

Attendance & Absenteeism Policy

St. Monica School

B'Kara

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1. Attendance

Students are to attend school regularly and punctually.

According to Article 5 of the Education Act, Chapter 327 of the Laws of Malta it is the duty of every parent of a child who is of compulsory school age to ensure that the child attends school every day unless the minor has a good and sufficient cause to be absent from school. If a parent fails to ensure regular school attendance he will be guilty of an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to the punishments established by law. The Education Act also provides that in the case of a second or subsequent conviction of any such offence by any parent the Court may also deprive the parent of his authority, whether de jure or de facto, over the minor and may appoint a tutor for that purpose (Article 133 (1) Education Act).

Parents who fail to send their children to school will be breaking the Law. Absenteeism is regulated by the Directorate for Education. The school keeps a record of attendance which is marked on KLIKKS every day.

2. Absenteeism

2.1 Absence due to medical reasons

Absenteeism must always be accounted for. A medical certificate is to be produced for absences of more than 3 days, consecutively or spread out, in a calendar month.

Medical Certificates are valid **only** if accompanied by the Medical Certificate Record Card duly filled and signed by the doctor issuing the certificate. Medical Certificates and Record Cards are to be given to the Form Teacher within 3 days of return to school. The assistant head is to countersign the Medical Certificate Record Card in the space provided. If a student is sick for more than 5 consecutive days, the first medical certificate is to be presented by the end of the 5th day. One Medical Certificate cannot cover separate days of absence. If a student turns up at school before the closing date of the medical certificate, the student cannot be accepted at school.

2.2 Valid Medical Certificates

A Medical Certificate is valid if it contains the following information:

- (a) the name, surname and registration number of practitioner;
- (b) the name of the student;
- (c) class and school of the student;
- (d) the date of the examination or the date of issuing of the certificate of illness – the school shall not accept a medical certificate that does not show the date of issue or consultation;
- (e) the exact period of recommended absence from school due to illness. Certificate must be renewed after a period of 7 consecutive days;
- (f) the certificate is submitted by not later than 3 days after the student returns to school. Nonetheless, if the student is sick for more than 5 consecutive school days, the certificate has to be handed in on the first day the student returns to school.
- (g) is accompanied by the (green) Medical certificate Record Card

2.3 Excused

Parents can send an Absentee note to the Form Teacher to explain their child's absence. If the explanation is deemed to be reasonable the student will be marked as '**Excused**'. The reasons include family health issues, hospital visits, death of family members, funerals and severe weather conditions, cultural, sport or educational trips abroad, participation in cultural, sport or educational events, sitting for an exam, etc.. If the explanation given is deemed unacceptable by the Head of School, the parents are informed accordingly. The students, whose parents' note was not accepted, are to be marked as '**Absent**'. Absentee notes of parents cannot cover more than three days in a month. Notes are to be brought to school as soon as the student returns to school. Copies of Absentee slips are downloadable from KLIKKS.

2.4 Absence during tests and exams

Absenteeism during exams or outings is to be covered by a medical certificate, even for one day only.

2.5 Travel abroad

Students will not be excused for going abroad. It is at the discretion of the Head to excuse students when parents plan trips abroad of less than 3 weeks. The reasons include medical or other serious family motives, like funerals, weddings, cultural and educational trips etc. A letter for approval is to be presented to the Head before any tickets are purchased. Students absent for more than 3 days in a calendar month due to travel abroad, will be reported to the Education Department as described below. Students accompanying parents abroad are to inform the school in writing and present the Airline ticket and a copy thereof.

2.6 Reporting unauthorised absence

Failure to produce a medical certificate as described above or if absenteeism is too frequent, the Education Department will be notified and legal action may be taken. The SEWO7 form is sent to parents of students who fail to attend school for more than three (3) days during a particular month (unauthorised absence). A report is sent to the Education Social Work Service within the Student Services Department, Hamrun (DSS) by the 12th day of the following month if the parents do not provide a valid justification within the stipulated timeframe indicated in the form.

2.7 Habitual absence

If the Head of School notes that a student is habitually absent, even if this long term absence is covered by medical certificates, she refers the student to the Social Worker by filling in the appropriate referral form. When a student has been absent for 9 cumulative days from the first day of school, without any justification, the Education Psycho-Social Services Personnel will intervene to address the problem at an early stage.

3. Absence for part of the day

3.1 Leaving early / Arriving late

Students will not be allowed to leave the school premises unless a permission to do so is granted by a member of the SMT. Should a student need to leave to go for a medical or dental appointment, a note signed by a parent, is to be handed to the relevant assistant head together with a copy of the appointment. A signed note declaring that the student has in fact attended the clinic, is to be presented to the assistant head upon her return to school. Such students will be marked as **Left for a Medical Reason** in KLIKKS. Similarly, if a student arrives late at school after attending a medical or dental appointment, will be marked as **Late for Medical Reason**.

Should a student need to leave to sit for an exam, a note duly signed by a parent, is to be handed to the relevant assistant head together with a copy of the exam timetable / notification. Such students will be marked as **Left for a Justifiable Reason** in KLIKKS. Similarly, if a student arrives late at school for a justifiable reason, will be marked as **Late for a Justifiable Reason**.

Students arriving late without a valid reason will be marked '**Late**'.

3.2 Picking up students before dismissal time

Parents or their representatives picking up the student before dismissal time, are to call at reception, presenting their ID Card and signing the appropriate register.

4. Child Supplement Benefits

If eligible, Child Supplement Benefits will only be issued if the child has a 95% attendance record in a particular scholastic year. Justified absence (covered by an absentee note or a Medical Certificate) is considered as part of the 95% attendance.

5. Absence affecting students' performance

5.1 Tests and Exams

Tests and exams missed due to absenteeism may not be repeated. The teacher may give the test exam for the students to work at home. Any marks assigned will be for formative purposes only and will not form part of the assessment mark assigned as part of the global mark issued at the end of the year.

5.2 Lessons

Lessons missed by a student due to absence cannot be repeated. It is the responsibility of the student to enquire her classmates or the teacher about what work was covered during her absence. It is important that any handouts given by the teacher during the lessons missed by the student are obtained, notes are read and the tasks assigned are attempted.

5.3 Practical sessions

Practical sessions (during Science, Home Economics etc. are normally followed by a written task. The marks assigned to such tasks usually form part of the total coursework mark which contributes towards the exam grade obtained for the SEC exam. For this reason, students are to do their utmost to avoid missing practical sessions. If such practical sessions are inevitably missed due to illness, the student is to approach her teacher and ask for a possible arrangement to be made. Such write-ups and tasks which form part of the SEC coursework due to be handed in on days when a student is absent, are to be handed in IMMEDIATELY upon the student's return to school. Teachers are not expected to mark a backlog of such work.

5.4 Homework

Homework due to be handed in during a student's absence is to be given to the teacher IMMEDIATELY upon the student's return to school. It is the responsibility of the student to check on KLIKKS or ask her classmates or the teacher about what Homework was assigned during her absence. This Homework should be handed in on time or, if not possible, ONE WEEK AFTER THE DUE DATE set by the teacher. Teachers are not obliged to correct / mark work handed in later than the extended due date.