

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. 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 places 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.

Chronic absenteeism (attendance of fewer than the minimum 600 hours), 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. At the discretion of the Head of School, re-enrolment at Whistler Waldorf School may be declined to students whose absenteeism exceeds ministry requirements and/or is deemed to negatively impact the learning community.

Excused Absence - home and school agree that absences are acceptable, thus excusable.

Unexcused Absence – absence that home may regard as excusable, but the school feels is not valid or excusable. The Head of School has the authority to determine if an absence is excused or unexcused.

Prolonged Absence – excused absence of more than three days which is pre-approved

Late – arrival at school after the 8:30 start time

Attendance Procedures

Excused Absence

If a student is absent due to unexpected illness, injury or family matters, it is the guardians' responsibility to contact Reception. If Reception has not been informed by 9 am, an email or call home will be made to

determine the child's whereabouts. If it cannot be reasonably assumed that the child is safe at home, the **Missing Child Policy** may be enacted.

If there is an important need for absence, other than for unexpected medical reasons, early consultation with the class teacher is essential.

Unexcused Absence

Any student who has been absent without his/her guardian contacting the school will be marked as 'unexcused'. Leaving campus without signing out also constitutes an unexcused absence.

1st to 2nd Incident - The student meets with the Teacher and/or Faculty Chair and the incident is recorded. The student may receive zero for any school work missed during the absence.

3rd to 4th Incident - Faculty Chair/Parent Conference takes place. Appropriate follow-up action is taken.

All Subsequent Infractions - Head of School/Parent conference; Short or long term in-school suspension; Expulsion

Prolonged Absence Proposal Process

If circumstances necessitate a prolonged absence of more than three days other than due to illness, a Prolonged Absence request must be submitted to Reception a minimum of three weeks in advance of the proposed absence.

In order for the school to mark a student's prolonged absence as excused:

- WWS must receive a Prolonged Absence request including a proposal for making up missed work. It should be noted that the Waldorf curriculum is experiential by nature and missed classes cannot be caught up in equal value with other work.
- Agreed upon tasks must be completed and submitted upon return

Late

Students arriving at school after 8:30 must check-in at Reception. All late arrivals are recorded.

Students who are late but who have a legitimate reason (required note or phone call from a guardian) will, in most cases, be excused.

Students arriving late without a legitimate reason are "unexcused".

1. After 10 late arrivals: Guardian(s) will be contacted.
2. After 15 late arrivals: Faculty Chair and guardian(s) and/or student (Grade 6 +) will meet to discuss and implement strategies for creating success.
3. After 20 late arrivals: The Head of school will meet with the parents/student to discuss and implement appropriate strategies

Early Departure from School

If a student leaves school for any reason before the regular dismissal time, the student must first report to Reception to sign out. The school must have advance permission from a guardian.

Off Campus Lunch

Lower School students may not leave the school grounds between 8:30 a.m. and 3:05 p.m. High School students with advance permission are allowed to leave campus for lunch on designated days. Students must sign out at Reception each time they leave.

Roles/Responsibilities

Guardians:

- ensure compliance with the BC Ministry of Education attendance requirements
- 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
- provide schools with a timely explanation of a student's absence
- attend meetings and work collaboratively with the school if their child's absenteeism needs to be addressed
- reach out to the school for support when the student's attendance is an issue.

Teachers:

- 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.

Head of School:

- establishes a school communication procedure related to absences from school
- adheres to the provincial attendance requirements and communicating these requirements to teachers and guardians
- maintains attendance records respecting every student enrolled at the school