



Dear Respected Parents/Guardians - Assalamu alaikum / Peace be with you,

### **Re: School Attendance**

We are writing this special letter to you about attendance to provide you with a clear outline about Eden Girls' School absence procedures and Local Authority responses to poor pupil attendance. At Eden we are expecting and promoting high levels of attendance and taking action where there are unsatisfactory reasons for absence.

Our target attendance this year is 97%. Attendance matters and is important for learning. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable. This letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

### **Types of Absence**

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

Unacceptable Reasons The following reasons are not acceptable:

- shopping visits and/or days out with family
- care for family members, and/or parental illness
- parents' work commitments or business trips
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)

### **Illness and First Day Call**

If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us by telephone on the first day of absence before 8.30am. Alternatively you can email us at [info@egslough.staracademies.org](mailto:info@egslough.staracademies.org) . It is useful to know the expected day of return. If you do not supply us with this information, we have a duty to contact you for so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure.

We will be asking for medical evidence for illnesses of more than two days. In addition, we will invite parents for meeting where we have concerns over excessive patterns through illness to gain better understanding of the problems and to offer support – for example by involving the school nurse or other agencies.

### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible. Parents must show evidence of medical appointment and must inform the school in advance when the appointment is. Parents also need to fill in their daughter's planner (page 33) to indicate the appointment time and date to notify teachers and Head of Year.

### **Lateness**

Please try to ensure that your child arrives at school so that they are present for registration; this is done at 8.00 am each day. One of the biggest changes in terms of the potential impact on parents, is that schools are now expected to close their registers 30 minutes after the official start time for the school day.



This means that if a child arrives to school late but before 30 minutes has passed the pupils will get a late mark. A late mark is a present mark, but it can result in loss of privileges or the issuing of sanctions. It is important that we train young people to be punctual and reliable.

However, if a pupil is **more than 30 minutes late** without a very good reason, the pupil will now be marked as an unauthorised late (a form of **unauthorised absence**). Pupil who is late to school will be sanctioned according to the Lateness to school Behaviour Policy.

### **Leave of Absence:**

#### **Holidays**

**It is not our policy to authorise holidays in term time.** The only exemption to this is where parents serve in the armed forces (this does not extend to the emergency services i.e. Police, Fire, Ambulance etc). Where authorisation is not granted then subsequent term time holiday absence will be reported as a matter of course to the Education Welfare Service; we are under a duty to do this. Where unauthorised leave is taken, legal interventions may be considered and a fixed penalty fine. This can be very expensive. This will apply to any parents who book holidays in term time.

#### **What is considered as poor attendance**

Anything below 94% is weak, under 90% is poor and if attendance dips below 85% we will have serious concerns. Below 90% is regarded as persistent absence by the DFE. In this school we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 97%. We monitor attendance and provide termly reports on each pupil's attendance. At the end of each half term, we identify all those pupils whose attendance has fallen below 94% and issue a courtesy letter or make telephone call informing parents. We then monitor the pupils' attendance on a weekly basis and hope to see a pattern of unbroken weeks developing.

#### **Our duty of care in responding to unauthorised and persistent absence – possible consequences**

We have a duty of care, shared with the Local Authority, to challenge poor attendance. Where attendance levels are low and where there are invalid reasons (judged by the Education Welfare Service, not the parent) for a pupil's frequent absence or where parents condone absence (e.g. by taking children out of school on unauthorised holidays) **then parents render themselves liable to a fine of £60 per pupil per parent.** This could mean a fine of £360 for two parents of three children. This would be doubled to £720 if the fine is unpaid within 21 days and could ultimately lead to a criminal conviction. Of course, no one wants this to happen, but we need to be very clear about the issue.

We hope that these notes will help you to have a clear understanding about the school's expectations in this matter. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and we would be very pleased to answer any questions you may have about our approach to maintaining and improving our attendance record.

Yours sincerely



Maschil De Guzman  
Assistant Principal