



**OUR LADY
OF LOURDES**

CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Pupil Attendance Policy

September 2025



Our Lady of Lourdes Mission Statement:

We are a partnership of Catholic schools.

Our aim is to provide the very best Catholic education for all in our community and so improve life chances through spiritual, academic and social development.

By placing the person and teachings of Jesus Christ at the centre of all that we do, we will:

- Follow the example of Our Lady of Lourdes by nurturing everyone in a spirit of compassion, service and healing
- Work together so that we can all achieve our full potential, deepen our faith and realise our God-given talents
- Make the world a better place, especially for the most vulnerable in our society, by doing **'little things with great love'** St Thérèse of Lisieux

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1. Core Principals.

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (CMAT) is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all students. The trust sincerely believes that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the Trust will do as much as it can to ensure that all students achieve maximum possible attendance and that any issues, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

Student performance and well-being go hand in hand. Students can't learn if they don't feel safe or if ill health problems are allowed to create barriers.

The law states that parents/carers have a legal obligation to ensure that children within their care attend school regularly. Schools and the local authority have a duty to ensure that poor school attendance is dealt with swiftly.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, section 23, sub-section (1) added two new sections (444A and 444B) after section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These new sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution under section 444 and enable parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty. The offence of irregular attendance under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 has not changed.

Within Our Lady of Lourdes (OLoL CMAT) we have schools operating under Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and Derbyshire County Council's Code of Conduct. (See Appendix A)

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](#)

It also refers to:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

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

- **Persistent** absence refers to pupils who miss 10% or more of school
- **Severe** absence refers to pupils who miss 50% or more of school.

3. Aims

Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT recognises that;

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Some pupils and their parents/carers may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils, parents or carers may impact on attendance. We will, with agreement and support of parent/carers, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their society.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The CMAT board

Ensures that the attendance policy is updated annually and monitored through reports to the board.

4.2 The governing board

The governing board 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.

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- OLoL CMAT will ensure the sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across all our schools

4.3 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Making good attendance a central part of our school's vision, values and ethos.
- Account for attendance in school improvement priorities and regularly reviewing our approach to improving attendance.
- Ensure there is a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for improving attendance.
- Promote and visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance.
- Recognising that children absent from education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.
- 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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

4.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

4.5 Class teachers

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

4.6 School office staff

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

4.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the head teacher, who can be contacted via the school's contact details on the website.

4.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

Schools should put this information

Attend school every day, on time

Parents and students can expect the following from Our Lady of Lourdes Trust;

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance, **electronically.**
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing a reason
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us
- Rewarding good attendance
- A quality education

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an **electronic** 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 once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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 B for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.45am and ends at 3.30pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day.

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to [exceptional](#) circumstances

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.00am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 13.00pm and will be kept open until 13.10pm for Year 2 to Year 6. The register for Nursery/Reception and Year 1 will be taken at 12.45pm and will be kept open until 12.50pm.

6. Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff.

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

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 will be notified of this in advance.

7. Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents should inform the school office staff of this in advance and provide an appointment card or give evidence of the appointment text.

However, we encourage parents 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 must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

See section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

8. Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance

- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

9. Reporting to parents

- The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels e.g. termly written reports for those children whose attendance falls below the expected level

10. Encouraging Good Attendance in School:

10.1 Attendance is encouraged in the following ways;

- Accurate completion of electronic registers in school
- Attendance checks at appropriate times
- Recording of good attendance on individual progress reports
- Establishing a mechanism for supporting those parents and carers who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty attending, including home visits
- An efficient use of computerised registration systems can provide valuable attendance data which can assist speedy analysis and timely responses by the school.

10.2 We will Monitor and analyse data to identify those that need support

We will ensure that:

- Our school will regularly analyse data to both identify and then provide support to pupils or cohorts that need it.
- Our school will look at historic and emerging patterns and develop strategies to address these.

To do this we will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

- Monitor the impact of these strategies.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the governing board.

10.3 We aim to engage with families, understand barriers to attendance and work together to remove them.

In the first instance our school will support pupils and parents by:

- Working together to understand and address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Meeting with the families of those at risk of persistent or severe absence and agreeing actions or interventions to improve the situation.
- Making referrals to services and organisations that can provide support.

Where absence intensifies, we will provide additional support, such as:

- Holding more formal conversations with the parents and pupils.
- Working with your local authority (LA) and other relevant partners.

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or not been engaged with, we will work with our LA to put formal support in place. Such as:

- Use an attendance contract or an education supervision order.
Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe.

11. Punctuality

11.1 The importance of arriving at school on time;

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***
- Arriving late at school may cause embarrassment for the child
- Pupils' arriving late is disruptive, not only to their own learning but the learning of others.
- Pupils may miss something important such as lesson plans or instructions on how to complete a piece of work
- Lateness can affect how students form friendship groups. Social interaction with peers before school is important.
- Pupils are marked present. The register is not only a legal document it also provides evidence that pupils have arrived in school and are safe.
- Punctuality shows reliability and is a valuable attribute for future working life. Future universities, colleges and employers look for reliability. A good record of attendance and punctuality is an indication of this and they may request to see this in the future.

Arriving after the session closes, is recorded as an unauthorised absence. It is important to note that this will mean a full session of absence is recorded on the register and therefore has an impact on a pupil's overall attendance figure. If unauthorised absence continues,

parents/carers will be contacted, and a meeting will be arranged to discuss this. If no improvement is made, a Penalty Notice may be requested from the relevant Local Authority.

12. Authorised and unauthorised absence

12.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- [Exceptional](#) circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in [exceptional](#) circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher will require where applicable evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (If medical evidence has been provided to support this).
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

12.2 Attendance meetings

Parents/Carers of students with poor attendance may be invited to attend an attendance meeting. This may include a variety of professionals involved with student welfare. The aim of this meeting is to improve future attendance and prevent the need for referral to the relevant Local Authority to begin legal processes.

Should poor attendance continue then a referral shall be made to the relevant Authority for further action.

13. Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

13.1 Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 (per parent per child) within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil/pupils, the parent must pay £160 per pupil if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

13.2 Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, our school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)

- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Nottinghamshire County Council

Absence from school is likely to be recorded as unauthorised absence when:

- there is no parental explanation
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation for an absence.

In either of these situations you could face prosecution. Head Teachers are no longer permitted to agree a Leave of Absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. This includes where parents decide to take their children out of school for a family holiday during term time. If a parent intends to take their child out of school for a leave of absence during term time, they must have requested this in advance and had their request agreed by the Head Teacher. Failure to do this could result in a fine or prosecution. In Nottinghamshire, parents can be fined if their child has in excess of 5 days unauthorised **absence over a 6 week period.**

- [penalty-noticerequestsheet.docx](#)

14. Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Our school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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.

Our school and Trust board benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

15. Leave of Absence during Term Time

OLoL CMAT will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are [exceptional](#) circumstances. Each school within the trust will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion and is not a parental right. In accordance with government guidelines, the application must be made 12 school days in advance by completing a leave of absence request form. The application form is available from individual schools within our trust by request. The head teacher must be satisfied that there are [exceptional](#) circumstances which warrant the leave.

If parents take pupils on holiday during term time OLoL CMAT schools **will not provide extra work**; students will be expected to catch up with any work they have missed when they return from the holiday.

16. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

16.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Our school will hold meetings with parents to ascertain and understand the barriers to attendance. Support will be offered in accordance with the issues identified.

16.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Our school will hold meetings with parents to understand the reason and barriers for the absence and depending on the circumstances work together to agree a plan moving forward. Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

16.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Our school will meet with the family to plan a suitable return to school if this is applicable. We will agree any reasonable adjustments that might need making to timings, entrance and dismissal locations and any environment adjustments that might need making.

17. Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

Our school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary

18. Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT schools may agree a 'leave of absence' in the following exceptional circumstances:

In order for consideration to be given, requests for absence must be for exceptional circumstances only. The number of days to be agreed with the headteacher.

18.1 Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- Important religious observances (but only for the ceremony not travelling time).
- Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 4 above, the headteacher agrees to consult with the Directors of Performance and Standards(DPS) team prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

18.2 What are NOT considered 'exceptional circumstances'

- The family cannot afford to go on holiday in school holiday time, or have a special holiday offer for term time.
- To visit family members abroad (unless they are severely ill which may be considered).
- To spend time with a family member who is visiting from abroad in term time.
- Because you or your partner cannot get time off work during school holiday time.
- You have a family tradition of going at a certain time of year.
- Going away for a birthday celebration (including the child's birthday)

18.3 Our Lady of Lourdes Trust will not agree a 'leave of absence in circumstances such as:

- Availability of cheap holidays;
- Availability of desired accommodation;
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term.

Leave of absence that has not been approved will therefore be unauthorised and may lead to a referral being made to the local authority for action.

19. Truancy

Pupils who are discovered to have truanted will be spoken to by the designated member of staff will be informed of what has happened. Pupils will be asked for the reasons for their truancy to see if there are underlying problems as the root cause. Parents will be contacted and kept informed of events. As a punishment, the truant will be expected to make up the number of hours they have missed in school detentions. All incidents of truancy will be recorded as unauthorised.

As a follow-up the student will receive an appropriate sanction.

20. Off-Site Provision

Where the school uses off-site providers the responsibility for external partners is to ensure the following:

- Accurately register student(s) on placement.
- Notify the school before 10.00am of any student absence.
- E-mail/post weekly attendance registers to nominated member of staff at the school.
- Alert school, (Attendance Officer or nominated staff) immediately in the event of a student leaving the provider's premises without prior authorisation from our school.

When our school places a pupil with an Alternative Provision (AP) provider, we retain full responsibility for the safeguarding and welfare of that pupil.

Monitoring of safeguarding, attendance, and welfare at AP placements takes place at least half-termly, or more frequently where risk or need requires. This includes direct contact with the pupil and communication with the AP provider to ensure safeguarding standards are upheld.

We ensure that:

- The placement is appropriate and meets the individual needs of the pupil;
- Safeguarding arrangements at the AP provider are robust, including safer recruitment, child protection policies, and access to a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- There is ongoing monitoring of the pupil's attendance, engagement, progress, and well-being;

- A named member of school staff maintains regular contact with the pupil and the AP setting;
- **Half-termly checks or visits** are undertaken to ensure welfare, progress, attendance, and safeguarding arrangements.
- Monitoring will include checking CPOMs entries, welfare logs, attendance, behaviour reports, and communication with the provider and pupil.
- Our school follows the statutory guidance:
- Alternative provision (DfE) – [Alternative provision - GOV.UK](#)
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school – [Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK](#)

These responsibilities are reflected in our separate Alternative Education Pathways Policy, which ensures that safeguarding remains a core priority for all off-site placements.

21. Children absent from Education

- Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.
- The designated staff will monitor unauthorised absences and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority particularly where children go absent on repeat occasions and/or are absent for periods during the school day in conjunction with **‘Children absent in Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities¹**
- Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

22. Anxiety Related Non-Attendance (ARNA)

If a student is believed to be experiencing anxiety, our school will liaise with parents and carers to carry out an initial assessment. This will involve an interview and completion of the ARNA Attendance assessment documentation, which is provided by the local authority and supported through their guidance.

If agreed strategies fail to improve school attendance and the wellbeing of the student, further strategies will be considered. Our school will ensure that the school systems adhere to the document ***Guidance to Schools: A Graduated Response to School Non-Attendance*** (which must be used for SEND/SEMH needs), in order to best support early identification of anxiety related issues.

The school will ensure that the existing systems around analysing absence are able to identify the different types of unauthorised absence i.e. anxiety related, truanting or parent/carer condoned and appropriate support implemented.

Should a parent/carer have any concerns regarding their child's mental health or wellbeing, they should contact our school immediately.

If a child has long term absence, the school endeavours to maintain regular communication with the student and family. School will seek support from professional outside agencies to provide additional help to the student and family.

Please refer to: **Anxious Learners & Anxiety Related Non-Attendance (ARNA): Guidance for Schools²**

23. Agency Liaison

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

There are the many support services we can work with to improve the outcomes for our students

- Targeted Support; Family Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- School health
- Social care
- Youth Offending Team
- Police

² [AL and AR \(ARNA\) support guidance for Nottingham County Council Secondary Schools.](#)

<https://www.em-edsupport.org.uk/Event/73352>

- CAMHS
- Absent in Education Teams
- Admissions Team
- Education Welfare Service
- Children Absent in Education

24. Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard to the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

25. Stepped Approach

All letters regarding notice of penalty and actual penalty notices need to be sent to both parents and or additional adults in the household as there could be a potential fine for both parents or additional adult.

Included in the Appendices are letters which we support schools to communicate attendance concerns with parents.

Please note:

Some Local Authorities use differently worded letters other than the ones we have supplied as example letters. **Please use your LA recommended letters to ensure their fining process is followed. The below letters are examples only.**

Attendance Letters and step approach (Appendix C)		
Record any concerns, patterns, or trends on CPOMs.		
Optional letter at the beginning of term. School may wish to send their own versions.		Start of the Academic Year: Statutory School-Age Pupils (Letter 1) Start of the Academic Year: Non-Statutory School-Age Pupils (Letter 2)
Attendance falls below 95% due to illness or unauthorised absence		
Step 1	Letter 1 to inform of a low level of attendance.	95% is a start for concern. This letter is to inform and advise. It starts the beginning of a 4-week monitoring period . (Letter 3) Letter 5: Concerns in attendance: non-statutory school age.
Step 2	After 2 weeks of monitoring, attendance has still not improved, and/ or there are additional absences – Letter 2 is sent.	Letter 4 explains the reasons given for absence so far, and that this has led to an unacceptable attendance level. If attendance has dropped below 90% your child is now classed as a persistent absentee. It also states that unless there is a significant improvement, a meeting will be held in school to form an attendance action plan. - This is the beginning of a second monitoring period of 2 weeks. (Letter 4) Letter 5: Concerns in attendance: non-statutory school age.
Step 3	First attendance meeting.	After four weeks: If attendance remains below 95%, a meeting is called with the Attendance team. At this meeting, targets are set and an attendance action plan is formed with the family. Attendance Action Plan (Appendix F) If the family do not attend, the plan will be made by school and sent home.
	Improved attendance This can be issued anytime there is improved attendance.	If there is improved attendance, please issues letter 6
Attendance falls below 90% due to illness or unauthorised absence		

Step 4	Letter to state that sickness must be evidenced.	If a child has attendance below 90% due to an unusual amount of sickness, this letter makes it clear that they will be marked as unauthorised absences unless there is a form of medical evidence. (Letter 7) After sickness 24 - 48hrs at the discretion of the HT
Step 5	Second attendance meeting	If attendance is still below 90%, implement the attendance action plan (Appendix F), this meeting is held to make clear what the next steps are, and what letters will be issued after the meeting.
Step 6	Penalty Notice warning letter	This letter states that there are serious concerns regarding the child's attendance, and that, unless there is significant improvement the case will be referred to the LA for penalty notices. (Letter 8) This begins the final monitoring period.
Step 7	Penalty Notice letter	This letter states that the school has referred the attendance case to the Local Authority, and that there is to be a penalty notice issued. (Letter 9)
Holidays, Appendix D		
Step 1	Agreeing a request	Agreeing a request for a holiday in term-time is up to the Headteacher's discretion (Letter 10) letter, however, there are guidelines within this policy and further advice in (Paragraph 18 of this policy)
Step 2	Declining a request	Declining a request for a holiday in term-time and warning parents that if they take the child out of school during these times, a penalty notice will be issued. (Letter 11)
Step 3	Holiday Absence	After an unauthorised holiday this letter informs parents that they may be issued with a penalty notice. (Letter 12)
Step 4	No notice holiday absence	If a family go on holiday, without informing the school this letter for a no notice holiday penalty can be issued. (Letter 13)
Other useful letters		
	Punctuality letters	Appendix E
	Exceptional Circumstances	Paragraph 18 of this policy
	Leaflet for parent	Appendix G

26. Best Practice for unagreed leave Penalty Notice Request

Attendance certificate for current and last academic year will be required.

Letters:

- Both letters must be issued, sample [letter 11](#) on finding out about the absence (whether before or during the absence) and sample [letter 12](#) after the family have returned.
- Letters should all be dated.
- Full parent names and honorifics should be used, when known.
- Letters should be addressed to individuals (not Mr and Mrs)
- Letters should be issued for each child, for each parent.
- All letters must be signed either electronically or by hand, typed names are not suitable.

Any contact from parent relation to the absence must be evidenced.

- This includes text, email, written letter, and in-person conversations. What was said, by whom and when?
- Communication Log/Running Records should be standard practice.
- If a parent has completed an absence request, this must be included.
- Where possible, all documents should be uploaded as PDFs, failure to provide the necessary evidence will result in your penalty notice being refused.

Please note: (Full school week including an inset day – is 10 sessions)

Penalty Notices are Changing from 19th August 2024!



- ▶ 5 consecutive days of term time leave
 - ▶ Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for Term Time leave of 5 or more consecutive days, inset training days are school days and can be included in the 5 or more consecutive days where there was intent to be absent for term time leave.
- ▶ 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period
 - ▶ Penalty Notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period
- ▶ Per Parent, Per Child
 - ▶ Penalty Notice fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent.
 - ▶ For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

- 1 First Offence**
The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time leave of irregular attendance the amount will be:
£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days
Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days
- 2 Second Offence (within 3 years)**
The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time leave or irregular attendance the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days
- 3 Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)**
The third time an offence is committed for Term Time leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child
Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parents future DBS certificate, due to a 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Appendix A: OLOL CMAT Schools

Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT Schools and Designated Local Authority.

Nottingham City Council Schools:	Nottinghamshire County Council Schools:	Derbyshire County Council:
The Trinity School St Marys Hyson Green Our Lady of Perpetual Succour St Teresa's Aspley St Augustines St Anns Blessed Robert Widmerpool Clifton, Our Lady & St Edward St Anns St Patrick's Catholic Primary and Nursery School Wilford St Margaret Clitherow Bestwood	The Becket School West Bridgford St Edmund Campion Catholic Primary Christ the King Arnold The Good Shepherd Arnold Sacred Heart Carlton Holy Cross Hucknall All Saints Mansfield St Philip Neri Mansfield St Patricks Mansfield St Joseph's Ollerton Holy Trinity Newark	St Joseph's Shirebrook.
Lincolnshire	North Lincolnshire	North East Lincolnshire
St Mary's, Boston. Our Lady of Good Counsel. St Mary's, Grantham St Hugh's. Our Lady of Lincoln. St Norbert's, Spalding. St Peter and St Paul. St Augustine, Stamford.	St Augustine Webster. St Mary's, Brigg. St Norbert's, Crowle. St Bernadette's St Bede's.	St Marys, Grimsby. St Joseph's.

Appendix B: 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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or

		Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix C: Letters for absence

Letter 1: Start of the Academic Year: Statutory School-Age Pupils

Dear Parents and carers,

The schools of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust are committed to working together with parents and carers to ensure the highest possible attendance, which will in turn support the progress of our children.

It is important for parents to remember that the occasional or few days off due to illness, holidays or family events can mount up and lead to children's attendance levels falling. This can have a negative impact on their progress in school and affect their wellbeing.

With this in mind, you can support the school, and your child, to achieve attendance targets by:

- Making sure your child attends school regularly and on time.
- Contacting school on the first day of any absence.
- Informing school of any problems that may impact on your child's attendance, punctuality and learning
- Arrange routine medical appointments outside of school time. If this is not possible, please bring your child in prior to their appointment and ensure they return to school afterwards.
- Ensuring children are ready for school by having good morning and bedtime routines.
- Consider whether it is appropriate to bring your child into school in the morning if they feel a little under the weather. The school office will contact you if we feel they need to go home.
- Ensure that you do not book holidays in term time. **Please note:** In line with government regulations we are advised not to authorise holidays taken in term time.
- If you feel your child is too ill to come to school, please try to provide medical evidence. This can be prescription medication, an appointment card or a prescription note from the doctor.

As part of our commitment to maintaining high levels of school attendance, we would like to inform you about some important changes regarding holidays/leave of absences in Term Time. These changes align with the Department for Education (DFE) updated guidance on improving school attendance, effective from 19th August 2024 in collaboration with the Local Authority.

The DFE emphasises that term-time holiday/leave of absences should be avoided. Absences during this time can significantly impact your child's education. We kindly request that you plan holidays/leave of absences during school holidays to minimise disruption in learning. Any such absences will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If you believe there are exceptional circumstances that require a term-time holiday/leave of absence, please submit a written request to the school as soon as possible. We will assess each case individually and provide guidance accordingly. However, if we determine that the circumstances do not qualify as exceptional, we will notify you in writing, indicating that you may be subject to a penalty notice issued by the local authority, which could result in legal action, please see below.

Penalty notices and prosecution.

A Penalty Notice issued for a Leave of Absence/Holiday not agreed by the school is 5 days (10 sessions) within a 10-week period.

A Penalty Notice can be issued under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty**

See below for further information:

Penalty Notice	Details
First Notice in a 3 year period :	Issued to each parent. Per child Charged at £80 if paid within 21 days £160 if paid within 28 days.
Second Notice in a 3 year period :	Issued to each parent. Per child Charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
Third Notice in a 3 year period :	The third time an offence is committed for Term Time leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines are per parent, per child Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may be shown on the parent's future DBS certificate.

It is important to note that fines are a last resort, and parents are offered support from the school regarding attendance concerns and are discouraged from taking holidays in term time. It is also important to note that if there are also attendance concerns, then further action can be taken in the form of Penalty Notices for persistent/non-attendance. Please refer to our attendance policy for more information which can be found on the website.

Thank you for your cooperation in ensuring that your child's education remains a priority. If you have any questions, or you would like any support with the attendance of your child, feel free to contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Letter 2: Start of the Academic Year: Non-Statutory School-Age Pupils

Dear Parents and Carers,

At the schools of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust, we know that regular routines and good attendance in the early years help children to settle, make friends and learn well. We are committed to working with you to support this.

What the law says for this age group

Children are not of compulsory school age until the start of the term after their 5th birthday. This means attendance is not yet statutory. However, once a place and agreed sessions are accepted, we do expect children to attend those sessions regularly, so they benefit fully from their early education.

How you can help your child (and us):

- Make sure your child attends their agreed sessions and arrives on time.
- Tell us on the first day of any absence by calling the school office or via Arbor app.
- Let us know about any issues that could affect attendance, punctuality or learning, so we can help early.
- Book routine medical or dental appointments outside school time where possible. If not, please bring your child in before/after the appointment.
- Keep good morning and bedtime routines so your child is ready for learning.
- If your child seems a little “under the weather”, consider bringing them in—we’ll contact you if they become unwell and need to go home.
- If your child is too ill to attend, please provide simple medical evidence where you can (e.g., prescription label, appointment card, or a note from the GP).

Holidays and planned time away

Please plan family holidays during school breaks. Time away in term time disrupts routines and learning, even at this age. If you are planning an absence, let us know as early as possible so we can record it correctly and support your child’s return.

Important note about fines

Penalty notices (fines) apply only once a child reaches compulsory school age. They are not issued for Nursery pupils or Reception pupils who have not yet reached compulsory school age. Our focus with this age group is on partnership and support to build great habits for learning.

When attendance becomes irregular

If absence becomes frequent or patterns emerge, we will invite you to meet with us to understand any barriers and agree supportive next steps. Our aim is always to help your child attend happily and consistently.

Thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions or need help with attendance, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Letter 3: Notice of Declining Attendance (less than 95%): 4-Week Supportive Review

Parent's Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Dear Parent/Carer,

I wanted to bring to your attention that your child's school attendance has recently been lower than expected. We appreciate that this absence may have been caused by an unavoidable illness requiring them to remain at home to recover.

Attendance: (Insert %)

Unauthorised absence (if relevant): (Insert info)

Regular attendance is crucial for your child's learning and well-being, as it helps them stay on track with their studies and reduces any anxiety about catching up. I've attached a copy of your child's attendance certificate for your review. We would like to thank you for ensuring your child attends regularly and know that you value their education.

If you need any support regarding this matter or would like to discuss it further, please feel free to contact the school to arrange an appointment. We are here to help.

Equates to <u>2</u> days off a year.	99%	Excellent attendance
Equates to <u>5</u> days off a year.	97%	Good attendance
Equates to <u>10</u> days off a year.	95%	Slight concern
Equates to <u>20</u> days off a year.	90%	Concerned
Equates to <u>30</u> days off a year.	85%	Very concerned

Yours sincerely,

Letter 4: Continued Attendance Concern (less than 95%): Second Notice Following 2-Week Monitoring.

*This letter is to be used after a period of two weeks monitoring, following the initial letter in Appendix E, if there is no improvement in attendance.

Parent's Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Dear Parent/Carer,

Second attendance monitoring period of additional 2 weeks

I'm writing to express my concern at (name's) continued high levels of absence from school.

(His/her) current attendance has continued to fall to (insert %). This continued poor attendance will likely have an impact on (His/her) academic achievement.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

As I have already stated, our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support (name's) education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help (His/her) to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please contact the school office on (number) as soon as you can so we can arrange a meeting to discuss this.

Please note your child's absence has been closely monitored for the past 4 weeks and will continue to do so for a further 2 weeks, after this time after this time if their attendance has NOT improved then the Local Authority will be contacted regarding a possible penalty notice being issued.

Yours sincerely,

(Name)

Headteacher

Letter 5: Concerns in attendance: non-statutory school age.

*This letter is to be used when there are concerns regarding the attendance of non-statutory aged children.

Parent's Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Dear Parent/Carer,

I'm writing to let you know that (Name)'s attendance has recently been lower than we would expect for their agreed sessions.

Attendance: (Insert %)

Unauthorised absence (if relevant): (Insert info)

We fully understand that absences can be due to unavoidable illness or family circumstances. However, regular routines and attendance in the early years help children to settle, build friendships, and make the most of their learning. Research show that good attendance in early years settings is crucial for children's development. It helps them develop social, emotional and communication skills, creating a supportive environment for their learning and growth.

I've attached (Name)'s attendance certificate for your review. Thank you for everything you already do to help them attend regularly.

What happens next (supportive review)

To help get things back on track, we will begin a supportive review from (start date) to (end date). During this time, we will:

- Keep you updated with attendance,
- Check in weekly to see how things are going,
- Offer practical support where needed (e.g. routines, health guidance, separation strategies, staggered starts, etc.).

How you can help

- Please phone the school on the first day of any absence: 01234 567890
- Where possible, arrange routine appointments outside session times, or bring (Name) before/after the appointment.
- Keep consistent morning and bedtime routines so (Name) is ready for learning.
- If (Name) is a little "under the weather," consider bringing them in, we will always call if they become unwell.

Important note: As (Name) is not yet of compulsory school age, penalty notices do not apply. Our approach is to work in partnership with you to support good habits and a happy start to school life.

As a guide (for a full-time timetable), attendance roughly equates to:

Equates to <u>2</u> days off a year.	99%	Excellent attendance
Equates to <u>5</u> days off a year.	97%	Good attendance
Equates to <u>10</u> days off a year.	95%	Slight concern
Equates to <u>20</u> days off a year.	90%	Concerned
Equates to <u>30</u> days off a year.	85%	Very concerned

If you would like to talk through anything that may be affecting attendance, please contact the school office and we will be happy to help.

Yours sincerely,

Letter 6: Improving attendance

Parent's Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Dear Parent/Carer,

Improved attendance.

Date:	Attendance:	Date:	Improved attendance:

I am writing to celebrate your pupil's improved attendance.

As you can see from the above attendance figure your pupil's attendance has significantly improved. We are really pleased with (name) is showing clear progress, which is linked to his/her consistency attendance in school. Learning is a progressive activity; each day's lessons build upon those of the previous day(s). Therefore, any sustained absence will hamper educational development. We believe that being in school, is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development.

Please pass on our congratulations to (name) and the positive impact his/her attendance has had on his/her learning.

If you require any further support or information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

(Name)

Headteacher

Letter 7: Persistent Absence (less than 90%): Illness Absences, Unauthorised Without Medical Evidence

*If a child has attendance below 90% due to an unusual amount of sickness, this letter makes it clear that they will be marked as unauthorised absences unless there is a form of medical evidence.

Dear Parent/Carer,

Parent's Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Attendance below 90%

I have been analysing (name of school) attendance data. It has come to my attention that your child has now hit the target percentage attendance of (insert %) and is now classed as a persistent absentee.

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education, taken from the DFE Working together to improve school attendance May 2022.

"School attendance remains mandatory and all the usual rules continue to apply. Enabling children and young people to attend their education setting regularly continues to be a national priority."

- *The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.*
- *Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.*
- *All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community.*

Please look at your child's individual registration certificate (see attached) and note the number of absences. With up to 20 days of learning potentially missed over the course of a year at 90% attendance, it is vital that your child attends school consistently and arrives on time to gain the full benefit of their education.

I will now be requiring medical evidence for your child's further absences. This can include:

- Screenshots of text messages from GPs for appointments
- Photographs of prescriptions
- Appointment Card/letters

We do not require doctor's notes.

Unauthorised Absence.

Further unauthorised absence in excess of 5 days (10 sessions) will lead to a Penalty Notice being issued or a referral to Education Enforcement for support.

You, as parent, have legal responsibility under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996, for ensuring that your child attends school regularly as per the information below:

Penalty notices and prosecution.

A Penalty Notice issued for a Leave of Absence/Holiday not agreed by the school is 5 days (10 sessions) with in a 10-week period.

A Penalty Notice can be issued under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty**

See below for further information:

Penalty Notice	Details
First Notice in a 3 year period :	Issued to each parent. Per child Charged at £80 if paid within 21 days £160 if paid within 28 days.
Second Notice in a 3 year period :	Issued to each parent. Per child Charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
Third Notice in a 3 year period :	The third time an offence is committed for Term Time leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines are per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may be shown on the parent's future DBS certificate.

Please take immediate steps to ensure your child gets to school on time every day and obtain medical evidence if he/she is too ill to attend. Any other reason for absence should be discussed with the school and it is the school's decision whether to authorise any absence that is not covered by medical evidence.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Your sincerely,

Letter 8: Serious Attendance Concern: Final School Notice Prior to Local Authority Referral

*This letter states that there are serious concerns regarding the child's attendance, and that, unless there is significant improvement the case will be referred to the LA for penalty notices.

PENALTY NOTICE WARNING

Parent's Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Dear Parent/Carer,

Further to our initial attendance letter dated (DD/MM/YYYY) and the Attendance Action Plan agreed for (DD/MM/YYYY)–(DD/MM/YYYY), there has been insufficient improvement in (Name)'s attendance.

- **Current attendance:** (Insert %)
- **Sessions missed this term/year:** (Insert number)
- **Unauthorised sessions:** (Insert number)

*At below 90%, (Name) is classed as a persistent absentee. This level of absence significantly affects learning, routines and wellbeing; at 90%, up to 20 days of learning can be lost over a school year.

Final improvement period

We are offering a final improvement period of 10 school days: (DD/MM/YYYY)–(DD/MM/YYYY).

During this time, we expect:

- Daily attendance, on time, unless there is a genuine illness with medical evidence
- First-day contact by 9:00am on 01234 567890 if (Name) is unwell
- Attendance at any support meetings we arrange

We will continue to monitor attendance closely and will contact you weekly with an update. If helpful, we can provide practical support (morning routine tips, pastoral check-ins, staggered start, healthcare liaison where appropriate). Please let us know what would help.

If there is not a significant and sustained improvement by (DD/MM/YYYY), the school will refer this case to the Local Authority in line with the Attendance Code of Conduct.

You, as parent, have legal responsibility under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996, for ensuring that your child attends school regularly as per the information below:

Penalty notices and prosecution.

A Penalty Notice issued for a Leave of Absence/Holiday not agreed by the school is 5 days (10 sessions) with in a 10-week period.

A Penalty Notice can be issued under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty**

See below for further information:

Penalty Notice	Details
First Notice in a 3 year period:	Issued to each parent. Per child Charged at £80 if paid within 21 days £160 if paid within 28 days.
Second Notice in a 3 year period:	Issued to each parent. Per child Charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
Third Notice in a 3 year period:	The third time an offence is committed for Term Time leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines are per parent, per child.

	Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may be shown on the parent's future DBS certificate.
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We would much prefer to work with you to improve (Name)'s attendance and avoid enforcement. Please contact the school office by (DD/MM/YYYY) to confirm you can attend a review meeting and to discuss any support you need.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Letter 9: Local Authority Referral: Penalty Notice to Be Issued

*This letter states that the school has referred the attendance case to the Local Authority, and that there is to be a penalty notice issued.

PENALTY NOTICE

Parent's Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Dear Parent/Carer,

We note from our registers that your child has incurred unauthorised absences from school this term. Please see attached attendance print out.

We wrote to you on XXXXXXX to explain that XXXXXXX school would not authorise your child's absence from school. We also informed you that this could lead to a Penalty Notice being issued to you.

I am now writing to advise you that a request has been made to the Local Authority to issue a **PENALTY NOTICE** for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly.

You, as parent, have legal responsibility under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996, for ensuring that your child attends school regularly as per the information below:

Penalty notices and prosecution.

A Penalty Notice issued for a Leave of Absence/Holiday not agreed by the school is 5 days (10 sessions) with in a 10 week period.

A Penalty Notice can be issued under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty**

See below for further information:

Penalty Notice	Details
First Notice in a 3 year period:	Issued to each parent. Per child Charged at £80 if paid within 21 days £160 if paid within 28 days.
Second Notice in a 3 year period:	Issued to each parent. Per child Charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
Third Notice in a 3 year period:	The third time an offence is committed for Term Time leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines are per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may be shown on the parent's future DBS certificate.

Please take immediate steps to ensure your child gets to school on time every day and obtain medical evidence if he/she is too ill to attend. Any other reason for absence should be discussed with the school and it is the school's decision whether to authorise any absence that is not covered by medical evidence.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Appendix D

Letter 10: Request [‘Agreeing’](#) a holiday in term-time

*Agreeing a request for a holiday in term-time is up to the Headteacher’s discretion

Parent’s Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thank you for your request to take (name) out of school between (date) and (date).

Having considered the exceptional circumstances set out in your application, I’m able to agree to your request.

I haven’t come to this decision lightly. Our school is dedicated to the education of all our pupils and believes regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child’s success and fulfilment.

Each request for a holiday absence is considered on its merits at the time. Please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent and does not mean I’ll be able to agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

Yours sincerely,

(Name)

Headteacher

**APPLICATION DECISION ON CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM
SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME
Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT**

Pupil's Name:	Year Group:	Home Address:			
You applied for your child to be absent from school during the following dates:					
First Day of Absence:		Date of Return to School:		Total days applied for:	
The reason you gave for the application for leave of absence during term time:					
The decision in response to your application:					
The leave is considered to be Authorised:			The leave is be considered to be Unauthorised:		
This application for leave was considered using the Trust's Attendance Policy and guidance for leave of absence requests. The application was reviewed by the Headteacher. If you wish to discuss this decision further, please contact the school office.					
Signed on behalf (Holy Cross Primary Catholic Voluntary Academy) part of the Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT.					

Penalty Notices are set at £80.00 if paid within 21 days rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Penalty Notices are per parent, per child. Failure to pay will result in prosecution under Section 444, Education Act 1996.

Letter 11: Request '[Declining](#)' a holiday in term time.

*Declining a request for a holiday in term-time and warning parents that if they take the child out of school during these times, a penalty notice will be issued.

Parent's Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Dear Parent/Carer,

Penalty Notice Warning

I note your application to take (name) out of education for (number of days) days to go on holiday/other circumstances. Schools are only allowed to agree a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances.

I have considered your application and do not feel it meets the exceptional circumstances criteria and therefore your request has been declined. Should you decide to remove your child from school on the dates indicated in your application then their absence will be marked in the register as unauthorised.

An unauthorised leave of absence of more than 5 days/10 sessions (over a 10-week rolling period) for the purpose of a family holiday can lead to you being issued with a penalty notice fine of up to £180 for each child who is absent. The fines can be issued to both parents for each child.

If you do remove your child from school for the period stated in your application, a request will be made to the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice.

You, as parent, have legal responsibility under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996, for ensuring that your child attends school regularly as per the information below:

Penalty notices and prosecution.

A Penalty Notice issued for a Leave of Absence/Holiday not agreed by the school is 5 days (10 sessions) with in a 10 week period.

A Penalty Notice can be issued under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty**

See below for further information:

Penalty Notice	Details
First Notice in a 3 year period:	Issued to each parent. Per child Charged at £80 if paid within 21 days £160 if paid within 28 days.
Second Notice in a 3 year period:	Issued to each parent. Per child Charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
Third Notice in a 3 year period:	The third time an offence is committed for Term Time leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines are per parent, per child.

	Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may be shown on the parent's future DBS certificate.
--	---

The Local Authority may take formal action against you for failure to comply with the law. Penalty notices are issued as an alternative to prosecution, but may not be issued if prosecution is a more appropriate response to the attendance issues.

Please take immediate steps to ensure your child gets to school on time every day and obtain medical evidence if he/she is too ill to attend. Any other reason for absence should be discussed with the school and it is the school's decision whether to authorise any absence that is not covered by medical evidence.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Letter 12: After an unauthorised holiday

Parent's Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

PENALTY NOTICE WARNING

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing regarding (Name)'s recent term-time holiday, which the school could not authorise because it did not meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances. This absence has therefore been recorded as unauthorised.

Please note the following information below:

Under the Local Authority's Code of Conduct, unauthorised leave of 5 school days (10 sessions) within a rolling 10-week period may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice. As a result, the school has referred this case to the Local Authority and requested that a Penalty Notice be issued.

Penalty notices and prosecution.

A Penalty Notice can be issued under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty**

See below for further information:

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Third Notice in a 3 year period:	The third time an offence is committed for Term Time leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines are per parent, per child Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court may be shown on the parent's future DBS certificate.

If you believe there is new or additional evidence of exceptional circumstances that we have not considered, please submit it in writing without delay. Otherwise, please be aware that any further term-time leave taken without authorisation will also be recorded as unauthorised and may lead to additional enforcement action.

Should you wish to discuss any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Letter 13: Penalty Notice Warning - Unauthorised Term-Time Holiday (No Prior Notice)

Term-Time Holiday Taken Without Prior Notice

Parent's Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Penalty Notice Warning Letter

Dear [Parent/Carer],

I am writing regarding (Name)'s recent term-time holiday taken without prior notice. This absence does not meet the school's criteria for exceptional circumstances and has been recorded as unauthorised.

(Name) has missed (X days / Y sessions) due to unauthorised leave between (date) and (date).

School policy

As set out in our policy, any Leave of Absence request must be submitted at least 12 school days in advance using the school's Leave of Absence form. Term-time leave is not authorised except in genuinely exceptional circumstances.

Please note the following information below:

Under the Local Authority's Code of Conduct, unauthorised leave of 5 school days (10 sessions) within a rolling 10-week period may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice. As a result, the school has referred this case to the Local Authority and requested that a Penalty Notice be issued.

Penalty notices and prosecution.

A Penalty Notice can be issued under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty**

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First Notice in a 3 year period :	Issued to each parent. Per child Charged at £80 if paid within 21 days £160 if paid within 28 days.
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If you have additional evidence

If there is new information that may demonstrate exceptional circumstances, please provide copies by (deadline date) so we can review. Please note that routine holidays and cost considerations do not meet the threshold for authorisation.

Why this matters

Time away in term time disrupts learning and routines and can affect progress and wellbeing. We are keen to work with you to avoid any further unauthorised absence.

If you wish to discuss this letter, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix E: Punctuality.

Letter 14: Punctuality: Letter to improve the punctuality of pupils.

Parent's Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Re: Punctuality

I'm writing regarding (Name) and their punctuality. Over the last XXXXX weeks, (Name) has arrived late on (XXX) occasions, averaging (XXX) minutes late. We know mornings can be challenging, and we want to work with you to help get things back on track.

Why punctuality matters

Arriving on time helps children start the day calmly with their peers, hear key instructions, and settle quickly into learning. Frequent lateness can leave a child feeling unsettled and missing the opening part of lessons.

School times (for your reference)

- Doors open: (HH:MM)
- Learning starts: (HH:MM)
- Registers close: (HH:MM)

Arrivals after registers close are recorded as unauthorised absence.

What we're putting in place

We will begin a 2-week punctuality review from (start date) to (end date). Our aim is that (Name) arrives by (HH:MM) each day.

During this period, we will:

- Monitor punctuality daily and keep you updated weekly.
- Check in with (Name) to support a calm start to the day.
- Offer practical help where needed.

How we can help

Please let us know if any of the following would be useful:

- Morning routine support (simple checklist/tips).
- Earlier drop-off arrangement (if available) / Breakfast Club details: (times/cost).
- Gate/entrance support (staff meet-and-greet if helpful).
- Advice on travel routes/parking to avoid delays.

What we need from you:

- Aim for arrival by (HH:MM) each day.
- If you're running late, call the office with an estimated arrival time.
- Where possible, arrange routine appointments outside school hours.

If punctuality does not improve over these two weeks, we will invite you to a meeting to agree further actions. Continued lateness after registers close may be coded as unauthorised absence and may lead to further formal action.

We appreciate your support and are keen to work with you. If you'd like to discuss anything that might be affecting mornings at home, please contact XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX via the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix F: Action Plan for supporting positive attendance.

Name(s) of pupil(s):			
Date:	Attendance:	Number of Lates:	Year Group:

Known barriers to attendance:	
Child's view (if appropriate):	
Parents view:	
School's view:	
Agreed actions:	
Date of next review:	If my child's attendance continues to decline without reason or medical evidence.

Parent/Carer

I/we confirm that I/we have parental responsibility and agree to the above attendance improvement plan

I agree that I will...

- Ensure my child will attend school regularly
- Ensure they are wearing the correct uniform
- Ensure my child arrives to school on time
- Contact school at the earliest opportunity should my child be too ill to attend
- Ensure I update the relevant member of staff if there are any changes to my contact details
- Try where possible to make appointments outside of school hours or provide proof of the appointment when this is not possible and ensure my child attends before/after the appointment where possible.
- Contact the school office if there are any problems or concerns
- Understand that my child's attendance will be monitored closely and reviewed regularly
- Understand that failure to comply with the above may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service which could lead to the issuing of a Penalty Notice and or prosecution

Signed (Parent(s)/Carer(s) Date

School

Staff member

- I/we agree to the above attendance improvement plan
- I/we will monitor attendance, which will be reviewed regularly
- If I/we have any concerns, I or someone on my behalf will contact you, the parent/carers immediately
- I/we will keep you informed of the result of any attendance reviews

Signed Date

Equates to 2 days off a year.	99%	Excellent attendance
Equates to 5 days off a year.	97%	Good attendance
Equates to 10 days off a year.	95%	Slight concern
Equates to 20 days off a year.	90%	Concerned
Equates to 30 days off a year.	85%	Very concerned

Insert school logo here.
Right click, select 'Change
picture' and find logo to
replace. Resize by dragging
corners.



Why is it important to attend school **every day**?

Having good attendance and being on time is proven to help boost your child's achievement, social development and mental health. It ensures your child feels safe and supported.

Attendance is a priority in our school and is closely monitored.

You must report your child's absence to the school office.

DID YOU KNOW?

80% attendance over 5 years = **1 whole year** of school missed!

DID YOU KNOW?

One day missed of school, can mean **three** days of catching up with learning for your child

- Research shows that young people with high levels of attendance have better SATs and GCSE results.
- Regular attendance also improves young people's social and emotional development which boost essential key life skills.
- Missing learning causes anxiety and missing playtimes really affects developing friendships.
- If your child isn't in school, it's hard for them to develop their core skills.

How can **you** help?

DID YOU KNOW?

There are **190 school days** in a year meaning there are **175 days left for holidays and appointments!**

- Try to arrange planned family trips and activities during the school holidays.
- Schedule doctor and dental appointments either before school or after school hours.
- If an appointment during school hours cannot be avoided, ensure your child is in school for as much of the day as possible.
- Try and set good routines at home including good sleep patterns.
- Take an interest in your child's school work and be actively involved in school, Parents Evenings and other events.
- Contact the school if attendance is becoming a problem. We can work together to improve things.