

# Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School



An Academy School Part of  
The Good Shepherd Catholic Trust



## Attendance Strategy 2026

*Our Mission Statement:*

*We are a Catholic school. We strive to be a sign of Christ's presence in the world.  
We follow Jesus.*

Date Approved by Governing Body:	Summer 2026
Date To be Reviewed by:	Summer 2029
Signed By:	Nicholas Bernal- Safeguarding Governor

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## **Our Lady of Lourdes Attendance Strategy**

This Strategy is intended to provide the framework for continuous improvement in school attendance and attainment and should be read alongside our Attendance Policy.

Ensuring the safeguarding of all pupils requires cohesive partnership between Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School and our parents. The responsibility for raising and promoting attendance is shared by parents/carers, children and School.

Attending school is a legal expectation for every child. Our expectation is that all pupils should strive for full and punctual attendance. However, we do recognise that some individual pupils and their families may need support in order to achieve this. In considering the authorisation of absences, the school will take into account any circumstances that are in line with the protected characteristics as outlined by the Equality Act 2010.

We also know that parents who work closely with school achieve the best outcomes for their child and we ask that every parent commit to supporting us in ensuring excellent attendance for their child, with the exception of illness that cannot be helped.

### **Parental Responsibilities**

It is the parents/carers legal responsibility to ensure their child receives a full time education. This extends beyond ensuring regular and punctual attendance and requires that your child come to school in a fit state to learn. This means that they arrive in uniform, have breakfast and have had sufficient sleep. Whilst we want to work with families, our involvement will always focus on the child's needs. We know that children become unwell and that sometimes there will be family bereavements that necessitate emergency travel. However, we also know that there will always be people who do not prioritise their child's education and, as professionals, it is our duty to do so.

We know that children feel/become unwell and that absences are a natural part of life. However, being unwell does not always mean that a child needs to take a day absence from school. Even on occasions where a child has been unwell, once they begin to recover they should return to school i.e. this should not lead to a full week's absence.

This strategy is focussed on supporting families to work with us to enable their child to succeed; it is a two-way partnership between school and home.

Communication to parents regarding their child's unexplained absences and lateness will be sent home on a regular basis.

## Strategy for First Day of Absence:

**A written explanation is required for every school absence from school.** This can be via ParentMail, email or letter. The school office should receive this no later than 8.30am on the first day of absence.

If, following enquiries, no satisfactory reason has been provided, the absence will be regarded as unauthorised and the register will be annotated accordingly.

Our Lady of Lourdes reserves the right to query the validity of an explanation and refuse to authorise an absence. Parents/Carers do not have the automatic right to remove a child from school for family holidays during term time. The Governors have agreed that any holidays or visits should be confined to school holidays and will not be authorised if taken during school time.

We work closely with the Education Welfare Service to promote regular attendance and punctuality. We use the Department for Education's expectations and thresholds to support with attendance and ensure that all pupils are safe, receiving the education of which they are entitled.

Time	Action by parent or school
<b>Before 8:30am</b>	Parents/carers of children who are absent from school are to inform us and explain the reason for non-attendance by 8.30am on the first day of absence.  <i>All messages received regarding absence will be noted. We will record instances where we have had to phone/ email etc. to ascertain the reason for a child's absence. Verbal and telephone messages are acceptable and will be noted by the person receiving them. A written explanation for which a pupil is absent from is also acceptable. A member of the office staff will then enter the reason for absence into the computer system. Copies of all letters/doctor's notes or appointment cards received will be placed in the child's file.</i>
<b>8:35am</b>	<b>School gates open</b>
<b>8:45am</b>	<b>School gates close</b> Any pupil arriving after this time is marked as late (coded 'L' on register)
<b>8:55am</b>	<b>Class Registers close</b> A member of the office staff will attempt to contact all parents/carers (and additional contacts on the pupil/s file) who have not telephoned the school, to try to ascertain a reason for the child's absence. <i>This is to safeguard you and your child. In exceptional circumstances where school cannot contact you the School, Police and / or Educational Welfare Officer may attempt a home visit to ensure that you and your child are safe.</i>
<b>9:30am</b>	A list of pupils who are absent and the reason they are not in school is printed, with their attendance percentage is viewed by the Leadership Team.  Where the pupil's attendance is below 96% the parents/carers will be notify by school.

	Where the pupil's attendance is deemed Persistent Absent i.e. below 90%, the parents/carers will be notify by school.
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### Strategy for First Week of Absence:

Time	Action by parent or school
Before 8:30am	<p><b>If your child continues to be unwell, please contact the school by 8.30am on each day of the absence.</b></p> <p>If the illness is prolonged, we will request that you provide medical evidence. This can be in the form of a doctor's note or certificate.</p>

### Monitoring of Attendance and Punctuality

	Action by parent or school
<b>Attendance below 96%</b>	<p>If it is found that a child's attendance has fallen below 96%, a standard letter will be sent to the parent/carer.</p> <p><i>Where absence has been agreed for exceptional circumstances, or where there is a known serious illness, this will be taken into account and no communication will be sent as there should already have been dialogue between school and the parents.</i></p> <p>Further monitoring will be carried out to see if attendance shows improvement.</p>
<b>Attendance below 90%</b>	<p>Additional absences resulting in attendance falling below 90% will result in a discussion with the Educational Welfare Officer; a home visit may be undertaken.</p> <p>Further monitoring will be carried out to see if attendance shows improvement.</p>

### How parents are informed of concerns about their child/children's absence

- Text Messages
- Attendance leaflets
- Termly Attendance information in the reading diaries (including each child's attendance percentage)
- Meetings (both with school and/ or the Educational Welfare Officer)

In exceptional circumstances, where there are on-going attendance concerns, school may deem it necessary to request medical evidence of a child's absence in order for it to be authorised.

### Medical Appointments and Sickness

Advance Notice Required	Action by parent or school
Where possible, we expect you to inform the school <b>in advance</b> that	We encourage parents to make doctors/dentist appointments outside of school time so as not to disrupt your child's learning. <b>Where this is not possible we will require proof of appointment,</b>

your child will be absent.	<p><b>such as a medical card/ appointment letter</b>, this will allow us to authorise the absence.</p> <p>Where a child has repeated medical absences you will be asked to provide medical evidence before the absence can be authorised. This may be in the form of a GP's letter, prescription/ prescribed medication. Please note that although authorised it will still count as an absence in terms of your child's overall attendance.</p>
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### **Holidays**

Parents do not have a legal right to take their children out of school on holiday. Our Lady of Lourdes realises that the majority of families value the opportunities that we provide and would only take leave in exceptional circumstances; we are grateful for their honesty in telling us so we know that the children are safe and with their families. Term Time Holidays cannot be approved.

### **Punctuality**

At Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School, every moment is a teaching moment and pupils are expected to be in school ready to learn by 8.45 am i.e. before the gate closes. We operate a soft start from 8.35am to allow children to have time to greet their peers, catch up with their teacher and also for their teachers to conduct any welfare and nurture conversations; this is precious personal development time for every child. Children who are repeatedly late and not in the classroom promptly not only miss their Early Morning Work but the opportunities that this ring-fenced time affords. They also miss personalised key learning feedback and conferencing to support their learning.

Persistent lateness does not constitute full school attendance (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996). From 2024, school will operate a Late Gate to identify pupils who are repeatedly late and speak with parents to ascertain what support is needed to help improve punctuality, which is a key life skill. Persistent lateness could result in a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer.

Please read this Attendance Strategy in conjunction with the Attendance Policy.