



## Attendance Policy



### *Our Lady's Catholic Primary School*

COMMITTEE: Local Academy Committee  
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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The Local Academy Committee

The Local Academy Committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### 3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance via SIMs on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### 3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and again in the afternoon. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:15pm.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school every day of an unplanned absence by 9:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

We can be notified by phone on: 01933 224900 – please leave a message if there is no answer.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

We can be notified by phone on: 01933 224900 – please leave a message if there is no answer.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- › Where a child is identified as having persistent lateness the pupil's parent/carer will be contacted so that support can be put in place.

Lateness would be classed as Persistent lateness if a pupil has been marked as late on 5 or more occasions within each term. There are 6 school terms a year.

### 4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- › Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by telephone call on the first day followed up by a text message.
- › If the child is under social care and/or being supported by our Family Support Team, the office will notify them of the absence, which will be chased up accordingly.
- › Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- › Identify the correct attendance code to use

### 4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance will be formally reported to parents/carers through the annual school reports that are sent out during the Summer Term.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- › Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

## 5.2 Reducing persistent absence through the monitoring of attendance

As a school, we know how important education is and how each missed session impacts on outcomes for children. The attendance of children from Reception to Year 6 is monitored. The following systems are in place for addressing attendance issues.

- Each term an attendance tracker is produced showing every child's percentage attendance
- The Headteacher and Attendance Officer look at children's attendance under 95% with a particular focus on those under 90% (the figure classed as persistent absence) Individual reports are looked at for each child and discussed with parents.
- Parents may be contacted either by letter or phone informing them that their child's attendance and/or punctuality is low and a meeting may be requested.

Persistent absence is dealt with on a case by case basis, due to the complexity of individual family situations.

The purpose of these meetings are to:

- Make parents aware of their child's attendance and/or punctuality.
- Ensure parents are aware that a referral to EIPT may be necessary if there are a significant number of unauthorised absences.
- Discuss reasons for absence.
- Look at additional support that may be available, eg. Family Support, Targeted Support, School Nurse, Early Help.
- Look at strategies for promoting good attendance, eg. Reward charts.
- Raise awareness of the impact of good attendance on pupil outcomes.
- Ensure that parents understand the impact and possible consequences of further absence.

If a child has not been at school and no contact has been made with parents, then a home visit by the Attendance Officer and/or headteacher may be requested by the school, particularly if there are any additional safeguarding concerns. See Appendix 2

If a child is absent from school for 10 days and cannot be located then the child may be reported to the local authority as CME – a child missing in education. Further information on CME can be found: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/550416/Children\\_Missing\\_Education\\_-\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)

There is also a statutory obligation to report any child to the local authority if there has been an absence for 10 or more days unless agreed as a holiday.

## 5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Our school positively encourages attendance in a range of ways, they are:

- A weekly attendance trophy given out for the classes with the highest attendance in the school.
- Text messages sent to those families with 100% attendance at Christmas and Easter.
- Certificates given for 100% attendance in the Summer Term.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2)

The pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school each day their child is ill.

If a pupil's parent/carer does not inform us on subsequent days of absence, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Education and Inclusion Partnership (EIPT). The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Our school uses SIMs to collect and store attendance data, to be used for internal purposes. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Headteacher/Attendance Officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by Local Academy Committee

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day



## Appendix 2: What are a school's responsibilities when a child is absent?

You should always assess the child's safeguarding risk at their own address using [thresholds and pathways](#). For example, is there a risk of forced marriage, child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, radicalisation, honour based violence? If the judgement is the child is at risk of harm, contact the police or [social care immediately](#).

If a pupil is absent, all schools have a responsibility to contact the parent or carer **on the first day of absence** and continue to make every effort to locate the pupil. When you have identified the child is not in school, please follow the procedure below.

### Day 1 - Phone call

A staff member trained to do so, telephones the child's home to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent or carer that the child is safe at home.

Response from parent	Next step from school
There is no answer at the home or on mobile numbers	Call back. Risk assess after 2 hours
The parent/carer answered the call, the child is safe with them	Ask for reason for absence and record on your school's attendance management system
The person answering is not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or safe	The school's designated lead for child protection should be consulted on a risk assessment and the degree of vulnerability of the child
The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is concerned	School to advise the parent to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact the local police station to inform them that the child is missing</li> <li>• Contact all people and places the child is known to talk to and visit to tell them that the child is missing and ask if they can help to find the child, by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts or actively searching for the child</li> <li>• Contact the family GP and Accident and Emergency Centres near where the child lives and goes to school, in case he/she has sustained an injury and been taken in for medical treatment</li> <li>• Report back to school if the child is found or remains missing</li> </ul>

### Day 2 - Follow up phone call

A subsequent telephone call must be made either from the school landline or preferably a mobile phone.

### **Day 3 – Write/email parents**

Write or email to the parent in plain English, asking for contact to be made with the school immediately. Please give the parents/carers 3 working days to make contact and if you are aware that English may not be the parent's first language, copy the letter into a language that may be more accessible.

### **Day 5/6 - Home visit**

Arrange a visit to the home address ensuring that risk assessments are in place

### **Once you have completed these checks (or within 10 days, whichever is earlier)**

If the child has not been seen and the parents or carers have not made contact with either, schools must report the child as missing from education.

## Appendix 3: Safeguarding Children Missing Education Process for Schools

Day One: The school identifies that a child is not in school. A staff member trained to do so, telephones the child's home to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent/carer that the child is safe at home.

Result of Call	Action
There is no answer at the home or on mobile numbers	Call back. Risk assess after 2 hours
The parent/carer answered the call, the child is safe with them	Ask for reason for absence and record
The person answering is not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or safe	<b>The school's designated lead for child protection</b> should be consulted on a risk assessment and the degree of vulnerability of the child
The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is concerned	School to advise the parent to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Contact the local police station to inform them that the child is missing</b></li> <li>• <b>Contact all people and places the child is known to talk to and visit to tell them that the child is missing and ask if they can help to find the child, by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts or actively searing for the child</b></li> <li>• <b>Contact the family GP and Accident and Emergency Centres near where the child lives and goes to school, in case he/she has sustained an injury and been taken in for medical treatment</b></li> <li>• <b>Report back to school if the child is found or remains missing</b></li> </ul>

If the judgement on Day One is that there is reason to believe that the child is at risk of harm the school will contact Police and/or children's social care immediately.

If the judgement on Day One is that there is no reason to believe that the child is at risk of harm school continues to make enquiries and informs Education Inclusion & Partnership on Day Ten that the child is missing education .

## Appendix 4: Safeguarding Children Missing Education Risk

### School Risk Assessment for Child Missing Education

Assessing vulnerability requires a combination of professional knowledge and experience of child welfare issues and knowledge of local circumstances. Considering the following questions could assist the process. If in doubt always consult with managers or other services.

Assessment Criteria	Risk	Action
Is there good reason to believe that the child may be the victim of crime?	High	Inform Police and/or children's social care immediately
Does the child have a formal child protection plan?		
Is the child in care i.e. looked after by the local authority?		
Is the planned or current LA children's social care or LA adults' social care services involved? e.g. section 47 enquiry about to start		
Is there a person present in or visiting the family who poses an on-going risk to children, or who is suspected of previously harming a child?		
Is the child at risk of sexual exploitation?		
Is the child at risk of radicalisation?		
Has there been LA children's social care or LA adults/ social care or Criminal Justice System involvement in the past?	Medium	Give consideration to the vulnerability of the child and following risk assessment inform one or all of the following:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police</li> <li>• Safer School Officer</li> <li>• Children's Social Care</li> <li>• Local Authority Designated Officer</li> <li>• Education Welfare Service</li> <li>• School Nurse</li> </ul> Use other services to help with your risk assessment, including the above.
Are there religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk? e.g. FMG or forced marriage.		
Is there any known history of drug or alcohol dependency within the family?		
Is there any known history of domestic violence?		
Is there concern about the parent/carer's ability to protect the child from harm?		
Was there any significant incident prior to the child's unexplained absence?		
Has the child been a victim of bullying?		
Does the child need essential medical or health care?		
Was the child noted to be depressed prior to the child's unexplained absence?		
Has the child gone missing with their family?		
Have the parents been subject to proceedings in relation to attendance?		
Is there a history or poor attendance?		
Has there been any change in the child/family's financial circumstances?		
Age of the child		

## Appendix 5: Example Letter for Lateness

Date:

Child's Name:

Class:

Dear Parent/Carer

### LATENESS

Your child has been late on several occasions this term.

It is very important that your child is in his/her class at 9.00am each morning so that they are here for the start of the school day.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their children arrive at school on time. Lateness can disrupt the learning of others and can result in a pupil feeling greater stress and achieving poorer outcomes. Research shows a close link between attendance at school and a child's achievement. Being late adds to a loss of learning.

If a pupil arrives after 9:30am, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised for that session. If this persists, legal action in the form of a Penalty Notice or Prosecution under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 may follow.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you wish to discuss the above, or any barriers to getting your child to school on time.

Yours faithfully

Elise Gribble  
Acting Head of School



**Getting Your Child to School Really Matters**

**Did You Know... ?**

In a School Year, If Your Child is Late Every Day By...	Your Child Would Have Lost Approximately...	or They Would Have Missed Approximately...
5 Minutes	3.5 Days from School	20 Lessons
10 Minutes	7 Days from School	41 Lessons
15 Minutes	10 Days from School	55 Lessons
20 Minutes	14.5 Days from School	82 Lessons
30 Minutes	22 Days from School	123 Lessons

**Please Encourage Punctuality to Maintain Attendance**

## Appendix 6: Example Letter for Persistent Absence

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Re.

Your child's attendance is below 90% and currently stands at \_\_\_\_\_%

This rate needs to improve and we will be monitoring your child's attendance closely. If the attendance improves there will be no need for any further involvement. However, if there is no improvement, this will be brought to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team and you may be asked to come into school for a meeting.

Section 7 Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child of compulsory school age receives a suitable education through regular attendance at school. If a registered pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly, the parent could be guilty of an offence under section 444 Education Act 1996. Schools also have a safeguarding duty, under section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate any unexplained absences.

Please be aware that we will be querying non-attendance and making referrals to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team for persistent absence or extended absences.

Please let us know if there is any way which we can support you to ensure that your child's attendance improves.

Yours sincerely

Miss E Gribble

Acting Head of School