



TO ALL PARENTS/CARERS

3rd September 2016

Dear Parents

At the beginning of a new school year, it is timely to remind you of the procedures that Eltham Church of England School are expected to follow with regard to pupil attendance.

Whenever your child is absent from school, please note the following:

If your child is absent from school parents need to:

- Telephone or email (absence@elthamce.greenwich.sch.uk) the school, preferably before 9.00 a.m. to advise us of your child's absence. Please use the school's telephone answer service via Option 1 leaving a brief message informing us of your child's name, class, reason for absence and expected date of return.

When your child returns to school after an absence parents need to:

- Send in a signed and dated note confirming the reasons for his/her absence. This is the same for all absences, even if you have previously called and spoken to the school or left a message.
- Absences that are not explained with a note may be classed as unauthorised.

Medical appointments:

- If your child has a medical appointment of any kind (i.e. Dr's, dentist, hospital or opticians etc.) please bring either their appointment card or letter of confirmation to school. When a child has a morning or afternoon appointment we would expect him/her to be in school for the other half of the day. If you need to take your child out of school to accompany you to an appointment, please note that this will be registered as an unauthorised absence.

Monitoring of absence:

- The Local Authority's Attendance Advisory Officer (AAO) will monitor pupil absence fortnightly.
- The school is continuing with the 'Fast Track' scheme this academic year. As such, there are thresholds at which a child's absence is monitored and, even if every absence is supported by a letter, parents will be informed by letter that their child has crossed that threshold and their attendance will be monitored and they may be required to meet with the school and the AAO to discuss the matter.
- The school carries out regular register checks on pupil absence to ensure we have received the relevant notifications of a child's absence and where there has been an absence, to ensure we have received a note explaining their absence. If the school has not received any notification or letter, with reasons for absence, a letter will be sent home. There will be a tear off slip

at the bottom of letter for parents/carers to fill out and return to the school office.

Leave of absence – including family holidays

- The school is unable to authorise absence due to a family holiday. If parents decide to withdraw their child from school then it will be recorded as unauthorised. A child's overall absence is monitored by the AAO and if a child's overall absence meets the threshold outlined by Fast Track then parents may be invited to meet with the AAO to discuss their child's attendance.
- If parents plan to withdraw their child from school then a letter explaining the reason for that absence, including holiday arrangements, must be sent to the school office so that there is a record of pupil absence.
- If the office is not informed of the reasons why a child is absent then in accordance with first day absence procedures they will ring home to ascertain why a child is away. If the school consistently gets no response then the AAO will be informed and home visits will be arranged; if there is still no response then the child will be considered missing from school and the authorities informed.

Late Marks:

- The school day commences at 8.55 a.m. for juniors and 9am for infants and registers are closed at 9.15 a.m. Therefore, if your child arrives after 9.15 a.m. he/she will be marked as 'U' (late after registers closed). If your child arrives after their official start time and before 9.15am they will be allocated a 'L' (late) mark in the register.
- Where a medical appointment is the cause of lateness, evidence must be provided.

Fixed Penalty Notices:

- In accordance with Fast Track, where a child's absence causes concern, our Attendance Advisory Officer will become involved and parents could be issued initially with a Fixed Penalty Warning and subsequently a Fixed Penalty Notice if their child/ren's overall attendance is deemed unacceptable. This is a fine of £60 payable to the local authority (this Notice will apply to each child that attends Eltham Church of England School not per family). Should a Fixed Penalty Notice be issued you will have twenty eight days to pay this, however, if it is not paid within the 28 days the fine will rise to £120. Parents will then have fourteen days to pay this and if no payment is received you could then be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance.

I know that the vast majority of parents already inform the school about their child's absence, and I thank you for your support, however, it is essential that our procedures are clear and all parents are aware of them.

90% attendance each school year may sound good, but this represents half a day a week's absence and taken over a five year period this would mean that half a year of education has been missed.

Eltham Church of England School reward good, individual, class and much improved attendance from all pupils. We know that we all need to work together to improve both attendance and the achievement of our children and thank you in advance for your co-operation.

If you would like clarification on any of the comments noted above please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Bulpitt'.

Matthew Bulpitt
Headteacher

