

# Our Lady's Catholic Primary School



## Attendance Policy

**Updated: November 2025**

**Review: November 2026**



The  
**Pope Francis Catholic**  
Multi Academy Company

## 1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)

Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

The [Equality Act 2010](#)

It also refers to:

[School census guidance](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

[Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority.
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources.
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs.
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance.
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **3.2 The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The 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.
- Authorising Oxfordshire County Council to issue penalty notices, where necessary.
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers.
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels.

- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
  - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times.
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days.
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Tara Davies and can be contacted via email to [office@ourladyscowley.co.uk](mailto:office@ourladyscowley.co.uk) or 01865 779176.

### **3.4 The Attendance Officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9).
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher.
- Working with education safeguarding officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher about referrals for fixed-penalty notices.

The attendance officer is Mrs Vivien Hillier can be contacted via the school admin office: 01865 779176 or [office@ourladyscowley.co.uk](mailto:office@ourladyscowley.co.uk).

### **3.5 Class Teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information on Arbor.

### **3.6 School Admin Staff**

School admin staff will:

- Take calls or messages from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on Arbor.
- Follow up any unexplained absences using the procedure, found in appendix 2.

### **3.7 Parents**

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them).

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am 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 and at least 2 emergency contacts for children in Nursery and Reception.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting your child's class teacher in the first instance, who can be contacted on 01865 779176 or a private message on Class Dojo.

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils on this register.

We will take our attendance register at 8.50am each school day and once during each afternoon session at 1pm. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending a place other than school

Absent

Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

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.)

We will also record:

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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.40am with the gates opening at 8.30am. The school day ends at 3.10pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and kept open until 9am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1pm and kept open until 1.10pm.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.40am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school admin staff, who can be contacted on the phone 01865 779176, via the Arbor App or via email [office@ourladyscowley.co.uk](mailto:office@ourladyscowley.co.uk).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

## **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents to make 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.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Our school identifies punctuality issues through weekly tracking by the Attendance Officer and half-termly tracking by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher. We aim to respond to ongoing punctuality issues by working alongside and supporting the family. In the first instance, a meeting is held so the concern can be discussed, barriers to punctuality identified and strategies put in place to overcome them.

#### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

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

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason by 9.15am. If the school has not spoken to the parent by 9.30am, it will attempt to speak to an alternative contact.
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent.
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team officer.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the parents to improve attendance.
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals.

If the parents cannot be reached then the school will:

- Make a doorstep visit (consisting of two members of school staff).
- If they are not able to make contact with the parent of child at the home address, the Police will be contacted and a request will be made for them to complete a 'safe and well check.'

## 4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see the definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels of the Arbor App, during parent consultation meetings in February/March and in the end of academic year report in July.

## 5 Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

### Leave of Absence

The law states a leave of absence may only be granted by a school if an application is made in advance and if it considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. All requests should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and on the leave of absence request form, accessible via the school's website or from the admin office. See appendix 4.

Expectations:

- A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. Permission for a Leave of Absence from a school may only be given by a person who the school's proprietor has authorised to do so (an authorised person).
- Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.
- A need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.
- Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school.
- When making an application for Leave of Absence parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the headteacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify the parents of their decision. The school may also request further information on the application and supporting documentation where appropriate.
- It is advised that if the resident parent has not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is their responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Where applications for Leave of Absences are made in advance and refused, the child is expected to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an 'unauthorised' absence. Where a leave of absence is requested but additional days take either prior to or after the request, they may be considered as part of the leave of absence.
- Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Oxfordshire Attendance Service of Oxfordshire County Council. Penalty notices are issued in

accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices and in the first instance, as an alternative to prosecution proceedings.

The law relating to Penalty Notices changed with effect from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024. Therefore, Penalty Notices issued for Leave of Absence taken from September 2024 will be issued in accordance with the updated legislation. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices – 4 in total).

- First Leave of Absence Offence: the amount of £160 to be paid within 28 days, this is reduced to £80 each child if paid within 21 days.
- Second Leave of Absence Offence within a 3-year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): the amount of £160 paid within 28 days. No reduced amount.
- Third Leave of Absence offence within a 3-year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the matter will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to reward high attendance and not just penalise pupils for poor attendance.

What we do in school:

- Run a weekly attendance league to showcase different attendance percentages per year group.
- Reward additional time on the MUGA for the class with the highest attendance.
- Reward a class with an automatic free breaktime if they achieve 100% attendance in the week.
- Recognise children with 100% attendance at the end of the academic year.
- Recognising the class, per phase, that has the best attendance per half term.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance.
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence.

The following steps will then be implemented:

- **Stage 1 – Early concern / informal contact**  
Attendance falls under 96% or shows worrying patterns. School office contacts the parent informally. Offer support and monitor for 2–3 weeks. Log on CPOMS under attendance.
- **Stage 2 – First Attendance Concern Letter**  
Continued poor attendance (below 92%) or no improvement. Send Attendance Concern Letter and monitor for 3–4 weeks. Update CPOMS.
- **Stage 3 – Attendance Meeting and Action Plan**  
Attendance below 90% (persistent absence). Invite parents for a formal meeting with a member of the school’s safeguarding team. Agree targets and review in 4 weeks. Continue to update CPOMS.
- **Stage 4 – Referral to County Attendance Team (CAT)**  
Ongoing unauthorised absence or no improvement despite support. Refer to CAT. Legal action may follow.
- **Stage 5 – Safeguarding escalation**  
If poor attendance suggests risk of harm, consult DSL and refer to Social Care or Early Help as appropriate.

### 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis.
- Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 9.4 below).
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school’s strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school.
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance.
  - Explain the help that is available.
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence.
  - Review any existing actions or interventions.

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant.
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Tara Davies, Headteacher. 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:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: School Attendance Codes

Code	Full name	Description
<b>The student is counted as present</b>		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
<b>The student is counted as present, at approved educational activity</b>		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
K	Education provision provided by LA	Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.
<b>The student is counted as absent, authorised</b>		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Other Authorised Absence	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Other Authorised Absence	Pupils on part-time timetables
J1	Interview	Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.

T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.
<b>The student is counted as absent, unauthorised</b>		
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.
<b>These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures</b>		
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g., students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
Y1	Unable to attend	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available.
Y2	Unable to attend	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend	Part of school closed.
Y4	Unable to attend	Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures).
Y5	Unable to attend	Pupils in the criminal justice system.
Y6	Unable to attend	Absence due to public health guidance or law.
Y7	Unable to attend	Any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Pupil Not on Roll	This code can be 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.
#	School Closed to Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.

## Appendix 2: Step-by step attendance procedures on the first day of un-explained absence

<b>Time/day</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Morning of the school day	Take the register	Class teacher, cover supervisor, HLTA
After registration	Identify pupils absent without prior notification.	Office admin
By 9am	Text alert the parent from Arbor.	
By 9.10am	First-day response: call the parent/carer. Follow up with email.	Admin office
By 9.30am	Try alternative contact if no response.	Admin office
By 9.40am	Record outcomes on CPOMS and alert SLT or DSL.	Admin office.
By 9.45am	Doorstop visit if safeguarding team has previous concerns surrounding the pupil.	
Day 2-3	Doorstop visit by two members of staff.	SLT/DSLs
Day 4	Contact police and county attendance team.	

## Appendix 3: Attendance Monitoring – example letter to parents



T: 01865 779176  
 E: [office@ourladyscowley.co.uk](mailto:office@ourladyscowley.co.uk)  
 Headteacher: Ms T Davies BA PGCE MA

**Our Lady's Catholic Primary School**  
 Oxford Road  
 Cowley  
 OX4 2LF

*"You are young, you are precious, you are loved."*  
 St John Bosco



Dear Parent/Carer of \_\_\_\_\_

I am writing to you to highlight your child's attendance. So far, this academic year, your child's attendance is:



Unfortunately, this has reached the threshold of:

Concern	√
Serious Concern	
Critical Level	

Your child's attendance will now be monitored by the school's attendance team as it is extremely important that children are in school every day. In the event that you are unsure if your child is well enough to attend school, please send him/her in and if we assess that they are too unwell to attend, we will contact you. Too many absences for illness will be investigated by our safeguarding team to consider any underlying causes.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS			
Please note, one day is two sessions.			
<b>190 days in school</b> (a school year)	<b>16 sessions</b> absent	<b>20 sessions</b> absent	<b>38 sessions</b> absent
	182 days in school	180 days in school	almost 4 weeks of missed education
<b>100% Attendance</b> Excellent record	<b>96% Attendance</b> Good record	<b>95% Attendance</b> Needs to improve	<b>90% Attendance</b> Cause for concern
Well done! Best possible chance of gaining the knowledge, experiences and confidence needed to enable choice now and later in life in order to live a happy, fulfilling life.		We are concerned. Fewer opportunities to gain knowledge, experiences and confidence, possibly leading to reduced choice and happiness later in life.	

If you are struggling and need support, please contact us as soon as possible; we are here to help.

## Appendix 4: Application form for leave of absence



T: 01865 779176  
E: [office@ourladyscowley.co.uk](mailto:office@ourladyscowley.co.uk)  
Headteacher: Ms T Davies BA PGCE MA

**Our Lady's Catholic Primary School**  
Oxford Road  
Cowley  
OX4 2LF

*'You are young, you are precious, you are loved.'*  
St John Bosco



### PARENT APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

I Request leave of absence for (child's name) .....

(year and class) .....

First day of absence .....

Last day of absence .....

Total number of days .....

**Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

These are exceptional circumstances because...

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

I confirm that I have read the section 'Attendance Diamond' and understand that, by taking my child out of school, this may affect his/her achievement.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

#### For use by the school:

Absences to date (days): .....

Percentage Attendance (for the last 12 months): .....

Decision by Headteacher: AUTHORISED / UNAUTHORISED