



SUNLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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LEARNER ATTENDANCE POLICY

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8. Late Coming

1. PREAMBLE

- 5.1 Regular and punctual school attendance by learners will not only instil discipline among learners but is likely to improve learner retention in the system and overall performance.
- 5.2 While learners stay away from school for many reasons, the effects of poverty cannot be undermined. Irregular attendance of learners can be attributed to one or a combination of the following factors:
- Parent's inability to pay school fees or buy uniforms;
 - lack of transport to school;
 - parents' or children's chronic illness, including HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis;
 - poor nutrition or hunger;
 - child labour;
 - unstable or dysfunctional family life and
 - Gang violence.
- 5.3 The monitoring of learners' absence and the taking of appropriate follow up action will enable a school to successfully curb absence. Thus enabling the School to protect every learner's fundamental right to education.
- 5.4 The willingness of parents to play a critical role in assisting the school in getting their children to school on time and on a regular basis is a necessary ingredient to improving learner attendance.

2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The primary purpose of the learner attendance policy is to:

- Provide public schools with standard procedures for recording, managing and monitoring learner attendance.
- Inform principals, educators, learners, parents and the SGB of their responsibilities towards promoting punctual and regular attendance at public schools.

3. DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

3.1 Definitions

Term	Definition
Class	Refers to a group of learners who are under the administrative supervision of a class teacher
Class register	Means an official document, which may be an electronic document, in which the attendance of learners in a class is recorded each school day.
Class teacher	Is a teacher to whom the principal has allocated administrative responsibility for a class for a school year (or part thereof)
Continuous absence	Means absence of a learner from school for 10 consecutive school days without valid reasons.
Educator	Refers to any person, excluding a person who is appointed to exclusively perform extra-curricular duties, who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services, including professional therapy and education psychological services at school.
Head of Department	Means the head of a provincial department of education
Learner	Means any person receiving education or obliged to receive

	education in terms of relevant legislation.
Parent	Means – a) the parent or guardian of a learner; b) the person legally entitled to custody of a learner; or c) the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a person referred to in paragraph (a) and (b) towards the learner's education at school.
Period	Refers to the time allocated on a school timetable for instruction in a subject or learning area.
Period register	Means an official document in which the attendance of learners in a period is recorded.
Principal	Means an educator appointed or acting as the head of a school.
School	Refers to the School in this policy.
School Governing Body	Means the relevant body responsible for Governance issues at the School
Suspension	Refers to the temporary refusal of admission to a learner to a school, usually suspension precedes expulsion.
Temporary class register	Refers to a register maintained by a class teacher for no more than 10 consecutive school days commencing from the first day of school on which learners report to school to the 10th school day
Temporary closure of schools	Means temporary closure of a school during the school year by the HoD in terms of 16(4) of SASA or by the SGB in terms of the National School Calendar Policy.

3.2 Acronyms

Acronyms	Explanation
EAS	Electronic Administration System
WCDE	Western Cape Department of Education
DH	Department Head of a school
HoD	Head of a Provincial Education Department
MEC	Member of the Executive Council of a province who is responsible for education in the province.
PAM	Personnel Administration Measures
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team

4. APPLICATION AND SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- 4.1 This policy applies to the learners, educators, support staff, the school management and parents of learners at the school.

5 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996), as amended.
- 5.2 National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996), as amended.
- 5.3 The South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), as amended.
- 5.4 Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act No. 76 of 1998).

- 5.5 Education Policy Act, 1998 (Act No. 12 of 1998).
- 5.6 Policy on Learner Attendance (General Notice No. 361 of 2010)
- 5.7 Admission of Learners to Public Schools (General Notice 4138 of 2001).

6. POLICY STATEMENTS

6.1 Attendance Records

- a) The School will maintain class registers and period registers as attendance records.
- b) The registers referred to above will be kept in the form of electronic records and paper based records for monitoring and verification purposes.
- c) For the first 10 days of the academic year, commencing from the first day of school on which learners report to school to the 10th school day, a teacher is required to maintain a temporary class register.
- d) The principal of the school will supply the class teachers with class registers and period registers annually after the 10th school day.
- e) All staff members are required to maintain the respective learner attendance records meticulously and accurately as these are legal documents which may be brought before a court in case a legal action is instituted against a school as a result of a mishap to a learner.
- f) The class register will be marked daily during the registration period by the class teacher and the period register will be marked daily during the teaching period by the subject/Learning Area teacher.
- g) In the absence of a class teacher/subject teacher a member of the SMT/another teacher will mark the relevant register.
- h) The class register shall be compiled by the class teacher.
- i) The class register shall be marked twice a day, during morning and afternoon registration times indicated on the school timetable, in accordance with the procedures as set out in Annexure A.
- j) Once the register is marked after each registration, it must be sent down to the administration clerk for capturing on the EAS.

6.2 Learner Absence

6.2.1 When Is A Learner Considered To Be Absent?

In line with the National Policy on Learner Attendance the School will consider a learner to be absent from school when such a learner is not present in class during the times when the class register is marked during the class registration period and/or during the time when the period register is marked or when the learner is not participating in an official educational, cultural, recreational or social activity of a school within or outside the school premises.

6.2.2 Valid Reasons for Learner Absence

Taking the cue from the National Policy on Learner Attendance, the School considers the reasons on the table below as valid for learner absence, implemented by clear actions and responsibility:

No.	Valid Reason	Action to be taken	By Whom
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a.	Physical or psychological illness must be supported by a medical certificate from the registered medical practitioner or traditional healer for illness longer than three days.	The principal should be notified (telephonically/in writing) from the first day the learner is absent.	Parent
b..	Religious or cultural observances approved by the SGB	The Parent to be notified by the school in writing.	Principal and SGB Chairman
c.	Death of a family member	The principal should be notified on return to school documentary proof must be provided.	Parent
d.	Suspension by the SGB	The Parent to be notified by the school in writing.	Principal and SGB Chairman
e.	Natural disasters.	The Parent to be notified by the school in writing or through the media.	Principal and SGB Chairman
f.	Exceptional cases (decision of Principal)	The Parent to be notified in writing	Principal

6.2.2.1 What To Do In Cases Of Learner Absence

- a. A class teacher must inform the principal of the school if a learner is absent from school without explanation for three (3) consecutive days.
- b. The Principal will follow up learner absence if a learner is absent for three consecutive days without an explanation.
- c. If despite the Principal's intervention, a learner persists in being absent without a valid reason:
 - i. The learner will be charged with breach of the school's code of conduct for learners.
 - ii. The learner's record in the class register will be cancelled if the learner is absent for ten (10) consecutive days
- d. Any cancellation of a learner's records can only be implemented on the following grounds:
 - i. Exemption from compulsory school attendance.
 - ii. Expulsion
 - iii. Transfer to another school
 - iv. registration for home education
 - v. continuous absence 10 day rule applies (parent will be notified on day 4, 6 and 8 and on day 10 deregister the learner if no response by the parent)
 - vi. Notification by parents that the learner will not return to school.
 - vii. death of a learner
- e) After cancelling a learner's record from the class register, the Principal must, in writing:
 - i. Inform the parent and the class teacher of the date of and reason for cancellation.
 - ii. If the learner is of school - going age, inform the District and Safe Schools of the date of and reason for cancellation.

- f) The Principal will ensure that a record of all communication will be kept in the learner's profile.
- g) A learner whose records were previously cancelled on the class register because of continuous absence from the school may be re-instated if the Principal has a reason to believe that it is in the best interest of the learner.

6.2.3 Temporary Closure of Schools

In cases where the school is closed temporarily by the HoD or SGB (after obtaining the necessary approval from the HoD), a learner will not be marked absent but the register will show through the correct notation in Annexure A.

6.2.4 Absence during an assessment or examination:

If a learner is absent **without a valid reason**, a written apology must be submitted.

- A doctor's certificate must be provided if the learner is ill
- Should it be due to death or family matters – with certified evidence or a letter
- Court cases – proof from the court / letter

Please inform your child's teacher via class dojo as well as the office via email on the day your child is absent. This serves as notification which is necessary during assessments. A doctor's certificate must be provided.

A learner who is absent **with a valid reason**, will not be afforded the opportunity to write the test and will therefore receive an "absent with valid reason" code on their report. With this code, learners will not be penalised.

A learner who is absent **without a valid reason** will not be afforded the opportunity to write the test and will therefore receive an "absent without a valid reason" code on their report, which equates to a zero mark.

6.3 Roles and Responsibilities

6.3.1 Learners

- a) All learners have a responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.

b) In Primary Schools :

No learner may take study leave for examinations or when examinations have ended.

6.3.2 Class teacher

- a) A class teacher must ensure that he/she receives a copy of an official class register or use a computer generated class list.
- b) A class teacher may use a temporary class register for a maximum of ten (10) consecutive days starting on the first day of the first term while class lists are being finalised and maintained in the same manner as the class register in terms of this policy.
- c) The data on the temporary register, once approved by the Principal, must be copied on the official register as soon as these become available after the 10-day life span.
- d) A class teacher will compile and mark a class register during the class registration period during the time allocated on the school timetable on each school day and take it to the principal's office on the last day of the week for safe keeping.
- e) Report to the Principal/SMT of any repetitive patterns of absence from school and the reasons thereof.

- f) Inform the principal of the school if a learner is absent from school without explanation for three (3) consecutive days.

6.3.3 Subject/Learning Area teacher

- a) A subject/learning area teacher must ensure that he/she receives a copy of the period register for his/her subject/learning area from the subject Department Head (DH).
- b) The subject/learning area teacher will receive a period register from the subject DH on the last day of the week in preparation for marking the register for the following week.
- c) A subject/learning area teacher is responsible for marking a period register daily and taking it to the subject DH on the last day of the week for safekeeping.
- d) A subject/learning area teacher must report a learner who is absent for a period without a valid reason to the subject DH.
- e) A subject/learning area teacher must support a learner who was absent from a period with a valid reason to make up for time lost or assessments missed in the form of catch-up programmes.

6.3.4 School Management Team

- a) The SMT and School Social Worker must work together with the Principal, SGB and Staff of the school to develop a culture of punctual and regular attendance at the school.
- b) The Grade DH will collect period registers at the prescribed time on the last day of the week from the subject DH's of that Grade and consolidate period attendance statistics for the week.
- c) The subject DH will collect period registers at the prescribed time on the last day of the week from the Grade DH and hand to the subject teachers before the end of the last school day of the week.
- d) Compile statistics and reports for learner attendance in the school.
- e) Follow up cases of irregular attendance during teaching time and report to the Principal accordingly.

6.3.5 School Governing Body

- a) The SGB must work together with the Principal, Management and Staff of the school to develop a culture of punctual and regular attendance at the school.
- b) The SGB must include rules dealing with punctuality and regular school attendance in the school's Code of Conduct for learners.
- c) The SGB must request from the principal a quarterly report on learner attendance trends and consider the report in the SGB meeting.

6.3.6 Principal

The Principal:

- a) Together with the Staff, SMT and SGB, is responsible for developing a culture of punctual and regular attendance at the school.
- b) Will ensure that all staff members understand the importance of accurate record – keeping and monitoring of learner attendance and carry out their responsibilities competently.
- c) Will provide all class teachers and subject teachers with class registers and period registers.
- d) Must give each learner a copy of the school's Code of Conduct and the learner attendance policy. Learners will be requested to sign acknowledgement of receipt.
- e) Will avail a class/period register to an authorised official of the Western Cape Department of Education (WCDE) or an authorised judicial officer upon request.
- f) Must ensure that quarterly attendance returns are generated and submitted to the District IDSO.

- g) Must implement government programmes to assist learners with problems leading to absence and irregular school attendance.
- h) Must ensure that class registers and period registers are compiled, marked, monitored and securely stored in terms of this policy.
- i) Must monitor and analyse learner attendance statistics by grade and include the information in the reports to the SGB and Head of Department for Education (HoD).
- j) Must establish in advance the difficulties that the writing of end-of-year examinations will bring in relation to accommodation of all learners in the school and the likelihood this will have on learner attendance, teacher absenteeism on examination marking duty and the program of action to alleviate this.

6.3.7 Parents

A parent of a learner is expected to fulfil the following duties and responsibilities:

- a) Ensure that the learner attends the school daily, on time and for the entire school day unless there is a valid reason for absence.
- b) Ensure that the learner is not taken out of school without a valid reason as determined by the school and without a permission note.
- c) Where a learner obtained permission to be taken out of the school early, inform the school who will be fetching the learner and what relationship is the person to the learner.
- d) Inform the class teacher in a school diary or in a letter to the class teacher or by a telephone call to the administration office if the learner is absent or expected to be absent or be late for school with a valid reason.
- e) Notify the principal in writing well in advance of the learners' intentions to take certain school days off for the purpose of observing religious holidays/festival or cultural practices.
- f) Cooperate with the school in resolving cases where the learner is absent without the valid reason or permission from the school.
- g) Encourage the learner to participate in catch-up programmes to make up for time lost for absence from school.
- h) Children not collected 15 minutes after their dismissal time, or after extra-mural activities, will be taken to aftercare and supervised. Parents will be charged the ad hoc fee of R70, payable immediately to the staff member on duty irrespective of the time spent.

7. LATE COMING

Parents must ensure their children arrive at school 10 minutes before the start of the day. When the bell rings, all access gates are locked, and the only entry is through the front office. A secretary records late arrivals in the latecomers book, which is updated in the Staffroom software. Persistent tardiness will prompt the Educator to contact the parents to address the issue. A standard letter will be sent to the parents. If the problem persists, the Principal, Deputy Principal, or Social Worker will contact the parents, and Safe Schools will be informed, as continued tardiness may be considered neglect.