

SPARK Schools Scholar Attendance Policy

1. General

- 1.1. The Principal of the school is accountable, and the School Operations Manager is responsible for the accurate recording and monitoring of scholar attendance and absence.
- 1.2. In terms of the National Policy of Learner Attendance 2010 (“the Policy”), a daily record of scholar attendance enables the school to monitor scholar attendance and absence, in order to take required action with scholars and parents, as necessary, or to make referrals to the district office when required.
- 1.3. Furthermore, section 3 of the Schools Act 84 of 1996 (“the Act”) makes school attendance compulsory for children under the age of 16.

2. Procedure

- 2.1. The member of staff responsible for each class during their first lesson of the day must mark attendance using the “Attendance App” and submit same by 08:30. If the responsible member of staff is for any reason not able to mark the requisite attendance, they must immediately notify the School Operations Manager.
 - 2.2. Attendance is recorded according to the following guidelines:
 - 2.2.1. A scholar is Present if they arrive by 7:45am.
 - 2.2.2. A scholar is Tardy if they arrive after 7:45am.
 - 2.2.3. A scholar is Absent if they do not arrive during the instructional day.
 - 2.2. The School Operations Manager must follow up on any instances where scholars / classes have not been registered by 9:00am each day.
 - 2.2.1. Attendance registers should be kept for the duration of the instructional year in a format accessible to school leaders, which can be made available on request by authorised district officials.
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2.3. The School Operations Manager is required to check and ensure that attendance registers are correctly marked, and absenteeism data is accurately captured, before submitting to SA-SAMS administrators by 9:15am every Friday.

2.3.1. Weekly attendance registers are reported to district offices as part of compliance reporting requirements by the SA-SAMS administrators at SPARK Support by 11am on Fridays.

2.4. The Principal is required to monitor, analyse, and report scholar absenteeism trends to take appropriate action with scholars and parents.

3. Attendance and Absence

3.1. If a scholar is absent for 3 (three) consecutive school days without a valid written reason, the matter should be reported to the Principal, who must intervene., the Principal must intervene by contacting the parents regarding their responsibility and requesting the parents' cooperation. This intervention must include contacting the relevant parents regarding their responsibility to ensure that their child/ren are in attendance at school and requesting the parents' cooperation in respect of same; approaching the district office for support if necessary and requesting government or non-governmental social development agencies to intervene, when necessary.

3.2. If the absence reaches 10 (ten) consecutive school days, the learner's record in the class register must be cancelled on the grounds of continuous absence. The cancellation should take place only after the principal has again made a reasonable attempt to contact the parents in an effort to resolve this issue.

3.3. In accordance with the Policy, if any of following three circumstances apply, a scholars record in the class register must be cancelled:

3.3.1. The learner has been withdrawn from that school;

3.3.2. no valid reason was offered for the absence; and

3.3.3. the parents could not be reached.

As is evident from the phrases "must be charged" and "must be cancelled" in the Policy, the Principal is not allowed any discretion in adjudicating these matters. Furthermore, the Policy provides that principals, teachers and district officials are obliged to show zero tolerance for unexcused absences.

3.4. In terms of Paragraph 59 of the Policy, a scholar may be readmitted. To this end, after the district office has been informed, it will inform the head of the provincial department of Basic Education, who will then deal with the matter in terms of section 3(5) of the Act. Readmittance to the school must be approved by the district office to which the Principal has referred the cancellation of the scholar's enrolment contract.
