

GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Learner Attendance Policy

1. Title of the policy

Learner Attendance Policy of Bryanston Parallel Medium School

2. Effective Date:

27 January 2018

3. Revision History

Date of policy:
a) January 2018
b)
Date of Next Review: (Specify Date)
January 2019

4. Preamble

4.1 Regular and punctual school attendance by learners will not only instil discipline among learners but is likely to improve learner retention in the system and overall performance.

4.2 While learners stay away from school for many reasons, the effects of poverty cannot be undermined. Irregular attendance of learners can be attributed to one or a combination of the following factors:

- Parents inability to pay school fees or buy uniforms;
- Lack of transport to school;
- Parents or children's chronic illness, including HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis;
- Poor nutrition or hunger;
- Child labour;
- Unstable or dysfunctional family life and
- Gang violence.

4.3 The monitoring of learner's absence and the taking of appropriate follow up action will enable a school to successfully curb absence. Thus enabling Bryanston Parallel Medium School, to protect every learner's fundamental right to education.

4.4 The willingness of parents to play a critical role in assisting the school in getting their children to school on time and on a regular basis is a necessary ingredient to improving learner attendance.

5. Purpose of the Policy

The primary purpose of the learner attendance policy is to:

- a) Provide public schools with standard procedures for recording, managing and monitoring learner attendance.
- b) Inform principals, educators, learners, parents and the SGB of their responsibilities towards promoting punctual and regular attendance at public schools.

6. Definitions and Acronyms

6.1 Definitions

Term	Definition
Class	Refers to a group of learners who are under the administrative supervision of a class teacher.
Class register	Means an official document, which may be an electronic document, in which the attendance of learners in a class is recorded each school day.
Class teacher	Is a teacher to whom the principal has allocated administrative responsibility for a class for a school year (or part thereof).
Continuous absence	Means absence of a learner from school for 10 consecutive school days without valid reasons.
Educator	Refers to any person, excluding a person who is appointed to exclusively perform extra-curricular duties, who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services, including professional therapy and education psychological services at school.
Head of Department	Means the head of a provincial department of education.
Learner	Means any person receiving education or obliged to receive education in terms of relevant legislation.

Parent	Means - a) the parent of guardian of a learner; b) the person legally entitled to custody of a learner; or c) the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a person referred to in paragraph (a) and (b) towards the learner's education at school.
Period	Refers to the time allocated on a school timetable for instruction in a subject or learning area.
Period register	Means an official document in which the attendance of learners in a period is recorded.
Principal	Means an educator appointed or acting as the head of a school.
School	Refers to name of school in this policy.
School Governing Body	Means the relevant body responsible for Governance issues.
Suspension	Refers to the temporary refusal of admission to a learner to a school, usually suspension precedes expulsion.
Temporary class register	Refers to a register maintained by a class teacher for no more than 10 consecutive school days commencing from the first day of school on which learners report to school to the 10th school day
Temporary closure of schools	Means temporary closure of a school during the school year by the HoD in terms of 16(4) of SASA or by the SGB in terms of the National School Calendar Policy.

6.2 Acronyms

Acronyms	Explanation
EAS	Electronic Administration System
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department of a school
HoD	Head of a Provincial Education Department
MEC	Member of the Executive Council of a province who is responsible for education in the province,
PAM	Personnel Administration Measures
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
BPMS	Bryanston Parallel Medium School

7. Application and Scope of the Policy

7.1 This policy applies to the learners, educators, support staff, the school management and parents of learners at the school.

8. Legislative Framework

8.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996), as amended.

8.2 National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No.2 of 1996), as amended.

8.3 The South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), as amended.

8.4 Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act No. 76 of 1998).

8.5 Education Policy Act, 1998 (Act No. 12 of 1998)

8.6 Gauteng Schools Education Act, 1995 (Act No. 6 of 1995).

8.7 Policy on Learner Attendance (General Notice No. 361 of 2010)

8.8 Admission of Learners to Public Schools (General Notice 4138 of 2001).

9. Relevant Policies and Provincial Circulars

9.1 Circular 9/2017

9.2 Circular 11/2017

9.3 Circular 17/2017

9.4 National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996

10. Policy statements

10.1 Attendance Records

- a) Bryanston Parallel Medium School will maintain class registers and Period registers as attendance records, will be introduced if deemed necessary.
- b) The registers referred to above will be kept in the form of electronic records and paper based records for monitoring and verification purposes.
- c) For the first 10 days of the academic year, commencing from the first day of school on which learners report to school to the 10th school day, a teacher is required to maintain a temporary class register.
- d) The principal of the school will supply the class teachers with class registers and period registers annually after the 10th school day.
- e) All staff members are required to maintain the respective learner attendance records meticulously and accurately as these are legal documents which may be brought before a court in case a legal action is instituted against a school as a result of a mishap to a learner.
- f) The class register will be marked daily during the registration period by the class teacher and the period register will be marked daily during the teaching period by the subject/Learning Area teacher.
- g) In the absence of a class teacher/subject teacher a member of the SMT/another teacher will mark the relevant register.
- h) The class register shall be compiled by the class teacher.
- i) The class register shall be marked once a day, in the morning, registration times indicated on the school timetable, in accordance with the procedures as set out in Annexure A.
- j) Once the register is marked after each registration, it must be sent down to the administration clerk for capturing on the EAS.

10.2 Learner Absence

10.2.1 When Is A Learner Considered To Be Absent?

In Line with the National Policy on Learner Attendance, Bryanston Parallel Medium School, will consider a learner to be absent from school when such a learner is not present in class during the times when the class register is marked during the class registration period and/or during the time when the period register is marked or when the learner is not participating in an official educational, cultural, recreational or social activity of a school within or outside the school premises.

10.2.1 Valid Reasons for Learner Absence

Taking the cue from the National Policy on Learner Attendance, Bryanston Parallel Medium considers the reasons on the table below as valid for learner absence, implemented by clear actions and responsibility:

No.	Valid Reason	Action to be taken	By Whom
a.	Five (5) days study leave for Grade 12 Learners	The Parent to be notified by the school in writing.	Principal
b.	Physical or psychological illness must be supported by a medical certificate from the registered medical practitioner or traditional healer for illness longer than three days	The principal should be notified (telephonically/in writing) from the first day the learner is absent.	Parent
c.	Religious or cultural observances approved by the SGB	The Parent to be notified by the school in writing.	Principal and SGB Chairman
d.	Death of a family member	The principal should be notified on return to school documentary proof must be provided	Parent
e.	Maternity leave supported by the medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner or registered midwife.	The principal should be notified.	Parent
No.	Valid Reason	Action to be taken	By Whom
g.	Suspension by the SGB	The Parent to be notified by the school in writing.	Principal and SGB Chairman
h.	Natural disasters.	The Parent to be notified by the school in writing or through the media.	Principal and SGB Chairman
i.	Exceptional cases (decision of Principal)	The Parent to be notified in writing	The Principal

10.2.2 What To Do In Cases Of Learner Absence

- a. A class teacher must inform the principal of the school if a learner is absent from school without explanation for three (3) consecutive days.
- b. The Principal will follow up learner absence if a learner is absent for three consecutive days without an explanation.
- c. If despite the Principal's intervention, a learner persists in being absent without a valid reason:
 - i. The learner will be charged with breach of the school's code of conduct for learners.
 - ii. The learner's record in the class register will be cancelled if the learner is absent for ten (10) consecutive days.
- d. Any cancellation of a learner's records can only be implemented on the following grounds:
 - i. Exemption from compulsory school attendance.
 - ii. Expulsion
 - iii. Transfer to another school.
 - iv. Registration for home education
 - v. Continuous absence
 - vi. Notification by parents that the learner will not return to school
 - vii. Death of a learner
- e. After cancelling a learner's record from the class register, the Principal must in writing:
 - i. Inform the parent and the class teacher of the date of and reason for cancellation.
 - ii. If the learner is of school – going age, inform the District IDSO of the date of and reason for cancellation.
- f. The Principal will ensure that a record of all communication will be kept in the learner's profile.
- g. A learner whose records were previously cancelled on the class register because of continuous absence from the school may be reinstated if the Principal has a reason to believe that it is in the best interest of the learner.

10.2.3 Temporary Closure of Schools

In cases where the school is closed temporarily by the HOD of SGB (after obtaining the necessary approval from the HOD), a learner will not be marked absent but the register will show through the correct notation in Annexure A,.

10.3 Roles and Responsibilities

10.3.1 Learners

a) All learners have a responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.

b) In Primary Schools:

No learner may take study leave for examinations or when examinations have ended.

In Secondary Schools:

Except for Grade 12 learners, a learner may not take study leave for examinations or when examinations have ended. A Grade 12 learner will be allowed to take five (5) school days before the first day of the national Senior Certificate to prepare for the examinations. Such learners may not attend school on days they do not write examinations and after completing the examinations.

- b) The Representative Council of Learners (RCL) in school with Grade 8 and above should:
 - i) Advocate regular school attendance and punctuality during meetings, assembly, sports and in the classroom.
 - ii) Promote punctuality for subject periods during period rotation.
 - iii) Report to the School Management Team (SMT) of any repetitive patterns of absence from school and the reasons thereof.

10.3.2 Class teacher

- a. A class teacher must ensure that he/she receives a copy of an official class register or use a computer generated class list.
- b. A class teacher may use a temporary class register for a maximum of ten (10) consecutive days starting on the first day of the first term while class lists are being finalised and maintained in the same manner as the class register in terms of this policy.
- c. The data on the temporary register, once approved by the Principal, must be copied on the official register as soon as these become available after the 10-day life span.
- d. A class teacher will compile and mark a class register during the class registration period during the time allocated on the school timetable on each school day and take it to the principal's office on the last day of the week for safe keeping.
- e. Report to the Principal/SMT of any repetitive patterns on absence from school and the reasons thereof.

- f. Inform the principal of the school if a learner is absent from school without explanation for three (3) consecutive days.

10.3.3 Subject/Learning Area Teacher

- a) A subject/learning area teacher must ensure that he/she receives a copy of the period register for his/her subject/learning area from the subject Head of Department (HOD).
- b) The subject/learning area teacher will receive a period register from the subject HOD on the last day of the week in preparation for marking the register for the following week.
- c) A subject/learning area teacher must report a learner who is absent for a period without a valid reason to the subject HOD.
- d) A subject/learning area teacher must support a learner who was absent from a period with a valid reason to make up for time lost or assessments missed in the form of catch-up programmes.

10.3.4 School Management Team

- a. The SMT must work together with the Principal, SGB and Staff of the school to develop a culture of punctual and regular attendance at the school.
- b. The Grade HOD will collect period registers at the prescribed time on the last day of the week from the subject. HODs of that Grade and consolidate period attendance statistics for the week.
- c. The subject HOD will collect period registers at the prescribed time on the last day of the week from the Grade HOD and hand to the subject teachers before the end of the last school day of the week.
- d. Compile statistics and reports for learner attendance in the school.
- e. Follow up cases of irregular attendance during teaching time and report to the Principal accordingly.

10.3.5 School Governing Body

- a. The SGB must work together with the Principal, Management and Staff of the school to develop a culture of punctual and regular attendance at the school.
- b. The SGB must include rules dealing with punctuality and regular school attendance in the school's Code of Conduct for learners.
- c. The SGB must request from the principal a quarterly report on learner attendance trends and consider the report in the SGB meeting.

10.3.6 Principal

The Principal:

- a. Together with the Staff, SMT and SGB, is responsible for developing a culture of punctual and regular attendance at the school.
- b. Will ensure that all staff members understand the importance of accurate record – keeping and monitoring of learner attendance and carry out their responsibilities competently.
- c. Will provide all class teachers and subject teachers with class registers and period registers.
- d. Must give each learner a copy of the school's Code of Conduct and the learner attendance policy. Learners will be requested to sign acknowledgement of receipt.
- e. Will avail a class/period register to an authorised official of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) or an authorised judicial officer upon request.
- f. Must ensure that quarterly attendance returns are generated and submitted to the District IDSO.
- g. Must implement government programmes to assist learners with problems leading to absence and irregular school attendance.
- h. Must ensure that class registers and period registers are compiled, marked, monitored and securely stored in terms of this policy.
- i. Must monitor and analyse learner attendance statistics by grade and include the information in the reports to the SGB and Head of Department for Education (HOD).
- j. Must establish in advance the difficulties that the writing of end-of-year examinations will bring in relation to accommodation of all learners in the school and the likelihood this will have on learner attendance, teacher absenteeism on examination marking duty and the program of action to alleviate this.

10.3.7 Parents

A parent of a learner is expected to fulfil the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. Ensure that the learner attends the school daily, on time and for the entire school day unless there is a valid reason for absence.
- b. Ensure that the learner is not taken out of school without a valid reason as determined by the school and without a permission note.
- c. Where a learner obtained permission to be taken out of the school early, inform the school who will be fetching the learner and what relationship is the person to the learner.
- d. Inform the class teacher in a school diary or in a letter to the class teacher or by telephone call to the administration office if the learner is absent or expected to be absent or be late for school with a valid reason.
- e. Notify the principal in writing well in advance of the learner's intentions to take certain school days off for the purpose of observing religious holidays/festival or cultural practices.

- f. Cooperate with the school in resolving cases where the learner is absent without the valid reason or permission from the school.
- g. Encourage the learner to participate in catch-up programmes to make up for time lost for absence from school.

11. Short title

This policy shall be called Learner Attendance Policy in Public Schools

12. Approval

Recommended by: (Principal) (Print Name)		Signature:	
Date:			
Approved by: (SGB Chairperson) (Print Name)		Signature:	
Date:			
Verification by GDE: (District Director) (Print Name)		Signature:	
Date of Verification			
Certified by: (Print Name)		Signature:	
Date:			

13. Annexure/s (If applicable)

ANNEXURE A – Procedures for compiling and maintaining a class register.

ANNEXURE A:

PROCEDURES FOR COMPILING AND MAINTAINING A CLASS REGISTER

- 1. Responsibility:** The register is an official document which may be used in legal proceedings. The principal of the school is responsible for its safety/the register must be managed as follows:
 - 1.1 Daily management.** The register must be kept safely by the class teacher and locked up in the school office when not in use
 - 1.2 Archiving.** The principal must keep the register securely for at least three years after the last entry has been made.
 - 1.3 Inspection.** The principal must produce the register for inspection if requested by a duly authorized official of the Provincial Education Department or by a duly authorized judicial officer.
 - 1.4 Compilation and marking.** The class teacher is responsible for compiling and marking the register in a professional manner. The class teacher must mark the register during the designated class registration period (or periods) each school day. A learner may not mark the register.
 - 1.5 Additions and alterations.** Additions and alternations must be made only by the class teacher. An error must be crossed out neatly so that the underlying text is legible and an alternation must be written clearly and initialled and dated. Correcting fluid may not be used.

- 2. Compiling the register.** The register must be compiled as follows:
 - 2.1 Gender.** In a co-educational school, list boys and girls on separate pages, first boys then girls. Write 'Boys' or 'Girls' in the space provided at the top of the page.
 - 2.2 Multi-grade class.** In a class with more than one grade, a separate class register may be used for each grade.
 - 2.3 Grade & Class.** Example: 'Grade 6B'
 - 2.4 Quarter....**Insert 1,2,3 or 4
 - 2.5 No.** Give each learner a number starting with 1
 - 2.6 Surname/First Name.** List the leaner's names in alphabetical order by surname. NB: If a class teacher cannot accommodate the names of all learners on the register, a second register may be used.
 - 2.7 Admission No.** Insert the leaner's admission number.
 - 2.8 Week ending.** Insert the date of the last school day of the week.

- 2.9 Learner's biographical details.** This section is optional and is for use by the school for administrative and management purposes. Schools are free to add additional columns.
- 2.10 New learner.** The name of a learner who is admitted after the register has been compiled must be entered at the end of the class list. Rule a horizontal line in the row across the days that the learner has not attended. Write N in the square for the learner's first day of attendance.
- 2.11 De-registered learner.** Write D in the square for the day that a learner is re-registered. Rule a horizontal line in the row from the following school day until the end of the quarter. A de-registered learner who is re-admitted during the same school term must be treated as a new learner and the class teacher must make a note to the effect against the original entry.
- 3. Marking the register.** The register must be marked in ink as follows:
- 3.1 When a learner is present.** Leave the square blank except on a new learner's first day, when N must be written in the square.
- 3.2 If a learner is absent.** If the register is marked once a day, write a single 'a' in the centre of the square. If the register is marked twice a day, write a morning 'a' in the top left corner and an afternoon 'a' in the bottom right corner.
- 3.3 Temporary school closure.** If the school is officially closed on a school day, write the reason in capital letters in the column for the day (for example, EMERGENCY, RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY)
- 3.4 Public holiday.** When the school closes for a public holiday, write in capital letters in the column for the day 'PUBLIC HOLIDAY'.
- 3.5 NSC Exams.** A horizontal line and the words. 'NSC EXAMS' in capitals must be inscribed on a grade 12 class register for the period from the start of the study leave period until the end of school year.
- 4. Daily summary.** The class teacher must each day compile a daily summary at the bottom of the page as follows.
- 4.1 Number of learners absent.** Add the column for the number of learners absent on that day and insert the sum in the correct space. If the register is marked twice a day, add only whole day absences.
- 4.2 Number of learners absent enrolled.** Insert the number of enrolled learners listed on the page. This number will remain the same from day to day except when a new learner is admitted or a learner is de-registered.

5. **At the end of each quarter.** The class teacher must fill the last column of the register as follows:
 - 5.1 **Days absent per learner.** For each learner add horizontally the number of days absent in the term and insert the sum in the correct space in the last column. If the register is marked twice a day, add only whole day absences.
 - 5.2 **Total number of learner absentee days.** Insert the total of all the figures in the correct space in the last column.

6. **Signatures**
 - 6.1 **Class teacher's signature.** The class teacher must sign the register at the end of each quarter to indicate that it is complete and correct.
 - 6.2 **Principal's signature.** The principal must sign the register at the end of each quarter to indicate that it is complete and correct.

7. **Biographical details (optional)**
 - 7.1 In the columns headed 'Mother deceased', 'Father deceased', 'Both parents deceased', 'Repeater', and 'Child support grant', write 'Y' if applicable.
 - 7.2 In the columns marked 'Home Language' insert the code for the language or languages spoken most frequently in the learner's home.