



**OUR LADY
OF LOURDES**

CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Pupil Attendance Policy

16th July 2024



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

Date Issued	January 2023
Governors' Committee Responsible:	OLoL Trust Standards Committee/Executive Board
Updates	<p>January 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarified persistent and severe absence • Exceptions in main body of the policy. • Clarified Headteacher responsibilities. • Updated how school will work with families. • Added Appendix T – Cumulative absence chart. • Added Appendix U – parent friendly leaflet. • Additional letters added. • Stepped guidance added for clarity. • Further exceptional circumstances guidance added. <p>March 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated attendance table <p>July 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included updates from the new working together to improve school attendance. • Updated register codes. • Keep registers for 6 years from 3 years. • Updated granting leaves of absence for specific circumstances. • Updated granting absence for education off site. • Fine increase: £80 to be paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. • Updated clarity on penalty notices and sample letters. • Clearer expectations for the school's senior attendance champion. • More detail about supporting pupils with physical or mental ill health. • Clearer link between improving attendance and wider school culture. • 'Parenting contracts' will be called 'attendance contracts'
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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 (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

The CMAT board

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

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
- Our Trust will ensure the sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across all our schools

The governor who is responsible for overseeing pupil attendance is Mrs Pamela Gamble.

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 missing 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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') 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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs J Green and can be contacted via 0115 9155762 / admin@st-teresas.nottingham.sch.uk

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/[role] (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs J Welsh and can be contacted via 0115 9155762.

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.

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 or pass over information from parents/carers to the class teacher/key stage lead, where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

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 9.00am 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
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the school attendance officer, who can be contacted via, 0115 9155762 or admin@st-teresas.nottingham.sch.uk

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- 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

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 8.55am and ends at 3.15pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

- For pupils of compulsory school age. 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 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.25am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm.

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 9.30am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office on 0115 9155762 or by sending an in-app message on Arbor.

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. This can be done through the Arbor parent app, by telephone or in person at the school office. Proof of appointment will be required.

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.

Go to 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 have to contact outside services.
- 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. This can be found on the Arbor parent app. Half- termly reports/letters will also be sent to parents if their child's attendance falls below 95%.

10. Encouraging Good Attendance in School:

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
- Our school will aim to provide an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who works either in our school or across our academy hub to identify and provide support, advice and guidance to pupils and their families who have attendance issues in the feeder primary school as part of any transition work between KS2 and KS3.
- 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 academy
- Sending parents termly/weekly absence figures as appropriate including positive letters of encouragement
- An 'improved attendance' award for any students showing a significant improvement in attendance, as appropriate
- Celebrating outstanding attendance during achievement assemblies every half term in school, as appropriate.

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.

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

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

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 may require 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

Education Welfare Officer

The academy trust employs an education welfare officer/Inclusions officer who works with families to overcome any barriers that may be preventing a student from attending regularly.

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.

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.

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

Nottingham City Council

Any pupil with 10 sessions of unauthorised absence over a rolling 10 week period (10%) unauthorised absence. This can include lateness after the register has closed.

Once received the following will also be taken into consideration:

- Whole year attendance (380 sessions) this may straddle the previous/next academic year. (Schools are required to upload the previous and current year's attendance date)
- Penalty Notices can be issued where the request for leave is not considered exceptional and there are 10 continuous sessions of unauthorised absence
- Requests for service should be timely. The last day of absence should be within the last 10 school days before the referral being made
- Breach of a Deferred Prosecution Notice (DPN) or Advisory Notice (AN). Refer the breach at 10 further unauthorised absences or more with your record of any warnings or interventions

More information regarding the Service and useful links can be found on the Nottingham Schools web page under Pupil Support or you can email EducationWelfareServices@nottinghamcity.gov.uk To speak with a colleague please call 0115 876 2965. Briefing sessions in schools can also be arranged upon request.

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

Our Lady of Lourdes 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. This must be in writing and submitted to the school office. The head teacher must be satisfied that there are [exceptional](#) circumstances which warrant the leave.

If parents take pupils on holiday during term time Our Lady of Lourdes 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

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

We recognise that there are complex barriers to attendance and each case is unique. In each case, we consider the barriers by listening to the family members and we consider how these in-school barriers can be removed. This can be a trial-and-error approach over several weeks and it is essential that parents/ carers and school staff work together in the self-reflection and review process. Communication between stakeholders is essential.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where children present mental or physical ill health or they are recognised as SEND, where barriers arise that impact a child's attendance at school, close partnership with parents/carers is key. Teachers and support staff will work with families and may adjust the school day. The school will show compassion and ensure the correct support is in place, working towards greater school attendance.

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.

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

Where children have experienced a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, the school may opt for a gradual reintegration of the child, back into school. This approach will only be applied where it is necessary. Other adjustments to the school day will be made, following recommendations of professionals involved.

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.

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 DPS team prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

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)

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 truanting 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 responsibilities for external partners is to ensure the following:

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

21. Children Missing in Education

- Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing 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 missing on repeat occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day in conjunction with **'Children Missing 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.

22. Anxiety Related Non-Attendance (ARNA)

Where a student is believed to be experiencing anxiety, the academy will liaise with parents/carers and make initial assessment by interview and completion of the ARNA Attendance Policy assessment documentation.

If agreed strategies fail to improve school attendance and the wellbeing of the student, further strategies will be considered. The academy 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 academy 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 the academy immediately.

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

If a child has long term absence, the academy 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.

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

- Faith in Families
- Targeted Support; Family Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- School health
- Social care
- Youth Offending Team
- Police
- CAMHS
- Missing in Education Teams
- Admissions Team
- Education Welfare Service
- Children Missing 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 fines for both parents or additional adult.