

Our Lady's Catholic High School

Attendance Policy

*'Our Lady's is first and foremost a Catholic school. It follows from this that the ethos of our school should reflect the values proclaimed by Christ in the Gospels and recognise the unique value of each individual. Everyone at Our Lady's has the right to be treated with respect at all times'.
(from OLCHS Mission Statement)*

Reviewed – Autumn Term 2023
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Principles

High levels of attendance are an important target for the school as only through high attendance can pupils receive their entitlement and achieve their potential. It is the role of parents, guardians and the school to encourage 100% attendance for every child. Poor attendance is a recognised barrier to achievement. We will therefore strive to monitor and check attendance and support pupils (and families) who are experiencing difficulties over attendance.

Attendance can only be authorised by the school.

Attendance will be an important aspect of the Home-School Agreement.

The school's target for attendance is 97%.

Personnel

The people responsible for attendance matters at Our Lady's are the form tutor, the Learning Manager and assistant, the Attendance Improvement Officer and both the Associate Assistant Headteacher, and Assistant Headteacher.

Responsibilities

The Form Tutor is responsible for the day to day checks required: completing registers; monitoring attendance and punctuality of pupils in his/her form and referring attendance concerns to the Learning Manager.

The Learning Manager is responsible for the overall attendance and punctuality of his/her year group. This involves liaising with form tutors, carrying out regular checks on attendance by checking registers and statistics from the attendance module on Synergy; contacting parents; supporting form tutors with the completion of registers; liaising with and making referrals to the Attendance Officer, and/or external agencies; and to refer any concerns to both the Associate and Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral).

The Assistant Learning Manager is responsible for supporting the Learning Manager as required.

The (Associate and) Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) is responsible for Promote regular attendance Promoting regular attendance using a range of strategies, including liaising with parents and liaising with and supporting Learning Managers; liaising with CIS; setting school attendance targets with the County Council and monitoring progress towards these; ensuring the completion of the annual DfE attendance return; reporting to the Governing Body of the school on attendance matters; acting as line manager for the Attendance Improvement Officer.

The Attendance Improvement Officer is responsible for dealing with referrals from the Pastoral Team and download and analyse attendance data. S/he will have a caseload of pupils who have attendance difficulties and will employ a number of strategies including attendance panels, home visits, attendance contracts and targets, and referral to outside agencies. S/he will oversee the application of Penalty notices and referrals for prosecution.

The Attendance Officer is responsible for monitoring completion of registers and issuing reminders when registers are not completed, the maintenance of the attendance module; entering attendance data; downloading statistics as required; liaising with Pastoral Support Mentors regarding first day of absence calls, printing and sending parental contact letters as required by the administrative team.

Procedures

- All registers will be completed using Synergy. These registers will be completed by Form Tutors at the start of each day and class teachers at the start of the p.m. session. Pupils are not allowed to complete the register.
- The register will be kept open until the end of the registration period.
- Pupils arriving after the register has been taken shall be marked as late.
- All pupils must be marked as present, absent or late; no pupils should be left with a blank space for any session.
- Parents must inform the general office of their Child's absence.
- The Classroom Teacher is responsible for ensuring that every register is taken accurately and within the first 10 minutes of every lesson. The administration team will send a message out to remind staff if a register is incomplete.
- Pupils who are dual registered must be contacted by the Attendance Officer on a weekly basis to ensure attendance, progress and behaviour is acceptable.
- Each Learning Manager will monitor the attendance of their Year Group by liaising with Form Tutors, liaising with the Attendance Improvement Officer, checking registers, requesting print-outs of statistics at least once every two weeks.
- The administration team will send letters to parents regarding attendance and punctuality matters, arrange meetings.
- The Attendance Improvement Officer and the Learning Manager will arrange and complete meetings.
- The Attendance Improvement Officer and Pastoral Support Mentors will undertake home visits.
- The Attendance Improvement Officer referrals will be agreed between the Attendance Improvement Officer and by Learning Managers. No referrals should be made before the appropriate Learning Manager has attempted to contact parents to discuss problems.
- The Attendance Improvement Officer will complete the annual DFE attendance return and the annual LCC Attendance Target sheet.
- The (Associate) Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) will complete the termly reports for the Governing Body.
- Attendance/Punctuality will be a standing item on Learning Manager meeting Agendas.

Registers

The Admission Register will include details of pupils from the date they are admitted to the school. All pupils recorded in the Admission Register must also be recorded on the **Attendance Register**.

The Systems Migration Report and the **Admission Register** will be stored electronically.

All pupils leaving school during the school day must sign out at reception.

Categories of Recording

There are four categories of classification of attendance:

- **present:** pupil is on the school premises at the time of registration.
- **approved educational activity:** pupil is engaged in an approved, supervised activity off-site.
- **authorised absent:** pupil has the authority of the school to be absent either given in advance (e.g. a hospital appointment) or afterwards (e.g. notification of illness); and
- **unauthorised absent:** no explanation received or unacceptable reason given.

When sickness or ill health are reported as the reason for absence, school may not authorise the absence until medical evidence is received. Examples of medical evidence include appointment cards, relevant emails or texts, or prescribed medication.

Approved educational activities are:

- **educational** and directly linked to the school's programme.
- **approved** by an authorised representative of the school such as a teacher; and
- **supervised**, either by school staff or someone authorised by the school.

Study leave is "by its nature unsupervised." Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise. (DfE School Attendance – Statutory guidance and departmental advice August 2013).

Lateness

Pupils are actively encouraged to arrive at school on time. Emerging patterns of lateness will be monitored and parents informed where necessary. Learning Managers will monitor lateness through statistics from the attendance system.

Members of the SLT will monitor lateness at the gate each morning and record the names of those who are late. Pupils must be on the school premises at 8.55am. Each time a pupil is late his/her parent/carer will be informed ~~by text message~~. Pupils who are late to school will be issued with a lunchtime detention. Parents must contact the general office before 10am if the lateness is for an unavoidable reason. Pupils who are repeatedly late will be contacted by letter and may have to attend meeting with a child's Learning Manager and/or Attendance Improvement Officer or Assistant Headteacher (pastoral).

On occasions the register will need to be left open in exceptional circumstances (eg inclement weather, school buses unavoidably delayed). On these occasions all staff will be informed of the arrangements, delayed pupils will be required to report to the general office on their arrival at school to register. Registers will not normally be kept open for more than one hour.

Education Outside School

Where parents decide to educate a child at home they must provide written notification to school. Where written notification is received the child's name should be removed from the school roll and a copy of the notification sent to County lead for Elective Home Education (EHE).

When only verbal notification is received a referral will be made to the Attendance Improvement Officer. In such cases a pupil's absence will be recorded as unauthorised until written notification has been received the pupil is expected to attend school.

Holidays and/or leave during term time

Holidays during school term time are **not allowed**. School holidays are the times when families should take holidays. By law, maintained schools cannot authorise any leave in term time other than in exceptional circumstances. Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their education and progress as much as any other absence.

To grant a holiday in school time gives the message to the child that their schoolwork and school life is not important and such a message can be very damaging.

Leave of absence from school for any pupil may be granted for compassionate reasons. This is entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher who will consult the governing body to ratify his decision.

Each request for leave of absence will be judged individually by the Headteacher. Cheaper flights, availability of certain days for parents, already having made the booking and financial commitments/loss will not be accepted as reasons to allow leave of absence.

Where leave is not granted parents will be notified in writing.

Where absence occurs despite leave not being granted or applied for, absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Leave of absence should not be granted retrospectively.

If a parent takes a child on a holiday when leave has not been granted by the Headteacher/Governors, or the child is absent for 10 or more school sessions (5 days), the school will apply for a Penalty Notice ~~will be issued~~. Where leave of absence has been granted but the child does not return by the agreed date, these absences will be recorded as unauthorised and legal action may be taken. In extreme circumstances a pupil may be removed from the school roll when a parent has chosen to remove them from school for an extended period without the permission of the Headteacher. In such cases the parents will need to reapply to the school to have their child readmitted to the school roll.

In certain circumstances, as outlined in regulation, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if leave is taken and the criteria governing removal from roll are met (see appendix).

If a pupil has an absence from school which is attached to a school holiday period, for example the beginning or the end of a term, we require parents to provide clear evidence that this was a legitimate absence. Where parents fail to do this, we will require that a meeting takes place with either the Attendance Improvement Officer, or the Learning Manager. Until such a meeting has been arranged the

child's timetable will be suspended. It will always be our priority to endeavour to prevent this happening by working closely with parents.

Part-Time Attendance

The only reasons why a pupil might attend school on a part-time basis are:

- **A temporary medical condition.** This should be supported by written medical advice and ACERS medical would need to be informed.
- **Part of their education is being received away from school** site at another location. This should be recorded as dual registration.
- **Approved work experience.**

Removal from Roll

Pupils must only be removed from the school roll:

- If CME have been informed and have given authorisation
- Where they have been absent from school for a period of four weeks or more and both the school and LEA have failed "after reasonable enquiry" to locate the pupil.
- After CME has confirmed that the pupil no longer ordinarily resides at an address which is a reasonable distance from school.
- Where written confirmation is received from a receiving school that a pupil has been enrolled at that school.
- On completion of the permanent exclusion process.
- Are in custody for a period of more than 4 months due to a final court order and where the school does not believe they will be returned to the school at the end of that period

The Admissions Register

Will contain an index in alphabetical order of all the pupils in the school containing **the** following information:

Name in full

Sex

Name and address of every person known by the school to be a parent/guardian of the pupil, the address at which the pupil resides and at least one emergency contact number. This information must be updated annually.

Date of birth.

Date of admission to the school.

Name and address of last school attended.

Penalty Notices

Parents [Defined under section 23 of the anti-social behaviour act 2003] have the responsibility to ensure a child's full attendance at school.

Our Lady's Catholic High School may use Penalty Notices in accordance with the local authority code of conduct, when other strategies have been used and have failed.

If attendance is consistently poor and there is little evidence of parents/carers working with school to overcome this; school may approach the LEA to request a prosecution under the Education Act 444 (1) 1996.

Criteria

A minimum evidential requirement of ten (10) school sessions lost to unauthorised absence by any pupil in any one term, and/or fourteen (14) sessions lost to unauthorised absence over two consecutive terms, will be required to trigger the process.

Reasons

The circumstances in which a penalty notice for non-attendance may be issued include:

Parentally condoned absence

Unauthorised leave

Unwarranted delayed return from authorised leave

Persistent late arrival after the register has closed

Fine

Payment of a penalty within 21 days of receipt of the notice is £60 for each parent in respect of each child (subject to regulatory change). Payment after this time, but within 28 days of receipt of the notice is £120 (subject to regulatory change). If payment is not made in full by the end of the 28-day period, the Local Authority will bring a prosecution against the parent for failing to ensure the child's regular attendance at school.

A prosecution under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 where parents are proved guilty allows Magistrates to fine parents a maximum of £2500.

All parents will be advised of the school's intention to use the notices and each year a reminder will be issued.