



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **RPE-PL-07**

<b>POLICY OWNER</b>	Education Quality and Accountability Office
<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	Principal and Senior Leadership Team
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	School Board
<b>APPROVAL DATE</b>	
<b>DATE POLICY CAME INTO EFFECT</b>	
<b>PERIOD OF REVIEW</b>	2 years
<b>DATE OF NEXT REVIEW</b>	

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# 1 RPE Mission and Vision

## Mission

Richmond Park Education aims to provide an inclusive learning environment that **nurtures, inspires and empowers** the students to reach their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally. Through innovative teaching methods, engaging and challenging enrichment programmes, personalised attention, and collaboration with families and the community, we cultivate critical thinking, creativity, and a lifelong passion for learning.

## Vision

Vision of Richmond Park Education is to prepare the students to become compassionate, confident, and responsible global citizens who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values to thrive in an ever-changing world.

# 2 Introduction

This policy was prepared by RPE Education Quality and Accountability Office.

The School Board has agreed and ratified this policy.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies: Curriculum policy, Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Teaching and Learning Policy, Assessment and Reporting Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

# 3 Rationale

At Richmond Park International School, Sarajevo (hereinafter: the School) we firmly believe that all students benefit from regular school attendance. In fact, evidence suggests that a student with attendance of below 90% has only a 27% chance of achieving 5 grades 9-4 in their GCSE results, regardless of ability. To this end, we will do all we can to ensure that our students achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted upon promptly.

Our expectation is that all students' attendance is 100%, unless there is a genuine reason for absence approved by the Principal or delegated member of staff as described in this policy. Each year, a number of students from every year group achieve 100% attendance, demonstrating that it is an achievable target. There are a number of rewards provided for students who achieve termly 100% attendance and yearly 100% attendance which recognises their continued effort.

# 4 Aims and Scope

The aims of this policy are outlined below:

- to set out school's desire and obligation to monitor student attendance and deal with cases of non-attendance,
- to provide each member of the school community with an understanding of what their responsibilities are in terms of school attendance,
- to outline the circumstances under which student absences are validated as excused,
- to outline the circumstances under which student absences are validated as unexcused,
- to determine the scope of unexcused lessons that leads to disciplinary actions.

## **5 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **School Board**

The School Board has devolved responsibility from the Richmond Park Education Board for approving this policy and ensuring it is implemented appropriately.

### **Principal and Safeguarding Team**

The Principal and the Safeguarding Team are responsible for ensuring this policy is shared annually with staff and made available to parents and carers via the school website. They are responsible for investigating cases of persistent absence and cases where concerns have been raised by the Form Tutors or members of the Safeguarding Team. They are also responsible for ensuring that the period of review is maintained appropriately.

### **Teachers**

All teachers are responsible for complete registers accurately and punctually for every lesson.

### **Form Tutors**

Form tutors are responsible to:

- communicate with parents/carers to collect evidence and validate absences as excused or unexcused for all students in their designated class,
- inform the students in their class about the regulations of this policy on the first tutor period they have in the term,
- inform the parents/carers of their designated class about the regulations of this policy on the first parent-teacher conference they have in the term,
- assist the Safeguarding Team in investigating any unexplained absences when the student returns,
- inform the Safeguarding Team of concerns,
- be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in absence and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Team.

### **Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers are expected to:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities,
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day
- contact the form tutor or (when necessary) school before 8:15 h on the morning of the day of absence,
- contact the form tutor or (when necessary) school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school,
- provide necessary medical or other documents as evidence for absence,
- request and fill the Prolonged Absence Form and submit it to the Safeguarding Team at least 5 days in advance,
- be aware that unexplained absence will be recorded as unexcused absence.

## **Students**

We expect that all students will:

- attend school regularly,
- attend school punctually,
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day,
- discuss promptly with their form tutor, or a member of the Safeguarding Team any problems that prevent them from attending school.

## **6 Defining Excused Absences**

Absences are validated as excused by the Form Tutor under the following circumstances:

- Parents/carers may request that the absence is excused for personal reasons up to 2 working days in a term, for a total of 4 days in a school year.
- Parents/carers may request an excused absence for personal reasons up to 3 working days from the Form Tutor, up to 5 working days from the Principal and up to 15 working days from the School Teaching Council.
- In case of an emergency, parents/carers may verbally request an excused absence from the Form Tutor or the subject teacher (if the Form Tutor could not be contacted) from their lesson.
- When the provider of transport is not able to follow the schedule or there is a traffic jam or any similar circumstance, the absence is validated as excused by the Principal.
- When the student participates in an event or a contest that is part of the school's curricular, enrichment and cultural activities, the absence is validated as excused.

Authorisation for absence in each aforementioned case is given in written form. For any other circumstance, parents/carers are obliged to provide a doctor's notice, medical or other documentation as evidence for the absence to be validated as excused. Evidence must be submitted within 5 working days upon the student's return to school.

## **7 Defining Unexcused Absences**

The purpose of monitoring and validating absences as unexcused is prevention of non-attendance and affirmation of responsible attitudes and behaviours of students.

Absences are validated as unexcused by the Form Tutor under the following circumstances:

- Parents/carers have not submitted request and received authorisation for excused absences as described in the previous section of this policy.
- Parents/carers have failed to provide the doctor's notice, medical or other documentation as evidence as described in the previous section of this policy.

Parents/carers must be aware that unexplained absence will be recorded as unexcused absence.

For each unforeseen circumstance not described by this policy, the School Teaching Council has the mandate to evaluate the case and decide if the absence should be authorised or not.

## 8 Disciplinary Measures for Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absence from school is considered a severe violation of student obligations as described by Article 7 of the Regulations on Unexcused Absences from School (Sarajevo Canton, 2020).

In accordance with Article 8 of the Regulations on Unexcused Absences from School (Sarajevo Canton, 2020) and Behaviour Policy, students are issued the following disciplinary measures due to unexcused absences as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Disciplinary measures for unexcused lessons.

Number of unexcused lessons	Disciplinary measure	Behaviour grade
0 - 5	No measure, contact the family to remind them of next steps	Remains "Exemplary"
6 - 10	"Reprimand by the Form Tutor"	Decreased to "Very Good"
11 - 19	"Reprimand by the Class Teaching Council"	Decreased to "Good"
20 - 25	"Reprimand by the Principal"	Decreased to "Satisfactory"
26 - 30	"Reprimand by the School Teaching Council"	Decreased to "Poor"
31 and more	Formal decision on expulsion	Remains "Poor"

## 9 Responding to Non-attendance

When a student does not attend school and the absence was not announced and authorised, the school will respond in the following manner:

- The Form Tutor will call/text the parent/carer contact numbers until a response is received.
- If there is no response from the parent/carer then the Form Tutor will call/text other contacts associated with the absent student.
- In the event that no response or follow up letter/evidence is received; the absence will be recorded as unexcused.
- If there is no response from the parent/carer after 2 days of unauthorised absence, the Form Tutor will notify the Safeguarding Team.
- Further contact will be attempted to the parents/carers and if necessary, a home visit will be conducted.

### Persistent absence

- Absence is monitored regularly and evaluated on a monthly basis.
- Initial contact will be made by the Form Tutor to the parent/carer of any student with a number of unexcused absences approaching 5 where there are concerns about potential

further absence. There will also be an accompanying letter of concern sent home.

- If further concerns arise or the attendance hasn't improved then the Form Tutor will inform the Safeguarding Team. Safeguarding team will attempt to contact the parent/carer. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the parent/carer via a second letter of concern about their legal obligations and remind them of the schools intents to contact Child Protection Services if the attendance continues to be an issue.
- Disciplinary measures will be issued along with aforementioned measures.

### **Lateness**

- Students are expected to go to their lockers and fulfil all their needs before classes commence at 8:30.
- If a student arrives late to school after 8:30, they will proceed to their lesson, but will be recorded as late with the number of minutes late by the subject teacher. The same procedure will be followed for each lesson in the day.
- Form Tutor has to evaluate each case of lateness in their designated class and either excused or unexcused absence, that will be reflected in the students' attendance figures.
- Continued lateness is considered to be violation of student obligations and is subject to disciplinary measures as defined by the Behaviour and Rewards Policy.

### **Holidays**

The school holiday dates are published before the beginning of each new school year by the relevant education authority. The school informs the parents/carers about its calendar at the first parent-teacher conference in each school year. We ask parents/carers to book their family holidays during the school holidays. Leave of absence during term time for personal reasons is granted as described in the Section 6 of this policy. Requests for leave of absence are treated sympathetically but only in exceptional circumstances, and form tutors, Principal and the School Teaching Council retain the right to dismiss any request for leave of absence within their authority.

### **Reporting absences**

Number of excused and unexcused absences is included in the student report cards delivered at the end of each term, and as such may be used as a point of reference for future employers, colleges or universities.

### **Changing schools**

It is important that, if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school, they inform the Form Tutor as soon as possible. A student will not be removed from the school roll until the tuition contract has been formally cancelled. Students are obliged to attend the school until the last day, and any absences due to changing school will be recorded and evaluated.

## **10 Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy**

We review the information in the policy biannually and make adjustments as appropriate. Our review involves students, staff, and carers.