have a serious detrimental effect on outcomes. Attendance falling below 95% can result in an average reduction of one grade per subject and this increases to two grades when attendance falls below 90%. Consistent lack of attendance and/or lateness is grounds for dismissal in employment or failing a university course, so we mirror these expectations.

One of our strategic objectives is to reduce to zero the number of students whose attendance and punctuality at the OBS drops below 90%. A target for attendance and punctuality will be established annually by the Headmaster. This is currently set at an aspirational level of 95%. The annual target will be published with other benchmarking data to students, staff, parents and Governors.

There is a direct link between attendance and attainment, and this policy is based on the understanding that full attendance underpins any learning and that high achievement directly correlates with good attendance. We are committed to the personal development and well-being of all our students and, consequently we want to encourage, support and motivate all students to make their attendance records as good as they can be.

Contents

Policy Purpose	3
Process 1 – Policy Aims	3
Process 2 – Objectives.....	3
Process 3 – Expectations	3
Teachers and Secondary Tutor/Primary Form Teacher/Primary Form Teachers are expected to	4
Parents/carers are expected to.....	4
Process 4- Attendance Procedures	4
Daily Monitoring.....	4
Notifying the school of Absence	5
Illness.....	5
Lateness.....	5
Justified Absence	6
Unjustified Absence	6
Application for Leave of Absence.....	7
Procedures for return to school	8
Removal from the school roll	8
Attendance Praise and Rewards	8
Process 5 – Attendance Intervention.....	9
Addressing punctuality concerns	9
Addressing attendance concerns	10
Process 6- Policy Framework.....	11

Process 1 – Policy Aims

This policy has been drawn up to clarify our attendance and punctuality expectations at The Oporto British School and ensure that parents and students understand what is expected of them. This includes the avoidance of all unnecessary absence, including term-time holidays.

Our vision is to work in partnership with parents to provide an education where all students want to be here 'all the time, on time and take pride in their attendance and punctuality because:

- OBS offers a secure, positive and encouraging environment.
- The curriculum is far-reaching and personalised to the ability of each student to help them achieve their full potential.
- Outstanding teaching and learning make school enjoyable and rewarding, securing positive achievement, underpinned by positive attendance.
- Through monitoring attendance and punctuality, students are given the support they need in order to meet or exceed their targets.

Process 2 – Objectives

- To meet the statutory requirements under Portuguese law.
- To maintain overall attendance percentage at 95%.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority at OBS, with targets published to students, parents/carers, teachers and governors.
- To develop robust and systematic approaches to collating, analysing and monitoring attendance data.
- To celebrate and reward excellent and/or improved attendance patterns and punctuality.
- To specifically monitor & target students in vulnerable groups (Poor Attendees, SEND pupils and those on the Safeguarding register)
- To investigate poor attendance (First Day Calling), address the causes and operate systems of staged action, alongside providing support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and students.
- To pursue cases of poor attendance caused by prolonged illness, address the needs of individual students and plan educational reintegration following periods of significant absence.
- To maintain positive and consistent communication between home and school, keeping students and parents/carers regularly informed of their child's percentage attendance.
- To promote effective partnerships with relevant external services and agencies.

Process 3 – Expectations

All students are expected to:

- attend fully during the OBS day;
- stay on site for the entire OBS day (Approval is required to go off-site, including lunch times)
- attend all timetabled lessons on time including tutorials, supervised study periods and morning registration;
- maintain a cumulative rate of attendance at 95% or above¹;
- maintain a cumulative rate of punctuality at 95% or above;

¹ Form 11 and 12 students will be justified for up to 5 days' attendance at relevant career events or university open days but are encouraged to visit at weekends wherever possible. At least one week's notice is required.

- avoid making routine doctor, dental or other appointments during the school day;
- never make appointments for driving lessons during the school day;
- sign in and out when entering or leaving the site; and
- take account of the OBS's recommendation to limit any part time work to 8 hours per week so that it does not impact on studies.

The Pastoral Lead (Ms Nuna Sousa) is the person charged with monitoring attendance and punctuality for the whole school, and reporting to the Head of School and to the Pastoral Committee on patterns of attendance and punctuality.

Parents are reminded that attendance and punctuality are key requirements as defined in the Home School Agreement, signed every year by parents or guardians.

Teachers and Tutors are expected to:

- promote high standards of attendance and punctuality;
- be at their door greeting students and ensuring students are ushered into their classroom for a prompt start to lessons and registration;
- complete the SIMS registration at the start of each lesson and update the register for any late arrivals;
- follow up on lateness and unexplained absence to lessons with the support of Secondary Tutor/Primary Form Teacher and Key Stage Coordinators/Primary Pastoral Coordinator and report any actions on SIMS;
- sanction students' lateness to lessons;
- secondary Tutors/ KS Pastoral Coordinators/ Pastoral Lead /Primary Form Teachers and Primary Pastoral Coordinator should followup unjustified absence with the support of the admin team and apply appropriate sanctions where it is deemed necessary using their professional judgement, and
- clear students from their duty area a few minutes before the start of each lesson to ensure that students can arrive to their next lesson on time.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- understand the length and structure of the OBS day and ensure that their child attends the OBS on time as required;
- inform their child's Secondary Tutor/Primary Form Teacher and the Admin team, preferably by email or in writing, of unavoidable appointments (such as specialist medical appointments) in advance;
- ensure that OBS has their current contact information, including email and mobile number for contact in the case of absence;
- inform OBS by phone or e-mail on each day of absence before 08:30, if the absence is not planned;
- provide OBS with a signed and dated letter or email stating the reason for absence, on their child's return to the OBS (where appropriate, medical evidence should be provided);
- support the school's processes for making lunch requests;
- never make arrangements for their child to go on holiday during term time and only approach the Headmaster or Head of Sections for permission for exceptional leave when this is clearly in compliance with Section 5 of this policy; and
- support OBS's rewards and sanctions arrangements.

Process 4- Attendance Procedures

Daily Monitoring

The Oporto British School monitors the attendance of all students through the Secondary teachers and Tutor/Primary Form Teacher, the Pastoral Team and Admin team on a daily basis, with registers being recorded on SIMS.

If a student is recorded absent without due notification, the admin team will contact parents /carers by email in the first instance, and certainly before 10am in the case of the morning session, and 3pm for the afternoon session (F9-12). If there has been no reply or explanation, the admin team will telephone parents / carers as a follow-up by 11am for the morning session, or 4pm for the afternoon session (F9-12), if this has not already happened.

If Subject Teachers become aware that a student has been in school that day, but is not in their lesson, this must be followed up involving the Secondary Tutor/Primary Form Teacher, and/or Primary Pastoral Coordinator / Pastoral Lead.

Notifying the school of Absence

Request for absence should be made in the first instance by completing an 'Absence Request for Students Form'.

Illness

Parents/Carers are expected to inform the school at the earliest opportunity of the student's absence by calling the school on +351 226 166 660. If illness is prolonged, parents/carers are asked to keep the school informed of their child's progress. If staff are contacted by a parent about absence, they must let the admin team know as soon as possible.

-Whilst OBS recognises that students will get ill, a prolonged period of absence, or regular bouts of illness still contribute to a poor attendance figure. Patterns of illness will also be monitored and may trigger the following actions;

- Students who are off school for more than 5 days due to illness will be required to provide a medical evidence of their illness.
- Students with attendance less than 85% may well be asked for medical evidence of their illness.
- Parents/carers whose child is reluctant to attend school by saying that they are ill should contact the Secondary Tutor/Primary Form Teacher and or relevant Secondary key Stage coordinator /Primary Pastoral Coordinator at the earliest opportunity in order to get to the root cause of the issue.

Illness during the school day

If a student falls ill during the school day then they are to visit the First Aid room for assessment. The First Aider on duty will decide if the student is to go home or stay at school or if other arrangements need to be made. The First Aider will then communicate this to the Admin team and arrangements made or the student will return to class.

Lateness

Parents/carers are encouraged to inform OBS at the earliest opportunity if they are aware that their child is

going to be late for school. Students arriving after morning registration closes will be allocated an 'N' code on the register.

All staff have a responsibility to be proactive with the punctuality of students. Secondary Tutor/Primary Form Teacher, Subject Teachers and Heads of Departments must follow up and action patterns of lateness and reasons for poor punctuality, involving parents/carers when appropriate. Persistent and complex cases should be referred to the relevant Secondary Head of House/Primary Pastoral Coordinator.

Students arriving late to OBS or lessons with no proper reason should be subject to appropriate disciplinary action which may include:

- Secondary Tutor/Primary Form Teacher/ Subject Teacher Break/Lunchtime detention, Department or After School Detention or Headmaster Detention.
- Attendance and Lesson report; via Secondary Tutor/Primary Form Teacher.
- Contact/Letter home.

All students who arrive late to OBS MUST report to the Reception Office and sign in, stating the reason for the lateness. This will be recorded with an 'L' code on SIMS and a note added.

Justified Absence

Justified absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, such as illness, religious observance, family bereavement or a cause beyond the care or control of the parents.

Only OBS can authorise absence.

Parents/carers are encouraged to keep planned justified absences to an absolute minimum. Parents/carers are expected to arrange holidays and appointments for medical or other reasons outside of school hours.

In the event of an extended family holiday/absence for cultural or religious reasons, the appropriate 'justified absence' code will be used. These are available to view on SIMS.

Justification

Justification for absence can only be granted for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Isolation due to illness
- Death in the family
- Birth of a sibling
- Medical treatment
- Help care for an ill close family member
- Observe religious ceremonies
- Participation in high level sporting events
- Fulfil legal requirements

Unjustified Absence

Unjustified absences are those which OBS do not consider reasonable or for which no 'permission' has been given. These are regarded as an offence by the parents/carers or student and include such instances as keeping children off school without a good reason, truancy from a whole session, absences which have never been

properly explained and taking unjustified holidays.

Absences are unjustified when:

- There has been no justification given
- Justification has not been handed in on time
- If a student must leave a lesson for disciplinary reasons

The school must notify parents of an unjustified absence within 3 working days.

Where unjustified absence in Forms 1-5 reaches 10 days (either continuous or aggregated) the school must contact the COMISSÃO DE PROTEÇÃO DE CRIANÇAS E JOVENS where the child is resident. The School should contact the child's parents or carers when the number of unjustified absences reaches 5 days (either continuous or aggregated).

Where unjustified absence in Forms 6-12 reaches the equivalent of 2 weeks for any subject (either continuous or aggregated) the school must contact the COMISSÃO DE PROTEÇÃO DE CRIANÇAS E JOVENS where the child is resident. The School should contact the child's parents or carers when the number of unjustified absences reaches 1 week in any subject (either continuous or aggregated).

(e.g. if a child has 2 lessons of games per week. The school must notify parents or carers when a child reaches 2 unjustified absences from games lessons. When a child reaches 4 unjustified absences from games COMISSÃO DE PROTEÇÃO DE CRIANÇAS E JOVENS would have to be notified.)

Application for Leave of Absence

In exceptional circumstances the Headmaster or Head of Section can authorise absence. These circumstances can be grouped under two headings:

- (a) Compassionate leave of absence. The Headmaster or Head of Section will grant leave of absence in compassionate circumstances, for example close family funerals, emergency caring responsibilities or absence related to time spent with a seriously ill close family member.
- (b) Educational activities. Parents may apply for their children to accompany them during term time on trips or activities whose primary purpose is of high and relevant educational value. Such a trip would have to be of relatively short duration (no more than 10 lost OBS days) and satisfy three tests.
 - I. The educational content must be directly related to the specific course of study the student is undertaking.
 - II. It must be impossible for the student to gain the same learning in the course of their studies or during holiday periods.
 - III. The educational benefits must outweigh the lost learning resulting from absence and be clearly catalogued in an agreed learning programme signed off in advance by OBS. This will include a learning timetable signed off before the visit and a formal report afterwards (which may well contribute to assessment in some qualifications).

Holidays **will not be** justified if:

- They are on the grounds of the availability of cheaper holidays.
- They are on the grounds of poor weather experienced during school holiday periods.

- The holiday arrangements overlap with the beginning or end of term.
- The student already has poor attendance, and/or the Pastoral Team is involved.
- The student already has unjustified absence.
- The student will miss end of year exams, mock exams or public examinations (IGCSE's, IBDP or any other externally set exams).
- The student's educational progress will be affected by any disruption at the time.

In all circumstances of holiday leave, a written application must be made by the parent/carer with whom the student normally resides in advance of the holiday and a date for the student's return to school agreed. Parents/carers must apply for the Headmaster's or Head of Section's permission using the appropriate form that is available. Parents/carers will be informed in writing or via email as to the decision made regarding the absence.

Procedures for return to school

Where a student has a prolonged illness, regular contact will be maintained with parents/carers and work sent home where appropriate. Individual arrangements will be made for students to access a gradual return to school where appropriate. A plan for the student may be needed to ensure that all agencies are involved in the reintegration. There will be regular meetings with students to support them on their return to school and Subject Teachers be informed of the individual needs of the students. Communication with parents/carers will also be key at this time.

Removal from the school roll

Students will only be removed from the School roll following authorisation from appropriate staff when:

- Parents/carers make a written request to the school.
- Confirmation has been received that a student is attending another educational establishment.
- They have completed all external examinations and left at the end of study leave/year 10 or 12.
- They have been continually absent from school for a period of not less than 4 weeks and both the school and the COMISSÃO DE PROTEÇÃO DE CRIANÇAS E JOVENS have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the student.
- They have been continually absent from school for a period of not less than 4 weeks and are detained in pursuance of a final court order or an order of recall made by the Secretary of State.

Attendance Praise and Rewards

Students' good attendance patterns are to be regularly recognised and celebrated by:

- Secondary Tutor/Primary Form Teacher giving praise and celebrating conspicuous attendance
- Pastoral Coordinators and/or Pastoral Lead /Primary Pastoral Coordinator giving praise and celebrating in assemblies / group meetings.
- The awarding of certificates for excellent or markedly improved performances.

Permission to leave the school during the lunch breaks

Students in all Forms up to and including Form 8 may only leave the campus at lunchtime in order to return home for lunch, and with exceptional permission; **they may not** go to cafes/restaurants on their own or with other students. Permission to go out for lunch with immediate family, relatives or other adults should be requested, **in writing not later than 9am on the day concerned**. On Mondays, this will be the Friday the week before. If this is not communicated in time, students will not be allowed to leave during the lunch break except in unavoidable and exceptional circumstances at the Head of Section's discretion (this applies to all students that do not have a lunch pass to leave the school). No students from any Form up to Form 10 are allowed to leave the campus at morning break. Long term requests for students to leave school regularly during lunch breaks, which also require adult collection, in all Forms up to Form 8 must be made in writing to the school and will have to be approved by the Head of Section. The school admin team should be given the request in writing.

A list of those students justified to leave the premises at lunchtime will be deposited at the Front Office as a security cross check. If your child's name is not on this list, they will not be permitted off site. Please note that these procedures and requirements are to ensure the safety of your child whilst at school.

Form 9 – 12 students are allowed to leave the school site at lunchtime providing parents/guardians approve a 'lunch pass request' which will be sent out by the school at the start of the academic year.

The students with permission can have permission revoked through the disabling of permissions through their turnstile card. **Any student who has arrived late or is missing work will have this privilege removed and will not be allowed to leave during lunch. The school will ensure that the student has food available for lunch in this case.**

All students in Secondary are allowed to leave the premises unaccompanied at the end of the school day, unless parents have specifically informed the school they are not allowed to.

IB students may be given permission to leave the school during study periods and breaks if they have acceptable attendance and have met academic expectations. This will be at the discretion of the IBDP Coordinator and Head of Section.

Process 5 – Attendance Intervention

Addressing punctuality concerns

- Stage 1
 - If a student arrives late (after 8:35am) at OBS, they will be given a warning by their Secondary Tutor/Primary Form Teacher and this will be recorded on SIMS.
 - If a student Form 1 and above has 2 or more incidents of lateness in a term the student will be given a negative point on SIMS and parents/carers will be contacted.
- Stage 2
 - If a student is persistently late (3 or more incidents in a term) they will meet with the Secondary Pastoral Coordinator/Primary Pastoral Coordinator and issued an after-school detention and will be put on a punctuality/attendance report to the Secondary Tutor/Primary Form Teacher. Parents/carers will be contacted.
- Stage 3
 - A continued pattern of lateness will result in a Punctuality Meeting with the relevant Secondary Pastoral Coordinators/Primary Pastoral Coordinator and the parent/carer. Targets will be set, and

the student will report to their Secondary Head of House/Primary Pastoral Coordinator. This will also be recorded on SIMS.

- Stage 4 (If the punctuality problem is still not resolved)
 - A School Attendance Meeting will be convened, and the student's name and concerns may be referred to the COMISSÃO DE PROTEÇÃO DE CRIANÇAS E JOVENS in the area where the child is resident. Parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school punctuality and that penalty notices may be issued and/or court proceedings pursued. Attendance at compulsory parent/student workshops and/or panel meetings will be expected.
 - If the minimum attendance requirements have not been met, the student may have to repeat the year and may not be entered for external exams, or they may be asked to leave at the end of the academic year at the Headmaster's discretion.

Addressing attendance concerns

If OBS has not been notified of the absence of a student, parents/carers will be contacted by the school by e-mail, text or telephone. Absence for holidays that have not been agreed with the Headmaster and will be marked as unjustified and will be referred to COMISSÃO DE PROTEÇÃO DE CRIANÇAS E JOVENS.

- Stage 1
 - If attendance falls below 95% the student will have an initial discussion with their Secondary Tutor/Primary Form Teacher, Secondary Pastoral Coordinators /Primary Pastoral Coordinator or Subject Teacher and this will be recorded on SIMS.
- Stage 2
 - If attendance falls below 90%, the Secondary Key Stage Coordinators/Primary Pastoral Coordinator will meet with the student. This will be recorded on SIMS. Parents/carers will be informed. They will also be sent a letter informing them of their child's attendance figures. The student will be on a Secondary Tutor/Primary Form Teacher Report.
- Stage 3
 - A continued pattern of poor attendance will result in an Attendance Meeting with the Pastoral Lead, the student and the parent/carer. Targets will be set, and the student will report to their Secondary Key Stage Coordinator / Primary Pastoral Coordinator or Secondary Tutor/Primary Form Teacher. This will also be recorded on SIMS.
During School Attendance Meetings, the student's name and concerns will be raised. The student will be monitored closely. For IB students, there will be a discussion about future studies at OBS.
- Stage 4 (if the attendance problem is still not resolved)
 - A School Attendance meeting will be convened and the student may be referred to the COMISSÃO DE PROTEÇÃO DE CRIANÇAS E JOVENS in the area where the child is resident. Parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance and that penalty notices may be issued and/or court proceedings pursued. Attendance at compulsory parent/student workshops and/or panel meetings will be expected.
 - If the minimum attendance requirements have not been met, the student may have to repeat the year and may not be entered for external exams, or they may be asked to leave at the end of the academic year at the Headmaster's discretion.

- Whenever a standard warning letter is sent home, it should be reviewed for appropriateness. For example, if a student's absences are justified, for example as a result of illness, then a letter should not come across as too heavy handed. In such cases there should be no references to legal action or fines.
- While the Attendance System normally anticipates progression from Stage 1 through to Stage 4, this may not necessarily happen. Some attendance and/or punctuality patterns may be so serious that students may jump several stages, and this can include going straight to stage 4.
- Medical Action Plans (Medical PEPs): This process is managed by the Pastoral Team and can be activated at any point, irrespective of attendance percentage. These are used for students with poor attendance due to health issues or medical complications. There is a specific letter which will be accompanied by a parent/carer meeting where the 'Medical Action Plan' is agreed.

Process 6- Policy Framework

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