

## Attendance Policy

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Note: This policy applies to all sections of the school including EYFS

### 1. Introduction

At EIFA International School (“EIFA”, “School”, “we”, “us” or “our”) we see education as a partnership between family and school. We are committed to providing the highest quality of education for our children, and we look to the Parents (“you”, “your” or “yours”) to support this objective.

Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance records tend to achieve less at school.

As an international school, we fully understand the particularities that may affect families in terms of travel and relocation for instance, and we do our utmost to consider and accommodate such circumstances. However, we are bound by laws and regulations, which have been enacted to ensure the educational welfare of all children.

The Government expects the following from schools:

- to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- to ensure every pupil has high levels of attendance so they can access the education they are entitled to;
- to act early to address patterns of absence;
- to encourage parents to perform their legal duties by ensuring their child attends school regularly;
- to ensure all pupils are punctual to lessons.

### 2. The Law

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child’s regular attendance at the school where they are registered, under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

### **3. School day**

Junior and Senior School pupils are required to be in school by 08:40.

The normal school day ends at the following times:

- Nursery/PS and Reception/MS – 15:10
- Years 1 to 6 – 15:20 Monday to Thursday and 15:30 on Friday
- Years 7 to 11 – 15:30 or 16:30, depending of the class timetable

Pupils are registered at both the start of the morning and afternoon sessions each day.

At Little EIFA, morning only sessions run from 08:00 to 12.00 and full day sessions, from 08:00 to 18:00.

### **4. Notifying the school of illness**

Should an occasion arise where your child is ill, please email [registrar@eifaschool.com](mailto:registrar@eifaschool.com) or telephone the school (020 7637 5351) before 09:00. If your child is absent and the school has not heard from you, we will always call you in order to make sure that your child is safe.

We ask that you inform us each day your child is going to be absent due to illness, in order to update our attendance register but, more importantly, so that we can keep abreast of the child's progress to full health and anticipated return date.

### **5. Late arrival**

Our attendance registration takes place daily at 08:50 and all pupils will be marked present, late or absent. It is therefore essential that if a pupil arrives late, he/she signs in at Reception to ensure our registers are updated and accurate. This is important in case an evacuation of the school is necessary, and so that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times.

Our registers are again updated at 09:30 when we compile the final registration for the morning. At this point, if you have not contacted the school by telephone or email, our Reception team will contact you.

### **6. Leaving school early during the day**

Pupils are not allowed to leave the School during the school day, unless accompanied by a member of staff, for a trip, a visit or a sporting activity.

If your child has to leave the school during the day for illness or you are collecting them for a medical appointment, you are required to sign them out at Reception. Students in the Senior School may sign themselves out, with the prior written consent of their Parents.

### **7. Requests for absence**

#### **7.1 Requesting absence**

If you wish to request an absence for any planned appointment or event, you should make the request in writing via email and send it to: [registrar@eifaschool.com](mailto:registrar@eifaschool.com) marked 'absence request'. If no request has been sent in advance, telephone or email the school on the first morning your child is absent and regularly keep the school informed on each consecutive day of absence.

## **7.2 Compassionate grounds or exceptional circumstances**

Requests for leave of absence on compassionate grounds or in exceptional circumstances should be made by email to the Head of School (fzurbach@eifaschool.com), in advance of the proposed absence when possible. Absence in exceptional circumstances does not include the following:

- birthdays;
- holidays;
- days out as a special treat;
- other family celebrations.

## **7.3 Authorising absence**

The Government has confirmed that schools, not parents, authorise absence. The main areas where the school will authorise absence are given below:

### **7.3.1. Illness**

Where schools accept that a pupil is ill, they must authorise the absence but can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness.

### **7.3.2 Appointments**

Dental and medical appointments are authorised absences but, where possible, such appointments should be made out of school hours.

### **7.3.3 Holidays**

The Regulations state that time off for family holidays is not a right. Parents do not have the right to take a child out of school during term time. By law, parents must ask prior permission for their child to miss school. The Regulations do not allow the school to give retrospective approval.

The Head of School is only able to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If the Head of School grants a leave request, it is for him/her to determine the length of time that your child can be away from school. Authorised leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

### **7.3.4 Religious observance**

The school will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, the school may seek confirmation from that religious body that the day has been set apart for religious observance.

## **8. Poor attendance**

The Department for Education (DfE) expects every pupil attending school to maintain an attendance level of approximately 90% and above; any figure below this is deemed as poor attendance.

### **8.1 Attendance and levels of achievement**

Poor attendance is normally defined as anything below 90%.

There is clear evidence, published by the Department for Education (DfE, 2016), of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

## 8.2 Persistent absentees

The DfE has changed the definition of 'Persistent Absence' to deal with the reality of pupil absenteeism in schools and its impact on their learning. The Department has reduced the threshold at which a pupil is defined as 'Persistently Absent' to 10%.

Pupils whose attendance is below 90% are now officially classed as 'Persistent Absentees'. The school is under obligation to contact the parents, if their child's attendance drops below that figure. If attendance does not improve and absence continues to be persistent, the school may be forced to contact Children's Services at the relevant local authority.

## 9. School action and support

In cases of consistent poor attendance, the school will work with the pupils and their families to understand the cause of absences and to find the best way to manage the situation.

The school will always consider every case on an individual basis.

### 9.1 Initial intervention

If the attendance of your child falls below 90%, and is considered unjustified, the school will write to you, suggesting alternative strategies to improve attendance and offering support to find adequate solutions.

Alternative strategies may include:

- Conducting information sessions on how to address issues such as school refusal
- Identifying a mentor for pupils who are at risk and developing an individual education plan for them
- Setting-up an attendance student support group, if it becomes apparent that a pupil needs ongoing intensive support

### 9.2 Meeting with parents

In cases where low attendance persists, the School will convene a meeting with you and your child (if necessary). The purpose of this meeting will be to identify issues which may be impacting on attendance and find any additional or alternative support that the child or the family may require.

Alternative support may include:

- Offer one-on-one sessions for pupils who require additional learning or wellbeing provisions
- Suggest community agencies that may be available to assist the child and family
- Access specialist support by making appropriate referrals to students support services or external health professionals and organisations

## 10. Maintaining records and reporting to the authorities

The School's attendance register is backed up, in the form of an electronic copy, at least once a month and records are retained for three years after the end of the school year in question.

By law, we are required to alert the local authority after a pupil of compulsory school age has:

- been absent without authorisation for 5 consecutive school days, or
- failed to attend school regularly, or
- been removed from the school without the school being informed formally, in writing.

I/We hereby confirm that I/We have read and understood the information note concerning the Attendance Policy, which I/We accept.

PARENT/GUARDIAN (first name – surname): .....

STUDENT (first name – surname): ..... CLASS: .....

SIGNATURE: ..... DATE:.....