

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School



**We aspire that through the love of Jesus everyone should
“have life and have it to the full.”
Jn. 10v10**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: December 2025
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INTRODUCTION

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Our Mission:

**We aspire that through the love of Jesus everyone should
"have life and have it to the full."**

In order to fulfil the school's mission, high attendance at school is not just valuable, it is essential. It is important that our children are able to use the gifts God gave them to enhance their life both in and out of school.

1. Aims

- Promote good attendance and lead to a positive culture of attendance at schools/colleges and the work place
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled and therefore to maximise opportunities to achieve their potential
- Early intervention to address patterns of absence
- Build strong relationships with families and ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Facilitate good relationships with peers
- Promote a full involvement in the life of the school

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of:

- [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (DfE 2022, updated August 2024)
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE 2022)
- Reference 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
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Appointing a link governor to review attendance data termly with the Headteacher

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance: Mrs K Weston

The designated senior leader for attendance is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The designated senior leader can be contacted via the school office on 01432 274814 or by email admin@our-ladys.hereford.sch.uk

3.4 The attendance officer: Mrs Moverley

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing half-termly attendance reports to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Mrs Moverley can be contacted via the school office on 01432 274814 or by email at fmoverley@our-ladys.hereford.sch.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance twice daily, once at 8.50 am and again at 1.00 pm daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 8.55 am and by 1.05 pm daily.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Accept communication from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Make first day absence calls where parents have not communicated this
- Pass information to the attendance officer in order that they can gain further information on absences and follow up where there is ongoing concern.

3.7 Parents/carers

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is the parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that the school does not authorise creates an offence in law.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day (8.50 am to 3.20pm) and arrives on time
- Telephone/email the school to report their child's absence before 8.50 am 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. School request that parents keep school updated with any change of address and contact numbers
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Provide evidence of medical appointments and absences to support appointments, failure to do so may result in the absence being unauthorised.
- Request in writing any planned absences at least 6 weeks in advance and only request a leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day and arrive on time.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

The school will:

- keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.
- take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark 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 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

The school will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

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

- The register for the morning is taken at 8.50 am, after which a pupil will be marked as 'Late'.
- 'Late' marks contribute to unauthorised absences and will be recorded daily
- A child arriving after 9.25 will be marked as absent.
- The afternoon register is taken at 1.00 pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence every morning of an unplanned absence by 8.55 am or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school office (01432 274814 or admin@our-ladys.hereford.sch.uk) staff (see also section 7).

Following a period of absence, the parent/carer must write a letter/email to explain reasons for absence. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask for a medical note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified.

See point 5.2 below.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides evidence. In this event parents should:

- Phone: 01432 274814
- Email: admin@our-ladys.hereford.sch.uk
- Send copy of letter to the school.

Parents/carers are asked to make all 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. Evidence of all appointments in the form of text messages/emails/letters will always be requested.

The pupil's parent/carer 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.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Where a pupil arrives late:

- The register for the morning is taken at 8.50 am, after which a pupil will be marked as 'Late.' All lateness is recorded daily.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised and coded U This mark shows them to be on-site but is legally recorded as an unauthorised absence. The courts will require this information should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded M, if proof of an appointment is provided.
- A child arriving after 9.20am will be marked as absent.
- The afternoon register is taken at 1.00 pm.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day and each day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts and staff are concerned as to the safety and care of a pupil, a home visit may be carried out or Social Care or the Police may be contacted.
- 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

At Our Lady's school, every effort will be made to support parents to ensure their child attends school. Some examples of support are:

- Establishing a 'Meet and Greet' for a pupil each morning, where there is reluctance to attend.
- Additional pastoral support for a pupil to find out reasons for reluctance to attend.
- Supporting parents where there is difficulty in getting their child to school.
- Starting the process of Early Help or parenting support classes.
- Seeking parents' permission to gain access to medical records to authorise or explain absences.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school informs all parents of their child's attendance at the end of each term.

If there are concerns about a child's high absence, parents/carers will be contacted at 'trigger' points (see 7.1).

Intervention and an action plan may be put in place to result in improvement.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be '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.

Applications for leave under 'Exceptional circumstances' must be made in writing to the Headteacher and are defined as follows:

- Significant trauma/illness within the family
- Bereavement of a close family member
- Parental holiday leave restrictions

Reasons that will **not** entitle a family holiday are:

- Affordability of travel during term-time
- Start and end of term – both are very important to each pupil
- Birthdays
- The Headteacher and appropriate governor will consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is

anticipated and, where possible, at least (four weeks before the absence is likely). The '**Exceptional leave of absence request form**' can be accessed via the school's website or from the school office. The Headteacher may request further evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (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

5.2 Legal sanctions

Section 444 (1) (a) of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure that The regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or Penalty Notice, each parent must pay £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 28 days for each child in the family.

If a parent receives a second penalty notice for the same child within a rolling three-year period, they will not be given the opportunity to pay the lower amount and will be required to pay £160 within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within three years of the date the first penalty notice was issued. If the national threshold is met for a third time, (or subsequent times), within the three year period, other action such as prosecution under Section 444 (1) or 444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 will be considered.

There is no appeal against a penalty notice. If you do not pay a penalty notice this may lead to legal proceedings under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996. If found guilty, parents/carers can be fined up to £1000, ordered to pay local authority costs, victim surcharge and would receive a criminal record.

Please refer for guidance:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance
www.herefordshire.gov.uk/schools-education/school-attendance-absences/5

At Our Lady's School:

- Where a pupil has high levels of unexplained absence and when this reaches ten sessions across an academic year, parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the Attendance Officer and Headteacher.
- If a further ten absences occur that are also unauthorised and unexplained, a referral could be made to the local authority and a Penalty Notice could be issued.

It should be noted that a significant number of late arrivals, contribute to absence and a Penalty Notice could then be issued.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- The school accepts that all pupils can become poorly and that results in legitimate time out of school for a short period.
- The school celebrates class attendance each half-term. This is displayed in the school.
- Cases of significant improvement in a pupil's individual attendance will be recognised and celebrated.
- Opportunities are taken to promote high attendance at events involving parents, in the school's newsletter and on the school's website.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring

- Parents are notified termly of their child's attendance when it falls below 95%.
- Communication between the Headteacher and parents/carers occurs at the following trigger points:
 - Below 92%
 - Between 87 and 92%
 - Below 87%
- Where a pupil's attendance falls below 90% without a significant reason known to the school, parents are requested to meet the Headteacher to discuss reasons. In some cases, the link governor may be involved.

If attendance does not improve, the following steps may be taken:

- Early Help referral
- Issuing a Penalty Notice
- Social Care referral

Pupil-level absence 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Hold regular attendance meetings to facilitate discussions with pupils and families and to understand underlying reasons for absences
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Provide access to wider support services to support a pupil/family to remove known barriers and improve attendance

7.4 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.

8. Policy monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated or annually as a minimum.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour policy

Other relevant legislation and guidance:

- www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/
- www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-schoolattendance
- www.herefordshire.gov.uk/schools-education/school-attendance-absences

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	WTISSA reference*	Description	Details
The student is counted as present.			
/ or \	287	Present at the school	
L	289	Late arrival before register is closed	As per school attendance policy, pupil arrives after the register has started but before the register is closed. Consider using "Late Sign In" template to identify patterns of late arrival and offer support to reduce repeated lateness. Refer to "A Quick Guide to code L" below
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.			
B	307	Other Approved Educational Activity	Refer to "A Quick Guide to minute guide to code B" below
J1	326	Interview for employment or admission to another educational institution	Parents should apply in advance to enable pupil to attend interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.
K	291	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority	Pupil is attending educational provision arranged by Herefordshire Council under section 19 of the Education Act 1996. Pupil will have been referred to Inclusion and Engagement Panel Attendance information for schools – Herefordshire Council
P	298	Participating in a sporting activity	Only to be used if at somewhere other than at school, be of educational nature, school has approved the activity and the activity is supervised by someone considered by the school as having the appropriate skills. Schools have responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils whilst attending an approved educational activity.
V	295	Educational trip	Must be supervised by member of school staff. See 'Common register queries' for details.
W	303	Work Experience	Attending work placement arranged by Herefordshire Council or the school as part of pupil's education. Only to be used if at somewhere other than at school, be of educational nature, school has approved the activity and the activity is supervised by someone considered by the school as having the appropriate skills. Schools have responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils whilst attending an approved educational activity.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.			
C	344	Exceptional Circumstances	Schools should seek each application individually which is made in advance of the absence. Generally a need/desire for holiday or absence for leisure/recreation purposes would not constitute as an exceptional circumstance.
C1	317	Participating in regulated performance or undertaking employment abroad	Only if licence has been granted for further information see School attendance and absences information for parents and carers – Herefordshire Council

C2	340	Pupil subject to Part time timetable	Must be reported to Social Inclusion Team, see website for further details. Social inclusion in school – Herefordshire Council
E	368	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Used whilst still on admission register but suspended/permanently excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made. Alternative Provision must be arranged from the sixth consecutive school day.
I	362	Illness	Can be physical and/or mental illness. Parents/Schools should refer to Is my child too ill for school? - NHS for guidance
M	321	Medical/Dental Appointments	Parents should get school permission in advance and pupil should only be out for the minimum time necessary for the appointment. School should encourage the pupil to come back as soon as possible, good practice is to ask parent expected time of return.
R	357	Religious Observance	Refer to " A quick guide to code R" below.
S	330	Study Leave	For a pupil to study for a public examination which has been agreed in advance with the parent. See 'Common register queries' for details.
T	351	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Mobile child and parents are travelling in course of their trade business and the pupil is travelling with them. Consider liaising with GRT Education Support Team Support for teaching minority group children – Herefordshire Council

The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.

G	391	Holiday not granted by the school	See "Enforcement guidance"
N	394	Reason not yet established	Code N can be used whilst ascertaining the reason for absence, this cannot be left on the pupils' record indefinitely and should be updated within 5 school days.
O	397	Unauthorised Absence	Used where no reason has been established or school not satisfied it would be covered by another code.
U	399	Arrived in school after registration closed	Arrived after the time specified in the schools' attendance policy. Session should be the same time every day for no more than 30 minutes.

These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.

D	313	Dual Registration	Refer to "A quick guide to code D" below.
Q	369	Unable to attend because lack of access arrangements	Local authority has a duty set out in regulation 10(12) or (13) to make access arrangements and has failed to do so.
X	334	Non- Compulsory school age pupil not required to attend	Where the pupil is absent when timetabled to attend the school, the absence must be recorded using the appropriate absence code not code X.
Y1	371	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Transport usually provided by school/LA not available and school not within walking distance. See WTTISA for definition.
Y2	374	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Widespread disruption to travel caused by local, national or international emergency.
Y3	376	Unable to attend due to part of school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.

Y4	378	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Whole school closed unexpectedly such as adverse weather. Cannot be used for planned closures.
Y5	381	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Pupil is in police detention, remanded in youth detention, awaiting trial/sentencing or detained under a section of detention. Liaise with pupil's Youth Offending Team Worker.
Y6	386	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	See Working Together to Improve School Attendance for details
Y7	387	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Emergency that affects the pupil, not the parent. Nature of the unavoidable cause must be recorded.
Z	402	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	407	Planned Whole School Closure	Whole school closures that have been planned in advance such as a bank holiday,