

## Attendance Policy

Date Originally Adopted:

Revisions: 7/26/11; 4/30/13, 3/8/16, 1/10/17, 5/23/18

Related Documents:

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### **Attendance**

Consistent attendance at school is essential to each student's academic and social success. In the Kona Pacific curriculum, much of the information is conveyed orally or is experiential and hence is impossible to make up outside of school. In addition, because Waldorf education is considered a social education involving relationships and connections that are dynamic, being absent can cause children to experience gaps in their social life/learning as well. These are an essential component of Kona Pacific's education program, and should be considered before making a choice that requires a student's absence from school. The school discourages removing a child from class for any reason other than illness.

### **Chronic Absenteeism – Why it Matters**

State and national data show that missing too much school is a primary predictor of a student's future economic and emotional instability. As a school community, we need to work together to support our students and families who may be experiencing one or more of the many challenges that may result in students not coming to school.

In addition, one of the performance criteria for all Hawaii schools is the level of chronic absenteeism at the school. For the purposes of tracking chronic absenteeism, there is no distinction made between excused and unexcused absences, as the state considers them equivalent. Making sure your child gets to school every day, unless there is a medical reason for them not to attend, is one way in which you can support our school community effort to reduce chronic absenteeism.

If a family is experiencing challenges in making sure their child comes to school every day, they should contact the Class Teacher or the School Office to discuss how the school can help you address this issue.

### **Absences/Tardies**

Absences and tardies will be excused only for the following reasons:

- Personal illness.
- Necessary emergency medical, dental, or optometric appointments that could not be scheduled at a non-school hour.
- Serious family emergency.
- Observation of a holiday or ceremony of the family's religion.
- Planned extended absences that have been approved by the class teacher and school director.
- Other justifiable reasons evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

In the event that an absence is necessary, parents are asked to call the school office at 322-4900 to inform the school why the child will not be in school. If the school does not receive a phone call, the office will call the home to follow up.

If a student has 5 absences in a school year, an official letter will be sent home to the parent or guardian reminding them of school attendance rules.

If a student has 7 absences in a school year, a call will be made to the parent or guardian reminding them of the school attendance rules.

If a student has 10 absences in a school year, the parent will need to meet with the class teacher and a school administrator to discuss the family's difficulty in meeting Kona Pacific's attendance requirements and to explore options for supporting more consistent attendance.

If a student has 20 absences in a school year, the student may be referred to Family Court.

Any trips or planned absences should be reported in advance to the office and to the class teacher.

Full-time attendance is expected in every grade, including Kindergarten. Any modified schedule must be approved by the class teacher and the director.

### **Punctuality**

In our classrooms, there is a rhythm to the day, with opening activities which prepare the child to work effectively, as well as closing activities which allow the group to end as one and to bring a sense of completion. It is essential that each student arrive at school on time to benefit from the entire class day. Arriving late creates a disruption for the class *and* for the child. As a school, we are committed to teaching our children the importance of timeliness.

A student who is not present by 8.00 a.m. is considered tardy. She must report to the school office. Any student arriving after morning protocol will be required to get an "I'm checked in" pass from the office prior to going to their classroom.

School supervision begins on campus at 7:30 a.m. Ideally, we request that students arrive at school a full ten minutes before the morning protocol in order to enable the student to settle in and be ready for the school day, which begins promptly at 7.55 a.m.

If a student has 5 unexcused tardies in a school year, an official letter will be sent home to the parent or guardian reminding them of school attendance rules.

If a student has 7 unexcused tardies in a school year, a call will be made to the parent or guardian reminding them of the school attendance rules.

If a student has 10 unexcused tardies in a school year, the parent will need to meet with the class teacher and a school administrator to discuss the family's challenges to arrive timely at school and to explore options for supporting more consistent attendance.

If a student has 20 unexcused tardies in a school year, the student may be referred to Family Court.

Students should be picked up promptly at the close of the school day. School supervision ends 15 minutes after the school day ends. If children are not picked up, a fee will be charged.

**Early Release**

If it is **necessary** for a student to be released from school during the school day, parents must come to the school office to sign out their child before leaving the school campus with the student. An office staff member or designee will get the student from class.

If the student returns to school before the end of the school day, he/she must report to the school office for a pass.

To ensure the safety of our students, children will not be permitted to leave campus without an authorized adult without prior written parent authorization.