



RUSTENBURG HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

ABSENTEEISM AND LATE-COMING POLICY

November 2007

PREAMBLE

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Western Cape Education Department, as well as the South African Schools' Act 84 of 1996 and Provincial Gazette 5190 of 31 October 1997.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clarify, for the staff of Rustenburg Girls' High School, the acceptable and expected procedure that will be followed at this school when learners are absent and arrive late, so as to maintain the work ethic and academic standards of the school in order that learners are provided with an environment in which they may achieve the best results possible.

This policy also provides a framework for dealing with problems should they arise, so as to avoid misunderstandings and to ensure that all learners are treated equitably, fairly and consistently.

This document should be read in conjunction with the procedures for addressing breaches of this policy, where specific acts of misconduct are clearly stated.

ABSENCE

As stated in both the South African Schools' Act 84 of 1996 and Provincial Gazette 5190 of 31 October 1997, learners are expected to attend school regularly.

Furthermore, Provincial Gazette 5190 says "a learner at school who has been repeatedly absent without leave from school and/or classes..... shall be guilty of serious misconduct". This gazette also indicates that "a learner at a school may be suspended by the governing body or expelled by the Head of Department if after a fair hearing, he or she is found guilty of misconduct".

Continuous assessment takes place throughout the year, including the beginning and end of term. Rustenburg High School for Girls, therefore, is not in a position to give permission to parents for their daughters to miss school.

Policy and Procedure:

1. The Form Captain is responsible for doing morning roll call. A learner who is not present in her form class during the morning form period will be marked down as absent. A learner who arrives after 07:50 (i.e. late) must enter her name in the late book at the front office, thereby ensuring that the class attendance register is amended accordingly and that she does not remain marked down as absent.

The front office will record all learner absences on the SIMS computer programme daily.

2. Learners may not absent themselves from school without a valid excuse. In cases of illness during the term, an absentee note from the parent should be brought on the first day the learner returns to school. While a telephone call to the school is appreciated this, on its own, will not suffice.

In the case of absence during examinations or other scheduled tests or assessments, a **MEDICAL CERTIFICATE** is required. This, too, should be brought on the day the learners returns to school after the absence, at the latest. Failure to do this will result in a zero mark. This also applies to the Grade 9 CTAs.

It is the learner's responsibility to ensure that a copy of her Medical Certificate is given to all educators whose assessment activities she missed as a result of her absence.

Unlawful absence may result in detention to make up for lost time.

The form teacher is expected to collect all absentee notes and/or doctors' certificates and to file and retain them until the end of the academic year. Medical certificates that cover examinations periods must be handed in to the Deputy Principal.

Grade Heads must follow up on any notes that are outstanding if the class teachers are unable to get them in for some reason.

Form Teachers must identify learners who display a pattern of absence (e.g. often absent on a Monday, absent frequently or for long periods, absent almost every week). Form teachers, or subject teachers, who notice such patterns or have concerns regarding absence, must raise this with the Grade Head concerned as soon as possible.

Grade Heads must investigate, check absentee notes and telephone parents of absentees if necessary. Details regarding the action taken must be recorded in the learner's file.

Serious absentee problems and truancy must be reported to the Principal, Deputy Principal and/or Teacher-Counsellor.

3. Parents are urgently requested **NOT** to arrange to leave early for holidays or to return late at the beginning of a new term as this practice may seriously disadvantage their daughter's studies. Learners will be given nought for any continuous assessment activities that they have missed.
4. Parents are requested to avoid making appointments which will necessitate their daughter's missing school. Very few learners can afford to miss lessons. Learners who miss continuous assessments activities or tests will be given nought.

If such an absence is **ABSOLUTELY UNAVOIDABLE** a note of excuse from the parent or guardian must be given, by the learner, to the Deputy Principal at least 24 hours **IN ADVANCE**.

Once the Deputy Principal has seen the parent's letter and signed it, the learner will be required to get the signature of all educators whose lessons she will miss as a result of the appointment. This letter must then be returned to the Deputy Principal as soon as possible and in good time before leaving for the appointment.

TRUANCY

Policy and Procedure:

1. Learners may not absent themselves from lessons without a valid excuse, such as illness, which must be reported to the office. Truancy will result in detention of 2 hours for every hour missed.

An alternative course of action may be decided upon, in consultation with the Deputy Principal, depending on the circumstances. This may include referral to the Teacher-Counsellor, the school clinic/support centre or a social worker or welfare agency. The learner may also be placed on daily report.

2. All truancy or suspected truancy must be reported to the Form Teacher who must, in turn, report it to the Grade Head.
3. The Grade Head must take the following action:
 - Inform the Deputy Principal.
 - If it is deemed suitable and appropriate, place the learner in detention.
 - Inform the learner's parents/guardians telephonically as soon as possible, but definitely before the end of the school day.
 - Record all details, including telephonic contact with parents, in the learner's file.

NB: No girl may leave the grounds without special permission, obtainable from the office, in an emergency. Breaking of this rule is considered truancy and will be dealt with as such.

Serious absentee problems and truancy must be reported to the Principal, Deputy Principal, and/or Teacher-Counsellor.

LATE-COMING

Learners are expected to arrive at school and at classes on time. Lateness disrupts the efforts of both educators and other learners.

Policy and Procedure:

1. Girls who are late in the morning must report to the secretaries' office. Failure to do so will result in them being erroneously recorded as absent.
2. Learners who arrive late for school will be given a dated and stamped late slip, which is handed to the Form Teacher during the form period. If the learner arrives at school later than this, the slip must be given to the Subject Teacher.
3. Girls who are late three times without good reason will be requested to make up this time in detention, which may be held during break or after school.