

Newton International Academy, Barwa

Staff Attendance Policy

An International Community of Learners, Striving for Excellence and Celebrating Success

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NEWTON
INTERNATIONAL
ACADEMY | BARWA

Vision

An international community of learners striving for excellence and celebrating success.

Mission

We aim to provide the highest quality of education possible for students of all abilities. In doing so, we aim to positively encourage each student to achieve academic excellence, enjoy creative diversity, develop critical thinking skills, and become lifelong learners and responsible citizens. To achieve this, we will provide a diverse education in a safe, supportive environment that promotes self-discipline and motivation. We will provide and maintain a calm, trusting, and caring atmosphere where teaching and learning are meaningful and developed. We will work in partnership with our staff, students, parents, and the wider community to achieve our vision.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to establish clear expectations and procedures for staff attendance, ensuring a supportive environment that promotes the well-being of all staff members while maintaining the operational effectiveness of the school.

Rationale

The effectiveness of any organisation is directly related to the well-being of the people who make up that organisation. Therefore, attendance management must be seen in the context of the school's general duty to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all those who work at the school. A positive and supportive attitude towards attendance is essential, and this policy aims to:

- Recognise Good Attendance: Acknowledge and reward staff members who maintain good attendance records, fostering a culture of commitment and responsibility.
- Address Underlying Issues: Identify and address any underlying causes of absence to support staff in maintaining their health and attendance.
- Minimise Disruption: Reduce the impact of staff absences on the learning experience of students and the operational costs of the school.
- Ensure Fair Treatment: Provide a framework that ensures all staff members are treated consistently and fairly regarding attendance matters.



The Purpose of an Attendance Policy

The policy on attendance management will operate in order to achieve the maximum benefits for pupils, parents, and staff. It explains why it is necessary to adopt an attendance management policy and sets out the principles on which it is based. It describes the information about staff attendance which will be collected and under what circumstances it will be used. It emphasises that the process will be underpinned by the use of objective evidence which will be subject to review and possibly inspection. Finally, it describes the roles and responsibilities of the Principal, the Head Teacher, and the staff; these need to be clearly understood to ensure that the policy works effectively and efficiently.

The Staff Attendance Policy ensures that all staff members are treated consistently where all matters of attendance are concerned in conjunction with the learning experience of our pupils.

The Need for a Policy

The effectiveness of any organisation is directly related to the wellbeing of the people who make up that organisation. It therefore follows that attendance management must be seen in the context of the School's general duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all those who work at the school. The best means of achieving this is to establish and maintain a positive and supportive attitude towards attendance within the school whilst recognising that some factors which impact upon attendance lie outside the scope of the school. Any analysis of staff attendance records will reveal the very low levels of absence amongst the vast majority of those who work in schools. Most staff maintain very good attendance records over long periods of time. The board and Senior Management (SMT) wishes to recognise this and build upon existing good practice.

Improving attendance is an ongoing responsibility for the school's management team and the governing body. Attendance management should not merely be about managing the level of attendance, but it should also seek to identify and address any underlying causes of absence. Staff absences add to the school's operational costs and divert resources away from teaching and learning. There are not only direct costs of engaging replacement staff, but significant indirect costs as well. Other staff frequently undertake additional duties and responsibilities, and this can become burdensome and detract from their core responsibilities. Repeated or longer-term absences can have an effect on the motivation of colleagues, and there is likely to be disruption to pupils' programmes of study. As the school year progresses, the cumulative effects of staff absence can have an escalating impact on the effective operation of the school and the delivery of quality education.

All staff have a right to know what support they can expect and what action may follow their absence. Everyone benefits from reducing staff absence; especially the staff themselves.

The Principles on Which the Policy is Based

This attendance management policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

- No staff member should feel under pressure to return to work while unfit; this policy should not be used to place such pressure on individuals.
- Good attendance is valued, and every opportunity should be taken to acknowledge and recognise good attendance.
- Raising matters relating to an employee's attendance does not imply any distrust of the conduct of the individual.
- The day-to-day management of attendance is for the SMT, under the direction of the Principal.
- Attendance problems need to be handled promptly and sensitively, and require a supportive approach by school management.
- Schools are entitled to expect good levels of attendance from all staff. Achieving and sustaining high attendance levels is a priority whole school issue for all staff and not just senior managers.
- All staff are entitled to expect fair, supportive, and consistent treatment.
- Information concerning an employee's health, whether given verbally or in writing, is a matter between the individual and the SMT (or designated SMT member). Principals and SMT must respect an individual's right to confidentiality and maintain it at all times.
- School managers should be as concerned with the causes of absence as they are with its effects.
- The school will seek to promote the welfare of its staff and take responsibility for managing those factors within school which impact upon good health and good attendance.
- The Principal and SMT will take action in dealing with abuse of the system.
- All staff should be aware of this policy and have easy access to it, particularly the procedures relating to absence reporting.

Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of the teacher to care for his/her physical and mental wellbeing in order to attend school regularly.
- School timings are from 6:40 am until 2:30 pm Sunday to Wednesday and until 2:00 pm on Thursdays. All staff members are required to attend as such. On one day each week, meetings are held. On meeting days, staff are expected to stay at school until 3:15 pm.
- A fingerprinting system is in place to record staff attendance. All staff members must sign in and out each day (fingerprint in and out). Failure to sign in or out will reflect as an unauthorised absence and will result in a deduction of salary. Staff should report to the HR manager if their fingerprint does not register.
- Staff members are requested not to leave the school premises during the school day unless permission is sought and granted by the Principal/Deputy Principal. Staff inform HR of this approval and should fingerprint out and back in on their return. Failure to follow this protocol will result in a deduction of salary.
- In the event of absence, all teachers are required to keep their up-to-date planning folder clearly visible within the classroom as well as a copy of their timetable on the door. Planning folders should also include lists of children attending Islamic Studies, Arabic 1st Language lessons, and other language choices where appropriate. Information relating to children taking medication or with allergies should also be included. Class teachers will be responsible for correcting work of the class upon their return.
- It is the responsibility of the Principal to implement this procedure in a fair and equitable manner in order to manage the attendance of all teachers in the school. The Principal should ensure that effective communication and consultation take place when applying this procedure and that due respect is given to the confidentiality of sensitive information.
- It is the responsibility of the Head of School to ensure that cover is provided for the absent teacher.

Notification of Absence

- If a staff member is absent from school due to illness, he/she must phone the Head of School at least one hour before the beginning of the school day. Text messages are not acceptable. If any absent staff member fails to notify the Head of School by 6 am, disciplinary measures may be taken.
- All teachers are also expected to contact their Head of Department or Year Leader regarding work to be given for their classes. These line managers are responsible for organising procedures so that work is given to classes during a teacher's absence from school. These line managers will inform HR of the staff absence.
- It is the responsibility of the staff member to report to the Head immediately upon his/her return to school with a brief explanation of the reasons for absence. This meeting will be informal in nature and provide an opportunity for the Head to welcome the teacher back and discuss the teacher's welfare needs, if any.
- Upon their return to school, the staff member must fill in and submit to HR the relevant absence form. To approve absent days as sick leave, it is necessary to submit a medical certificate issued by a doctor.
- If the staff member does not follow the above notification procedures without satisfactory explanation, it may result in the absence being regarded as unauthorised and pay being withheld or disciplinary measures being taken. Any deductions in salary will take place at the end of the month when salaries are paid.

Leave Regulations

- The staff member shall be entitled to sick leave with pay three months after the commencement of their work provided that they provide a medical note from a doctor approved by the employer. If the sickness occurred prior to completing three months at work, then the days absent will be considered unpaid (Article 82 paragraph 1).
- Staff members are expected to keep unscheduled absences to a minimum. Sick leave is provided to staff during absences related to illness.
- The number of days the staff member is allowed to be unavailable for work before receiving a meeting to discuss concerns is 3 days.
- Where long-term illness is concerned (please note that maternity leave and childbirth do not constitute long-term illness unless there are complications and concerns), the first two weeks (10 school days) will be fully paid. If the sick leave exceeds two weeks (20 school days), the staff member shall be paid 50% of his/her remuneration for a maximum of another four weeks.

- Thereafter, leave shall be without payment until the staff member returns to work or resigns for health reasons. If all the available medical evidence indicates that the teacher is not fit to return to work within a reasonable period, the CEO, following consultation with the Principal, may determine that a teacher's employment should be terminated on grounds of ill health. The contract can be terminated after twelve weeks of sick leave if it has been proved by the medical certificate that the worker is unable to resume his/her duties. (Article 82 paragraph 2).
- It is the responsibility of the HR Manager to ensure that all absences are recorded on the monthly return of staff absences. Information from the return is used to ensure the correct calculation of sickness pay and salary, and it is therefore important that these are completed on a monthly basis.
- There is a responsibility on the management of the school and the teacher to maintain contact with one another whilst the teacher is on sick leave. Such contact should be of a professional, supportive nature and mindful of the welfare needs of the teacher. The maintenance of such contact should enable effective communication between the parties and facilitate the teacher's return to work.
- If a pattern of absence is identified or if a staff member is absent from school on a regular basis, the situation will be addressed by the Head. If it is determined that attendance is an ongoing issue, it will be dealt with by the Principal and may result in disciplinary action and/or impact on contract renewal.
- Muslim staff members shall be entitled to leave to fulfil his/her obligation to go on pilgrimage once during the period of his/her service.

Requests for Private Leave of Absence

Staff members requiring leave of absence for a reason other than illness must submit an application to the Principal for approval. Such leave may be paid or unpaid depending on the staff member's attendance record and reason for the leave. The administration must be notified at least 2 weeks prior to the date of such leave. A full work plan must be prepared and given to the Head of Department or Year Group Leader to be applied during the absence of the teacher. These days may be offset against the three (3) days included in the Qatari Labour Law (Article 78.4). The approval of such leave is at the discretion of the CEO.

Compassionate Leave

In the event of the death of a family member (family member is defined as a spouse, partner, grandparent, parent, foster parent, sibling, uncle/aunt, nephew/niece, child/grandchild), the staff member will be granted 3 days leave. In the event of the death of a spouse or child, a staff member is entitled to 2 weeks leave. Such leave may be extended at the discretion of the Principal and the CEO.

Emergency Leave

Should an emergency arise, emergency leave will be granted for a maximum of 3 fully paid working days in the event of sickness of immediate relatives (parents, brother, sister, spouse, children, and grandparents).

Time off for Medical Appointments

It is expected that non-urgent appointments for doctors, dentist, etc., should be arranged in the staff member's own time or at the beginning or end of the working day. Most medical investigations can be conducted outside of regular school timings. Time off can be granted provided proof that this cannot be conducted outside of regular school timings is provided and adequate notice has been given. Appointment cards will be requested.

Arriving Late or Leaving Early

Arriving to school late or departure from school before the end of the workday for 3 times without a justifiable reason shall be considered a full day's absence and pay will therefore be deducted from the teacher's salary. It is the responsibility of the HR Office to keep accurate records and implement appropriately and effectively; and the responsibility of the Senior Management to ensure that this is closely monitored

Maternity Leave

- The teacher must notify the school administration of her expected delivery date so that arrangements for a substitute teacher can be made.
- A female staff member who has been employed for a complete year shall be entitled to maternity leave with full pay for a period of 40 consecutive days. Such maternity shall include the period before and after the delivery provided that the period following the delivery shall not be less than 35 days (Article 96).

- This leave shall be granted subject to a medical certificate issued by a licenced midwife/gynaecologist stating the probable date of delivery.
- If a medical condition prevents a return to work after expiry of the agreed leave, the staff member shall be on leave without pay for a maximum of 60 days and the staff member shall provide a medical certificate of her medical condition.

Marriage Leave

The teacher shall be granted 3 days as marriage leave with full pay.

Abuse of Leave

A "pattern of abuse" in regard to absence refers to employees who have violated the attendance policy on numerous occasions. Disciplinary procedures, which could result in termination, will ensue from repeated leave abuse and misuse. The Principal will investigate all absences which are unsubstantiated and disciplinary procedures will be applied accordingly.

Salary Deduction in the Case of Private/Sick Leave

Deductions from the salary are calculated on the basis of the actual cost of one workday.

Attendance Bonus

Please note that these bonuses are only applicable to staff who complete a full academic year (September to June). The school offers a financial incentive for teachers as follows:
QR 1000 - for perfect attendance throughout the school year.
QR 750 - for only one day of absence throughout the school year.
QR 500 - for only two days of absence throughout the school year.
For teachers joining the school in the first term, the amount will be as follows:
QR 500 - for perfect attendance.
QR 400 - for only one day of absence.
QR 300 - for only two days of absence.
There is no incentive for staff joining later than the first term.

Late Start

As per the Letter of Offer, staff members who start later than the joining date are paid a pro rata of their summer leave and August salary. The pro rata payment is as follows:
Staff who start in Term 1 – 100% of the summer leave pay.
Staff who start in Term 2 - ⅔ of the summer leave pay.
Staff who start in Term 3 - ⅓ of the summer leave pay.

HR managers will discuss these details with their staff within the first week of arrival. Staff who start late do not qualify for the Attendance Bonus.

The Newton Group does not unlawfully discriminate in employment or in its programmes and activities. All staff have equal access and inclusive rights to their work regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, or ability. The Newton Group is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential.

This policy will be reviewed annually.