

## QUALITY PRESCHOOL FOR GHANA (QP4G) STUDY

### Protocols for School Attendance Records

#### 1.1 Why School Attendance Records?

Successful preschools begin by engaging teachers and children and making sure they come to school regularly. Research has shown that there is a high correlation between school attendance and academic performance and success, while absence from school is often the greatest single cause of poor performance and achievement. If children do not show up for school regularly, they miss out on fundamental reading and math skills as well as the chance to build a habit of good attendance when they are school ready. Thus, children are more likely to succeed in academics when they attend school consistently. Information on school attendance for the sampled KG children and teachers would help us establish the link between school attendance and teaching/ learning outcomes of teachers and children.

#### 1.2 Source of Attendance Records

The sole source of information for the attendance record is the attendance register or book (Table 1). Where the Pupils' Attendance Register does not exist in the school, use the acceptable record type that the school provides on children school attendance. For instance, some schools use exercise or notebooks to record school attendance. In some schools, the attendance book for the teachers at the KG unit is different from the primary or JHS level. Enquire from the school head the appropriate source of attendance records for the teachers at the KG unit to ensure speedy data collection.

*Table 1: Source of Attendance Records*

Respondent	Name of the Reference register
KG children	Pupils' Attendance Register
KG teachers	Teachers' Attendance Book

#### 1.3 Terms and Definitions

The following terms and definitions apply.

- a. *Absence*: Absence is the nonattendance of a child or teacher to school on days school is in session as reported in the attendance register. Generally, absence is marked "0" in the Pupils' Attendance Register. Teachers who did not write their names and signed [in the Teachers' Attendance Book] on days school is in session are considered to be absent.
- b. *Attendance/present*: Attendance is the presence of a KG child or teacher during the prescribed/active school period on days school is in session. Generally, present is marked "1" in the Pupils' Attendance Register. In the Teachers' Attendance Book, it is indicated by the name and signature of a teacher on days school is in session.

- c. *Total number of weeks per term:* This is the number of weeks that the school was [or will be] in session in a particular term. It includes national and/or school-related holidays. A number of weeks for the 2015/2016 academic year for the public schools is shown in Table 2. This may vary among private schools.

*Table 2: Academic Calendar and Holidays for the 2015/2016 School Year*

Term	# weeks/days spent in school		National Holidays		
	Weeks	Min. Active days	Name	Date	Day
1	15 weeks	72 / 73	Founder's	21 <sup>st</sup> September	Monday
			Eid al-Adha	September 24	Thursday
			Farmers'	4 <sup>th</sup> December	Friday
2	14 weeks	67	Independence	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2016	Sunday/Monday
			Good Friday	25 <sup>th</sup> March 2016	Friday
			Easter Monday	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2016	Monday
3	12 weeks	57	AU day	25 <sup>th</sup> May 2016	Wednesday
			Republic	1 <sup>st</sup> July 2016	Friday
			Eid-Al-Fitr	6 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	Wednesday

- d. *Total number of active school days per term:* This indicates either the (a) number of days the attendance register was opened in either *Terms 1* or *2*, or (b) number of days the attendance register has been opened till date (i.e., day/date of visit to the school) [for *Term 3*]. It excludes national and school-related holidays within the term.
- e. *Total number of national and/or school-related holidays:* This is the number of days within the school term or as part of the number of weeks that the school is in a session that is observed as either a national holiday or a school-related holiday. See Table 2 for details on the observed national holidays within the 2015/2016 academic year.
- f. *Total attendance per term:* This is the cumulative number of days a KG child or teacher was/is present in school in a term. It is the sum of the number of days present in school or total weekly attendance for a child or teacher in the term.
- g. *# No or incomplete records:* This is the number of days within the term with or without attendance records for a KG child or teacher. This could be because no attendance was taken for a particular day or period during the term.
- h. *Child absent for 14 days or more in a row in a term:* Per GES regulations, if a student/child absent him/herself from school for 14 days or more in a row, the student is assumed to have withdrawn him/herself. The school is expected to cancel the child's name in the attendance register (*but this doesn't often happen!*).

## 1.4 Procedure for Completing the School Attendance Records

In order to ensure standardization of the attendance records for the KG children and teachers, the following procedures should be adhered to.

### 1.4.1 General guidelines

1. Obtain [verbal] consent from the school head.
2. Request for the *Pupils' Attendance Register* and *Teachers Attendance Book* for the KG unit for *Terms 1, 2 and 3* of the 2015/2016 academic year from the school head and/or KG class teacher.
3. Obtain school-level information on the (a) total number of weeks that a school is in session per term, (b) a number of active school days per term, and (c) the total number of school-related holidays from the school head. Use this information for all KG teachers and children within the school. Observed holidays are often written across the names of the children in the register for the particular day. Use the holidays provided in Table 1 as a guide to ensure that the days in the register are appropriately recorded.
4. If no attendance was recorded on a particular day, count that day as part of the number of 'no or incomplete records'.
5. Make sure you send the data to the server before the close of each day.
6. All paper completed *School Attendance Records Forms* should be submitted to the FM.

### 1.4.2 Attendance records for KG children

1. Observe the *Pupils' Attendance Register* for *Term 1*.
  - a. Observe the attendance register for each KG class and record the cumulative total attendance for each KG child on the *KG Children Attendance Record Form*.
    - i. Where the cumulative totals for the term do not exist, calculate using the weekly totals, but ensure that the weekly totals are accurate for all the weeks in the term.
      - o Check through the total attendance per week and ensure that it is not more than five (5). If you observed a value more than five for a particular week, recalculate the weekly attendance for the child.
      - o Check the cumulative totals for each child and ensure that the summations are accurate. If not accurate, calculate the total attendance before you record the value.
  - b. Identify the number of days in which no attendance records were taken for each child and record the totals in the column "*# No/incomplete records*".
  - c. Identify whether any of the KG children were absent from school continuously for *14 days or more in a row* (in some cases, the name of the child would have been

- canceled). If yes, record the number of days the child was absent from school for these periods. Look for this information for each child and record appropriately. If the child absents him/herself for the entire term but resumes in the subsequent term, follow the information provided in the attendance register. That is if the child has been marked absent for the previous term or canceled indicate so. Also, indicate the number of days that s/he was/is present in the subsequent term as indicated in the attendance register. If the attendance for the days of absent for 14 days or more is not recorded, report as 'no or incomplete records'.
- d. Complete the attendance records for Term 1 before moving to Term 2.
2. Repeat the process as in step 4 for *Term 2* of the 2015/2016 academic year.
  3. Repeat the process as in step 4 for *Term 3* of the 2015/2016 academic year. Note that the Term 3 attendance records would not have the cumulative totals, as Term 3 is still in session.
    - a. Calculate the total attendance for the previous weeks (i.e., weeks preceding the week of the visit to the school) in *Term 3*, say *Total for Previous Weeks*.
    - b. Calculate the number of attendance for the days of the week in which you visit the school. For instance, if you visited the school on a Thursday, attendance was taken from Monday to Thursday and the particular child was present on these days, the total attendance for the week is four (4). However, if the attendance for the day of the visit was not taken, find out whether the particular child was in school that day and mark present/absent (on your notepad). Add the total attendance for the week of the visit to the *Total for Previous Weeks*. This becomes the cumulative total for *Term 3* for the particular child.
  4. After recording the attendance for the three terms, take pictures of either Term 1 and/or Term 2 of the Pupils' Attendance Register (for KG 1 and 2 KG classes or combined KG) using the tablet and save using the school ID, KG class, and term. The pictures should have the page bearing the names of the children and their respective cumulative attendance scores, labeled *school ID\_KG\_term*.

### 1.4.3 Attendance records for KG teachers

The following procedures should be strictly followed when completing the school attendance records for the KG teachers:

1. Use the information in 1.3 above to complete the teacher records.
2. If the attendance records for the KG teachers is combined with other teachers in the school, identify the KG teachers in the *Teachers' Attendance Book*.

3. For each KG teacher, count the number of days each KG teacher was present in school for each term and complete the attendance records. In some schools, the cumulative totals or days present in a particular term is indicated in the *Teachers' Attendance Book*.
4. For Term 3, if the teacher is present on the day of the visit, mark as a present and calculate the total attendance for the term as from the beginning of the Term 3 till the day of a visit to the school.