



30 October 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian
Assalaamu alaikum - Peace be with you,

Re: School Attendance and Punctuality

We are writing this special letter to you about attendance to provide you with a clear outline of absence procedures and the School and Local Authority responses to poor pupil attendance. The Governors have made it clear that they will support the Headteacher and Education Welfare Service in promoting high levels of attendance and taking action where there are unsatisfactory reasons for absence.

Unbroken attendance at school is important for learning. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. 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.

The following reasons are not acceptable and absence will be unauthorised:

- ♣ shopping visits
- ♣ care for family members
- ♣ days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- ♣ parents' work commitments or business trips
- ♣ holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
- ♣ parental illness

Illness and First Day Call

If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us via Class Chart before 8.30am. Alternatively, you can the HoYs by telephone on the first day of absence. 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 so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure.

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

Where we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness, we will need to discuss this with parents to better understand the problems and offer support – for example, by involving the School Nurse and/or Early Help.

Medical/Dental Appointments

It is generally better if these can be **arranged outside school hours**, but we know this is not always possible. Where children need to attend such appointments during the school day it is important that parents come



first to the Office before collecting children. Please bring your child to the office upon returning from the appointment. Please indicate in advance whether s/he will be returning for the midday meal.

Emergency Occasions

There are some occasions e.g., bereavements, family problems, etc where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs.

Lateness

As you may be aware, the law treats persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance, and parents may be fined or prosecuted by the Local Authority if this regular pattern of arriving late is not resolved.

I must advise you as a parent/carer of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. (Education Act 1996)

Please ensure that your child arrives at school **before 8.00 am** each day so that they are present for registration. Parents must plan and consider variables such as traffic, bin day, weather, and distance to ensure that your child arrives on time to school.

There are consequences for being late to school. This includes:

- Missing the beginning of vital lessons
- Feeling unprepared for the school day
- Missing important instructions and messages
- Learning bad habits which could affect their employability in the future

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, 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, **the school will notify and share this form and any subsequent letters with Slough Borough Council Attendance Service.** A legal intervention may be instigated in the form of a Penalty Notice. If a Penalty Notice is issued it will be to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. We would like to make you aware that non-payment of the Penalty Notice may result in legal action.

What we are aiming for

Average attendance would be around 96% for the year, with outstanding attendance above 97.5%.

What is considered poor attendance?

Anything below 94% is weak, under 92% is poor and if attendance dips below 90% we will have serious concerns. Below 90% is regarded as persistent absence by the Department of Education (DfE). In this school we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 96%. 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 90% and issue a courtesy letter or make a telephone call informing parents. We



then monitor the pupils' attendance on a weekly basis and hope to see a pattern of unbroken attendance 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 your child's future life success.

Please refer to the following policy linked to Attendance and Punctuality:

[Attendance-and-Punctuality-Policy.pdf \(edengirlsslough.com\)](https://edengirlsslough.com/Attendance-and-Punctuality-Policy.pdf)

We hope that these notes will help you to have a clear understanding of 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

Return Slip

Re: **School Attendance and Punctuality Letter (30 October 2023)**

This is to confirm that we have read the above Attendance and Punctuality reminders and will comply with them.

Pupil's name: Form:

Parent /Carer name(print):Signed:

Relationship with above named pupil.....Date.....

Please return this slip to your child's Learning Coordinator on or before Friday, 3rd November 2023.