

Student Welfare – Student Attendance Policy

Source of Obligation

The Education Training and Reform Regulations 2017 (sch 4 cl 10) require that we must make provisions to:

- monitor the daily attendance of each student enrolled at the school;
- identify any absences of a student from school including classes;
- follow up any unexplained absences of a student from the school or classes;
- notify any parent or guardian regarding a student's unsatisfactory school or class attendance; and
- record information regarding a student's unsatisfactory attendance at school or classes on their student file.

The Education Training and Reform Regulations 2017 (sch 4 cl 11) require that we must maintain a student attendance register in which the attendance at the school of any child of compulsory school age is noted at least twice a day, and any reason given or apparent for the absence of the child from the school is noted.

At Sidrah Gardens School we believe that student success is determined by regular attendance at school. Students need to attend school regularly in order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from their schooling. Regular attendance enables students to access a full education, enabling them to reach their full potential.

Student attendance is dependent on a supportive school environment, a curriculum that provides for all students and structures and approaches that facilitate the success of all students.

We acknowledge that monitoring of student attendance enables identification of students at risk and the early implementation of intervention strategies.

We also acknowledge our obligation to monitor the legal requirement for all students under fifteen years to attend school, and that we have a duty of care for all students including those over the compulsory school age.

School staff should set an example for students, encouraging and emphasising attendance and punctuality.

Daily Attendance Register

Sidrah Gardens School keeps a register of the daily attendance of all students at the school in electronic form. The register of daily attendance records the following information for each student:

- daily attendance;
- absences;
- reason for absence; and
- documentation to substantiate reason for absence.

Attendance is checked at least twice a day, at:

- 9:00am (roll call); and
- 2pm (After lunch)

Monitoring Daily Attendance

Sidrah Gardens School has implemented the following systems and procedures in order to monitor the daily attendance of students and identify absences from school or class:

- Parents/guardians must notify the school to explain the absence of their children any particular school day or part of the day. Notification to the school may be provided directly or via electronic means (e.g SMS, phone call) and, where possible, prior to the start of school.
- Class teachers check the class roll promptly at the commencement of the school day and after lunch.
- All absences are recorded absent. They are then notified to the Business Manager and cross checked against the absentee notifications that have been provided to the school that day. (**school to complete when operational**)

Principal

The Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent for a student's absence. The Principal will generally excuse:

- medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or appropriate
- bereavement or attendance at the funeral of a relative or friend of the student, including a student required to attend Sorry Business
- school refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent to address causes and support the student's return to school
- cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the school in advance
- family holidays where the parent notifies the school in advance

If no explanation is provided by the parent within 10 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' and recorded on the student's file.

Parents will be notified if an absence has not been excused.

The principal will:

- Ensure that very clear attendance expectations are evident to students and parents
- Ensure that a good example is set by all staff with attendance and punctuality
- Oversee the consistent implementation and review of policies and procedures
- Oversee and support teachers, students and parents in the implementation of attendance procedures and policies.
- Educate students, parents and the community that attendance at school, whenever it is possible, is mandatory
- To follow up students who are at risk of lack of attendance or who are continuously late arrivals.
- To support parents in whatever strategy and assistance they may require.

Following Up Unexplained Student Absences

Sidrah Gardens School has implemented the following systems and procedures in order to follow up unexplained absences from school:

- Where an absence has not been explained by 10 am, an SMS Text message is forwarded to the student's parents/guardians notifying them of the absence and requesting that they immediately contact the school.
- Where the absence remains unexplained the matter will be reported to the Principal for investigation and follow up.
- All information in relation to any matters of unsatisfactory attendance is recorded on the student's file and relevant information is included in the student's school report.
- If contact cannot be made with the parent (due to no response or incorrect contact details), the school will attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the school, where possible, **on the day** of the unexplained absence. If a student is absent on a particular day, and the parents/guardian have not contacted the school, and if the school has made every attempt to contact the parents/guardian with no response, the absence is marked as unexplained.
- Sidrah Gardens will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. The principal will determine if the explanation provided is a **reasonable excuse** for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the Education Training Reform Act 2006 and the School Attendance Guidelines.

- If Sidrah Gardens considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**excused absence**'.
- If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as '**unexcused absence**'.

(School to complete when operational)

Notification of Parents and Guardians of Unsatisfactory Attendance

Sidrah Gardens School has implemented the following systems and procedures in order to notify parents and guardians of unsatisfactory attendance:

- Where a student has an unsatisfactory record of attendance, and where the reasons for the absences are not reasonable, the school will contact the parents/guardians directly to seek an explanation and to remind parents of their child's obligation to attend school.
- Where parents/guardians repeatedly fail to inform the school of absences the Principal will contact them directly seeking an explanation and to remind them of their obligation to report absences.

Records of the Register of Daily Attendance

The register is retained indefinitely and copies of information in the register are stored off-site at regular intervals. The register is kept for each calendar year, and shows the twice-daily attendance checks and any reasons for absence.

School Attendance Guidelines

Sidrah Gardens School has referenced the information in the **Student Attendance Guidelines** in relation to the development of this policy.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- To attend all classes.
- Parent or Student to inform teachers of known extended absences and seek information about work missed.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- To accurately mark class rolls twice a day.
- To ensure correct codes are entered for explained and unexplained late arrivals and absenteeism.

- To follow up consistent lateness
- To show concern for students who are absent – ask them where they were and supply any work missed.
- Ask the Business Manager to make follow up phone calls to parents where appropriate.
- To monitor weekly attendance and absence reports.

If a student is not present during form assembly, it should be recorded as an absence. Do not leave it blank and then fill it in at the end of day assembly. Teachers will place the annotation for lateness or early dismissal upon notification from the office.

If a student is absent from school and s/he fails to bring a note explaining the absence, the teacher must inform the Business manager. The Business manager is required to send home an email or SMS message for Absence Note(s) for the parents to provide reason.

NOTE:

No names should be deleted off or changes made to the attendance roll without official notification from the student registrar.

ADMINISTRATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- To generate and maintain rolls
- To accurately enter roll data on a weekly basis into the SAS program.
- To monitor student attendance data.
- To record verbal phone messages and pass them on to teachers.

_____Our records show that your child
 _____has been absent from school on the following
 date/s: _____

Dear
 Mr. &
 Mrs.

When there is an absence from school, the student is required to bring a dated and signed note. Since a written explanation for the absence/s has not been received. Please complete the details as required and return this form immediately.

While it is appreciated that you may have contacted the school and verbally notified the year teacher regarding this absence, we do require a written note for our records. Please include a medical certificate where one exists.

Name _____ Year Level _____

Date	Reason for absence	Signature

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Truancy

The Hazard - Truancy

Truancy is the absence from school of a school aged student, without the consent of parents/guardians, during school hours.

Common reasons for truancy include boredom at school, embarrassment and frustration at poor performance, fear of bullying or harassment, drug dependency, family stress or conflict, homelessness and defiance of authority.

Truancy can compound the problems of students who are already behind in class as a result of behavioural, emotional or learning difficulties. They gradually fall further behind in their studies and jeopardise their chances of completing their education.

This increases the risk of students dropping out of school, becoming involved in delinquency and criminal activity and ultimately, reducing their adult employment prospects.

Enrolment & Attendance Policies

In line with our legal obligations, Sidrah Gardens School has developed detailed policies and procedures to manage our obligations relating to Enrolment and

Attendance of Students. Refer to our Student Enrolment Policy and Student Attendance Policy.

This policy has been developed specifically to manage issues relating to truancy.

Sidrah Gardens School's Policy

Sidrah Gardens School is committed to the management of regular school attendance and providing a safe and positive learning environment which promotes engagement and participation.

It is our policy that:

- All unauthorised absences from school are unacceptable;
- High expectations of attendance will be made known to all students;
- Processes for unexplained student absences are implemented to reduce absenteeism and ensure the safety of students;
- Truancy prevention strategies are developed and implemented with the school community considering the needs of students; and
- Early intervention strategies and family support programs will be provided.

Management of Non-Attendance - Immediate

School absenteeism is monitored closely to identify students who are truanting.

To avoid suspicion, parents/guardians are required to contact the school prior to school commencement time to explain their child's absence, late arrival or request for early leave.

All teachers are required to take a roll call in every class. Any student absences are recorded by the class teacher.

Where a student is absent from school, administration reviews absentee notifications to identify any students that are absent where no notification of absence has been received from a parent/guardian.

Where a student is absent without explanation and cannot be located within an hour, parents/guardians are forwarded a text message to their mobile phones in the following terms:

Sidrah Gardens School records indicate that your child [insert name] is absent from school without explanation. Please contact us as a matter of urgency.

If the student's parents/guardians do not contact the school within one hour of sending the text message, attempts will be made to call the parents/guardians and confirm the location of the student.

Management of Non-Attendance - Parental Notifications

Where parents repeatedly fail to notify the school of legitimate absences, the school will write a letter to parents requesting that they comply with the school's notification procedures.

In cases of serious non-compliance, the school may request that the parents/guardians attend a meeting with the Principal to discuss the importance of parental notifications in ensuring the safety of all students.

Persistent Non-Attendance

All students found to be truanting will be subject to the consequences as outlined in the Discipline – Student Policy.

Where absences are recurrent the school will investigate the student's absences having regard to factors such as the day of the week, the class, subject or year level and particular social group that may affect their attendance.

Parents/guardians will be contacted to discuss issues which may be related to truancy. Where appropriate, the school will work with the parents/guardians and the student to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan.

Workers' Responsibility

All workers are responsible to ensure that:

- Students are made aware of the importance of regular attendance and notification of absences;
- Accurate records of student attendance are maintained; and
- Where they have suspicions relating to possible truant behaviour they raise this with their Teacher.

Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- Staff training;
- Development and implementation of a whole school strategy to encourage regular attendance and to reduce truancy;
- Implement strategies to address specific needs of each individual student, according to their reasons for truanting;
- Development and promotion of positive relationships within the school by implementing programs that develop social and emotional skills, peer tutoring, mentoring and anti-bullying strategies;

- Establishing positive home-school relationships to assist parents/guardians to support their child's attendance at school;
- Effective incident notification procedures;
- Effective communication procedures;
- Effective record keeping procedures; and
- Initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

