



Edgewood Attendance Information Session

Update on changes for 2015/16

Why have we made changes?

- The government has raised the threshold for persistent absence to 90% or below.
- The County Council have voted on changes to the guidance regarding penalty notices.
- Our attendance, while improving each year, is still below the national average.
- One of our biggest reasons for low attendance is children who have too long off school for minor illnesses.
- We still have children who are classed as persistent absentees.

Why good attendance matters

At Edgewood we value children's attendance, because, above all, children with low attendance make less progress at school.

To learn anything from school, children need to be in school.

Almost all our lessons build on previous learning and if a child is missing sessions then they are going to struggle when they return as they will have missed previous learning.

This makes it much harder for them to gain all the benefit from their time at school.

What is good attendance?

Good attendance is 97% or better
5 and a half days off or less over the whole year - less than two days each term!

Satisfactory attendance is 95% to 96.9%
Up to 9 and a half days off over the whole year – up to 3 days off each term.

Attendance causing concern is 90% to 94.9%
Up to 19 days off each year – up to 6 days off each term.

Unacceptably low attendance is below 90%
More than 19 days off in a year – more than 6 days off each term.

How will our policy work now?

Most of our policy remains unchanged.

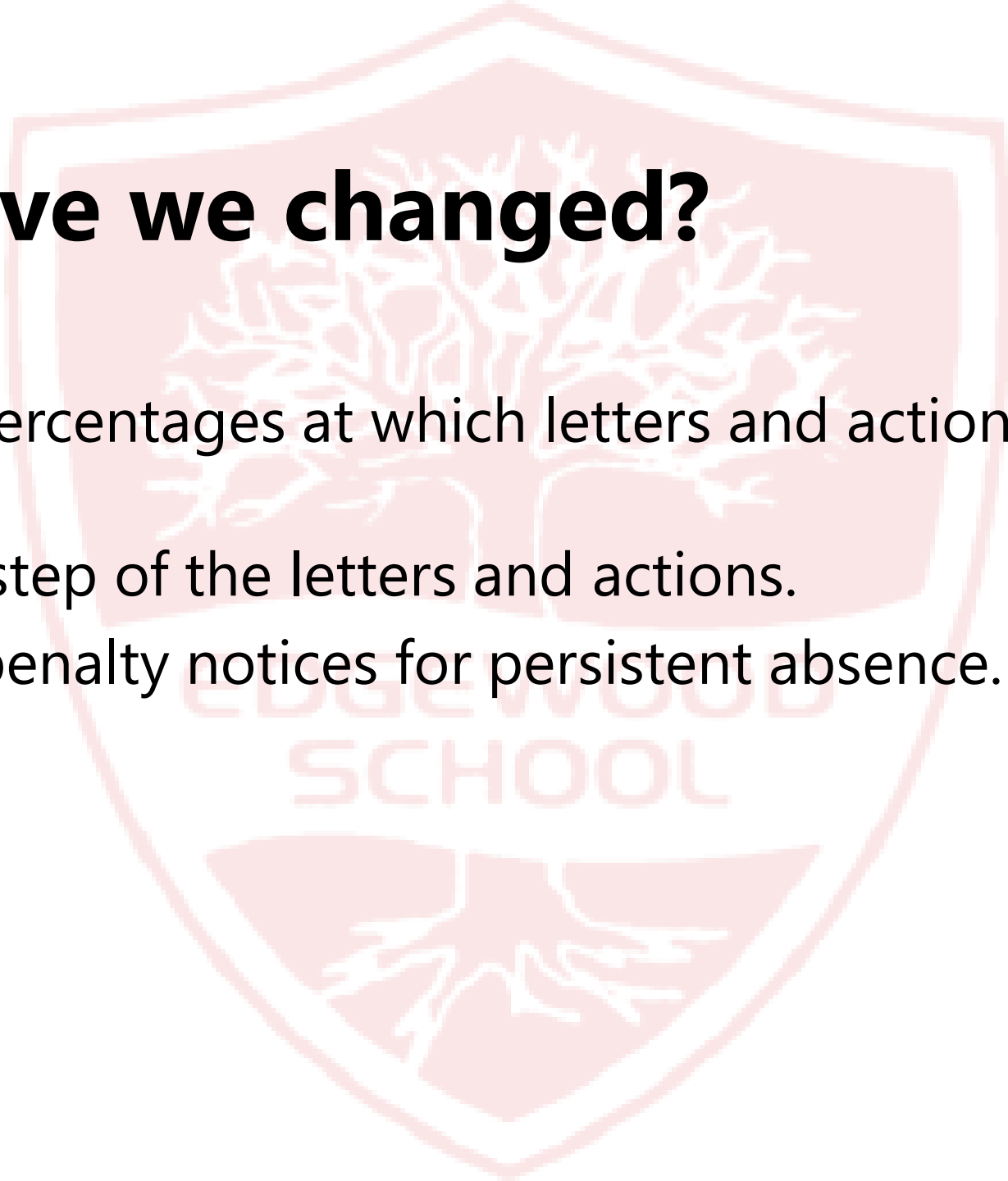
- We still reward good attendance in a number of ways.
- We still chase reasons for absence on the first day of absence.
- We still inform you of attendance levels in reports.
- We still send letters to make you aware of attendance causing concern.
- We will still ask to meet with you when we are worried about attendance.
- We will still refer poor attenders to other agencies for support and further sanctions.

What do we still need you to do?

- Bring your child to school every day they are well enough.
- If they have been sick for transmittable reasons they need to be off for 48 hours.
- If they have been sick for non-transmittable reasons then they may come to school as soon as they are well enough (not been sick for a number of hours after having food and well within themselves). We would rather they were in and if they are not well enough we will send them home.
- If your child will be off school for any reason please let the school office before the day or by leaving a message on the answerphone.
- If you are taking a holiday during term time you must still fill in a request form so we can record it correctly.

What have we changed?

- Raised the percentages at which letters and actions will be taken.
- Taken out a step of the letters and actions.
- Introduced penalty notices for persistent absence.



How do we reward good attendance?

- Dolphin awarded each week to the class with the best attendance.
- Termly draw for 100% attendance in a week (Each week with 100% attendance = 1 ticket in the draw).
- Termly play session in the pool for the two classes with the best attendance that term.
- Every child lucky enough to end the year with 97% or better attendance will be entitled to a free reward trip.
- Every child that ends the year with 100% will also get a £5 book voucher.

(Unavoidable medical appointments will be excused from the annual rewards – dentists appointments that could have been taken after school or in holidays will not, nor will illness except for certain extreme circumstances.)

What if attendance isn't good?

Attendance below 95% (or 3.5 days in the autumn term) letter sent saying attendance causing concern.

After this letter we will not authorise any absences without evidence.

3 more days' unauthorised absence will trigger a formal warning letter and a meeting with the head teacher to see how school can help improve attendance.

2 more days' unauthorised absence will lead to the issuing of a penalty notice.

Continued poor attendance (below 90%) will lead to a referral to the Family Service (formerly Targeted Support and Education Welfare) and possible further fines and court appearances.

What is a penalty notice?

- A fixed penalty notice is issued by the local authority – school will request their issue but not actually be issuing them.
- The money goes to the local authority – school receives no money so it is not in our financial interest to issue penalty notices.
- The penalty is £120 per child, per parent. This reduces to £60 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days.
- If they aren't paid the local authority will chase payment and can take the parents named on the letters to court for non-payment.
- Please note section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:
 - all natural parents, whether they are married or not.
 - any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- This effectively means the adults responsible for the care of the child will be the people issued with the fine, whether biological parents or not.

What is suitable evidence for absence?

Suitable evidence could be:

- Prescription from your doctor
- Appointment card or letter
- A note or letter from your doctor, dentist or hospital

Please note at all times school retains the right to decide whether to approve absence or not irrespective of the evidence provided.

Holidays during school sessions

Holidays will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. religious observation).

Cheaper holidays, family weddings and holidays booked by other family members are not reasons for absence to be authorised.

Please note that a religious event that isn't a strict observation will not be authorised either.

Penalty notices will not be given specifically for holidays but if attendance is causing concern then a holiday could trigger a penalty notice being issued.

Appointments during school hours

Appointments must be made outside of school hours or in the school holidays where possible.

The school will only approve absence where evidence is provided and the child is in school before and after the appointment where possible.

Without this the absence will be unauthorised.

Further information

On the website policies page,

www.edgewoodprimaryschool.co.uk/policies

are;

- Parent friendly attendance policy summary
- Attendance policy
- The local authority's guidance for the issuing of penalty notices