



# SUNLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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## LEARNER ATTENDANCE POLICY

### POLICY ON LEARNER ATTENDANCE

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to

- (a) promote punctual and regular attendance at **Sunlands Primary School** and
- (b) provide **Sunlands Primary School** and the Western Cape Educational Department (WCED) with standard procedures for recording, managing and monitoring learner attendance.

#### 2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 The national Minister of Basic Education has determined the Policy on Learner Attendance with the approval of the Council of Education Ministers in terms of section 3 of the National Education Policy Act of 1996, which appeared in Government Gazette No. 33150, dated 4 May 2010.

2.2 This policy includes the attached schedules and related instructions.

2.3 This Policy on Learner Attendance applies to **Sunlands Primary School**

#### 3. RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY

##### **Importance of Regular School Attendance**

Enrolment of learners and their regular and punctual attendance at school are prerequisites for an educated nation. Moreover, enrolment and punctual, regular attendance at school are important because

- (a) each school has a duty to protect each learner's fundamental right to education;
- (b) enrolment at a school places a learner under an obligation to attend school punctually and regularly, unless there is a valid reason for absence; and

- (c) a school that successfully curbs absence without valid reason will most likely improve learner retention and performance.

#### **4. LEARNER ABSENCE**

##### **Definition of 'absent'**

A learner is deemed to be absent from school when the learner is not present in class or not participating in a school activity when the register is marked.

#### **5. VALID REASON FOR ABSENCE**

5.1 While punctual and regular attendance is necessary, from time to time, it may not be possible or desirable for a learner to attend school. Any of the following is a valid reason for the absence of a learner from school:

- (a) Study leave taken by a Grade 12 learner in terms of paragraph 6.4.2 of this policy
- (b) Physical or psychological illness, for which a principal may require communication from the parent that the learner is unable to attend school, or written confirmation by a registered medical practitioner or traditional healer if the illness lasts longer than three days
- (c) Giving birth, subject to written confirmation by a registered medical practitioner or registered midwife
- (d) Religious or cultural observances approved by the school governing body (SGB) in terms of the National School Calendar Policy
- (e) Death of a family member
- (f) Appointment at court, social services or other official agency, for which a principal may require documentary proof
- (g) Suspension by the SGB
- (h) Acts of nature (that is, events that are beyond human control)
- (i) Exceptional circumstances for which, in the view of the principal, a temporary absence from school
  - (i) is in the best interest of the learner or
  - (ii) was unavoidable

5.2 Absence without valid reason is unacceptable and will be followed up promptly as set out below.

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 6.1 Roles and Responsibilities of the Principal

6.1.1 The principal, working with the school management team (SMT) and the SGB, is responsible for developing a culture of punctual and regular attendance at the school.

6.1.2 The principal is responsible for fostering a caring school environment in which the SMT and teachers take an interest in each learner's well-being and are alert to problems that might affect a learner's attendance.

6.1.3 Subject to the provisions of section 16A of South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 and section 4 of the Personnel Administrative Measures, the principal may allocate a responsibilities envisaged in this policy to members of staff.

**Class teachers will record absentees in their message books, which must be sent to the office by 08:30 each morning. Ms Puccini, or one of the other administrators in her absence, will record absentees' names on STAFFROOM and CEMIS**

6.1.4 The principal must ensure that staff who are allocated responsibilities for school attendance matters understand the importance of accurate records and careful monitoring, and that they carry out their responsibilities competently.

6.1.5 The principal is responsible for ensuring that class registers and period registers are compiled, marked and monitored properly, and that they are stored safely in terms of this policy. At schools with electronic administration systems, the principal is responsible for ensuring that electronically generated registers are properly maintained and backed up, and that hard copies are made in accordance with this policy.

6.1.6 The principal with the assistance of staff members, eg. Deputy Principal and Social Worker will monitor and follow up absenteeism in the school

6.1.7 If the learner is absent without valid reason for three consecutive school days, the principal must

(a) inform the parents of the importance of regular attendance;

(b) emphasise the learner's duty to attend punctually and regularly in terms of the school's code of conduct for learners;

- (c) if the learner is of compulsory school-going age, inform the parents of the legal implications of section 3 of the SASA;
- (d) inform the parents of the risk of the learner's record in the class register being cancelled because of continuous absence;
- (e) request the learner's return to school;
- (f) where necessary, elicit the support of the district office; and,
- (g) where necessary, elicit intervention from government or non-government social development agencies.

6.1.8 If, despite the intervention of the principal, a learner persists in being absent without valid reason, the principal must

- (a) charge the learner with breach of the school's code of conduct for learners; or
- (b) cancel the learner's record in the class register if the learner is absent for at least 10 consecutive school days.

6.1.9 When a learner's record is cancelled in the class register, the principal must

- (a) inform the parents and class teacher in writing of the date of and reason for the cancellation; and,
- (b) if the learner is of compulsory school-going age, inform the district office of the date of and reason for the cancellation.

6.1.10 The principal must monitor and analyse learner attendance rates in each grade and must include such information in the reports the principal makes to the Head of Department or the SGB in terms of section 16A of SASA.

6.1.11 The principal must consult the district office in order to find an acceptable solution if, during the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations, learner attendance is likely to be disrupted by accommodation difficulties or the absence of teachers on examination marking duty.

## **6.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers**

### **6.2.1 The Class Teacher's Roles and Responsibilities**

6.2.1.1 The class teacher is responsible for sending daily absentees to the office via the message book.

6.2.1.2 The class teacher must inform the principal when a learner is absent without explanation for three consecutive school days and must draw the principal's attention to cases of repeated absence so that the matter may be followed up with the parents in an appropriate manner.

### **6.3 Teacher's Roles and Responsibilities**

6.3.1 The teacher is responsible for indicating absentees in the message book and sending it to the office by 08:30 each day

6.3.2 A teacher who has reason to believe that a learner is absent from a period without valid reason must report such absence to the school office.

### **6.4 Roles and Responsibilities of Learners**

6.4.1 A learner has a responsibility to attend school punctually and regularly. The government depends on parents, SGBs, SMTs, teachers and the WCED to play their part in ensuring that learners accept and act on this responsibility. The example set by parents, SMTs and teachers is of crucial importance in building a culture of punctual and regular attendance.

6.4.2 Except for Grade 12 learners, a learner may not take leave from school to study for examinations or when examinations have ended.

### **6.5 Roles and Responsibilities of Parents**

6.5.1 Parents are expected to

- (a) ensure that the learner attends school daily, on time and for the whole school day, unless there is a valid reason for absence;
- (b) ensure that the learner is not taken out of school without valid reason (Family holidays are not a valid reason.);
- (c) inform the principal or class teacher if the learner is absent or expected to be absent or expected to be late for school, giving a valid reason in writing;
- (d) co-operate with the school in resolving the problem if the learner is absent from school without valid reason; and
- (e) encourage and, if possible, assist the learner to make up for time lost as a result of absence from school.

## **6.6 Roles and Responsibility of the School**

- 6.6.1 The school community, led by the principal and SGB, is responsible for promoting and monitoring school attendance in order to give learners the best chance of benefiting from their school experience.
- 6.6.2 The school will provide support to a learner who has been absent by providing work missed and spending some time with the learner in order to make up for time lost or assessments missed.

## **6.7 The Roles and Responsibilities of the SGB**

- 6.7.1 Rules dealing with punctuality and regular attendance must be part of an SGB's code of conduct for learners.
- 6.7.2 An SGB is expected to take an active interest in the rate of attendance of learners at its school. In particular, an SGB must request from the principal a quarterly report on learner attendance trends (in terms of section 16A (2) (c) of SASA) and consider the report at a meeting.

