



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 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 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 Dani Seaman and can be contacted via email on danis@st-josephs-pri.derbyshire.sch.uk

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 from parents/carers to the class teacher 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 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 class teachers or the headteacher who can be contacted via telephone on 01623 743609

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 8:45 am and ends at 3:30pm
Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am 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 8:40 am and will be kept open until 8:45am
The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1:05pm

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, who can be contacted via telephone on 01623 742609.

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 request leaves of absence by contacting the school office.

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 visit the family home
- 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 via half termly attendance reports.

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
- 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 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 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 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible from 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

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

Derbyshire County Council

A penalty notice may be issued under any of the following circumstances:

- If a child is absent from school, during term-time, in order to take leave without the permission of the headteacher
- If a child has unauthorised absence from school, meets the referral criteria and their parent has failed to improve the situation
- If a child is persistently late for school, after the close of register, and this absence is marked as unauthorised.
- If a child, who has been excluded from school, is seen in a public place, without adult supervision, in school time during the first 5 days of a fixed period of exclusion or a permanent exclusion.

Education Welfare managers have the discretion to identify other circumstances where a penalty notice may be used as a suitable intervention

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 by completing a leave of absence request form. The application form is available from individual schools within the academy 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 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

At St Joseph's we work sensitively to remove barriers to attendance. We work closely with the parents and children to identify the barriers and put timely strategies in place to remove these. Plans are drawn up to ensure that all parties involved have a clear understanding of the strategies and how we are working together. Regular review meetings are held to assess the success of these strategies and make adaptations where necessary.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Working closely with the SENCO, class teacher and family. Meetings are held to ensure that adaptations are made to support any child to return to school after mental or physical illness. Plans, with clearly identified strategies and adaptations are shared with school and parents to ensure that anyone in contact with the child is aware of this.

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

School will meet with the family and pupil returning to school and ensure that any adaptations are made to ensure that they have a successful return to school. This can include, but is not limited to, a phased return back into the classroom.

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 Authorities'**¹

- 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, truancing 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.

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.

Please refer to: **Anxious Learners & Anxiety Related Non-Attendance (ARNA): Guidance for Schools**²

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

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

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

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

- 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.

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

Record any concerns, patterns, or trends on CPOMs.		
Optional letter at the beginning of term. School may wish to send their own versions.		Optional information for school newsletter or leaflet sent at the beginning of term (Appendix C) Nursery to Reception letter (Appendix D)
	Children have 100% attendance	Children who have 100% attendance will be rewarded each term and at the end of the school year.
	Children have attendance above 95%	Children will be rewarded each term.
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. (Appendix E)
Step 2	After 2 weeks of monitoring, attendance has still not improved, and/ or there are additional absences – Letter 2 is sent.	Letter 2 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. (Appendix F)
Step 3	First attendance meeting.	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. If the family do not attend, the plan will be made by school and sent home.
Case will be referred to Education Welfare as a record of poor attendance		
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. (Appendix G)
Step 5	Second attendance meeting	If attendance is still below 90% after the attendance action plan (Appendix Q), 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. (Appendix H) 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. (Appendix I)
Unauthorised Absence Letters		
	Unauthorised absence(s)	Concerns about a pupil's unauthorised absence(s) letter. To be used for periods of absence that have not been authorised by school. (Appendix J)
	Formal issue of penalty notice	Formal penalty notice linked to unauthorised absence. (Appendix K)
Holidays		
Step 1	Agreeing a request	Agreeing a request for a holiday in term-time is up to the Headteacher's discretion (Appendix L) letter, however, there are guidelines within this policy and further advice in (Appendix Q)
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. (Appendix M)
Step 3	Holiday Absence	After an unauthorised holiday this letter informs parents that they may be issued with a penalty notice. (Appendix N)
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. (Appendix O)
Other useful letters		
	Punctuality letters	Appendix P
	Exceptional Circumstances	Exceptional
	Nottinghamshire Penalty Notice Form	Appendix S
	Celebrate improved attendance	Appendix T
	Authorised request and warning notice.	Appendix V:

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 1](#) on finding out about the absence (whether before or during the absence) and sample [letter 2](#) 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: Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT Schools and Designated Local Authority.

Nottingham City Council Schools:	Nottinghamshire County Council Schools:	Derbyshire County Council:
<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>St Joseph’s Shirebrook.</p>
Lincolnshire	North Lincolnshire	North East Lincolnshire
<p>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.</p>	<p>St Augustine Webster. St Mary’s, Brigg. St Norbert’s, Crowle. St Bernadette’s St Bede’s.</p>	<p>St Marys, Grimsby. St Joseph’s.</p>

Appendix B: 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:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: Letter to be sent out at the start of the academic year.

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 on 01623 742609
- 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.

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) 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.

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:

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,

Appendix D: Nursery to Reception Letter

Dear parent/carer,

Child's name and attendance figure

It has come to my attention that your child will be joining us full time in September. In reception, teachers work hard to embed positive attitudes towards school and learning. In addition to setting the expectations for children's behaviour and building a sound understanding of key concepts such as reading and numbers.

Attending school regularly is important for your child's future. You, as a parent or carer are responsible for making sure your child receives a full-time education. If your child does not attend school on a regular basis, you could get fined or prosecuted.

You can help prevent your child missing school by:

- having a routine from an early age and sticking to it
- making sure your child understands the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- making sure they understand the possible implications for themselves and you as a parent if they don't attend
- taking an interest in their education - ask about schoolwork and encourage them to get involved in school activities
- discussing any problems they may have at school and letting their teacher or Headteacher know about anything that is causing concern
- not letting them take time off school for minor ailments or holidays during term time.

Please see your child's attendance (above) and note that this level of attendance is unacceptable in Reception. If you require any support, it is available. Please come and see us if you have any attendance concerns. Contact reception if you would like to speak with me.

Yours Sincerely,

Dani Seaman

Headteacher

Appendix E: 95% and under attendance letter 1.

Dear Parent/Carer,

Child:

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.

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,

Dani Seaman

Headteacher

Appendix F: 95% and under attendance letter 2.

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 (percentage). 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,

Dani Seaman

Headteacher

Appendix G: 90% and under attendance letter.

Parent's Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance is below 90%

I have been analysing (name of school) Voluntary Catholic Academy's 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. Home visits will now be undertaken for each absence (delete as required).

Our children have already missed such an incredible amount of important learning time, it is crucial that your child attends school regularly and on time.

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.

I urge you to put some importance on this matter and I am happy to discuss or meet with any family that may need that additional help to overcome those barriers to learning.

I look forward to working with you and improving your child's school attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Dani Seaman

Headteacher

Appendix H: Penalty notice warning letter (Sample letter 1)

Example – leave request denied (unauthorised)

School Headed Paper

Recipient(s) full name

Address

DATE

Dear

Absence from School

Thank you for your application requesting leave of absence for CHILD'S NAME, for NUMBER school days, from DATE to DATE, for the purpose of a family holiday.

In September 2013 the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Having carefully considered your application, in line with Government guidelines, I am unable to grant approval for your request as the reason given is not exceptional.

Whilst on this occasion we will not be requesting a Penalty Notice please note that should there be any further periods of unauthorised leave during term time regardless of the duration this may result in a request for a penalty notice

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Appendix I: Penalty notice letter (Sample letter 2)

PENALTY NOTICE

Child Name:

DoB:

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 XXXXXXXX to explain that XXXXXXXX Academy **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 J: Concerns about a pupil's unauthorised absence(s) sample letter

Dear Parent/Carer

PENALTY NOTICE WARNING

Child's Name:

DoB:

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

Further unauthorised absence in excess of 3 days (6 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.

Yours sincerely

Appendix K: Formal notice about unauthorised absence

Example – leave request denied (unauthorised)

School Headed Paper

Recipient(s) full name

Address

DATE

Dear

Absence from School

Thank you for your application requesting leave of absence for CHILD'S NAME, for NUMBER school days, from DATE to DATE, for the purpose of a family holiday.

In September 2013 the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Having carefully considered your application, in line with Government guidelines, I am unable to grant approval for your request as the reason given is not exceptional. If your child is absent from school during the specified dates you may be issued with a Penalty Notice for this unauthorised absence.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Appendix L: Agreeing a request for a holiday in term-time

Example letter – leave approved

Recipient(s) full name

Address

DATE

Dear

Absence from School

Thank you for your application requesting leave of absence for CHILD'S NAME, for NUMBER school days, from DATE to DATE, for the purpose of a family holiday.

In September 2013 the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Having carefully considered your application, in line with Government guidelines, I am able to grant approval for your request for NUMBER school days on the basis that the reason given is exceptional.

Yours sincerely

Example letter – leave approved

Recipient(s) full name

Address

DATE

Dear

Absence from School

Thank you for your application requesting leave of absence for CHILD’S NAME, for NUMBER school days, from DATE to DATE, for the purpose of a family holiday.

In September 2013 the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Having carefully considered your application, in line with Government guidelines, I am able to grant approval for your request for NUMBER school days on the basis that the reason given is exceptional.

Yours sincerely

Appendix M: Declining a request for a holiday in term-time

Example – leave request denied (unauthorised)

School Headed Paper

Recipient(s) full name

Address

DATE

Dear

Absence from School

Thank you for your application requesting leave of absence for CHILD'S NAME, for NUMBER school days, from DATE to DATE, for the purpose of a family holiday.

In September 2013 the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Having carefully considered your application, in line with Government guidelines, I am unable to grant approval for your request as the reason given is not exceptional. If your child is absent from school during the specified dates you may be issued with a Penalty Notice for this unauthorised absence.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Derbyshire Local Authority guidelines

To request the issue of a penalty notice for unauthorised leave of absence in term time your school must have a policy statement that supports the use of penalty notices and reflects the legislation appropriately. It may be useful for you to incorporate the legally compliant statement below into your attendance management policy.

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers must not give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a **NAME OF FORM** available from the school office and handed in **NUMBER** school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. Absence deemed for the reason of unauthorised leave in term time will be marked in the register with the Attendance code G.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

Please do not use blanket statements or suggest situations which the school might authorise – Each parental request should be considered on merit based on the information provided at the time.

Your school policy extract should be included with your penalty notice request as it forms part of the evidence for Court should the penalty notice remain unpaid.

Appendix N: After an unauthorised holiday (Sample letter)

Example letter – challenge absence

School Headed Paper

Recipient(s) full name

Address

DATE

Dear

Absence from School

NAME was absent from school for NUMBER days between DATE and DATE without explanation. You were sent a text message, enquiring about the reason for absence, each day during this time. (Or give details of the contacts made by school during the absence.)

It is my belief (**or** - You have since informed us) that CHILD'S NAME was absent from school due to a family holiday. In view of this, in accordance with Government regulation, I must mark the register for CHILD'S NAME with a 'G' which means 'unauthorised absence for a holiday during term-time'.

If this is not the case please arrange an appointment to meet with me to discuss the matter further and where possible provide evidence to support your position. Unless I hear from you in the next 5 school days I will refer the case to the Local Authority and you may be issued with a penalty notice for unauthorised absence.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Appendix O: After an unauthorised no notice holiday

Holiday absence

Parent's Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Dear (Insert parents name)

Penalty Notice Warning Letter

The Government states that students should not be taking leave of absence during term-time and in line with this, it has been agreed that leave taken in term-time will not be authorised other than in exceptional circumstances.

As our school policy states a Leave of Absence must be made 12 school days in advance by completing a Leave of Absence Form. (Child) absence was not authorised and therefore I have requested a Penalty Notice Fine from the Local Authority.

All absences from school can have a detrimental effect on a child's education as well as personal development which is something we take seriously. We therefore, would like to bring to your attention that (Insert School) Academy notify the local authority about holidays taken in term time, truancy and unauthorised absences such as repeated lateness to school after the registers close.

Penalty Notices are issued by the local authority to all guardians with parental responsibility for that child, even if the original request for leave was only raised by one parent/carer. With this in mind, if your child is taken out of school for any future holidays or has unauthorised absence in term time, this may lead to a Fixed Penalty.

A Penalty Notice can lead to a fine of £80 per child/parent if paid within 21 days or £160 per child/parent if paid within 28 days. If leave is due to employment contractual restrictions, please forward any official documentation as soon as possible prior to taking the leave.

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

Yours sincerely,

(Name)

Headteacher

Appendix P: Punctuality.

Dear Parents / Carers,

Re: Punctuality

We are writing to children's families to emphasise the importance of being in school on time as there have been numerous incidents of some families routinely arriving late to school.

Children who arrive late are greatly disadvantaged because they miss starting the day with their peers and the beginning of lessons. This means that they are often unsettled and confused about tasks. Their teacher will not always be able to re-explain work.

It is also very important that children establish good routines and habits in preparation for the rest of their lives. Punctuality is a life skill that they need to develop whilst they are young.

It is essential that you ensure that your child arrives at school on time to prevent disruption to your child's own learning and that of others.

We will continue to focus on this area with children through class work and school assemblies

We are required to monitor children's punctuality and attendance. On-going lateness (after the class register has been taken) is classified as an unauthorised absence and this is contrary to The Education Act.

We understand that there may be rare occasions when you are unavoidably late due to unforeseen circumstances. On these occasions, please make sure that you contact the school office to inform us when you will arrive.

If you are experiencing difficulties with punctuality and would like to talk to us about it, please contact myself or your child's progress leader (if you have one in school).

Yours sincerely,

(Name)

Headteacher

Parent's Address

Child X (dob XX/XX/XXXX)

Dear Parents / Carers,

Re: Punctuality

We are writing to children's families to emphasise the importance of being in school on time as there have been numerous incidents of some families routinely arriving late to school.

Children who arrive late are greatly disadvantaged because they miss starting the day with their peers and the beginning of lessons. This means that they are often unsettled and confused about tasks. Their teacher will not always be able to re explain work.

It is also very important that children establish good routines and habits in preparation for the rest of their lives. Punctuality is a life skill that they need to develop whilst they are young.

It is essential that you ensure that your child arrives at school on time to prevent disruption to your child's own learning and that of others. We will continue to focus on the importance of punctuality and regular attendance with children through class work and school assemblies. I have enclosed a copy of the current school start and end of day times for your reference, this is also displayed on the school gates and in classroom windows.

We are required to monitor children's punctuality and attendance. On-going lateness (after the class register has been taken) is classified as an unauthorised absence and this is contrary to The Education Act.

We understand that there may be rare occasions when you are unavoidably late due to unforeseen circumstances. On these occasions please make sure that you contact the school office to inform us when you will arrive.

If you are experiencing difficulties with punctuality and would like to talk to us about it, please contact myself or (Other contact in school).

Yours sincerely,

(Name)

Headteacher

Appendix Q: 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, I am aware this may be escalated for discussion with Education Welfare Service from the Local Authority.

Parent/Carer

I/weconfirm 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 <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

Appendix R: Derbyshire County Council Penalty notice request form.

Request to LA for formal commencement of statutory parental responsibility measures/legal action in relation to school attendance.

(One request form per child)

The following information must be provided before the Attendance Team can consider serving a Penalty Notice/prosecution. Should the case forwarded for prosecution this information will be used as evidence, in court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

DCC USE ONLY:

LI

Sch. Code:

PRN:

Parent 1 ref:

Parent 2 Ref:

Pupil information

Forename

Surname

DOB

Address including postcode

Check the address is correct before submitting to the LA. If incorrect the school will be named as the data breach

Dates that the pupil was absent from school

(e.g. 16/05/2011 to 25/05/2011 inclusive.)

Parent 1* for whom Penalty Notice is being requested

Title

Forename

Surname

Address including postcode, if different from pupilParents

Name of School

Check the address is correct before submitting to the LA. If incorrect the school will be named as the data breach

Parent 1 Email

Parent 2* for whom Penalty Notice is being requested

Title	Forename	Surname

Address including postcode, if different from pupil

	<p>Check the address is correct before submitting to the LA. If incorrect the school will be named as the data breach</p>
--	--

Parent 2 Email

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE RELEVANT SECTION BELOW FOR EITHER
UNAUTHORISED LEAVE IN TERM TIME OR UNSATISFACTORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

UNSATISFACTORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

A copy is required of each of the following documents:

Please tick appropriate box to indicate copy is attached to this form.

- Leave of Absence Request Form completed by parent/carer.

- Letter from school to each parent indicating that leave would not be authorised or a challenge letter.

- Attendance report (herringbone) for the current academic year showing 10 sessions of absence (5 days) marked as absence code G.

- Copy of statement in school prospectus/newsletter warning of consequences of taking leave In term time that has not been authorised.

Requests must be submitted within 4 weeks of the end of the period of unauthorised leave.

UNSATISFACTORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

A copy is required of each of the following documents:

Please tick appropriate box to indicate copy is attached to this form.

- Copy of the parental responsibility letter

- A full chronology of support provided to parents(s) over the last 6 months

- Copy of attendance printout for the last 12 months showing 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous 10-week period.

- An explanation for the use of any registration codes other than \ and O:

Requests must be submitted as soon as the threshold has been reached.

Head Teacher's signature _____ **Date** _____

Please send all this information within 4 weeks of the end of the unauthorised leave taken in term time or within 10 days of the end of the monitoring period via perspective lite to EWS_830school 4 digit DFE No: pnholchild initials & date backwards or EWS_830school 4 digit DFE No:pnattchild initials & date backwards

example: -EWS_8301000pnattjb20240514 or EWS_8301000pnholjb20240514

If you have any queries regarding Penalty Notices, please do not hesitate to contact the Attendance Process Team on 01629 532157 or email CS.AttendanceProcessTeam@derbyshire.gov.uk

Appendix S: Improving attendance letter

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 Pupil's name he/she is showing clear progress, which is linked to his/her consistence 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 Pupil's 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

Appendix T: Leaflet for parents

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

Part of
**OUR LADY
OF LOURDES**

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, the 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 **180 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.

