



**OUR LADY
OF LOURDES**

CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Pupil Attendance Policy

January 2023



Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Trust 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.
- Working 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 Therese of Lisieux*)

In living out our mission we are guided by our **Catholic Virtues**. They form a common vocabulary with which we can articulate our faith in action.

Follow the example of Our Lady of Lourdes by nurturing everyone in a spirit of compassion, service, and healing.

Our trust will be a place to encounter the **love** of Christ. A place that puts safeguarding, and the safety of all, at the heart of everything we do. We will **respect** the unique dignity, value and worth of each individual and empower those who lead, to lead with **humility**, and with behaviours rooted in our virtues. Our trust will be a place where we help everyone to be happy and healthy and a place where we bring healing to those in need.

Work together so that we can all achieve our full potential, deepen our faith and realise our God-given talents

Our trust will be a place for discipleship. A place of 'Outstanding Catholic Education' for all. Through an enriched curriculum, and the very best teaching, we will remove barriers to learning, and stand in **solidarity** the most vulnerable. Our trust will be a place where we celebrate achievement and where we are **attentive** to the different skills and talents in our community. A place that provides opportunities for all to grow, realise their vocation and achieve the very best outcomes.

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*)

Our trust will be a place where we form Missionary Disciples. A place where we engage in **charitable** works to support and give **hope** to those in our school, parish, and global communities. Our trust will be a place where we have a positive impact on the environment and where we instil in all, the **courage** to be an agent of change. Our trust will be a place where we celebrate 'little acts of kindness' A place where everyone feels valued, cared for and loved. We will be outward facing and work to **discern** partnerships which benefit all.

Date Issued	January 2023
Governors' Committee Responsible:	OLoL Trust Standards Committee/Executive Board
Updates	<p>Dec 2022 – update to letters</p> <p>Nov 2022 – update to include additional local authorities.</p> <p>Additional letters added.</p> <p>Stepped guidance added for clarity.</p> <p>Further exceptional circumstances guidance added.</p> <p>Jan 2022 – updated with off-rolling.</p>
Status & Review Cycle:	Statutory – annual review
Next Review Date:	January 2024
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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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. 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 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The attendance officer - Anne-Marie Bell, supported by Erin Webb and Agnieszka Bebenek

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

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

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an 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 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 09:20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1:05pm.

5. Implementation

This policy received the full agreement of the executive board: February 2022

6. 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.

7. Expectations:

We expect the following from parents/carers;

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- To ensure that they contact their children's school on the first morning of absence whenever their children are unable to attend, as appropriate. This should always be the first day of absence and everyday thereafter until the child returns to school
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework
- To contact their children's school whenever any problem occurs that may affect performance
- That they will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending

We expect the following from all our pupils;

- That they attend school regularly
- That they will be on time and be appropriately equipped for the day.

Parents and students can expect the following from Our Lady of Lourdes Trust;

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- 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
- Education welfare officer working across the academy trust to provide support, advice and guidance to students, parents and carers for all aspects of school attendance

8. Encouraging Good Attendance in School:

Attendance is encouraged in the following ways;

- Accurate completion of registers in school
- Attendance checks at appropriate times
- Recording of good attendance on individual progress reports
- Our school has an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) – James Verran, who works for Nottingham City LA. He offers advice and guidance to help pupils and their families who have attendance issues.
- Establishing a mechanism for supporting those parents and carers who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty attending, including home visits by the education welfare officer if necessary
- 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/weekly 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 during achievement assemblies every half term in school, as appropriate

9. Punctuality

The importance of arriving at school on time;

- Arriving late at school may cause distress for the child, entering class when peers are already settled.
- 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.

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate (DfE Guidance July 2019). Our Lady of Lourdes recommends that the register closes 30 minutes after it is opened.

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.

10. Leave of Absence and Responding to Non-Attendance.

Parents should report absences on the first day of any illness before the start of the day and continue to report on subsequent days. Only persons with Parental/Carer Responsibility can report absences. Parents/Carers can report via their school's Gateway app/School Coms/texting or via email. CMAT Schools will not accept a verbal message from a child. If we do not receive a message, the absence will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

Home visits where pupils don't attend school: When a pupil is absent from school, and no reason for absence is received, the school will contact parents/carers by text message and phone calls. In the event we are unable to make contact regarding the absence, the school

may try other contacts held on a child's record and/or reserve the right to make an unannounced home visit.

Medical Appointments: Parents must notify the school in advance of any medical appointments and provide evidence of the appointment. Wherever possible, medical appointments should be made outside of school hours.

Medical sick notes: where students have had on-going regular absence, medical evidence would need to be provided.

Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT has a structured response for dealing with attendance concerns. When attendance falls below the expected level of 97% close monitoring will be put in place.

We will communicate our concerns with parents/carers if attendance falls below our expected levels. This may be in writing, by telephone or in person – through home visits or parent meetings.

Education Welfare Officer

The St Mary's Academy employs an Admission /Inclusions Officer who communicates with families and offers support to help overcome any barriers that may be preventing a student from attending regularly and on time.

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 (see below)

Nottingham City Council – should a student accrue 10% unauthorised absence over a 10-week period, a request for service, for a Penalty Notice or enforcement action may be made to Nottingham City Council Education Welfare Service.

11. 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.

Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT schools may agree a 'leave of absence' in the following exceptional circumstances:

- for service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education; and
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

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.

- Schools within Nottingham City Council, a Penalty notice will be requested if an unauthorised holiday is taken of 5 continuous days (10 sessions).

Penalties are set at £60.00 per parent per student if paid within 21 days of issue, if not paid within 21 days the fine doubles to £120 if paid within 28 days. Where a fine remains unpaid the matter may be enforced at the Magistrates Court, under Section 444, Education Act 1996. The maximum fine for this offence is £1000 per parent, per child.

Nottingham City Council will not issue Penalty Notices on more than three occasions for an individual child, in an academic year.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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.

Off-rolling:

- *Do not take a pupil off roll until you have confirmation from their destination school.*
- *If the pupil is starting a school in a different country, ensure that you have written permission, e.g. email from the LA to take them off role.*

15. 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.

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

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, truanting 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.

16. 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

- 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

17. 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.