

# POLICY ON LEARNER ATTENDANCE



**Date reviewed: 22 July 2020**

**Date updated: 22 July 2020**

**Date approved: 25 July 2020**

## **1 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to
- (a) promote punctual and regular attendance at Golden Grove Primary School; and
  - (b) provide Golden Grove Primary School and the Western Cape Education 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 (CEM) in terms of section 3 of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (NEPA), which appeared in Government Gazette No. 33150, dated 4 May 2010.
- 2.2 The policy includes the attached schedules and related instructions.
- 2.3 The policy on Learner Attendance applies to Golden Grove Primary and Pre-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 every 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;
- (c) a school that successfully curbs absence without valid reason will most likely improve learner retention and performance; and
- (d) regular attendance at school is a powerful brake on teenage pregnancies and HIV infection.

## **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 absence of a learner from school:

- (a) physical or psychological illness, for which a Principal may require communication from the parent
- (b) 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) religious or cultural observances approved by the School Governing Body (SGB) in terms of the National School Calendar Policy;
- (d) death of a family member;

- (e) appointment at court, social services or other official agency, for which a Principal may require documentary proof;
- (f) suspension by the SGB;
- (g) acts of nature (that is, events that are outside of human control);
- (h) Civil unrest or protest action;
- (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.

## **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 a school.
- 6.1.2 The Principal is responsible for fostering a caring school environment in which the SMT and educators 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) and section 4 of the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), the Principal may allocate a duty or responsibility envisaged in this policy to a member of staff.

#### Responsibilities of Principal in terms of Non-Compliance

- Receptionist/ Teacher has a file containing learners' names
  - Latecomers names are recorded
  - Implement the late coming procedure as per Code of Conduct.
- 6.1.4 A Principal must ensure that staff members who are allocated responsibility for school attendance matters understand the importance of accurate records and careful monitoring, and carry out their responsibilities competently.
  - 6.1.5 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 must follow up learner absence. See 6.1.3 for procedure.
  - 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) 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 on grounds of 'continuous absence' 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 HoD and/or SGB in terms of section 16A of SASA.

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

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

6.2.1.1 A class teacher is responsible for compiling and marking the class register in the class registration period on each school day, maintaining it accurately and taking it to the school office for safekeeping.

6.2.1.2 A 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 parent in an appropriate manner.

## **6.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Learners**

6.3.1 A learner has a responsibility to attend school punctually and regularly. The government depends on parents, school governing bodies (SGBs), school management teams (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 decisive importance in building the culture of punctual and regular attendance.

## **6.4 Roles and Responsibilities of Parents**

6.4.1 A parent is 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, in writing prior to the learner's absence or expected lateness for school, giving valid reason;
- (d) cooperate with the school in resolving the problem if the learner is absent from school without a valid reason;
- (e) assist the learner to make up for time lost for as a result of absence from school; and

- (f) collect their children timeously after school/extra murals.

## 6.5 Roles and Responsibility of the school

- 6.5.1 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.
- 6.5.2 The school, i.e. Class Teacher, will provide support to a learner who has been absent in order to make up for time lost or assessments missed. The Class Teacher will try cover as much work as possible but however the responsibility falls on the learner and parent to assist the learner with any work that is being missed.

## 6.6 Roles and Responsibilities of the SGB

- 6.6.1 Rules dealing with punctuality and regular attendance should be part of an SGB's code of conduct for learners.
- 6.6.2 An SGB is expected to take an active interest in the rate of attendance of learners at its school. In particular, an SGB should 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.

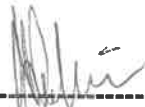
## 7 NON – COMPLIANCE

See Section 6.1.3 above.

## 8 POLICY AMENDMENTS

The school's Governing Body may from time to time amend, supplement, adapt or change this policy.

Signed at: GOLDEN GROVE on this 25TH day of JULY 2020

  
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School Governing Body Chairperson

  
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School Principal (Ms D Petersen)

