 Unicorn Preparatory School	<b>UNICORN PREPARATORY SCHOOL</b>	Policy No
	Section (2) School Management <b>POLICY ON PUPIL ATTENDANCE &amp; ABSENCE</b>	2.4

## LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

This policy for school attendance has been drawn up in accordance with the South African schools act no. 84 of 1996.

Chapter 2 paragraph 3 of the act states:

Compulsory attendance.

- 1) Subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law, every parent must cause every learner for whom he or she is responsible to attend a school from the first school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of seven years until the last school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of fifteen years or the ninth grade, whichever occurs first.
- 5) If a learner who is subject to compulsory attendance in terms of subsection (1) is not enrolled at or fails to attend a school, the Head of Department may:
  - (a) investigate the circumstances of the learner's absence from school;
  - (b) take appropriate measures to remedy the situation; and
  - (c) failing such a remedy, issue a written notice to the parent of the learner requiring compliance with subsection (1).
- 6) Subject to this Act and any other applicable law:
  - (a) any parent who, without just 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 not exceeding six months; or
  - (b) any other person who, without just cause, prevents a learner who is subject to compulsory attendance from attending a school, is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months.

## Objectives/Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote punctual and regular attendance at Unicorn Preparatory School and provide the school with standard procedures for recording, managing and monitoring pupil attendance.

## Absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- When a child is absent from school without an excuse.
- The school cannot authorise a child being absent and cannot give permission for a child to be absent even if permission is requested from parents or caregivers.
- Not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.
- A child needs to be at school for at least 2 hours a day to be marked present.
- A child going for an academic assessment recommended by the school will be marked present.

- A child going for an academic assessment not recommended by the school will be marked absent.
- A child attending an interview or writing a test for admission to high school will be marked present.
- Religious or cultural observances approved by the Management Team must be marked present. Although they have been marked present, a comment must still be typed into the comment section indicating what religious observance they are respecting. E.g. Diwali or Eid etc.

## **Valid Reason for Absence**

While punctual and regular attendance is necessary, from time to time, it may not be possible or desirable for a pupil to attend school. Any of the following is a valid reason for the absence of a pupil from school:

- Physical or psychological illness, for which a Headmaster may require communication from the parent/s that the pupil is unable to attend school, or written confirmation by a registered medical practitioner or traditional healer if the illness lasts longer than three days
- Death of a family member
- Appointment at court, social services or other official agency, for which a Headmaster may require documentary proof
- Suspension by the Headmaster
- Acts of nature (that is, events that are beyond human control)
- Exceptional circumstances for which, in the view of the Headmaster, a temporary absence from school: is in the best interest of the pupil or was unavoidable.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the Headmaster**

- The Headmaster, working with the school management team (SMT) and the Board of Governors, is responsible for developing a culture of punctual and regular attendance at the school.
- The Headmaster is responsible for fostering a caring school environment in which the SMT and teachers take an interest in each pupil's well-being and are alert to problems that might affect a pupil's attendance.
- The Headmaster must ensure that staff who are allocated responsibilities for school attendance matters understand the importance of accurate records and careful monitoring, and that they carry out their responsibilities competently.
- The Headmaster is responsible for ensuring that class registers are compiled, marked and monitored properly, and that they are printed at the end of each academic year and are stored safely in terms of this policy. At this school an electronic administration system will be used with the teachers completing the register each morning online. The Headmaster is responsible for ensuring that electronically generated registers are properly maintained and backed up, and that hard copies are made at the end of each academic year.
- The Headmaster or his delegate must follow up on excessive pupil absences.
- The Headmaster will make sure that each new academic year, including holidays, term time and number of school days is drawn up at least 12 months before the start of that year and that this information will be displayed on the school website.

If the pupil is absent without valid reason for three consecutive school days, the Headmaster must:

- inform the parents of the importance of regular attendance;
- emphasise the pupil's duty to attend punctually and regularly in terms of the school's code of conduct for pupils;
- if the pupil is of compulsory school-going age, inform the parents of the legal implications of section 3 of the South African schools act no. 84 of 1996;
- request the pupil's return to school;

If, despite the intervention of the Headmaster, a pupil persists in being absent without valid reason, the Headmaster must charge the pupil with breach of the South African schools act no. 84 of 1996

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers**

- The class teacher is responsible for updating the electronic class register during the registration period on each school day.
- The class teacher must inform the Headmaster when a pupil is absent without explanation for three consecutive school days and must draw the Headmaster's attention to cases of repeated absence so that the matter may be followed up with the parents in an appropriate manner.
- To make sure that each child in the class (Grade 4-7) has been allocated a homework buddy and that when a child is absent that buddy gets a homework buddy form to fill in.
- Grade R-3 teachers will assist with academic work to be recovered.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Pupils**

- A pupil has a responsibility to attend school punctually and regularly.
- No pupils may take leave from school to study for examinations or when examinations have ended.
- To catch up all work missed no matter the reason for being absent.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Parents**

Parents are expected to:

- ensure that the pupil attends school daily, on time and for the whole school day, unless there is a valid reason for absence;
- ensure that the pupil is not taken out of school without valid reason
  - invalid reasons include but are not limited to:
    - Family or other holidays;
    - Doctor appointments
    - School "open days"
    - Sporting functions not related to Unicorn Preparatory directly
    - Any other non-academic related absenteeism
    - Any absenteeism as deemed absent by the Headmaster
- inform the Headmaster via letter, email, telephone or class teacher if the pupil is absent or expected to be absent or expected to be late for school, giving a valid reason;
- co-operate with the school in resolving the problem if the pupil is absent from school without valid reason; and
- encourage and, if possible, assist the pupil at home to make up for time lost as a result of absence from school.
- May not take out of school for purposes of going on holiday.

## Roles and Responsibility of the School


- The school community, led by the Headmaster and BoG, is responsible for promoting
- and monitoring school attendance to give pupils the best chance of benefiting from their school experience.
- The school will provide support to a pupil who has been absent to make up for time lost or assessments missed. This will be done by the individual subject/class teachers, within normal school hours and will not be deemed as extra tuition or lessons.

## Procedures for taking roll call and “marking” of registers

- Each class teacher will enter the details of absenteeism from their own class during registration in the morning.
- At term end the administrator will print the term’s absent rolls for each class.
- If a pupil arrives late or leaves early it should also be marked in the attendance section of the administration programme.

## Awards

- Each child who does not miss a day of school in any academic year (including recognised religious observances) will be issued with a 100% attendance certificate on the final school day of the year.
- Any child who has never missed a school day in 7 years (Grade 1-7) will receive a special, framed full attendance certificate at the final senior prize giving of the year.

Revised by Name	Revision date	Approved by Name	Signature	Approved Date
I HOUSTON	20-03-2018	Management Team		25-03-2018