



RUSTENBURG GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

LEARNER ABSENCE AND LATE-COMING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

November 2007
Revised April 2018

PREAMBLE

It is a legal and contractual responsibility that all staff and the school maintain accurate attendance records for all learners. 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 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 and provide learners 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.

ABSENCE

1. *The South African Schools Act* clarifies expectations regarding compulsory attendance. The *Provincial Gazettes 33150 of 4 May 2010* (see the extract provided below) and *5190 of 31 October 1997* make it clear that learners are expected to attend school regularly.

Policy on Learner Attendance

Government Gazette No. 33150 of 4 May 2010

The Department of Basic Education gazetted a policy on learner attendance on 4 May 2010, Government Gazette No. 33150. The policy is applicable only to public schools and will be implemented in schools as of 1 January 2011.

The key aspects of the policy are:

- * All learners, with the exception of grade 12 learners, **must attend school on every school day**, including examination periods (before, during and after examinations) for the total number of official school days of each year
- * **A learner's record will be cancelled in the class register** if he or she is absent from school for **10 consecutive school days without a valid reason**.

2. Furthermore, *Provincial Gazette 5190* states that "a learner at school who has been repeatedly absent without leave from school and/or classes.....shall be guilty of serious misconduct". This document 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".

3. School Based Assessment (SBA) takes place throughout the year, including at the beginning and at the end of a term. Rustenburg Girls' High School and its staff are, therefore, not allowed to give permission for learners to miss school.
4. Parents are urgently requested **NOT** to arrange for their daughters to leave early for holidays or return late at the beginning of a new term, as this may seriously disadvantage their studies. Learners will be given zero for any SBA activities that they have missed. It is possible that assessments may be scheduled at this time, including the first and last days of the academic term.
5. Parents are also requested to avoid making appointments which will necessitate their daughters missing school. Learners cannot afford to miss lessons. Learners who miss SBA activities will be given zero.
6. If an absence is **absolutely unavoidable**, the relevant form for requesting that a learner miss part of the school day (**Annexure A**) must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian. The learner must give this to the Deputy Principal (Academic) **at least 24 hours in advance**.

Once the Deputy Principal (Academic) 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 arrangement. This letter must then be returned to the front office so that the scheduled and approved absence can be recorded in the attendance system in advance.

LATE-COMING

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

PROCEDURES

DAILY REGISTRATION

1. The teacher is responsible for capturing attendance at the start of every school day, during the form period. A learner who is not present in the form class during the morning form period must be marked "**absent**".
2. The Western Cape Education Department requires an attendance register to be kept for each lesson of every day. A learner who is not present in a subject class must be marked "**absent**" for that lesson/session register.

LATE-COMING

3. A learner who arrives after 07:50 (i.e. late) must have her late arrival entered in the late book at the front office. This will be captured online by the front office (i.e. the class attendance register will be amended to "**late**", so that she does not remain marked as absent).
4. Learners who arrive late to subject classes must be recorded as "**late**" by the subject teacher for that lesson/session register.

5. Regular lateness for school must be dealt with by the form teacher, preferably by making contact with the parent/guardian to try to remedy the problem.

Regular lateness to subject lessons must be dealt with by the subject teacher/s concerned.

6. Where there is no improvement, the matter must be reported to the Grade Head, who will take further action.

ABSENCES

7. Learners may not be absent from school without a valid excuse. In cases of illness during the term, an absentee note from the parent must be brought on the **first** day the learner returns to school. This note should include the date/s of the learner's absence, the reason for the absence and must be signed by a parent/guardian.

While a telephone call to the school is appreciated this, on its own, will not suffice.

8. 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 learner 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 systemic testing.

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.

Medical certificates that cover examinations must be handed in to the Deputy Principal (Academic).

9. Form teachers should file **all** absence notes, medical certificates and other supporting documents. These must be kept on file until the end of the academic year, as they may be requested at any time.

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

10. Form teachers must identify and follow up on learners who display a pattern of absence (e.g. often absent on a Monday or Friday, 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.

11. Form teachers and Grade Heads must investigate, check absentee notes and telephone the parents of absentees where necessary. Details regarding the action taken must be recorded on the learner's profile.

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

TRUANCY

1. Learners may not absent themselves from school, individual lessons or any other expected/compulsory school activities without a valid excuse.
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 (Pastoral)
 - Institute an appropriate sanction
 - Inform the learner's parents/guardians telephonically as soon as possible, but preferably before the end of the school day
 - Record all details, including telephonic contact with parents, in the learner's profile

PLEASE NOTE:

For their own safety, after arriving at school and during the school day, no learner may leave the grounds without special permission.

Breaking of this rule is considered truancy and will be dealt with as such.

NOTE FOR EDUCATORS:

Instructions regarding the capturing and recording of attendance, late-coming and truancy, as well of the details of follow-up action, are provided for teachers in ***Annexure B***.