

# International School Seychelles



## **Attendance Policy**

*You are not born for yourself but for the world*

## **Contents**

1. Policy Aims
2. Policy Scope
  - 2.1 Importance of Attendance
  - 2.2 Links with other policies and practices
3. Monitoring and Review
4. Promoting attendance
5. Types of Absences
  - 5.1 Authorised absences
  - 5.2 Unauthorised absences
  - 5.3 Persistent absenteeism
6. Absence procedure
7. Lateness

## **1. Policy Aims**

- The International School of Seychelles (ISS) aims for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the school community to strive for excellence in education. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school.
- At International School of Seychelles (ISS), the objectives are to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/guardians and the wider community the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Regular and punctual attendance is essential for effective learning and children should be at school, on time and every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.
- All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

### **1.1. The aims of the policy are:**

- 1.1.1. To achieve the highest attendance and punctuality rates for all students. (Reception 1 to Year 13 inclusive)
- 1.1.2. To highlight the responsibilities of students, parents, teachers and the school in order to secure high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- 1.1.3. To outline procedures for monitoring and recording attendance and lateness.

### **1.2. At ISS:**

- 1.2.1. every child has a fundamental right to receive a full time education,
- 1.2.2. each student has a level of responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually, to participate in lessons and to remain at school throughout the school day,
- 1.2.3. parents have a duty to promote punctual and regular school attendance whilst minimising unessential periods of absence during term time,
- 1.2.4. teachers are responsible to monitor attendance and punctuality and implement strategies in accordance with school policies, to address concerns, (this involves working collaboratively with students and parents)
- 1.2.5. the school is accountable to ensure the attendance and punctuality policy and procedures adheres to relevant legislation.

### **1.3. Rationale**

- 1.3.1. The school curriculum is designed to enhance all aspects of a child's development. Teaching occurs in a variety of settings both on and off the school site to maximise learning opportunities.
- 1.3.2. Setting good attendance patterns from an early age will help them become responsible adults.
- 1.3.3. Students who are absent or persistently late are not receiving a full time education and may struggle to keep up with school work. Absenteeism undermines academic and developmental progress, disturbs the continuity of the curriculum and impacts negatively on relationships in school.
- 1.3.4. Being present and on time for school and all school activities within the academic year is essential.
- 1.3.5. As school trips form part of the curriculum attendance procedures outlined in this policy are applicable to it.

## **2. Policy Scope**

International School of Seychelles (ISS) believes that students need to attend school as much as possible in order to achieve academically as well as develop their skills and talents.

This policy applies to all students.

### **2.1 Importance of Attendance**

#### **2.1.1 Learning**

- i. Experience and studies demonstrate that regular absence and poor punctuality can have a detrimental effect on a child's learning. When a pupil is absent or arrives late it disrupts teaching routines and affects the learning, not only of that pupil but also that of others in the same class.
- ii. Parents and Guardians must ensure their child's regular attendance at school as their parental responsibility

#### **2.1.2 Safeguarding**

- i. At International School of Seychelles (ISS), every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. ISS is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all pupils so they can learn and participate in school activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.
- ii. Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/guardians.
- iii. Safeguarding is about identifying support for children and families that have difficulties with attendance and lateness as these may be signs that something is worrying the child or that there are difficulties within the family.
- iv. Poor or irregular attendance, persistent lateness or absenteeism may be considered a safeguarding matter if this places a child at risk of harm.
- v. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of ISS; safeguarding and promoting the welfare and life opportunities for children encompasses: Attendance, Behaviour Management, Health and Safety, Access to the Curriculum and Anti- bullying, protecting children from all abuse and neglect, online safety, radicalisation and extremism.
- vi. More information on safeguarding and the protection of children can be found in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- vii. In order to safeguard the children at ISS, it is important that parents and guardians provide the school with their current contact details (and any change thereof) and provide at least three other contact numbers in case of emergency.
- viii. It is also important for parents/guardians to let school know of any specific vulnerability in relation to their child or home circumstances. If you are uncertain about what would be considered a vulnerability, please speak with your child's Phase Leader.

### **2.2 Links with other policies and practices**

This policy links with several other policies, practices and action plans including:

- Sanctions procedures
- Safeguarding policy

### 3 **Monitoring and Review**

- 3.1. International School of Seychelles (ISS) will review this policy at least once annually.
- 3.2. Regular and daily monitoring of student attendance will be undertaken to ensure that this policy is consistently applied.
- 3.3. The Senior Leadership Team will have oversight of attendance and be informed of any matters relating to attendance and punctuality, as appropriate by the Phase leaders
- 3.4. The Senior Leadership Team will report on a regular basis to the Board of Governors issues around attendance, including outcomes.
- 3.5. Any issues identified via monitoring will be incorporated into the school's action planning.

### 4. **Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

#### **4.1. To help focus on attendance and punctuality ISS will:**

- 4.1.1. Provide parents /guardians with details on attendance in school communications;
- 4.1.2. Report to parents regularly on how their child is performing in school, including how their attendance and punctuality rate are relating to their attainments;
- 4.1.3. Celebrate good attendance;
- 4.1.4. Reward good or improving attendance.

#### **4.2. The Law Relating to attendance and safeguarding**

With reference to the Seychelles Education Act: (2010)

- 4.2.1. A child of compulsory school age who is a resident in Seychelles must by law attend school regularly. (The only exception is if the child is 'handicapped.')
- 4.2.2. Those parents who fail to ensure their child attends regularly are guilty of an offence and liable to a conviction or fine. (It is considered a form of neglect, which is a child protection issue.)
- 4.2.3. Early Childhood Education is considered the initial stage within the formal education system. (At ISS attendance guidelines apply to Reception 1 and 2.)
- 4.2.4. Only schools can authorise an absence of a registered child.

### 5. **Types of Absence**

Any absence including half day absences or lateness from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

## 5.1 Authorised Absences

An authorised absence is where the school has either given permission in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered is accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- 5.1.1. Illness, medical appointments (appointments should be made outside school times where possible)
- 5.1.2. Unavoidable cause (which is expected to be an emergency and unavoidable)
- 5.1.3. Days of religious observance
- 5.1.4. Child(ren) travelling for the purposes of parents' employment
- 5.1.5. If the child is suspended/ excluded.
- 5.1.6. Exceptional circumstances (nature of such will be determined on a case to case basis)

## 5.2 Unauthorised Absences

An unauthorised absence is where either no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is not considered acceptable by the school.

This includes:

- 5.2.1. Absences which have never been properly explained
- 5.2.2. Children who arrive at school too late to get a late mark
- 5.2.3. Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- 5.2.4. Day trips and holidays in term time.
- 5.2.5. If an absence is regularly recorded as unauthorised the school may refer this to the local authorities. The local authorities can use various sanctions to promote regular attendance.
- 5.2.6. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/guardians and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is not advisable to make false representation to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter.

## 5.3 Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

5.3.1. A pupil is considered to be a 'persistent absentee' if they miss 10% or more across the school year for whatever reason.

5.3.2. Absence at this level shall materially affect the child's educational prospects and parental support and co-operation is needed to tackle such persistent absenteeism.

5.3.3. ISS shall monitor all absences thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that level is given priority and parents/guardians will be informed of this immediately.

5.3.4. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

5.3.5. All PA pupils and their parents/guardians are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

5.3.6. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the relevant authorities.

5.3.7. If your child has or is at risk of reaching the threshold for Persistent Absence you will be asked to provide evidence for any future absence. This may be medical evidence for illness which can be in the form of prescription, medicine packaging or hospital letter.

## **6. Absence Procedures**

### **6.1. If your child is absent parents/guardians must:**

6.1.1. Contact ISS as soon as possible on the first day of absence and give an expected return date. You need to contact the school frequently thereafter to advise school of your child's progress.

6.1.2. If you have not contacted ISS by email, send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence.

### **6.2. If your child is absent we will:**

- 6.2.1. Contact you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- 6.2.2. Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Phase Leaders if absences persist.
- 6.2.3. Refer the matter to the relevant authorities if attendance moves below 94%.

### **6.3. Family Contact Details**

- 6.3.1. Kindly keep your contact details up to date and current at all times to enable ISS to contact you.
- 6.3.2. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year. You are also asked to provide two other contacts in case of emergency where we are unable to contact you.

### **6.4. Leave in Term Time**

- 6.4.1. There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time.
- 6.4.2. Taking leave in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and parents are expected not to take a child away during term time.
- 6.4.3. All applications for a leave of absence must be made in advance to the Head of Primary / Secondary and will only be considered if there are exceptional circumstances.
- 6.4.4. In making a decision the Principal will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.
- 6.4.5. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised.

## 7. Lateness

- Poor punctuality is not acceptable.
- Lateness can cause a child to miss vital information and instructions at the start of the day.
- Students arriving late also disrupt lessons and can cause disruptions to the rest of the call.

### 7.1. Managing lateness

- 7.1.1. The school day starts at 8am and all children are expected to be in class at that time. They are advised to arrive at school from 7:30am to be on time for registration.
- 7.1.2. Registers are marked electronically during registration and at the start of every lesson. After registration the registers will be closed. If a child arrives after registration, the child will receive an unauthorised absence mark that shows them to be on site but **not** counted as a present for statistical / legal purposes.
- 7.1.3. If your child has a persistent late record, the parents/guardians will be asked to meet with the Phase Leader to find solutions, but parents/guardians may approach the school at any time in the event of getting the child to school on time.