

## **Absence Policy & Procedures**

Regular attendance is essential for a child's academic well-being and social life.

The School requires parents to support their children in understanding the importance of punctuality and good attendance. Early intervention benefits the School and the student when irregular attendance is identified.

The School is responsible for identifying and implementing strategies to achieve a desirable outcome. These strategies include oral communications, written communications, and meetings with parents/caregivers. Waldorf education is an accumulative education. When attendance is inconsistent or irregular, or if absences are prolonged, the student's advancement and continued enrollment may be in jeopardy.

Parents have a legal obligation to ensure that their children attend a public school or receive satisfactory instruction elsewhere, such as at the School. For students enrolled with the School, the School must be made aware if a student will be absent and the reason for the absence. In the case of unreported absences, the School will contact parents/caregivers and/or emergency contacts, including at work and/or emergency contact numbers provided.

### **Attendance Requirement**

Unless the School approves a student's absence, students are required to be at School during school hours. Examples of legitimate reasons for which the School may approve an absence include, but are not limited to, the following:

- occasional short-term illness of the student;
- illness-related absences of longer duration or of a repeated nature that are supported by a doctor's letter/certificate;
- the need for the student to attend at a medical appointment;
- bereavement-related absences (e.g. absence due to a death in the student's family);
- religious holidays/observances; or
- for the purposes of observing a special event/occasion, provided that the parent/caregiver submits a written request for the student to be excused in advance and the absence is of short duration.

The School may require an explanation for an absence and/or documentation to support the absence that is reasonable in the circumstances.

If a student must leave during the school day for an appointment, parents or caregivers must notify the class teacher and the office by phone (**905-331-4387**) or email (**reception@haltonwaldorf.com**).

If a student arrives late or returns from an absence during the school day, they must sign in at the front desk before proceeding to class.

## Family Vacations

When family vacations are planned, they should coincide with the School's regular holiday schedule. When taking a student out of school is necessary, parents should consult with the class teacher before making travel arrangements. Teachers do not provide work for students who miss school for family vacation purposes.

## Problematic Attendance

School teachers and administrative faculty are responsible for identifying attendance issues and implementing early strategies to enhance the potential to achieve a positive outcome. Where absenteeism creates a concern for a child's safety, the School may have a duty to report the matter to the children's aid society.

The School considers a student's attendance to be problematic when any of the following develop:

- absences are frequent and/or prolonged (without legitimate explanation);
- absences follow a pattern (without legitimate explanation);
- absences begin to affect the student's progress;
- the School has difficulties establishing contact with the parent, caregiver, or emergency contacts regarding absences; or
- explanations for the student's absence(s) are inadequate, concerning, or inconsistent.

The School will take steps to address attendance issues that it considers appropriate in the circumstances. Without limiting the steps that the School may take in any particular circumstances, the following thresholds and steps will generally apply:

<b>Absenteeism Rate</b>	<b>Step</b>
<b>10%</b> 18 school days per academic year	An official letter from the School will be sent to the parents/caregivers identifying the attendance issue and a meeting will be required between the class teacher and the parents/caregivers to address the issue.
<b>15%</b> 27 school days per academic year	A further meeting will be required between the class teacher and the parents/caregivers to address the attendance issue and notify the parents of potential next steps if absenteeism persists. The student may be placed on probation for up to three (3) months.
<b>20%</b> 36 days per academic year	A meeting will be required between the Pedagogical Director, the class teacher, and the parents/caregivers. At this stage, or if there are further absences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student may be required to withdraw from the School</li><li>• The Ministry of Education/Provincial School Attendance Counselor may be notified</li></ul>

<b>Consecutive Unapproved Absences (School Days)</b>	<b>Step</b>
3	The class teacher will telephone the parents/caregivers.
7	The class teacher will send a letter to the parents/caregivers.
14	The Pedagogical Director will send a letter to the parents/caregivers.
21	A meeting will be required between the Pedagogical Director, class teacher, and the parents/caregivers.
28	The student may be required to withdraw from the School. The Ministry of Education/Provincial School Attendance Counselor may be notified. Without a legitimate explanation for the absence, the School will make a report to the children's aid society.

All absences will be recorded by the School and will appear on the student's report card and the Ontario Student Record (OSR).