

# Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

## Attendance Policy



Date	Action
March 2025	Reviewed & updated
April 2025	Shared with staff
April 2025	Presented to Governing Body; Full Governing Body ratification
March 2027	Next review

## **1. Aims**

The school mission statement, ***“As Our Lady instructed, we are called to follow his Word (John 2:5): learning with joy, love and hope”*** encourages all pupils to attend school on a daily basis and we strive for all pupils to maintain excellent attendance through their time at Our Lady's. As a school, we believe this is fundamental in establishing positive relationships, achieving excellent academic outcomes, and to prepare pupils for lifelong learning.

### **Through this policy, we aim to:**

- Achieve an attendance for all children that is higher than the National Average and meets our school target of **96%**.
- Raise awareness on the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Reception-aged children in order to promote good habits from the outset of formal education.
- Outline the procedure for monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in dealing with difficulties.

## **1. Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- ✓ [Education Act 1996](#)
- ✓ [Education Act 2002](#)
- ✓ [Equality Act 2010](#)
- ✓ [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024](#)
- ✓ [Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024](#)
- ✓ [Local code of conduct for issuing penalty notices for school absence 2024](#)

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

### **Governors**

- To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy and Procedures.
- The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Attendance Policy and Procedures of Our Lady's School.
- The Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- The Governing Body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's complaints policy.

### **Senior Leadership Team**

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality patterns.
- The Head Teacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and Procedures of the school.
- To provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.

- To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and/or punctuality becomes an issue.
- To contact and work with parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- To monitor attendance data and ensure the Head teacher receives this information every half term.
- To process all legal documentation regarding attendance monitoring including penalty notices to the LA.

### **Office Staff**

- To record children arriving late or leaving early on a daily basis.
- To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the Attendance Manager System.
- To contact any parent who has not informed the school as to why their child is absent on the first day of absence.
- To use the text system to request a reason for absence from parents.
- To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each week.
- To make a judgement in conjunction with the Inclusion manager whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

### **Local Authority Access and Inclusion Officer**

Warrington Local Authority's code of conduct for attendance states, "Children registered at a school must attend school unless there is genuine reason given for their absence.

There are many reasons why young people fail to attend school regularly, if you are experiencing any problems in the first instance you should contact the school who should help you to resolve these problems. If you are still experiencing problems you can contact an attendance officer."

The LA supports the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings with school, monitoring individual children's attendance, contacting parents where attendance is a concern and where necessary issuing fines.

## **4. Procedures**

### **4.1 Daily Procedure**

<b>Daily Procedure</b>	<b>By whom</b>
08:45 Pupils arrive to school on time	Parents/Carers
The school is informed of reasons for absence by 8:45am	Parents/Carers
Teachers record attendance using class registers by 8:50am	Class Teachers

(See Appendix 3 for register codes)	
Pupils arriving late to school are registered at reception - reason recorded	Parents/Carers
Registers close and the School Office Administrator will make a call home at 9.30am requesting parents to contact school to provide a reason of absence (and will leave a voicemail if necessary)	School Office Administrator
If no response is received, parents/carers will be sent an email at 10am	School Office Administrator

#### **4.2 Attendance Response Procedures**

Pupils Attendance Percentage	Action
Below 96%	Initial communication sent to parents
Below 92%	Letter - School
Below 90%	Letter - Local Authority
Below 90% - no improvement after previous communications	Parents/Carers invited in for support meeting with Attendance Lead and Local Authority Attendance Officer
Below 90% - no improvement after support meeting	Referral to external agency/ FastTrack programme commenced leading to legal action if no improvement

*Pupils who finished the previous academic year as persistently absent (Below 90%) are required to provide medical evidence for every absence*

#### **4.3 Lateness Procedure**

Number of late marks in a half-term	Action
0-1 late marks in a half-term	No action taken - this is excellent punctuality
2-4 late marks in a half-term	This is below average punctuality
5-7 late marks in a half-term	This is punctuality that causes concern and may disrupt the learning of the child. Parents/carers will be contacted and a warning letter will be sent

7 or more late marks in a half-term	The matter will be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Team
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## **5. Categorising Absence**

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher or Attendance Team and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation is received for the pupil's absence.

Parents must inform the school by telephone or by email on the first day of absence.

**For the purpose of this policy, authorised absence will be classified as the following:**

**I - Illness:** 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 or prescription, hospital letter or other appropriate form. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

**M - Medical / Dental:** Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if evidence is provided and as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and within a minimum of 24 hours notice. However, we strongly encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible.

**C - Other Authorised Circumstances:** This relates to where there is cause for absence due to serious exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers who need to take their child out during term time due to *serious, exceptional circumstances* must make a request to the Head Teacher through the school office in advance. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

Our Lady's Catholic Primary is unable to authorise holidays during term time in line with government regulations. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for a leave of absence. The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence for a pupil during term time if they consider there to be *serious, exceptional circumstances*. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion and will include the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave which is taken for the following reasons below will not be considered as serious, exceptional circumstances and will therefore be ***unauthorised circumstances***:

- Availability of cheaper holidays.
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday time.
- Overlap with beginning or end of term.
- Booked the 'wrong dates' that overlap by mistake.
- Booked by another family member.
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family (defined as mother, father or older sibling).
- Family birthdays or other family occasions.

If the permission for absence is not granted, and the parent/carer takes their child out of school regardless, the absence will be ***unauthorised***.

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 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
Authorised Absence		
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
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised Absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## **6. Children Missing in Education**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.

### **Updating the School Roll:**

All schools must notify the local authority when they are about to remove a pupil name from the School Admission Register under any of the 15 grounds listed in the [Children Missing in Education Regulations 2016 annex A](#).

All admissions to school must go through the LA Schools Admissions Department. Any changes to the Admissions Register would be picked up through the 'Data Changes' report that the LA Information Management Team export on a weekly basis. Changes to the Admissions Register would also be picked up by the LA on a termly basis through submission of the School Census.

If the child leaves the school and the destination is unknown then schools must complete the CME Notification form and forward to the CME officer as soon as possible following the guidance below.

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the Local Authority at the earliest opportunity.

### **What happens if a school think a child is missing education?**

Schools have a duty of care to ensure they have conducted 'reasonable enquires' to locate a child missing education before this is reported to the Local Authority CME officers.

Where a pupil leaves without advance notice or their destination is unknown, the school will:

- Check possible whereabouts with staff
- Contact parents using last known number or e-mail
- Contact any emergency contacts held for the pupil
- Make a home visit to the last known address
- Check with neighbours and any known friends
- Contact any agencies known to be involved
- If the pupil is statemented or has SEND check with SEND services
- If the pupil or family is known to Social Services inform the named social worker
- Ask the pupil's friends and their parents if they are aware of the pupil's whereabouts
- Check any social media sites e.g. Facebook.

***If the pupil is still not located,*** the school should complete a CME Notification Form and e-mail it to [dsampson@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:dsampson@warrington.gov.uk) (01925 442261). This will enable the LA to make further enquires, as appropriate, to try and locate the pupil. The pupil should remain on roll for **20 school days** and their absence should be recorded. Please note, the school must contact the CME officer to **agree the date** that the pupil should be removed from roll before they actually remove the pupil

from their roll. On the date agreed with the school, the school should ensure the pupil's attendance data is up to date, and remove them from their roll with the correct leaving date.

### **Admission of children from overseas**

All schools must comply with the [Schools Admission Code](#) when dealing with an application for a child who is not a UK National. Schools must not refuse a school place simply because of doubts about the child's immigration status. **School may seek passport identification / visa checks when parents are applying for a place within the school.** Further information can be found <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-admissions-applications-from-overseas-children>