



SUMMERHILL
NURSERY • PREPARATORY • COLLEGE



Student School Attendance Policy - Parents

Vision:

"To raise the ability, initiative and cultural level in the education process, so that the student may thrive and be part of raising the survival level of society.

We therefore make it our goal to help develop people who can think, judge and express their artistic and creative potential, meet the sporting challenge and finally, value and conserve their natural environment and its living creatures."

Mission:

"To provide students with limitless horizon and the means to open doors to any field of achievement. To provide the opportunity of developing their full potential and embracing their best future without hindrance."

Preamble:

Summerhill School is committed to providing a full, well-rounded and efficient education to all students and embraces the concept of equal access and opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome.

We recognise that for students to reach their full potential and achieve high educational outcomes, regular and punctual school attendance is essential. **We will consistently work towards a goal of one hundred percent attendance for all students.** Every opportunity will be used to convey to students, parents and care-givers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education Laws and most importantly it is enshrined in our constitution as a basic right of every child of school going age.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving the goals set for itself and **compliance to the legal requirements of the Department of Education.**

For every day a student is absent valuable resources such as time, money and information are lost by the school, and opportunity and skill is lost to the student. **Frequent lack of punctuality and attendance has a compound effect on the future of the student and their ability to have full benefit of infrastructure and teaching offered.**

South African Schools Act 84 of 1996

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 places an obligation on a parent or care-giver to send a student regularly to school.

Section 3 (1) states:

Subject to this act and any applicable provincial law, parents must ensure that the child/children for which one is responsible for, attends school from the first day of the school year until the last day of the school year.

Section (5) states:

If a student who is subject to compulsory attendance in terms of subsection (1) is not enrolled at or fails to attend school, the Head of Department may:

1. Investigate the circumstances of the student's absence from school;
2. Take appropriate measures to remedy the situation; and
3. Subject to this act and any other applicable law:

3.1 any parent who, without cause and after a written notice from the Head of Department, fails to comply with subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period of not exceeding six months; or

3.2 any person, without just cause, prevents a student who is subject to compulsory attendance from attending a school is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Objectives of the policy

- To provide a framework for the management and staff to exercise control of the student attendance and absence.
- To improve the overall rate of attendance in all schools in the province.
- To gather and analyse attendance data.

School going age

Students begin school in Grade 1 in the year they turn seven (7).

School procedures

1. Registration at school will be conducted daily and recorded in a register both manually and electronically in a format approved by the Department.
2. Any student who is absent from the morning registration period must have his/her absence recorded irrespective of it being authorised or unauthorised. Only a principal or member of staff acting on behalf can authorise absence. If there is no reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.
3. Any student that is not present during registration or arrives after will be marked as having unauthorised absence unless there is a reasonable explanation for the late coming.

Late arrivals

1. Morning registration takes place at the start of school at 7:30am.
2. Registration remains open for 20 minutes until 7:50am.
3. Students arriving after the start of the school day, but before the end of registration period will be treated for statistical purposes as present, however it will be coded as **late** before registers close.
4. Students arriving late must report directly to the Admin staff member at Forest Hall to be noted on the late register or if it is after 8am late students must report to reception.

5. The school will judge late arrival of students by the arrival of the school busses in cases of heavy traffic.

6. The termly process for late arrivals is as follows:

- 1st late arrival – recorded as a warning in the diary and logged on the register.
- 2nd late arrival – warning in the diary followed by an email to the teacher, Grade Head, HOD and parents.
- 3rd late arrival – a final warning in the diary followed by an email to the teacher, Grade Head, HOD and parents.
- 4th late arrival – a demerit in the diary followed by an email to the teacher, Grade Head, HOD and parents.
- 5th late arrival – a 2nd demerit in the diary followed by an email to the teacher, Grade Head, HOD and parents.
- 6th late arrival – a 3rd demerit in the diary followed by an email to the teacher, Grade Head, HOD and parents informing of an impending detention.
- 7th late arrival – a 4th demerit and detention noted in the diary followed by an email to the teacher, Grade Head, HOD and parents notifying of the detention.

First day absence

All students who have registered for school are expected to be at school from the first day of school until the last day of school. Condonation of absence will be with the explicit consent of parent or care-giver after providing valid reasons. However, such a student will be marked as absent in the class register on the first day of absence and ensuing days until he/she returns.

Categories of absence

The department recognises three categories of absence, namely:

1. Authorised absence

Students who are away from school on any compulsory school day (including Saturdays) for reasons that are deemed to be valid and with the consent of the parent or care-giver and the school, in advance. The student will be marked with an "A" on the register. The absence will count against them for 100% attendance.

- Students who do not attend camp will be marked as absent unless the student comes to school on the days allocated for camp.
- Students who do not attend compulsory Saturdays e.g. Fun Day, Fun Run and Montages will be marked as absent even if the student is engaged in an outside educational event.

2. Unauthorised absence

Students who are away from school where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. Students will be marked absent with an "A" on the register. The absence will count against them for 100% attendance.

3. Approved outside educational activity

This covers types of educational activity undertaken off site, but with the approval of the school e.g. Ballet exams. This category of absence is considered as authorised absence.

Continuing absence

The school will endeavour to contact parents or care-givers to elicit the reason for absence and to provide the necessary support. **Any absence for reasons of ill-health for three (3) days or more, or on a Monday or Friday or day before or after a public holiday, must be**

accompanied by a medical certificate. All other absence, irrespective of the numbers of days must be accompanied with an explanation from a parent or care-giver upon the student's return.

Frequent absence

It is the responsibility of the class educator to be aware of and bring to the attention of the HOD and Vice-Principal of Academics, any emerging attendance concern or communication received regarding absence. In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absence, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents or care-giver. If this is unsuccessful, the school will with the consent of the parents or care-giver, refer to the local clinic if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases, the school will seek advice from Social Services.

Absence from formal assessments

Students from grades 1 to 7 must attend school every day up to and including the last day of term.

Valid reasons for absence during cycle test, examinations or formal assessments are:

1. Illness supported by a medical certificate if absent for more than 3 consecutive days or on a Monday or Friday or day before or after a public holiday.
2. Humanitarian reasons, which includes the death of an immediate family member, supported by a death certificate.
3. The student appearing in a court hearing, which must be supported by written evidence; and
4. Any other reasons as may be accepted as valid by the Vice-Principal of Academics.

Return after absence

It is important that on return from absence that all students are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the student is helped to catch up on missed work, tests and exams and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other students. A sick note must be produced and filed.

Absence notes

Notes, including medical or e-mail, received from parents or care-givers explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. The notes may need to be retained for a longer period if there are concerns about attendance of the students which may require further investigation. The notes should be filed in the student's Ed Lab file.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents and care-givers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

Holidays in term time

Vacations or Family Holidays during term times are to be discouraged. Parents or care-givers will be reminded of the effect absence can have on a student's potential achievement.

Religious holidays

While it is expected that every student attends school every day of the academic year, the school respects the cultural diversity of the South African population. Students wishing to absent themselves during school term to celebrate cultural and religious occasions must apply for such leave of absence.

Absence from school during this period will be regarded as authorised absence. Register code R, not included in the total number of days absent.

Early closure at end of term

A school may close early at the end of term provided that at least three (3) hours of national time is spent meaningfully on the academic programme. School closes at 11:00am for juniors and at 12pm for seniors at the end of each term, except term 2 mid-term break when the school closes at normal times.

Attendance awards

Summerhill awards students with one hundred percent (100%) attendance at the end of each academic year, if a student has been present on all (including Saturdays and camps) compulsory school days.

10 Day register

Classification of students may be completed prior to closure of the school academic year and a temporary register compiled for each class for the following year. The temporary registers must be finalised and closed on the tenth (10th) day of the new school year. Within a week of submission of the tenth day statistics, the permanent register must be finalised and made available for inspection by the District Office. Only the names of those students who have registered and have returned to school or those whose parents or care-givers has indicated their intention to return, should appear temporarily and subsequently in the permanent registers. It is a criminal offence to misrepresent the number of students in a register.

Daily register

The school must maintain a register for each class. The school may determine the times for registration. The attendance register is a legal document that provides a daily record of attendance per class in the school. The register must be marked by the educator responsible for the class. No student must mark a register. The security and storage of all registers must receive high priority. A class register must be maintained for as long as at least one student is mentioned therein and is still learning at the school and thereafter for a period of at least three years before being disposed.

Ownership declaration

This policy is the property of Summerhill School. It has been thoroughly researched with the sole intention to inform the reader.

This policy has been analysed and reviewed to ensure that it is relevant and aligned with the South African Educational Act.

We reserve the right to change any information on this policy should the need arise.