Serenity School

Serenity School Eltham
70 Court Road
Eltham
Greenwich
SE95NP

Wednesday 16th October 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we are reaching the end of Autumn Term 1, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your continued support and involvement in our school community. It has been a wonderful term filled with learning, growth, and memorable experiences for our students.

Throughout this term, our students have demonstrated remarkable resilience, creativity, and enthusiasm in their studies and extracurricular activities. From engaging classroom projects to exciting school events, it has been a joy to witness their progress and achievements. The pupils have participated in two charity days including Celebrating World Mental Health day and supporting Young Minds dedicated to our Serenity School values:

- Taking care of ourselves.
- Taking care of each other.
- Taking care of our learning.
- Taking care of our school, community, and the world.
- Taking care of our future.

We welcomed parents and carers for our Macmillan Coffee Morning –it was great to see so many parents attend and a perfect opportunity for our parents to share stories, strategies and ideas with each other. One parent stated that it 'made me feel less alone'. We will continue to offer regular opportunities for parent coffee mornings through the rest of the academic year. Please look out for updates to our school website which will include a 'Parent Forum' section.

I am particularly proud of the way our students have embraced new transitions, challenges and opportunities, showing a strong commitment to their education and personal development. Our dedicated staff has worked tirelessly to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment, ensuring that each child feels valued and supported. We continue to celebrate and reward those students who uphold Serenity School values through our 'Investor in Me' programme. Pupils have represented the school exceptionally well including our two football teams who are part of the South London Special League. We have had school trips to the local area, including the park, The Tarn, feeding the Donkey's and visiting Chislehurst War memorial. Please look at some of the photos below from this term.

Pupils created some amazing Artwork to celebrate Black History Month, Also as I am writing this there is a feast of Jollof rice, Plantain and chicken being created in food tech to celebrate the end of this half-term for pupils and staff, requested by the pupils to celebrate the end of this half-term.

As we look forward to Autumn Term 2, we are excited to continue our journey of learning and discovery. We have a range of exciting activities and programs planned. These will provide further opportunities for our students to explore their interests, develop new skills, and build lasting friendships.

We understand that the transition between terms can be a busy time for families. Please know that we are here to support you and your children as we move into the next phase of the school year. Communication and collaboration remain key, and we encourage you to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Thank you once again for your unwavering support and partnership. Together, we can ensure that our students continue to thrive and succeed. Wishing you all a restful and enjoyable break, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back on Tuesday 5th November 2024.

Warm regards,

C Pettman

Headteacher

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Dates for your Diary

End of Term – Thursday 17th October 2024 (normal finish time).
Friday 18th October 2024 – School Inset Day.
Monday 4th November 2024 – Annual Review Day (pupils not on site unless attending meeting).
Tuesday 5th November 2024– Pupils return to school.
Monday 18th November- Coffee Morning for Parents/Carers 9:30am-10:15am
Wednesday 18th December 2024- Academic Review Day (pupils not on site unless attending). meeting)
Friday 20th December – Last day of term. 12pm finish Primary.
12:30pm finish Secondary.

Uniform Reminders:

I would like to remind all parent and carers of our school uniform policy, which is as follows:

- Black trousers/Smart tracksuit bottoms- non-branded- no leggings
- Blue Serenity polo shirt
- Black Serenity school jumper
- Green Serenity T-Shirt for PE
- Black School trainers or shoes- no colourful logos.
- Optional Navy Serenity fleece (At an additional cost of £5)

The above uniform expectation is applicable for all learners, failure to meet this may result in pupils being sent home, so I do encourage all parents to ensure your child is wearing the correct uniform each day.

Attendance and Punctuality

School attendance- Information provided by Greenwich Local Authority

Regular attendance at school will:
•give your child the best possible start in life
•enable your child to reach their full potential
•prove to employers that your child is reliable and assist him or her in getting a good job
•reduce the risk of your child becoming a victim of crime or abuse
•reduce the opportunity for your child to be drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour.

What regular attendance means
Regular attendance means that your child must:
•attend school every day unless there are justified reasons
•arrive at school on time
•go to all lessons.

How to encourage regular attendance
If your child starts missing school or you are experiencing difficulties in ensuring your child's regular school attendance, you are advised to speak with the Attendance Lead in your child's school, to address any support needs.

You should start the habits of regular school attendance at an early age. If your child starts missing school:
•make early contact with the school
•work with the school to overcome any barriers to regular school attendance
•make sure that your child understands that you do not approve of them being absent

Your child must not be kept away from school for reasons such as:
•looking after others at home
•minding the house
•visiting relatives
•taking long weekends
•shopping trips
•birthday treats.

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What to do if your child is ill

If your child is ill and you feel they are unable to attend school, you should contact the school as early as you can. Contact on the first day of absence and each day they are absent, to keep the school up to date on the situation. You can contact them by phone, email or in person. When your child returns to school, please provide whatever medical evidence you have to show your child's absence was due to ill health.

Dental or medical appointments

Please make routine dental and medical appointments out of school hours to avoid disrupting your child's school day.
Other reasons for absence

If your child is ever off school, you must tell the school why. If you want your child to miss school for a specific reason you must ask the school for permission well in advance and give full details.

The school will give careful consideration to your application, and they may take your child's attendance record into account. If they do not agree to your request, any absence would be unauthorised. Only the head teacher or principal of a school can authorise school absence.

Unauthorised absence from school
Fines for unauthorised absence from school

Unauthorised absences are any absence not agreed by your child's school. If your child has unauthorised absences in an academic year, you may be liable for a penalty notice. To avoid this, it's important to ensure that your child attends school every day and on time and that if they are absent, the school are able to authorise the absence.

Issuing a penalty notice

Under the Working together to improve school attendance, (statutory guidance effective from the 19 August 2024), a national framework for the use of penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school, has been introduced by the ***Department for Education.***

There is now a national threshold

There is a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence, within a rolling 10 school week period.
For example:

- a 5-day holiday in term time (term time leave), would meet the national threshold.
- 5 days of unauthorised absence due to irregular school attendance, would meet the national threshold
- The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

Who may be issued with a Penalty Notice?

Penalty Notices are issued per *parent - per child
•Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent from school.
•For example:
•3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent, who allowed the absence, receiving 3 separate fines.

A parent is defined as the natural parent, the person with whom the child lives and/or has day to day care of the child.
Fines and prosecution

First offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance, the fine amount will be:

- £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days.
- increasing to £160 if paid between days 22 to 28.

Second offence (within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is considered and issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance, the fine amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child, payable within 28 days.

Third offence and any further offences (within 3 years)
The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular school Attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued.
•The case will be referred to the Magistrate's Court for consideration.

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Upon Prosecution a parent can receive a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500.
If you pay the penalty notice within the timeframe, as indicated, you cannot be prosecuted for the period covered by the penalty notice.

You do still remain liable to prosecution if your child's attendance does not improve.
If you don't pay the fine, you'll be prosecuted for the original offence of failing to secure attendance. If proven, the court can impose a fine of up to £2,500 and/or three months' imprisonment.

For more information- please have a look on Greenwich Website Fines for unauthorised absence from school | Unauthorised absence from school | Royal Borough of Greenwich (royalgreenwich.gov.uk).

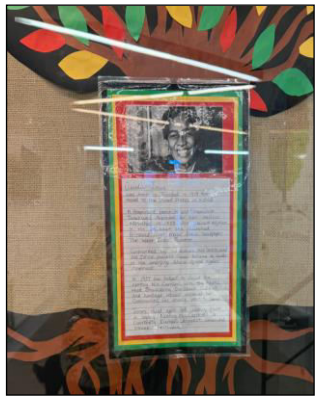
Please Note if your child is persistently absent from Serenity School Eltham, we will be following the above guidance from Greenwich and Under the Working together to improve school attendance, (statutory guidance effective from the 19 August 2024), a national framework for the use of penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school.

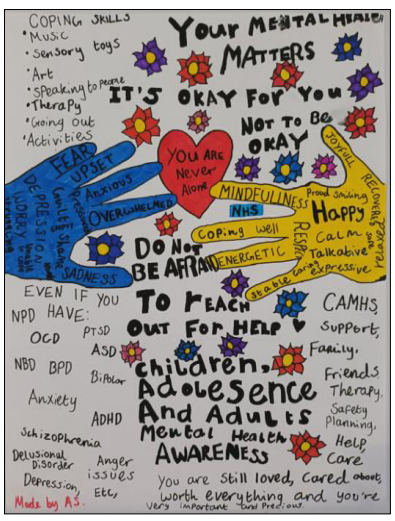
Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

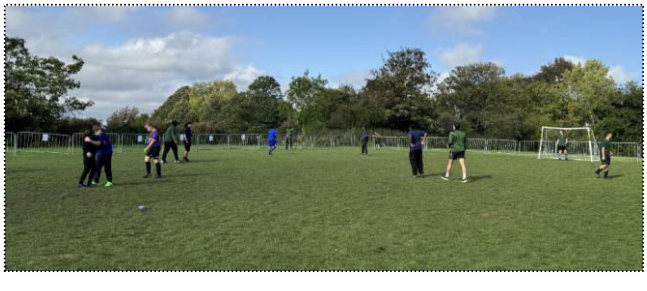
Serenity School Absence:

Existing pupils if pupils have a persistent unauthorised absence
@ 5 Days - LA fine / school contract set at 95% min attendance for 6 weeks
@10 days - LA action plus final school contract for 6 weeks
@ 15 days - school placement ended

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT







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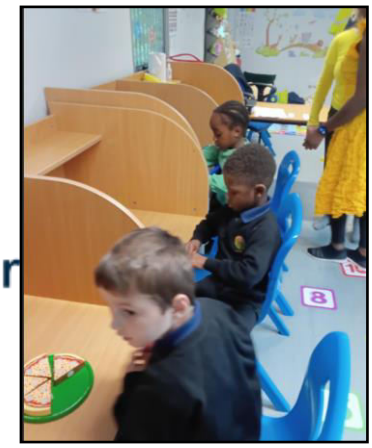
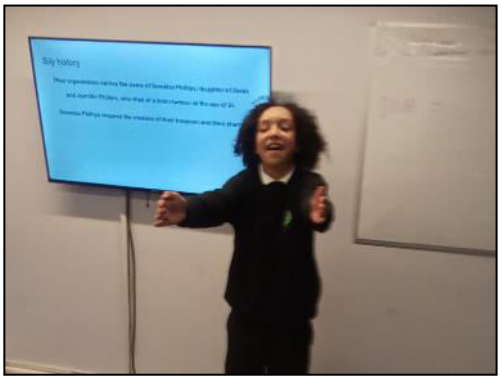


Oxfam
By Luis and Lamar

Here is a picture of their remembrance event where they commemorate the lives that were lost.



HOPE