



# Attendance Policy Everyday Matters\*

2019

## ABSTRACT

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and management in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

## Grassroots School

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## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Our Vision .....  | 2  |
| Our Mission .....   | 2  |
| Introduction .....  | 3  |
| Objective.....  | 3  |
| Value (s) guiding the policy.....   | 4  |
| Definitions .....   | 4  |
| Authorised absence.....   | 4  |
| Unauthorised absence .....  | 4  |
| Rationale .....   | 4  |
| Responsibilities .....  | 5  |
| Class Teacher.....  | 5  |
| Head of School.....   | 5  |
| Management Team.....  | 5  |
| Parents .....   | 5  |
| Early/Late Arrival – Early/Late Leaving Guidelines .....  | 6  |
| Definitions .....   | 6  |
| Early/Late Arrival – Early/Late Leaving Instructions .....  | 6  |
| Purpose of Policy.....  | 6  |
| Process for Parents- Communication for Early – Late Arrival / Early – Late Departure.....           | 7  |
| Guidelines for Event Attendance .....   | 7  |
| Student Contact Days:.....  | 7  |
| Parent Contact Days:.....   | 7  |
| Student / Parent Contact Day's Attendance.....  | 8  |
| Religious Festival falling on Working Days.....   | 8  |
| Promotion Policy .....  | 9  |
| Chronic Absence/Absenteeism Intervention Flowchart .....  | 9  |
| Annexure I - 1 <sup>st</sup> Notification of Absenteeism (NOA) Letter for Unexcused Absences .....  | 10 |
| Annexure II - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Notification of Absenteeism (NOA) Letter for Unexcused Absences ..... | 11 |
| Annexure III - Chronic Absence Letter for Excused and Unexcused Absences .....                      | 12 |
| Annexure IV - PARENT'S UNDERTAKING FOR STUDENTS CHRONIC ABSENCE .....                               | 13 |

Grassroots was established in 2011 as a Reggio inspired school, with its focus on holistic education provided within an inclusive set-up. Grassroots aims to be a warm, welcoming, and encouraging environment, in which all concerned share solicitude for the needs of the child. This in turn is the best motivation for any child to attend school and learn.

## Our Vision

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"Everyone can learn - just not in the same day or same way".

## Our Mission

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Grassroots believes education is a lifelong journey. The organisation aims to spark curiosity, imagination and love for lifelong learning whilst nurturing young minds to be caring, empathetic and responsible citizens of the global world.

To this end we prepare our children to meet 21st century challenges with creativity and confidence thereby building a peaceful and sustainable community through international mindedness.



# Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Grassroots School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/guardians of pupils via our school website.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head of School and Management Team at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

## Objective

Grassroots School desires 100% attendance for all students studying in the school. Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 85% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness about the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education with parents, caregivers and pupils.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Prekindergarten and Kindergarten aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, and the staff so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

As a school, we maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and Management Team on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.

- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

## Value (s) guiding the policy

This policy applies to all students.

- a) Achieving excellence in the teaching-learning environment
- b) Everyday matters in the learning

## Definitions

### Authorised 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.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## Rationale

- For children to be involved completely in the learning process, it is important they are present in school. The teaching learning methodology is such that a gap of even one day will make a difference. Prolonged absenteeism severely sets back the child's understanding of a particular topic. Also, specialist subjects (Hindi, Visual Arts, Music, Physical Education – Sports, Drama, and Dance) have only 1-2 sessions per week and missing these classes also hinder the child's overall development.
- There's a limitation to what can be covered up academically and otherwise for children who are absent. While we can give a few worksheets, and give a summary of what's happened, but to really cover up the concepts in detail like it was done in class is not possible.
- Sufficient vacations are given to children including a number of long weekends, for parents, to plan short and long trips. Moreover, the school calendar for the year is given well in advance, thereby enabling parents to plan major events and vacations and minimize the holidays.
- The school has approximately 200 working days for children, and 10% leaves amount to 20 days (almost a month of working days) and 15% leaves amount to 30 days. Since sufficient leeway has already been given for some natural circumstances under which leave needs to be taken, the policy as stated above will be implemented strictly.

# Responsibilities

All members of school staff and parents have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

## Class Teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Head of School and Management Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

## Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

## Management Team

Management Team will ensure that the teachers and staff maintain:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- The attendance records regarding Absence/Late is completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head of School
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

## Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Parents are expected to ensure that the child is able to attend the maximum number of days barring unavoidable circumstances such as illness of the child.
- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.

- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence for planned, sick or emergency leaves without fail through the School Planner so that the class teacher is informed.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence during term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- For any sick leave beyond 3 days at a stretch, parents must send a medical certificate from a medical practitioner stating clearly the medical reasons justifying the leaves.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Parents are expected to provide children with proper care, nourishment, and sleep so as to ensure that children are fit and healthy and are also mentally active, when in school.

## Early/Late Arrival – Early/Late Leaving Guidelines

### Definitions

Early arrival is defined as any child arriving more than 15 minutes prior to their stipulated time.

Late arrival is defined as any child arriving more than 15 minutes past their stipulated class time.

Early leaving is defined as any child leaving more than 15 minutes prior to their stipulated time.

Late leaving is defined as any child leaving more than 15 minutes past their stipulated class time.

### Early/Late Arrival – Early/Late Leaving Instructions

It is the school's policy that if any student wants to leave early/late or to come to school early or late for any reason e.g. passport/visa appointment, function at home, some urgent work, going out of town, not feeling well (sickness), doctor's appointment, attending events, missed school transport (intentional or unintentional), unauthorised stay back etc.; they need to keep the school informed via the planner and the assigned technology (e.g.: skooly whats app, etc.) and require prior authorization whenever possible.

The student will not be allowed to leave the school premises without prior permission, in case of Early / Late Leaving. In a case of any medical emergency; the student will have to be accompanied by the parent to take them home.

In case a parent is unable to come and is sending their relative/friend/driver etc. for pick up; please ensure that the student bearer card is being carried. Bearer cards will be made available at all times at the office and it is the responsibility of the parent to collect and fill-out with the necessary details. The student will not be handed over without bearer card as it puts a risk on the safety and security of that student.

## Purpose of Policy

Many times, it has been observed that students are taking short leaves for different reasons which can be managed easily. Some of the above-mentioned reasons (for Early / Late Arrival – Early / Late Leaving) can be easily taken care of by rescheduling it as per the school timings e.g. doctor's appointment can be taken after school hours, students can take some rest in the sick bay if not feeling well, travel booking (if going out of town) can also be done accordingly.

Additionally, a lot of time is consumed by the coordinators for taking approvals at different levels to allow a student to leave early or late or arrive early / late.

## Process for Parents- Communication for Early – Late Arrival / Early – Late Departure

- Parents should send a request through the above stipulated methods one day in advance in case of passport/visa appointment, function at home, some urgent work, going out of town, doctor's appointment, attending events etc. e.g. request should be received by 2.55 pm on the previous day. No request for the next day will be approved if it is received after 2.55 pm.
  - As these things can be planned; no immediate request will be entertained.
- Upon receiving a request, the administrative staff will seek approval from the respective teacher/Head of School.
- Bearer card is necessary in all cases to pick up the student.
- The above-mentioned guidelines are also applicable for coming late due to illness, family function or any other reason.
- This is applicable with immediate effect.

Attendance is marked when the student comes to school and attend classes. If s/he is ill and come to school but does not attend classes or fall sick in school and remain in sickbay then the system of marking them presently is not logical.

## Guidelines for Event Attendance

Student & Parent contact day's (events) have been divided into two categories as per the attendance criteria are given below.

### Student Contact Days:

| Category                     | It Includes   | Attendance criteria will be followed as  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Regular Student Working Days | Sports day, first and last day of school (before and after three major vacations i.e. September, December, May) | Attendance criteria will be followed as – The attendance will be recorded as regular working day and will be counted in cumulative percentage of attendance.                                     |
| Necessary Student Event Days | Excursions, Special days celebrations, Educational Trips  | Attendance criteria will be followed as – The attendance will be recorded but only WORKING DAYS will be counted under event category which will be added in cumulative percentage of attendance. |

### Parent Contact Days:

| Category                               | It Includes  | Attendance criteria will be followed as  |
|--|--|--|
| Parent – Event (Recommended by School) | IEP Meeting, Gallery walk, Parent-teacher meet, PYP Exhibition | Attendance of at least one parent is mandatory and will be recorded for reference. |
| Parent – Event (Voluntary to attend)   | Any other group meetings, event, exhibition etc.               | Attendance will be recorded as per the requirement of the event.                   |

It is especially important to note that the school desires full attendance on the first and last day of the school. The first few days are important for the children as a number of rules, regulations, as well a broad overview of the year's curriculum are discussed with the children in the first few



days. The initial days are essential to help children settle and to ease them into the year. Children also make friends easily in the beginning rather than a few days later when almost everyone else has already made friends. We simply wish to state that it is important for parents to enable students to attend both the first and the last day of the school.

### Student / Parent Contact Day's Attendance

Parents will have to get a medical certificate issued by certified doctors on specially identified days where we expect compulsory attendance from the students. The sole objective to bring in such a system is to encourage students to not miss their school during their major events or when they have critical curriculum going on.

In case the child is not well and would want to apply for a medical leave you will have to get a medical certificate only from a Certified Doctor. Once the certificate has been issued you must submit the same to the school. We request the parents to kindly follow this procedure from now on for medical leave where it is mandatory for the students to be present in the school.

Exception:

The exceptional circumstances under which students may exceed the limit given include **major illnesses** which require significant time for treatment and recovery. There may be other critical reasons for extended leaves all of which need to be approved by the Head of the School

### Religious Festival falling on Working Days

School cannot give the holiday for each and every festival considering the huge diversity in the student community. The rationale behind this:

1. Too many festivals in the calendar year. There are many aspects which need to be looked at while preparing an annual calendar but we will try to clarify a few points, to give you an insight on how the planning has been done:
  - We need 200-201 working days for the students.
  - Our teacher-working Saturdays are spent on following:
    - Professional or Personal Development Training
    - Parent-Interaction Meetings (PTC, PCM, Open Houses)
    - Planned work (such as planning of assessments, reporting etc.)
    - Some of our 2nd & 4th Saturdays are holidays for the teachers – which are necessary for them as our working hours throughout the week are quite long.
2. Because of operational reasons we have to give holidays for certain festivals and road blocks during rallies and protests.
3. Some holidays given because of low attendance of support staff and the school cannot function without support staff.
4. The school does not follow bank holiday calendar for every festival.
5. There are many other religious holidays that the school does not give across religions. These include, but are not limited to:

|                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| a) Jain Samvatsari | b) Mahavir Jayanti    |
| c) Mahashivratri   | d) Ramnavmi           |
| e) Gudi Padwa      | f) Ambedkar Jayanti   |
| g) Buddh Purnima   | h) Guru Nanak Jayanti |
6. We do give possible holidays for different communities e.g. Christmas, Muharram.

Further students have the liberty to take a leave on the day of the festival but leave will be marked as absent because we cannot offer a holiday for each festival because the school has a lot of diversity in the community. As mentioned in attendance policy, Grassroots School expects the students to maintain regular attendance in school except for school holidays i.e. summer breaks, Diwali break & other holidays. However, it is sometimes necessary or desirable

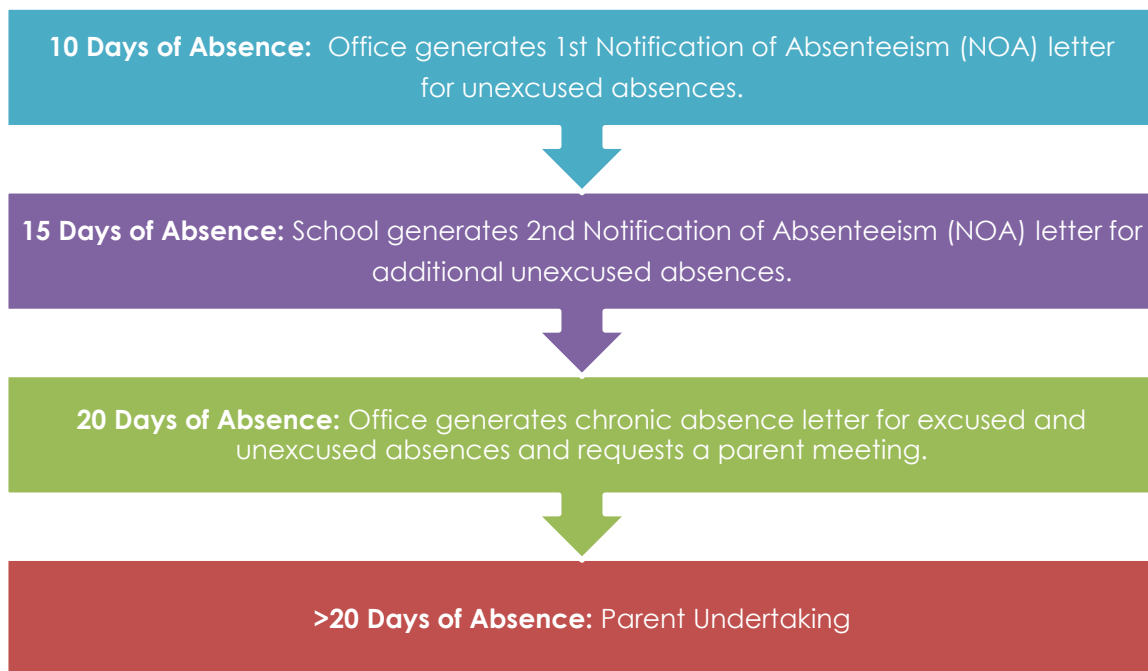
for a student to take a leave for 1-2 days or for a specific period of time or take want to come late for few hours to take part in extracurricular/academic activities.

## Promotion Policy

The promotion will be granted to every student who has met the minimum grade level academic requirements and attendance percentage as defined for each grade. As per the government norms and guidelines laid down by international agencies no child will be detained between the Grades of 1-5. For those children who fall below the cut-off category for attendance the parent must provide a written undertaking (See Annexure) in order to promote the child to the next level.

### Chronic Absence/Absenteeism Intervention Flowchart

*The steps listed in the flow chart can overlap.*



**Annexure I - 1<sup>st</sup> Notification of Absenteeism (NOA) Letter for Unexcused Absences**  
**Sent to parent when student is absent 10 or more days within a two-month period.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Guardian of: \_\_\_\_\_

School attendance has a direct impact on academic achievement. In order to make the most of educational opportunities, students must have consistent, punctual daily attendance. Our school policies require us to notify the parent or guardian if a student has been absent from school for three or more days within a four-week period. Our records indicate that your child has the following absences without excuse:

[List Absence Dates]

Clearly going to school regularly matters!

We don't want your child to fall behind in school and get discouraged. Please ensure that your child attends school every day and arrives on time. Here are a few suggestions to help support your child's attendance.

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Don't let your child stay home unless they are truly sick.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, counsellors, and other parents for advice on how to make your child feel comfortable.
- Develop backup plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, neighbour, or another parent to take your child to school.
- If other issues are impacting your child's attendance, please talk to someone at your child's school.

Let us know how we can best support you and your child in order to improve his or her attendance. We want your child to be successful in school! If you have any questions or need more information, please call your child's school.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

For Grassroots School

Head of School

## **Annexure II - 2<sup>nd</sup> Notification of Absenteeism (NOA) Letter for Unexcused Absences**

**Sent to parent when student is absent 15 or more days within a term (four-month) period.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Your child has a total of \_\_\_\_ absences from school. His/her teacher and I are concerned about the effects of this absenteeism on his/her educational progress.

Grassroots School Attendance Policy requires that children attend school every day unless an absence is necessary due to illness or some other unusual circumstance.

Ten days are generally considered excessive unless a long term or chronic illness is involved. Such a student may be considered to be a neglected child or a child in need of supervision and thus advising you of these requirements to emphasize the importance of regular school attendance.

If your child is ill or an unusual circumstance comes up in the family, make sure the school is notified right away through a phone call, note in the planner or through school specified telephone/technological modalities. If your child is absent more than 10 consecutive days due to illness, we would like to have a statement from your doctor verifying the illness.

Parents, guardians, and school officials share a responsibility to make earnest and persistent efforts to resolve attendance problems. Parents or guardians are always welcome and are encouraged to call or visit the school for current attendance information concerning their students.

Sincerely,

For Grassroots School

Head of School

## **Annexure III - Chronic Absence Letter for Excused and Unexcused Absences**

**Sent to parent when student is absent 20 or more days across two term (eight-month) period.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Guardian of: \_\_\_\_\_

Our goal this year is for every student to attend school regularly. Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day and understanding why attendance is so important for success in school and in life.

Our records indicate that your child has been absent from school for \_\_\_\_\_ days this school year. This puts your child on track for being chronically absent. A student is considered chronically absent if he or she has missed 10 percent or more of the days he or she has been enrolled in school.

We realize some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances. But, we also know that when students miss too much school — regardless of the reason — it can cause them to fall behind academically. Research shows that:

- Children chronically absent in kindergarten and 1st grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.
- By 6th grade, chronic absences are a proven early warning sign for students at risk for dropping out of school.

Students must be in the classroom when roll is taken to be counted present. If you believe your child was present at school, please call the school office. To provide a reason for your child's absences, please write an official letter with an explanation for each day of absence and submit it to the school office in person. Upon submitting the letter an Administrative Staff will give you the Parent Undertaking Form. Please carefully read and sign the given form.

We are asking for your cooperation in making sure your child's school attendance improves. If you would like to discuss the matter with me or his/her teacher please call the school.

Sincerely,

For Grassroots School

Head of School

## Annexure IV - PARENT'S UNDERTAKING FOR STUDENTS CHRONIC ABSENCE

I \_\_\_\_\_ Father/Mother of \_\_\_\_\_  
am aware that as per Grassroots School Attendance Policy, my child has to maintain a minimum of 85% attendance during each academic year of their enrolment in Grassroots School. I further understand that it is crucial to be present for the first and last working day of each term while my child is enrolled in school.

I, hereby, undertake that since my child \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
grade has not maintained his/her minimum required attendance, I will not hold the School accountable for my child's learning and performance. I also understand that the School has done its best to help my child reach the set academic and learning goals during the time they have attended school.

Name of the Parent & address : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact No. Mobile/Landline : \_\_\_\_\_

Email ID : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Father/Mother : \_\_\_\_\_

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Place) (Date) (Month)