

EXCELSIOR

PRIMARY SCHOOL



LEARNER ATTENDANCE POLICY

(REVISED AND APPROVED BY SGB IN 2024)

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Policy relates to learner attendance at Excelsior Primary School. The policy is based on the following documentation:

- **Gov Gazette No 33150 Vol 539 / 4 May 2010**
- **Circular 29/2010 WCED**
- **WCED'S Protocol Addressing Absenteeism**

1. RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1. Learner's responsibilities

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.

1.2 Parent's responsibilities

A parent is expected to –

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

1.3 School's responsibilities

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.

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1.4 SGB's responsibilities

- a. Rules dealing with punctuality and regular attendance should be part of an SGB's code of conduct for learners.
- b. 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.

1.5 Principal's responsibilities

- a. A principal, working with the SMT and the SGB, is responsible for developing a culture of punctual and regular attendance at a school.
- b. A 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.
- c. Subject to section 16A of SASA and section 4 of the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), a principal may allocate a duty or responsibility envisaged in this policy to a member of staff.
- d. The principal must develop a school policy on learner attendance after consultation with the school staff, RCL (where applicable) and SGB. A school attendance policy must –
 - i. make clear that absence without valid reason is unacceptable and will be followed up promptly;
 - ii. specify how the parent should communicate with the school if a learner is absent;
 - iii. specify whether the class register will be marked once or twice per day;
 - iv. state what follow-up action the school will take if a learner is absent;
 - v. state what support the school will give a learner who has been absent, in order to make up for time lost or tasks missed;
 - vi. specify when the class register must be brought to the school office for safekeeping;
 - vii. specify how often the period register must be marked and when it must be brought to the school office for safekeeping;
 - viii. state how staff duties and responsibilities for (d)-(g) are allocated.
- e. A principal must ensure that staff members who are allocated responsibility for school

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attendance matters understand the importance of accurate records and careful monitoring, and carry out their responsibilities competently.

- f. A principal is responsible for ensuring that class registers and period registers are compiled, marked and monitored properly and 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.
- g. A principal must follow up learner absence if three days or longer without notification from the parent/caregiver [see Section 1.6(b)].
- h. A principal must cancel a learner's record in the class register if invalid absence of 10 or more days occurs.
- i. A principal must monitor and analyse learners' attendance rates and must include such information in the reports the principal makes to the HOD or SGB in terms of section 16A of SASA.

1.6 Class teacher's responsibilities

- a. 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.
- b. 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.

1.7 Teacher's responsibilities – Gov Gazette 33150 4 May 2010

- a. A teacher is responsible for marking the *period register*, maintaining it accurately and taking it to the school office for safekeeping.
- b. 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.

1.8 WCED's responsibilities

- a. The HOD, acting mainly through the district office, has the responsibility to promote punctual and regular learner attendance by –

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- i. Raising public awareness of the educational and social importance of regular school attendance;
 - ii. Giving appropriate administrative direction and management support to district offices and schools;
 - iii. Ensuring that authorised district office staff monitors class registers when they visit a school;
 - iv. Analysing school quarterly attendance returns to identify patterns of absence in schools; and
 - v. Taking appropriate follow-up action in the case of schools that have high rates of learner absence.
- b. The HOD must ensure that specific staff members are allocated responsibility for school attendance matters in the WCED head office and at each district and circuit office; that they understand the importance of accurate attendance records and careful monitoring; and that they carry out their responsibilities competently.
- c. The HOD must ensure that every school that does not have an electronic administration system has sufficient class registers, period registers and quarterly returns.

2. PROCEDURES

2.1 A principal of a school that keeps learner attendance data in an electronic administration system -

- a. may use a class register to record daily learner attendance, or may print out a class list from the school's electronic administration system for use by a class teacher;
- b. must ensure that attendance data is captured on the electronic administration system at least once a week;
- c. must ensure that a hard copy of the attendance record of each class is generated monthly for the previous month, signed by the principal, and filed for audit purposes; and must ensure that quarterly attendance returns are generated.
- d. Any attendance record or return generated by an electronic administration system is an official document of the WCED.

2.2 Following up learner absence

- a. If a learner is absent for three consecutive school days without explanation, the class teacher concerned must report the absence to the principal. The principal must, as soon as possible,

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make a reasonable effort to contact the parent by whatever means are suitable for the circumstances of the school and of the family concerned.

- b. If the learner is absent without valid reason for three consecutive school days, the principal must –
 - i. inform the parent of the importance of regular attendance;
 - ii. emphasise the learner's duty to attend punctually and regularly in terms of the school's code of conduct for learners;
 - iii. if the learner is of compulsory school-going age, inform the parent of the legal implications of section 3 of SASA;
 - iv. inform the parent of the risk of the learner's record in the class register being cancelled for continuous absence;
 - v. request the learner's return to school;
 - vi. where necessary, elicit the support of the district office; and
 - vii. where necessary, elicit intervention from government or non-government social development agencies.
- c. If despite the intervention of the principal, a learner persists in being absent without valid reason –
 - i. the learner must be charged with breach of the school's code of conduct for learners; or
 - ii. the learner's record in the class register must be cancelled if the learner is absent for 10 consecutive school days.
- d. A record of all communication with a parent must be kept in the learner's profile.

2.3 Cancellation of a learner's record in a class register

- a. Cancellation of a learner's record in a class register is an administrative action, not a disciplinary action. It is not the same as suspension or expulsion in terms of section 9 of SASA.
- b. A learner's record in a class register may be cancelled for one of the following reasons:
 - i. exemption from compulsory school attendance;
 - ii. expulsion;
 - iii. transfer to another school;
 - iv. registration for home education;
 - v. continuous absence;
 - vi. notification by the parent that the learner will not return to school; or

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- vii. death of the learner.
- c. If a learner is absent from school for 10 consecutive school days a principal must make reasonable attempts to ascertain from the learner's parent whether the learner has been withdrawn from the school. If the learner has been withdrawn, or if no valid reason for absence is given, or if the principal is unable to make contact with the parent or the learner, the principal must cancel the learner's record in the class register on grounds of **'continuous absence'**.
- d. A female learner's record may not be cancelled on grounds that she is pregnant or has given birth.
- e. When a learner's record is cancelled, the principal must, in writing –
 - i. inform the parent and class teacher of the date of and reason for the cancellation; and
 - ii. if the learner is of compulsory school-going age, inform the district office of the date of and reason for the cancellation.
- f. If a learner's record has been cancelled and the learner is later readmitted to the school, the class teacher must make a new entry for the learner in the class register.

2.4 Temporary closure of school

- a. A school may be closed temporarily by the HOD in case of emergency in terms of section 16(4)(b) of SASA.
- b. An SGB may apply to the HOD in terms of paragraphs 3.1.7 and 3.1.8 of the National School Calendar Policy for permission to close a school temporarily for religious commemorations (if a majority of learners in the school are members of the faith in question), or for sporting or cultural events. In either case, the school may be temporarily closed for no more than two school days per year.
- c. A learner may not be marked absent in the class register on a day when a school is temporarily closed.

2.5 School quarterly return on learner attendance

- a. The school quarterly return on learner attendance must be compiled, verified and signed according to the template provided in Schedule 4 and must be submitted to the district office either electronically or in hard copy by not later than one week after the beginning of the following school term.

3. DATE OF COMMENCEMENT

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The policy comes into effect on the date of sign-off.

4. SCHEDULES

The following schedules form part of this policy:

- Class register;
- Period register;
- School quarterly CEMIS return on learner attendance.

This document may be amended by the compiling parties as and when deemed necessary.

Revised and approved by the School Governing Body of Excelsior Primary School.

Signed at **BELLVILLE** on this **28th** day of **MAY 2024**.

Chairperson:

Mrs L. Taylor

School Principal:

Mr E. Pio

Educator:

Mrs M. Rose

Educator:

Mrs C. Fourie

Non-educator:

Mrs M. Crous

Parent:

Mrs C. Broughton

Parent:

Mrs V. Gilbert

Parent:

Mr R. Maphike

Parent:

Mr W. Stark