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ELLIS
GUILFORD
SCHOOL
*Creative
Education
Trust*

3rd July 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to share some important updates regarding our approach to attendance at the Ellis Guilford School. We are committed to providing the very best support to empower our children to attend school regularly and overcome any potential barriers they may face in their educational journey.

Our new approach is rooted in an inclusive attendance model designed to ensure that everyone - our staff, families, and children - fully understands their individual roles and collective responsibilities in supporting school attendance, active engagement in learning, and addressing potential barriers.

To achieve this, we are introducing a Multi-Tiered System of Support.

This approach will begin with a universal offer (open to all children and their families), progresses to Tier 2 which is additional support for some children through early help services, finally progressing to Tier 3 where we ensure that specific children and their families have access to specialised resources if required.

Effective communication with all our families is central to our values at Ellis Guilford School. In light of this, we will transition from reporting attendance in percentage form to a focus on the number of days missed. This shift will simplify the process, improve communication, and help all children and families have a clear understanding of the impact of missed school days on education.

Our renewed focus will ultimately help us create a culture where everyone at Ellis Guilford shares the collective responsibility for school attendance.

In August 2024 the Department for Education are implementing new legislation on school attendance. To ensure you are fully aware of the impact school absence will have on you and your families we have included the following in this letter.

- Information on the fines that will be issued by the local authority for absence and lateness to school, including holiday absence.

At Ellis Guilford School our main aim is to work with families to support you in removing barriers to school attendance and ensuring children have an attendance of over 98%. If you would like to discuss barriers or would like support prior to September, please contact Stacey Jackson our Director of Attendance.

Yours sincerely

Jo Chambers

Vice Principal

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Department for Education Guidance

What happens if my child misses school or is repeatedly late to school?

In the majority of cases, schools and local authorities will try and provide support to help you improve your child's attendance first, but if this isn't effective or if the absence is for unauthorised term time holiday, parents may face paying a fine.

Currently, it's the responsibility of the local authority to decide when to issue fines to parents.

However, under the new national framework from the Department for Education, **all schools will be required by law** to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions for unauthorised reasons.

- Each day has two sessions. Am session and PM session. **School begins at 8.40am. If your child is late this will count as a half day unauthorised absence as they would miss the AM session start time.**
- From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be **£80 if paid within 21 days**, or **£160 if paid within 28 days**. This rate is in line with inflation and is the first increase since 2012.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of **£160**.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to **£2,500**.

Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

You can only allow your child to miss school if either:

- they're too ill to go in -
- Medical appointment – these should be avoided during school time. However, if the appoint cannot be avoided medical evidence will need to be provided. This could be a text to conform appointment, letter, or prescription.