

PROTEA HEIGHTS ACADEMY

PROTEAHOOGTE AKADEMIE

LEARNER ATTENDANCE, EARLY LEAVERS AND LATE COMING POLICY



POLICY REGISTER DETAILS

TITLE OF POLICY	Learner attendance, early leavers and late coming policy
COMPILED BY	D Tucker
POLICY NUMBER	15
DATE APPROVED BY SGB	6 December 2022
EFFECTIVE DATE	1 January 2023
EXPIRY DATE	This Policy remains in force until amended or replaced <u>and</u> approved by the SGB
REVIEW DATE	1 January 2025
AMENDMENT HISTORY	

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1. BACKGROUND

The purpose of this policy is to promote punctual and regular attendance at PHA and provide PHA and the Western Cape Educational Department (WCED) with standard procedures for recording, managing and monitoring learner attendance.

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. This Policy on Learner Attendance applies to Protea Heights Academy rationale for the policy.

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:

- each school has a duty to protect each learner's fundamental right to education;
- 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
- a school that successfully curbs absence without valid reason will most likely improve learner retention and performance.

2. LEARNER ABSENCE

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.

3. VALID REASON FOR ABSENCE

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:
 - 1.1. study leave taken by a Grade 12 learner in terms of Section 4 paragraph 4.2 of this policy;
 - 1.2. physical or psychological illness, for which the 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;
 - 1.3. giving birth, subject to written confirmation by a registered medical practitioner or registered midwife;
 - 1.4. religious or cultural observances approved by the School Governing Body (SGB) in terms of the National School Calendar Policy;
 - 1.5. death of a family member;

- 1.6. appointment at court, social services or another official agency, for which the Principal may require documentary proof;
- 1.7. suspension by the SGB;
- 1.8. acts of nature (that is, events that are beyond human control);
- 1.9. exceptional circumstances for which, in the view of the principal, a temporary absence from school:
 - is in the best interest of the learner or
 - was unavoidable.
2. Absence without valid reason is unacceptable and will be followed up promptly as set out below.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN TERMS OF LEARNERS ATTENDANCE

1. Roles and Responsibilities of the Principal
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 1.3. Subject to the provisions of Section 16A of South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996, the Principal may allocate the responsibilities envisaged in this policy to members of staff.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 1.6. The Principal must follow up learner absence by instructing Grade Heads to contact parents for any cases of irregular attendance.
 - 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

2. Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers

2.1. The 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.

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

2.3. The teacher is responsible for marking the period register, maintaining it accurately and taking it to the school office for safekeeping.

2.4. 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.

3. Roles and Responsibilities of Learners

3.1. 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.

- 3.2. Except for Grade 12 learners, a learner may not take leave from school to study for examinations or when examinations have ended. Grade 12 learners may take 5 school days' study leave to prepare for the NSC examinations before the first day of the NSC examinations. Such learners need not attend school on days when they do not write examinations and after writing each examination.
- 3.3. The representative council of learners should
 - (a) contribute to the development and application of the School Policy on Learner Attendance and
 - (b) inform the SMT of reasons for poor learner attendance.
4. Roles and Responsibilities of Parents
 - 4.1. ensure that the learner attends school daily, on time and for the whole school day, unless there is a valid reason for absence;
 - 4.2. ensure that the learner is not taken out of school without valid reason (Family holidays are not a valid reason.);
 - 4.3. 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; this is done by means of a letter/email written by the parent and given either to the Principal or class educator.
 - 4.4. co-operate with the school in resolving the problem if the learner is absent from school without valid reason; and
 - 4.5. encourage and, if possible, assist the learner to make up for time lost as a result of absence from school.
5. Roles and Responsibility of the School
 - 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.
 - 5.2. The school will provide support to a learner who has been absent in order to make up for time lost or assessments missed. The Grade Head will provide assistance via Subject Heads and Subject Educators.
6. The Roles and Responsibilities of the SGB
 - 6.1. Rules dealing with punctuality and regular attendance must be part of an SGB's Code of Conduct for learners.
 - 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 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.

5. LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY FOR AN APPOINTMENT

- 1 Any parent who intends taking a learner out of school during school hours for any reason must adhere to the following procedure:
 - 1.1 Provide a letter/ Email stating arrangement or, in the case of an emergency, explain arrangements in person on arrival, to the Principal or one of the Deputies at the Administration Office.
 - 1.2 A control book must be filled in:
 - Reason for leaving school must be established
 - If possible, attach proof to confirm appointment
 - Time of departure and return to school
 - Signature of parent / guardian (on departure and arrival back at school)
 - 1.3 A parent / guardian must collect the learner(s) from the Administration Office.
- 2 If learners need to leave school during the day for educational visits or outings the parent must complete a consent form. Permission must be obtained from the parent any time prior to departure, as well as from the District (at least three months prior to departure – see circular and pro-forma GDE) before the event takes place. Indemnity forms are to be taken on the trip and staff must have immediate access to these for the duration of the trip.
- 3 A public school must inform the parents in advance if the learners are going to be released from school early.

6. LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY FOR ILLNESS

1. If a learner becomes ill during the day or they are feeling unwell:
 - 1.1. they must inform their educator and ask if they may be excused.
 - 1.2. the educator will provide a permission note, which must be signed by each of the remaining educators for the day, this is to ensure that no assessments are missed. If the learner is not well enough to collect signatures, a class representative will assist.
 - 1.3. once all educators have signed the sick note, the learner must obtain final approval from the principal.
 - 1.4. The office will then call the learner's parent to collect them. Learners will only be signed out for illness during first and second break.
2. A parent / guardian must collect the learner(s) from the Administration Office. Upon collection, a control book must be filled in:
 - Reason for leaving school must be established
 - Time of departure
 - Signature of parent / guardian

In case of an emergency, parents will be called immediately.

7. ARRIVING LATE FOR SCHOOL

1. Learners are to be punctual at all times. This includes being on time for school, for class and for extra-mural activities.
2. When late for school, the learner must get a late note from the front office. The late note is given to the register educator before the learner reports to lessons.
3. Register teacher must file this late note in a designated file
4. The school office is responsible for marking a learner late on Staffroom after the learners has completed a late note.
5. Learners will be punished for continuous late coming. In 15-day cycle learners will be punished by the register educator as follows:
 - 3 – 5 Times late = 1 Friday detention
 - 6 – 8 Times late = 2 Friday detentions
 - > 8 times = refer to Head of Discipline for Saturday detention
6. Parents will be informed if the late coming is habitual.

8. APPROVAL AND ADOPTION

This Learner Attendance, Early Leavers and Late Coming Policy was approved and adopted by the Protea Heights

Academy Governing Body on 06/12/2022 (date).

SIGNED:

CHAIRPERSON:



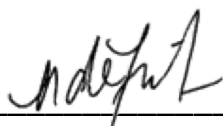
DATE: 6 December 2022

PRINCIPAL:



DATE: 6 December 2022

SECRETARY:



DATE: 6 December 2022

ADDENDUM A –



EARLY RELEASE RECORD

(The letter, signed by the principal, requesting early release must be kept)

Date	Name of learner	Surname of learner	Class	Name of person collecting learner	Signature	Reason	Permission given by