



Our Lady's Catholic College

Attendance Policy

Agreed by Governing Board on 8th June 2026

Policy will be reviewed by December 2027

Mission Statement

Our Lady's Catholic College is a family of faith where we are nurtured to aspire, achieve and serve. Through Christ's example, we grow in virtue as God's masterpiece.

‘Pupils value the sense of community and friendship that they find at Our Lady’s Catholic College. They enjoy the calm and purposeful atmosphere that permeates the school site. Pupils and staff recognise the considerable improvements to the school that have taken place over the last few years.’

Ofsted May 2024

Introduction

This is a successful school and every child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all pupils to achieve their potential and aspire to excellence.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless they have an unavoidable reason to be absent. Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Absence or late arrival also disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Government research shows a direct link between attendance and attainment and good attenders also make better progress socially, learn to work with others, and are better prepared for the transition to secondary school and, eventually, higher education, training and employment.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Our attendance target is 97%, but all pupils should strive to achieve 100% attendance if they can.

Policy Aims

To promote high levels of attendance across the school.

To ensure all pupils have equal access to education and opportunities for achievement.

To create a culture that values regular attendance and punctuality

To safeguard pupils’ welfare by ensuring they are present, safe, and accounted for.

To support academic achievement, recognising that regular attendance improves outcomes.

To work in partnership with parents/carers and external agencies to improve attendance.

Policy Objectives

Monitoring and Recording Attendance

- Maintain accurate daily records of student attendance.
- Identify patterns of absence early
- Use attendance data to inform interventions.

Early Intervention

- Act promptly when attendance drops below expected levels.
- Provide support strategies for pupils with attendance difficulties.
- Implement staged responses

Promoting Positive Attendance

- Reward and recognise good and improved attendance.
- Encourage punctuality and reduce lateness.
- Raise awareness of the importance of attendance among pupils.

Supporting Pupils and Families

- Work with parents/carers to address barriers to attendance.
- Provide pastoral support for pupils facing challenges
- Involve external agencies where necessary

Ensuring Legal Compliance

- Meet statutory duties regarding school attendance.
- Follow national and local authority guidance.
- Take appropriate action in cases of unauthorised absence.

Safeguarding

- Ensure all absences are followed up to confirm student safety.
- Identify unexplained absences quickly.
- Escalate concerns in line with safeguarding policies.

Communication

- Maintain clear communication with parents/carers regarding attendance expectations.
- Provide regular updates on attendance performance.
- Ensure policies and procedures are understood by all stakeholders.

ATTENDANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Expectations of parents/carers:

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in an offence under the Education Act 1996. At Our Lady's Catholic College, a strong culture of excellent attendance is well established, and we expect all families to actively support this commitment.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 08:40 each school day. Where absence is unavoidable, such as being too poorly to attend, parents/carers must notify the school as early as possible using the Synergy Portal. For safeguarding purposes, the school will contact parents/carers if a student is absent without prior notification.

Parents/carers must provide daily updates for each day of absence using the Synergy portal. If there are exceptional reasons why this is not possible then contact should be made by phone on 01524 66689. If no notification is received, parents/carers are expected to respond promptly to attendance alerts.

Where possible, appointments should be arranged outside of the school day to minimise disruption to learning. Evidence will be requested for medical appointments. Term-time holidays will not be authorised due to their impact on student progress.

We ask that parents and carers engage fully with the school to support high attendance and punctuality, including attending meetings where required, and to promptly raise any concerns that may affect their child's attendance so that appropriate support can be provided.

We ask that parents/carers work cooperatively with school at all times to ensure their child benefits from the significant importance of good attendance. However, if your child fails to attend on a regular basis without good reason, then the school will initiate a staged response which may include phone calls, home visits, meetings in school, attendance contracts, fines and legal intervention.

Expectations of pupils:

Pupils are expected to understand the importance of excellent attendance and its impact on their progress and overall development. They should attend school every day, arriving by 8:40 in full uniform and equipped for learning. Pupils should arrive at subsequent lessons punctually within 3 minutes of the bell going or they will be classed as late to the next lesson.

Punctual attendance to all lessons is essential, and absences should only occur if they are too poorly to attend or authorised reasons. Pupils must report promptly to their Form Tutor at 8:40 at the designated line up point before attending any other activities or interventions.

Where absence is unavoidable, pupils are responsible for catching up on missed work and should contact their subject teachers via school email if further guidance is needed on tasks set through online platforms.

Pupils are also encouraged to speak to their Form Tutor or Pastoral Support Officer (PSO) if they have any concerns about their education or school life that may affect their attendance, so that appropriate support can be provided.

We ask that pupils work cooperatively with school at all times to ensure they benefit from the significant importance of good attendance. However, if pupils fail to attend on a regular basis without good reason, then the school will initiate a staged response which may include phone calls, home visits, meetings in school, attendance contracts, fines and legal intervention.

Expectations on the Senior Attendance Champion and SLT (Senior Leadership Team)

To lead and embed a strong whole-school culture of excellent attendance, providing strategic oversight and direct line management of the Attendance Team.

To chair regular Attendance Team meetings, ensuring that daily and weekly actions are closely monitored and consistently implemented.

To work collaboratively with pastoral leaders and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) to track and support vulnerable pupils, including those in alternative provision.

To maintain a comprehensive understanding of all complex attendance cases, ensuring effective and timely intervention.

To present accurate and insightful attendance data to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and governors, termly, to support accountability and continuous improvement.

To rigorously review and refine attendance policies and procedures to ensure compliance, consistency, and impact.

To line manage the Attendance Team and Attendance Mentor directly and be the operational and strategic attendance link to the pastoral teams and teaching staff.

The Headteacher will consider requests for leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances; in line with Department for Education guidance, term-time holidays will not normally be authorised.

To provide strategic direction and oversight of 'Attend' which is our primary School Attendance Management system, ensuring it is used effectively to drive attendance improvement across the school.

Expectations on Attendance Team staff:

The Attendance Administrator is responsible for recording and processing absence information accurately and without delay, ensuring all communications from parents/carers are actioned promptly.

Late arrivals must be monitored at reception by the Attendance Officers, with records maintained and sanctions applied consistently in line with school policy. The team will actively check and follow up on AM and PM registers, addressing missing marks and ensuring all registers remain accurate and compliant with legal requirements.

The team will follow daily absence procedures include issuing notifications from 9:45am, followed by timely follow-up for any non-response or insufficient explanations. Particular priority is given to vulnerable pupils, with swift escalation of concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and relevant external agencies where necessary.

The team will maintain close oversight of attendance for all pupils, including those in alternative provision, ensuring daily contact and accurate reporting. Home visits will be carried out where appropriate, particularly from day five of absence, or earlier for vulnerable pupils. The Attendance Officers will use EBSA strategies as appropriate and hold regular attendance support meetings with parent/carers as well as Attendance Panel meetings. Some of these meetings may be in conjunction with the Pastoral team.

The team will use robust monitoring systems will be used to track attendance patterns, including persistent absence, with appropriate interventions implemented and recorded. This includes issuing stage letters, managing penalty notice processes, and working closely with pastoral teams to support reintegration and sustained improvement using ARK and other reintegration strategies.

Strong partnerships with parents/carers are essential; the team will communicate clearly, build positive relationships, and provide support to encourage a prompt return to school. All contact and interventions will be thoroughly recorded.

The Attendance Team will ensure compliance with statutory processes, including part-time timetable reporting to the local authority which are done in conjunction with the pastoral team. The Attendance Officers will complete EHAs and School Nurse Referrals.

Regular attendance data will be produced by Attendance Officers and shared with key stakeholders, including Form Tutors, Pastoral Support Officers, Progress Leaders, Senior Leadership Team, and Governors, to inform strategic action and accountability.

In addition, the team will promote a positive culture of attendance through rewards, communication initiatives, and regular updates, celebrating success and encouraging improvement across the school.

Above all, the Attendance Team will work in close partnership with the Senior Attendance Champion and senior leaders to champion and sustain a culture of excellent attendance.

Expectations on the Attendance Mentor

The Attendance Mentor will be line managed by the Attendance Champion and will work collaboratively with Form Tutors and Progress Leaders as well as with the Attendance Team and Pastoral Support Officers to ensure planned attendance interventions are implemented effectively and consistently.

Build strong, positive relationships with pupils, fostering a culture of belonging that supports engagement and regular attendance.

Identify target groups and provide targeted mentoring and support for pupils at risk of persistent absence, developing personalised plans and delivering one-to-one or small group interventions to address barriers and build confidence.

Use weekly attendance data proactively to monitor trends, identify at-risk pupils, and ensure timely, evidence-based interventions.

Actively promote excellent attendance through assemblies and form-time activities, reinforcing expectations and celebrating success.

Implement focused strategies to improve attendance within targeted groups, including rewards, mentoring, and close partnership with pastoral staff.

Support the successful reintegration of pupils returning from prolonged absence, ensuring a smooth transition back into school and sustained engagement.

Expectations on the Pastoral Team

Progress Leaders will use weekly, half-termly, and termly attendance data to monitor trends across their year group, identify patterns of absence, and address barriers to attendance promptly. Progress Leaders are responsible for identifying and coordinating effective pastoral support, and evaluating its impact through ongoing analysis of attendance data.

Progress Leaders will actively promote a culture of excellent attendance through assemblies, form time, rewards initiatives, and regular communication, celebrating success and reinforcing expectations.

Progress Leaders will provide targeted mentoring to pupils with poor or declining attendance. This includes setting clear, short-term targets, implementing strategies for improvement, and maintaining regular check-ins.

Progress Leaders will ensure attendance will remain a priority focus, featuring regularly in tutor meetings, with Progress Leaders fostering a positive and aspirational attendance culture across their year group. Attendance data will also be used to inform fair and consistent decisions regarding eligibility for rewards and trips.

Progress Leaders will hold structured conversations with pupils whose attendance falls below key thresholds, meet with identified pupils regularly, and engage parents/carers early to build strong partnerships and maintain focus on improvement.

Pastoral Support Officers will work closely with the Attendance Team, they will ensure all processes are implemented consistently and rigorously, including, where appropriate, accompanying home visits, school attendance meetings and ensuring pupils receive the right balance of support and challenge.

Pastoral Support Officers will take timely and appropriate action, including meeting with pupils and parents/carers and engaging external agencies where necessary, to help reverse declining attendance and secure sustained improvement.

Expectations on the Form Tutor

Tutors will play a key role in promoting excellent attendance through consistent reinforcement, ensuring pupils understand expectations and are motivated to achieve them. This includes fostering a positive, aspirational culture where forms strive to achieve the highest attendance standards. Promote a clear understanding of what excellent attendance looks like, and foster a sense of healthy competition by encouraging pupils to strive to be the highest-attending form in their year and the school.

Form Tutors are responsible for ensuring registers are completed accurately straight after the prayer in morning form time session and maintained promptly throughout. Pupils arriving after 8:40am must be recorded as late, reinforcing the importance of punctuality.

Form Tutors will actively monitor and provide additional support to pupils who have now dropped below the expected level of 97%. Parents/carers of these pupils will be contacted at the outset by phone and as necessary to offer support, discuss concerns, explain the impact of their absence and the importance of catching up the work, as well as building strong, supportive relationships, with follow-up communication to recognise and encourage improvement.

Form time should be delivered with professionalism and enthusiasm, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where all pupils feel valued and a strong sense of belonging is established. Pupils should be supported to track their attendance regularly and engage with wider attendance initiatives and resources across the school.

Tutors are expected to hold timely and purposeful conversations with pupils whose attendance falls below key thresholds, encouraging improvement and recognising success. They should also reinforce messages around attendance stages, support pupils in responding to attendance targets, and utilise designated form time opportunities to embed these practices effectively.

Ensure pupils regularly update their Personal Attendance Records on a weekly basis, and direct them to relevant attendance information and resources displayed around the school.

Expectations on all staff:

All staff are responsible for completing registers accurately on Synergy within five minutes of the start of lesson or straight after the prayer in morning form time.

Registers must be kept up to date throughout the lesson, including recording late arrivals where the number of minutes late should be detailed or pupils returning from appointments.

Any student who has been marked present but is subsequently unaccounted for must be reported immediately to on-call staff via the LSU safeguarding system.

All staff are expected to actively promote and uphold the school's culture of excellent attendance at all times. Staff should make regular references to the multiple benefits of attending well such as improved exam grades, future prospects and overall wellbeing whenever appropriate and in all pupil and parent/carers meetings.

Staff must also respond promptly and appropriately to messages within the attendance system to support effective communication and safeguarding.

Subject teachers will actively monitor the progress of pupils with current or previous attendance concerns, recognising the impact attendance has on achievement. They will work collaboratively with the Pastoral and attendance Team to address attendance-related barriers, ensuring timely intervention and support to help pupils fully engage and succeed in their subject. They will give missed work to pupils to ensure that curriculum impact is minimised.

ATTENDANCE STAGES AND INTERVENTIONS

Percentage/Stage	Intervention
97%+ Green Form tutor monitors	Pupils are currently achieving the school target of 97%. Pupils will receive regular praise messages and other initiatives to reward their excellent attendance.
93-97% Yellow – Stage 1 Form tutor monitors and actions target pupils	Pupils' parent/carers are notified by letter that their attendance has dropped below the school target of 97%. Pupils are encouraged by Form Tutors to improve their attendance further to move back into the Green group. Form Tutors will actively monitor and provide additional support to pupils who have now dropped below the expected level of 97%. Parents/carers of these pupils will be contacted at the outset by phone and as necessary to offer support, discuss concerns, explain the impact of their absence and the importance of catching up the work, as well as building strong, supportive relationships, with follow-up communication to recognise and encourage improvement. The Attendance Mentor and relevant Progress Leader will have responsibility for the oversight of this Stage. For safeguarding purposes home visits from the attendance team when pupils are absent are a regular part of our attendance policy.
88-93 % Amber – Stage 2 Progress Leader and Attendance Mentor monitors and actions pupils	Pupils' parent/carers are notified by letter that their attendance has dropped again below the threshold of 93% meaning they are becoming a concern and close to PA (Persistently Absent) which is sub 90% attendance and impacts academic progress substantially. Pupils are met at least twice per half term and monitored by Progress Leaders. The parents of these pupils will be contacted by the Progress Leader by phone or they may ask Parent/Carers to attend a school meeting to explain the impact of the pupil's absence and explore any support which may be appropriate. Pupils are given targets to improve and encouraged through rewards and initiatives to move back up to the Yellow Stage 1 group. Progress Leaders will send a message at the end of the half term to recognise and reward where appropriate any improvement. The Attendance Mentor will have responsibility for the oversight of this Stage For safeguarding purposes home visits from the attendance team when pupils are absent are a regular part of our attendance policy.

Sub 80-88% Red – Stage 3 Attendance team monitors and actions target pupils	Pupils' parent/carers are notified by letter that their attendance has dropped again below the threshold of 88% meaning they are now a substantial attendance concern. Parents/Carers will be invited into school for a attendance support meeting. Pupils will be monitored closely by our Attendance team on a daily basis and given targets to improve and encouraged through rewards to increase attendance above 90% as an initial priority. If there is no improvement in attendance following the attendance support meeting then pupils' parent/carers are notified by letter that their attendance has dropped again and will be invited into school to draw up an attendance contract and implement any further support. The legal intervention process will also be explained during this meeting. Pupils within this category are at risk of local authority action unless improvements in attendance are made. This enforcement process includes penalty notices and prosecutions. The Senior Attendance Champion will have responsibility for the oversight of this Stage For safeguarding purposes home visits from the attendance team when pupils are absent are a regular part of our attendance policy.
50-80% – Stage 4 Attendance team monitors and actions target pupils	Pupils' in this stage are now chronically absent from school and the measures above will continue. Pupils will be monitored closely by our Attendance team on a daily basis, offered a comprehensive support plan and given targets to improve and encouraged through rewards to increase attendance. The Senior Attendance Champion will have responsibility for the oversight of this Stage For safeguarding purposes home visits from the attendance team when pupils are absent are a regular part of our attendance policy.
0-50% – Stage 5	Pupils' in this stage are now classed as Severely Absent SA and the measures above will continue. Pupils will be monitored closely by our Attendance team on a daily basis, offered a comprehensive support plan and given targets to improve and encouraged through rewards to increase attendance. The Senior Attendance Champion will have responsibility for the oversight of this Stage For safeguarding purposes home visits from the attendance team when pupils are absent are a regular part of our attendance policy.

School Attendance Contacts

- **Mr Coyle** – Senior Attendance Champion
- **Ms Vipond/Mr Gargrave** – Attendance Officers
- **Mrs Plawecki** – Attendance Administrator

All attendance staff can be contacted using the Synergy portal

School Attendance Legal Team (SALT)

Where pupils fail to attend school regularly, SALT may take legal action at the school's request. This can include Penalty notices and Prosecutions

Children Missing Education (CME) Team

The CME team ensures the local authority meets its duty to identify children not registered at school and not receiving appropriate education. Schools must make reasonable efforts, including home visits, to locate pupils who stop attending before referring them to the CME team.

Types of Absence

All absences are recorded as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Parents/carers must always provide a reason for absence. The school will work with families and external agencies where needed to understand and address absence.

Authorised absences include:

- Illness where pupils are too poorly to attend school
- Medical or dental appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours
- Emergencies or unavoidable circumstances

Evidence should be provided where possible.

Unauthorised absences are those the school considers unreasonable. Continued unauthorised absence may lead to legal action. Examples include:

- Keeping a child off school without good reason
- Truancy
- Unexplained absences
- Late arrival after registers close
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, or childcare
- Absences where parents/carers do not agree with school decisions or policy
- Unapproved holidays or days off

The Head Teacher makes the final decision on whether an absence is authorised. Additional evidence (e.g., appointment cards or prescriptions) may be requested. Parents should not request GP sick notes for school absences. Schools can only approve term-time leave in **exceptional circumstances**. Requests must be made in advance using the appropriate form and be approved by the Head Teacher before booking. Unauthorised leave may result in penalties or legal action.

If a child is reluctant to attend school, parents should contact the school promptly so support can be provided.

Religious Absence

One day per religious festival will be authorised. Additional leave requires prior approval and will only be granted in exceptional cases

Sporting Events

Leave may be granted for participation in major sporting events at the Head Teacher's discretion. Consideration will be given to the frequency and duration and continuity of education

Late Arrival

- Pupils arriving after 8:40am must sign in at reception
- Marked as:
- **L** – Late but present, 3 late arrivals in one half term is a one-hour after-school detention and a one-hour after-school detention for each subsequent late after this.
- **U** – Late after register closes counts as an unauthorised absence and is subject to the normal attendance policy.

Medical Needs

The school will support pupils with medical conditions to minimise absence and may arrange alternative provision if required.

School Refusal

The school will not accept refusal as a valid reason for absence and will work with families and external services to resolve issues.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices may be issued for:

- Unauthorised holidays
- Leave taken without approval
- Repeated unauthorised absences

Alternative Provision

Pupils may attend alternative provision for reasons such as:

- Medical needs
- Behaviour support

Parents will be formally notified where required.

Appendix: School Attendance and the Law

School attendance is governed by a range of legislation and statutory guidance that places clear responsibilities on parents/carers, schools, and local authorities. The following provides an overview of the key legal framework underpinning this policy.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Under Section 7 of the *Education Act 1996*, parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and any special educational needs, either through regular school attendance or otherwise. Failure to ensure regular attendance may constitute an offence under Section 444 of the Act, unless specific statutory defences apply (e.g. authorised absence, illness, or unavoidable circumstances). The legal definition of “parent” includes all natural parents, as well as any individual with parental responsibility or care of the child.

Compulsory School Age

A child becomes of compulsory school age from the start of the term following their fifth birthday and remains so until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which they turn 16.

School Responsibilities

Schools are required to: Maintain accurate attendance and absence records in line with statutory guidance (*Working Together to Improve School Attendance*, DfE, 2024).

- Safeguard pupils and follow up all unexplained absences promptly.
- Share attendance data with local authorities and the Department for Education.
- Notify the local authority when pupils join or leave the school roll.
- Publish attendance data as required and report concerns regarding individual pupils.
- Ensure all personal data is handled in accordance with the *Data Protection Act 2018*.
- Support pupils with medical needs and those facing barriers to attendance, in line with equality legislation.

Leave of Absence and Term-Time Holidays

In line with national regulations, leave of absence during term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays do not normally meet this threshold.

Legal Interventions

Where attendance concerns persist and absences are unauthorised, schools and local authorities may take legal action under relevant legislation, including penalty notices and prosecution.

Additional Considerations

Schools must also:

- Follow regulations regarding children missing education (CME).
- Support pupils returning from prolonged absence.
- Ensure compliance with legislation relating to performances, school registration, and the structure of the school day.

- Take account of their duties under the *Equality Act 2010* and the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* when addressing barriers to attendance.