

Attendance Policy

Policy Purpose

Whistler Waldorf School is committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that students have every opportunity for academic success. We believe, and statistics show, that regular attendance is essential to learning. Irregular attendance curtails a student's ability to contribute to, as well as benefit from the learning experience. It can also hinder the progress of the class. The responsibility for regular attendance lies with the student and guardians.

Scope

As a Group 1 B.C. Ministry of Education Independent School, Whistler Waldorf School is accountable to the B.C. Ministry of Education. WWS must ensure that all students are meeting the learning outcomes as set out by the Ministry and receiving sufficient instructional hours. Chronic absenteeism regardless of excused or unexcused, has impacts on the student (e.g. academic and social-emotional impacts) as well as on other students, the teacher, and classroom routines.

The following definitions are important in the interpretation of this policy:

- **Excused Absence** – The Principal or designate has the authority to determine if an absence meets the criteria to be deemed an excused absence. The following are valid excuses for absences: injury, illness, bereavement or family emergency or observance of religious or cultural holidays. In the case of excused absences, faculty will work to determine an interim plan to reduce the impact on the student's education. These plans will be determined on a case-by-case basis. An absence may not be considered excused if it causes a serious adverse effect on the student's educational progress.
- **Unexcused Absence** – Any absence from school for the majority of hours or periods in an average school day is unexcused unless it meets one of the criteria above for an excused absence and includes absences for which no excuse is ever provided. Family holidays, non-medical related absences and parental business trips are considered unexcused. All unverified absences will be marked as 'unexcused'. An unverified absence is cause for disciplinary action. Teachers are not obligated to provide work and/or cannot pre-teach or post-teach materials in the case of unexcused absences. Therefore, student achievement or academic standing may be impacted.
- **Extended Absence** – for known absences of 3 or more days an [Extended Absence Report Form](#) must be submitted
- **Late** – arrival at school after the 8:30 start time or arriving to class after the designated start time

Attendance Procedures

Parents are required to verify all student absences by contacting Reception by 9am. If Reception has not been informed by 9:15 am, an email or call home will be made to determine the child's whereabouts. If Reception cannot verify a student's absence, he/she will be marked as unexcused. If it cannot be reasonably assumed that the child is safe at home, the Missing Child Policy may be enacted.

Extended Absence Report Form

If circumstances necessitate a prolonged absence of more than three days, an Extended Absence Report Form must be submitted to Reception in advance of the proposed absence. WWS may provide support depending upon the circumstances of the Extended Absence. If there is a need for absence, other than for unexpected medical reasons, early consultation with the class teacher is essential.

Attendance Consequences

The Ministry of Education requirements outline that in order to receive full credit for course work student absence MUST not exceed 20 school days or 15% per academic year. If a student's combined absences (excused or unexcused) exceed this threshold:

- Administration will meet with parents and the student, if appropriate, to discuss and document attendance concerns and assess the student's academic standing
- Students may be withdrawn or receive an "incomplete" from a course due to insufficient evidence for assessment

WWS is eligible to receive a government operating grant per student enrolled. A key component to calculating this grant is student attendance. A full grant is paid for each full-time student who is present for a minimum of 600 hours of instruction (112 school days) by May 15. Grant payments may be withheld or reduced if a student fails to meet this requirement. If the total unexcused absences place a student below the required hours for Ministry of Education funding, the guardian(s) will be charged the difference between the full grant and the pro-rated grant received for the student.

Re-enrollment at Whistler Waldorf School may be declined to students whose absenteeism exceeds ministry requirements and/or is deemed to negatively impact the learning community.

Late Arrivals

Students arriving at school after 8:30 must check-in at Reception. Every Late Slip is a documented part of a student's attendance record. Parents will be contacted if a student has three unexcused late arrivals.

High School 'late' consequences:

- 3 unexcused late arrivals will result in disciplinary action
- Subsequent late arrivals will result in a meeting with administration to discuss and document attendance concerns

Early Departure from School

The school must have advance parental permission if a student must leave school for any reason before the regular dismissal time. The student must first report to Reception to sign out.

Off Campus Lunch

High School students with advance permission are allowed to leave campus for lunch on designated days. Students must sign out at Reception. Parents will be contacted if a student is more than 30 minutes late returning to campus. If a student's whereabouts cannot be determined, the Missing Person policy may be enacted.

Guardians:

- ensure compliance with the BC Ministry of Education attendance requirements
- contact Reception to provide timely notice of any student absence for any reason. As per the Ministry of Education we are required to have parental confirmation for all absences.
- communicate the importance of attending school to their child
- avoid making commitments for their children during school hours
- support the child's teachers in their efforts to provide an education for their child
- attend meetings and work collaboratively with the school if their child's absenteeism needs to be addressed

Teachers/Reception:

- maintain accurate attendance records
- ensure that parents are informed promptly when the attendance of students is not satisfactory.
- work with students and families to support students' continued learning when they are absent from school.
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Principal:

- establishes a school communication procedure related to absences from school
- adheres to the provincial attendance requirements and communicates these requirements to teachers and guardians
- maintains attendance records for every student enrolled at the school
- enact Missing Child Policy as required
- determines whether the reason for an absence is considered valid or excusable

See also: Supervision Policy (Missing Child Policy)