



OKANAGAN MISSION SECONDARY SCHOOL
Attendance Expectations

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that every student at OKM has the greatest opportunity to experience academic success. This can only be done if a partnership is formed between the school, the student and their guardians. Maintaining regular attendance is an important component in providing students with the opportunities to learn to the best of their abilities.

At OKM we believe that in order to receive a quality education it is essential to attend all classes and be a part of classroom explanations, clarifications, discussions, opportunities for feedback and various other experiences that enrich the learning opportunities of our students.

Experience has taught us that students who miss instructional time are at a significantly increased risk of lower academic performance. The academic policy is aimed at ensuring student academic success by requiring regular attendance.

Categories of Absences:

<u>Excused</u>	<u>Explained Unexcused</u>	<u>Unexcused</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student illness • Health appointment • Death in the family • Family emergency • Personal safety issues • Observance of a religious holiday • Principal's discretion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work related absence • Sleeping in • Transportation issues • Baby-sitting for parents • Trip or holiday • Non-school sanctioned event • Parent decision not meeting the criteria for excused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to substantiate absence in 3 days • Failure to attend assembly or other mandatory events • In or around school but not in class • Any absence not meeting the criteria for excused

Attendance Procedure for Planned Absences: (i.e. medical appointments, missing a class due to school trips, family holidays, or any other absence that you know in advance)

- The student is required to see their teachers before they are away
- If the planned absence is made by the home (i.e. holiday), the parent/guardian is to inform the school of the impending absence through the SchoolMessenger attendance system. (Smartphone App or Online Parent Portal)
- Teachers should also be informed through email, note or phone call.

Attendance Procedures for Unplanned Absences: (i.e. illness)

- The parent/guardian is to inform the school through SchoolMessenger the attendance system. (Smartphone App or Online Parent Portal)

Note: *All absences result in a student missing a valuable learning opportunity. The learning environment of the classroom and the rich discussion taking place cannot be replicated with text books or worksheets. It is important for students and guardians to understand that the ramifications of missed class time could be a lowered level of academic success. It is the expectation of the school that students take responsibility for all work that is missed while they are away. This means the student needs to see the teacher to find out what needs to be done in order to be caught-up and to complete the work by the agreed upon time.*

Extended Absences:

- Each year we are approached by an increasing number of families who wish to take their child out of school for extended periods of time. Usually this is for reasons associated with family holidays or family business. We do not have a procedure for granting students a "leave of absence". Rather it is assumed that families will make decisions in the best interests of their own child.
- We also encounter parents who wish to excuse their child from school for extended periods of time due to emotional or medical issues.

- Regardless of the reason, difficulties arise when parents wish to have some sort of reassurance that their child will not be "behind" in their work when they return.

If your child misses school for extended periods of time, he or she will be "behind" in classroom work and may have a lowered level of academic success.

Students may have cultural and travel experiences which contribute to their development, but the varied daily classroom activities they miss cannot be duplicated through worksheets or workbooks.

- Missed instructional time cannot be "made up". Although teachers will do their best to help students get "caught-up", they are, generally speaking, not in the position to provide make-up assignments for children who have extended absences due to family vacations. The decision to provide "make-up" work will depend greatly on the student's attendance, work habits and effort prior to the date of the extended absence. It is up to the student to make arrangements with each of their teachers well in advance of the date of the absence.
- Students who are away for extended periods due to medical, social or emotional issues are referred to our School Based Response Team for support. In most cases, students are referred to the Hospital-Homebound Program where their needs can be met in a much more effective way.
- It is **not** possible for teachers to provide online or remote learning in addition to their in-class teaching responsibilities.

Lateness

- It is expected that students will be in class on time. The classroom teacher, through student-teacher conferences and contact with guardians will deal with occasional tardiness. Habitual lateness will be referred to their administrator, who will design an action plan by working with the student and the teacher to correct this pattern of behaviour.

Response to Attendance Concerns:

- If an assignment was due on the day of the absence the student has three days (or a date agreed to by the teacher) to turn in the assignment before they lose that assessment opportunity. The teacher may use the appropriate section of midterm or final exam as the mark for the missed assessment opportunity.
- If a student misses a major assessment on the day of an unexcused absence they may face a disciplinary response from teacher and admin. If this happens a second time the student may be removed from the class.

Unexcused absences, habitual lateness, and/or direct defiance of attendance expectations may be addressed in accordance with the "Response to Behaviours" section of the [OKM Code of Conduct](#).