

Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy



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Statement of Intent

We want your child to thrive in Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School every day. We build strong and enduring relationships because we believe this is the foundation pupils need to fully engage in our community, to feel a sense of belonging and to become the people of God they are called to be.

Every child has a right to access education, and **everyone** is responsible for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality. Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School are committed to providing the highest quality of education to our pupils and we recognise the clear link between attendance and the attainment of our pupils.

The aim of this Attendance Policy is to enable Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School to provide a consistent practice that actively encourages and supports the highest possible levels of attendance for all our pupils. Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School takes a whole-school approach to maintaining regular attendance and to achieve this, all members of our school community have an important contribution to make. It is vital that we work in partnership to ensure that any in-school or out-of-school barriers are removed at the earliest opportunity, this is achieved through early and meaningful support.

We support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly and in addition, promote and support punctuality when attending lessons.

We are committed to taking positive action in the line with the Equality Act (2010) regarding the needs of people with protected characteristics. These are age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and marriage and civil partnership. We make reasonable adjustments to avoid anyone with a protected characteristic being placed at a disadvantage. Our relentless approach to ensuring our pupils attend school and receive the education that they deserve, and are entitled to, is central to our school values.

This policy is supported by policies relating to child protection and safeguarding, anti-bullying, behaviour, inclusive learning, equality, special educational needs and teaching and learning.

It is our duty to strive for a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils so that they can take full advantage of the opportunities offered. It is vital that your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Therefore, this policy has been created to help support the school in effectively managing absences so that our pupils (your children) can make the most of the educational and life opportunities available to them.

In summary, Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School aims to meet its obligations relating to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence by effectively removing the barriers to attendance.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Minimising the disruption caused by late arrivals or non-attendance to the quality of the education and provisions for all pupils.

1 Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all school leaders, staff, parents, and pupils.

- 1.1 For the purposes of this policy, references to 'teachers' include all paid staff responsible for the supervision of pupils.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this policy, references to 'pupils' include all children in Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this policy, references to 'school' refers to all education settings, regardless of type.
- 1.4 For the purposes of this policy and the procedures, we refer to Section 576 of the Education Act which defines the 'parent' of a pupil or young person as:
 - Both of their natural parents, whether they are married or not.
 - Any person who, although they are not the natural parent, has parental responsibility for the pupil or young person, as defined in the Children Act (1989).
 - Any person who, although not the natural parent, has the care of the pupil or young person i.e., a person with whom the pupil lives, irrespective of their relationship to the pupil.

2 Legal Framework

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance 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:

- The Education Act (1996)
- The Education Act (2002)
- The Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2010)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2011)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2013)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (Amendment 2016)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) England) Regulations (Amendment 2013)

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

Responsibilities

- 3.1 All children aged 5 - 16 years must receive suitable education. (Section 7, *Education Act (1996)*). A pupil of compulsory school age who is registered at a school must, by law, attend regularly.
- 3.2 By law, parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that pupils of compulsory school age attend regularly. (Section 576, *Education Act (1996)*).
- 3.3 The Local Authority (LA) must offer educational provision for all children of school age.
- 3.4 By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed or has been notified that the pupil will attend the school.
- 3.5 Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- 3.6 By law, all schools must keep an admissions' register, the contents of which includes all pupils, their personal details, (including at least two telephone numbers for different safe adults, to ensure that we can always contact someone in the event of an emergency), the date of admission (or re-admission), information regarding parents and details of the school last attended.
- 3.7 Pupils will be removed from roll only when they complete their education stage, transfer to another school, move out of the area or emigrate or following a parental request for elective home education. We follow statutory guidance for removing pupils from roll and notifying the local authority. Further information can be found in Appendix 6.
- 3.8 There is a clear link between attainment and attendance. Under **section 444 (1)** of the **Education Act 1996** (EA 1996), a parent commits an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school where the child is registered. We therefore enforce the use of statutory action to encourage and promote attendance, this is done to ensure that all pupils can benefit from their legal right to receive an education.
- 3.9 School will communicate attendance concerns to the pupil's social worker, if they have one or The Virtual School Head, if the pupil is a looked after child. This will be done as soon as there is an attendance concern and immediately upon becoming a persistent absentee. Unexplained absences will also be communicated to the social worker and Virtual School Head, where relevant.
- 3.10 We have a roles and responsibilities framework outlined in Appendix 3 to complement this policy. This defines agreed roles and responsibilities for parents, pupils and staff. This includes the new responsibility for our School Attendance Champion who is Mrs Sue Lloyd.

3 Definitions

- 4.1 A pupil is classed as absent if they arrive after the register has closed or if they do not attend for any reason.

4.2 An authorised absence is when approval has been given in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be absent for a specific (legal) purpose, or we have accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence from a parent or carer. This may include:

- An absence for illness for which we have granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments may be granted leave where every attempt has been made to arrange outside of school hours, has been unsuccessful and so cannot be avoided, or where the appointment is a genuine emergency
- Religious or cultural observances for which we have granted leave. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents or pupil belong. Where necessary, we will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance
- An absence due to a change to exceptional circumstances

4.3 An unauthorised absence is defined as one where we are not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Reasons may include:

- Parents keeping children from attending unnecessarily or without reason.
- Missing sessions before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival after the register has closed.
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed.
- Leaving our school without authorisation during the day.

4.4 Persistent Absence is defined as: 10% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

4.5 Severe Absence is defined as: 50% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

4.6 Persistent lateness is defined as pupils who have five or more late marks recorded in a single half-term.

4 Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

5.1 We recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. We monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year. We recognise that certain groups of pupils may be more at risk of poor attendance and will provide support and assistance wherever possible.

5.2 We set challenging attendance targets for the whole school.

5.3 Pupil-level absence data is collected regularly and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. We compare our attendance data to the national average and to other schools within Our Lady and All Saints Catholic MAC.

5.4 Specific measures are taken to monitor attendance. These processes are embedded and regularly checked to ensure the effective safeguarding of all pupils through specific tailored interventions. Data on attendance is collected and analysed a minimum of once a half term. Key analysis is made of:

- Patterns of absence
- Patterns of lateness
- Patterns of medical appointments
- Correct and consistent use of absence codes
- Trends in reasons for absence, for example, use of the C code, leave of absence and exclusions
- Trends in particular groups of children for example, pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

5.5 Attendance data informs action planning and supports the identification of key priorities in our school development plan and future revisions of this policy. The attendance data will be reported to Mrs Debbie Enstone (Headteacher) and all other relevant staff, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families. Data will also be used by the school to monitor the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies.

5 Reviewing this Policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- As a result of any other significant change or event
- If the policy is determined not to be effective

Appendix 1 - Key Personnel

<i>Headteacher</i>		<i>Mrs Debbie Enstone</i>
Contact Details	Email	<i>S79denestone@ol-wayside.solihull.sch.uk</i>
	Telephone	<i>0121 744 6852</i>
<i>Senior Attendance Champion</i>		<i>Mrs Sue Lloyd</i>
Contact Details	Email	<i>S79slloyd@ol-wayside.solihull.sch.uk</i>
	Telephone	<i>0121 744 6852</i>
<i>Office Manager</i>		<i>Mrs Danielle Chambers</i>
	Email	<i>S79dchambers@ol-wayside.solihull.sch.uk</i>
	Telephone	<i>0121 744 6852</i>
<i>Governor responsible for attendance</i>		<i>Mrs Mary McHale</i>
	Email	<i>G79mmchale@ol-wayside.solihull.sch.uk</i>
	Telephone	<i>0121 744 6852</i>

Appendix 2 Maintaining an Attendance Register

1.1 The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the pm session. It will mark whether each pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

2.2 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 making the amendment

2.3 The school gates are open from 8:30am The school day starts at 8:55am All pupils should be in their classroom at this time.

2.4 The first (morning) registration session starts at 8:55am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their designated classroom by 9:05am. The register closes at 9:05am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend before this time. Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that the pupil is on site, (U) but will count as an absent mark.

2.5 Pupils arriving late should report to the main school office and sign in via pupil register book.

2.6 The second (afternoon) registration session starts at:
Nursery: 1:00pm

Reception: 12:45pm
Year 1: 1:00pm
Year 2: 1:15pm
Year 3: 1:30pm
Year 4: 1:45pm
Year 5: 2:00pm
Year 6: 2:15pm

- 2.7 If a pupil needs to leave school during the day, they must sign out at the main reception with a parent once authorisation has been given from the school receptionist or office staff.
- 2.8 Pupils educated off-site are monitored daily for their attendance at the off-site/alternative provision. Staff work closely with the staff at the off-site provision, the pupil, and their parents to support the pupil to maintain good attendance.

3. Recording Attendance

- 3.1 The national absence and attendance codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the Census. The data helps schools, local authorities, and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for absence. See Appendix 4 for the DfE attendance codes.
- 3.2 Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School will not pre-populate codes and we will monitor the whereabouts of pupils educated off-site, which will include regular safeguarding checks.
- 3.3 Where pupils are dual registered or are taking part in other approved educational activities, the register will be updated following regular discussion and information sharing with the other establishment.
- 3.4 Mrs Lisa Stiles, school receptionist, will check the missing register report and will report any unexplained pupil absent

4. Reporting Absence

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of the parent to inform us of a pupil absence and to inform us of any changes to contact details.
- 4.2 Parents are expected to inform us of their pupil's absence before 8:55am on each day of absence providing the reason for absence and when their pupil will be returning to school. We will contact parents and/or other listed emergency contacts where no contact has been made. Where required, we may conduct reasonable enquiries with friends or neighbours and will carry out welfare home visits as necessary. If no contact is made, we may request a welfare check from the police.

5. Reasons for Absence

5.1 Appointments

- 5.1.1 As far as possible, medical, and dental appointments should be made outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to us prior to the appointment.

5.1.2 Pupils must attend before and after the appointment wherever possible. Should a pupil arrive late following an appointment, they should report to the school office to be signed in.

5.1.3 Absences for medical appointments will be recorded with an M code.

5.2 Religious Observance

5.2.1 Parents must inform us, in advance, if absences are required for days of religious observance. We will authorise absences where a reasonable request is made. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, we will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

5.2.2 Absences for religious observance will be recorded with the R code.

5.3 Illness

5.3.1 In order to make informed decisions about their pupil's fitness for attending parents are encouraged to refer to the NHS guidance 'Is My Child Too Ill for School?'. Any authorisation of absence through illness is done so at the discretion of the Headteacher or member of staff delegated to carry out this task.

5.3.2 In the case of an illness which lasts for five days or more (or four days in the event of an INSET day or Bank Holiday), parents may be asked to provide additional medical evidence before authorising the absence, however this will only be requested if there is any genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. In this instance, if medical evidence is not provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

5.3.3 Where attendance of a pupils is causing concern, we may require medical evidence to authorise any further periods of absence through illness. This will be determined on an individual basis. Parents will be notified of this by letter. Telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent will not be accepted as medical evidence when attendance is causing concern. For the purpose of this policy, 'attendance causing concern' may be defined as: repeated unexplained/unauthorised absences or three separate illnesses within a half term where no medical condition or underlying health issues have been identified.

5.3.4 Acceptable forms of medical evidence include:

- Medical card with one appointment entered with the pupil's name and surgery stamp included, signed by the receptionist
- Letter from a professional such as a hospital consultant
- Evidence of consultation with NHS 111
- Medication prescribed by a GP
- Copy of prescription
- Print screen of medical notes / call log
- Letters detailing hospital appointments Doctor or GP 'sick notes' are not required, and we do not expect parents to request these from their GPs.

5.3.5 In some cases, a pupil may be absent for long term due to an illness or injury. We will liaise with families to ensure children return to school quickly and that there are no

safeguarding concerns. On occasions where this is not possible, and the section 19 threshold is met, we will make a referral to Solihull Local Authority which provides educational opportunities for pupils who are unable to attend their regular school.

5.4 Traveller Pupils Travelling for Occupational Purposes

5.4.1 Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes covers Roma, English and Welsh Travellers, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Circus workers, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers), Showman 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 us, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

The aim for the attendance of Traveller pupils, in common with all other pupils, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act (1944), Section 86, states that a Traveller parent/carer is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e., 200 half days) in a year. It is important to note that this is only relevant when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is regularly attending school when that trade/business permits following a request from parents (and the minimum 200 session criteria is met).

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller pupils is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents/carers of their duties to ensure that their child is receiving a suitable education when not at school.

It is parent's responsibility to:

- Ensure that your child's ethnicity has been registered with the school. You can ask the school to correct this or update it.
- Ensure you tell your child's school ahead of time. 2 weeks' notice is useful.
- Your children should attend as much school as possible.
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child is accessing at least 100 days (200 sessions) of school in any 12-month period.
- To have regular contact with their child's school whilst travelling. Once a week is suggested.
- To support their child to complete the work set by schools whilst travelling.
- If staying in a new area for a week or more, the parent/guardian can register their child for a temporary place at any school – called 'dual registration'.

It is the school's responsibility to:

- Allow Traveller pupils to travel with their parents for work purposes.
- Create work packs for their pupils to complete when away.
- Arrange times for at least a weekly 'check in' with the family. This can be through a call or email.
- Contact the Local Authority if they have concerns.
- Mark pupil's work and provide valuable feedback.
- Ensure missed opportunities such as parents evening, vaccinations and careers advice are supported on the pupil's return.

5.4.2 Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil.

School will:

- Work with parents to improve attendance, be mindful of the barriers pupils face, make reasonable adjustments, and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. It is also expected that parents will engage with the support offered both internally and with external partners to ensure our children have all the support they need to thrive.
- Encourage positive conversations so that a good support plan can put in place including making reasonable adjustments.
- Work with parents to consider whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- Ensure relevant referrals are made for pupils who are too ill to attend school, which may include medical panel (under section 19) and or medical agency support such as CAMHS.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers this may include considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place and consider whether a time-limited, closely monitored and reviewed, phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance.

6 Requesting Leave in Term Time

- 6.1 Absence for purposes of leave during term time can only be authorised by the Headteacher within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations (2006). “Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional.” Under the Regulations, retrospective authorisation for leave in exceptional circumstances is not permitted.
- 6.2 The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional circumstances’ are that they are: ‘rare; significant; unavoidable and short’. Holidays during term time will not usually be considered as exceptional circumstances. The following guiding principles apply:
- Term-times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off a year including weekends and school holidays. We will rightly prioritise attendance.
 - The decision to authorise a pupil’s absence is wholly at the Headteacher’s discretion based on their assessment and merits of each individual request.
 - If an event cannot be reasonably scheduled outside of term-time, then it would be normal to authorise absence for such an event – holidays are therefore not considered ‘exceptional circumstances’. It is acceptable for the Headteacher to take a pupil’s record of attendance into account when making absence-related decisions.
 - We will take the needs of the families of service personnel into account if this prevents them from being able to take family holidays during scheduled holiday time.

- We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special needs and/or disabilities.
- 6.3 Family emergencies need careful consideration before decisions about attendance are made. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the pupil to miss education for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school with support from staff and peers can provide children with stability. The school routine can offer a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty. Relevant members of staff will work with parents to decide what is in the best interest of the pupil.

7 Persistent and Severe Absence

- 7.1 Pupils with 90% or less attendance are classified as Persistent Absence (PA). PA includes both authorised and unauthorised absences.
- 7.2 Pupils with 50% or less attendance are classified as Severe Absence (SA). SA includes both authorised and unauthorised absences
- 7.3 All PA pupils will be monitored by Mrs Sue Lloyd(Attendance Champion). Where there are concerns regarding a pupil's attendance, there will be a bespoke action plan in place to try to improve their attendance to over 90%. Pupils who are PA will be regularly reviewed (at least half-termly) and pupils whose attendance is causing concern, will be reviewed and discussed at weekly safeguarding meetings. Where pupils have an identified special educational need, the schools SENCO will also provide support, so that the impact of needs are clearly understood and appropriate, supportive actions are taken.
- 7.4 The school's strategy for tackling persistent absence, can be found in Appendix 7.

8 Following Up Absence and Taking Statutory Action

- 8.1 We will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason.
- 8.2 Unexplained absences will be followed up on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence and the school will identify whether the absence is approved or not. The school will identify the correct code to use and will input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained. This will take no longer than 5 working days after the session.
- 8.3 In the case where the reason for absence cannot be ascertained by the school and no reason has been issued for the pupil's absence, the school will initiate safeguarding procedures and the DSL will decide on the best course of action to ensure the safety of the pupil, following procedures for children missing in education as outlined in the document from the Department of Education.
- 8.4 Where it is appropriate, a member of staff may carry out a 'Return to School Interview' to discuss the absence and to offer any support. The interview will be carried out by the school's Attendance Champion or a senior member of staff.
- 8.5 It may, occasionally, be necessary to inform parents that no further absences will be authorised for a particular pupil unless medical evidence is provided. This decision will be made by the Headteacher, Mr Ben Taylor, in consultation with the school's Attendance Champion, Mrs Sue Lloyd, and where relevant, the SENCo, Mrs Carol Ashcroft.

- 8.6 It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send children to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence. Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their pupil, where the pupil is of compulsory school age. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher. The Headteacher will consider:
- Guidance from Solihull Local Authority on the issuing of penalty notices.
 - The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year considering.
 - Singular incidences of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
 - Where an excluded pupil is seen in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.
- 8.7 Issuing Penalty Notices: each parent receives a penalty notice for each pupil who has unauthorised absence. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.
- 8.8 Taking Parents to Court for unauthorised absence: The Education Act (1996) Section 444 (1) states that courts can fine each parent up to £1000 per pupil, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.
- 8.9 Taking Parents to Court for Persistent Unauthorised Absence: The Education Act (1996) – Section 444 (1A) states that courts can fine each parent up to £2500 per pupil, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence parents to a period of imprisonment of up to three months.

9 Children Missing from Education (CME)

- 9.1 We have due regard to our statutory duty to safeguard pupils who are CME. We follow the Local Authority's processes for reporting pupils missing from education. [The DfE guide can be found here.](#)
- 9.2 If a pupil fails to return following a period of absence, investigations will be made by staff to their whereabouts. If our investigations fail to contact the parents/pupil the case will be referred to the Local Authority Children Missing Education (CME) Team within 20 days.

10 Attendance Causing Concern

- 10.1 Specific measures to monitor attendance are embedded and regularly checked to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils through specific and tailored interventions.
- 10.2 Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic Primary School records and collects attendance data using our Data Management System, SIMS. We recognise that there are particular groups who nationally, and within our local setting, are more vulnerable and susceptible to lower attendance patterns such as children who are defined as Pupil Premium, and pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities. We work with families to overcome any specific barriers that children may be facing regardless of these needs to ensure that pupils access all their education.

- 10.3 School will report patterns of class attendance via the weekly school newsletter and will report individual pupil attendance approximately every 6 weeks via the Pupil Report Card.
- 10.4 Where attendance is deemed to be a concern, we will talk to pupils and parents.
- 10.5 If the conversation with the pupil indicates a serious safeguarding concern, we will follow our safeguarding procedures as set out in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

11 Supporting the Attendance of Every Pupil

11.1 We use a variety of strategies to encourage attendance such as:

- Building strong and enduring relationships with our pupils so they feel a sense of belonging in our school community.
- Verbal encouragement and praise.
- Create personalised and achievable targets for pupils, based on their medical needs and/or additional needs that is realistic and appropriate for each individual .
- Create safe spaces for pupils to thrive.
- Make decisions on targets in consultation with families, while understanding that a medical condition can worsen suddenly and taking this into account.
- Create opportunities for dialogue with families about attendance, ensuring that we work in partnership with parents.
- Use different methods to encourage attendance; for instance, explaining the links between attendance and outcomes.
- Raise the profile of attendance with families, particularly when pupils start at Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School.
- Teach and model a love of learning, helping families to see the value of the education that is offered to them.
- Look at the effect on attendance of decisions made at school level, for instance ending terms on a Monday or Tuesday and the dates of INSET days.
- Be aware of the complexity of different contexts and the pressures that families might experience, which may in turn contribute to poor attendance; for instance, in areas where many parents perform seasonal work and are unable to take holidays over the summer break.

11.2 We recognise that not all children, particularly those who are most vulnerable, are able to achieve 100% attendance through no fault of their own. We celebrate improvements in attendance and contextualised good attendance for individual pupils.

11.3 Each pupil is supported and encouraged to achieve their individual highest possible attendance. Where appropriate, pupils will be provided with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound) individual targets for their attendance which will be reviewed regularly and will include parental involvement.

12 Ethnic Minority Pupils

- 12.1 Pupil registration regulations states that absence should only be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all.
- 12.2 The following might be considered as exceptional circumstance for ethnic minority pupils:
- Religious festivals: the school should authorise any absence where the parent/carer's religious organisation sets the day as a religious festival.
For example: There are two key festivals in Islam, Eid-ul-Fitr (celebration that takes place at the end of Ramadan, the period of fasting) and Eid-ul-Adha (festival of sacrifice). The dates of these key events are set according to the Islamic calendar. Muslim families usually need to take one or two days to celebrate these important festivals. Absences may be recorded as R.
 - Religious rites e.g. Bar Mitzvah, Holy Communion. The headteacher will consider each request for leave of absence individually to determine the number of days approved.
 - Close family wedding if dates cannot be during school holidays.
 - Illness or death of an immediate family member; the headteacher should consider time needed for the length of journey when child needs to travel abroad.
 - Child, parent/carer requires medical treatment overseas or elsewhere in the UK due to language barrier or requiring specialist treatment elsewhere.
 - Length of journey from abroad; the headteacher will consider length of journey or limited regional flights.
 - Cultural celebrations such as Chinese New Year or Diwali. Cultural celebrations give children a feeling of belonging and make them feel part of their culture. This sense of identity is like a natural buoy for a child's emotional health.
 - Children attending their annual exam in their home country. There are exams which are compulsory in some EU countries. They are normally during holidays but can occasionally be requested during term time.
 - Child, parent/ carer's visa have been revoked and they need to return to their birth country whilst pursuing the renewal of a visa.

Appendix 3 – Framework of Responsibilities

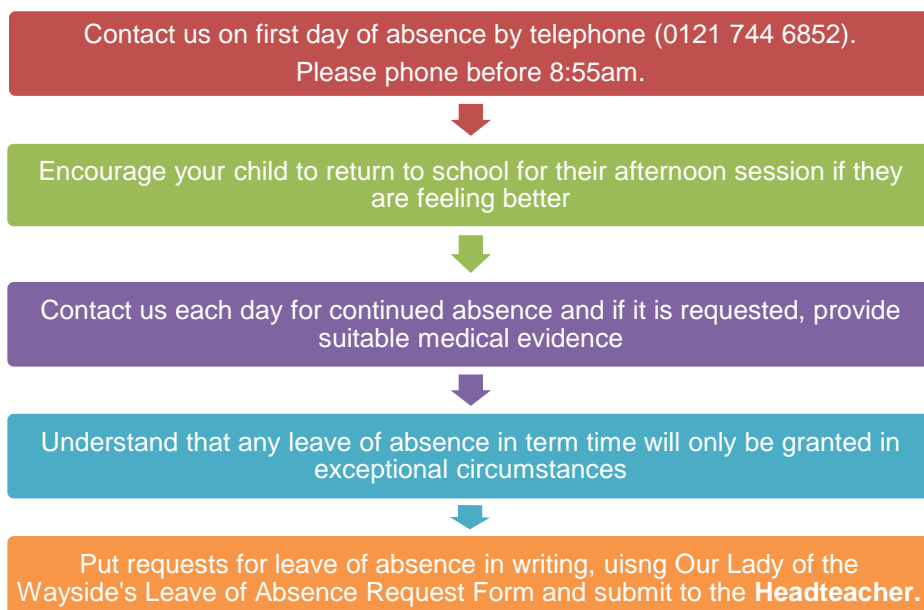
The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, therefore, Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School expects everyone to uphold their responsibilities for promoting attendance at school.

To do this everyone must understand their role in promoting a positive culture of attendance and be clear about what is required of them individually as well as how they need to work together in partnership with others.

Parents

- Ensure pupils attend regularly and punctually.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- Do everything you can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Work with the school and your child to address any in-school barriers to attendance and support their learning by taking an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that you child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that your child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact for your child.
- Provide proof of medical appointments that can only be attended during the school day.
- Make early contact with us when you become aware of problems with your child attending school.
- Attend meetings if attendance concerns are identified.
- Support us in actioning agreed interventions/action plans.

Please follow this process if your child is going to be absent from school:



Pupils

- Aim for 100% attendance.
- Arrive in school on time and be ready to start your lessons at 8:55am.
- Discuss concerns about your attendance or punctuality with a trusted adult in school, especially if you are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on your attendance and/or learning

Staff

- Understand that promoting pupil attendance is the responsibility of all staff. Be curious, aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children say about the barriers to accessing education
- Ensure attendance has a high profile within the school and, where appropriate, your class.
- Ensure register codes are accurately recorded and are taken at the appropriate time.
- Build a culture of challenge when addressing absences with parents. Treat all pupils and parents with dignity and model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school
- Communicate with parents positively. Teachers should discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing. Teachers should challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like (this is outlined in more detail in figure 1 below).
- Escalate attendance concerns as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Report attendance figures on Pupil Report Cards and discuss attendance concerns during Pupil Review Meetings.
- Participate in training relating to attendance as appropriate

School Office

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Where no absent reason has been provided by parents, phone parents (and named contacts) to establish reason for absence. Calls to be made by 10:30am.
- Where contact has not been made by 10:30am, inform Attendance Champion and/or school leader.
- Offer parents support and guidance on attendance where appropriate.
- Monitor pupil absence and share information with the Attendance Champion.
- Monitor and ensure register codes are accurately completed by teachers.
- Ensure pupils who arrive late, or leave school early, are appropriately signed out by an appropriate adult.

School Attendance Champion

- Take a lead in promoting pupil attendance ensuring it is the responsibility of all staff. Be aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children say about the barriers to accessing education
- In partnership with school leaders, develop a clear strategy and vision for improving attendance

- Work with the SENCO, where relevant, to ensure any SEND needs are fully understood, including how these may impact on attendance, and to ensure that the provision in place meets needs and supports good attendance
- Monitor attendance for vulnerable pupils, pupils whose attendance is causing concern and for pupils with attendance below 90%.
- Support all staff to monitor attendance patterns and tackle attendance concerns.
- Conduct regular reviews of attendance data to identify patterns and trends including analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance etc.
- Work with the leadership team to benchmark the school's attendance data against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Provide rewards for improving attendance, punctuality and overall high attendance while not penalising pupils with complex medical or additional needs which impacts on their ability to attend school regularly.
- Set annual school attendance targets with the Headteacher.
- Work on proactively on building strong relationships with families.
- Work with the LA, agencies, and safeguarding partners to overcome barriers to attendance
- Advise the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.
- Attend welfare home visits, where required.
- Escalate concerns when deemed appropriate as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Lead attendance training for staff and governors.
- Communicate attendance concerns to the pupil's social worker, if they have one or The Virtual School Head, if the pupil is a looked after child. This will be done as soon as there is an attendance concern and immediately upon becoming a persistent absentee. Unexplained absences will also be communicated to the social worker and Virtual School Head, if the pupil has one.

Education Welfare Support Officer

Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School employ the services of an Education Welfare Support Officer (currently Anita Gray) to:

- Assist school in the monitoring and analysis of pupil attendance.
- Share and advise school on attendance best practice.
- Support families who child's attendance is causing concern.
- Assist school in safe and well home visits.
- Advise parents on their responsibility to ensure their child regularly attends school.
- Support school with attendance policy and procedures.

Senior Leadership Team

- Take a lead in promoting pupil attendance ensuring it is the responsibility of all staff. Be curious, aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children say about the barriers to accessing education
- Ensure attendance has a high profile across the school.
- Work on proactively on building strong relationships with families.
- Build on a culture of challenge when addressing persistent illness absences with parents.
- Attend welfare home visits where required.

- Escalate concerns where required as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Participate in appropriate training in relation to attendance.
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters and ensure that adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring our school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance e.g., deletion from school roll is adhered to for example.

Headteacher

- Take a lead in promoting pupil attendance ensuring it is the responsibility of all staff. Be aware, vigilant, well-informed and listen to what children say about the barriers to accessing education
- Ensure the attendance policy is implemented consistently across the school
- Ensure attendance has a high profile across the school in all communications
- Monitor school level absence data with the School Attendance Champion and report data to the Local Governing Board and Our Lady and All Saints Catholic MAC.
- Support other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Agree with the Attendance Champion when to issue fixed-penalty notices.
- Decide whether to grant leave during term time for exceptional circumstances.
- Ensure staff have appropriate attendance training.

Local Governing Board

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Review the implementation of the School Attendance Policy.
- Ensure the school fulfil their statutory duties.
- Ensure the importance of school attendance is promoted across policies and procedures.
- Ensure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Discuss the targets for attendance with the Headteacher and review progress towards these at Board meetings.
- Regularly monitor attendance figures through data analysis at Board meetings. Ask questions about attendance trends and be curious about what is being done to challenge and prevent persistent poor absence

Figure 1:

There are 190 school days each year, this means that there are 175 non-school days a year.

Attendance %	Rating	Days absent	Description
100%	Perfect Attendance	0	This is the best chance of success for your child
97%	Good Attendance	5	
Below 95%	Improvement Required	95% = 9 days	Less chance of your child succeeding as it is harder for them to make progress
90% or below	Persistent Absent Attendance is causing concern	30 or more	Your child is likely to have significant gaps in their learning. They are unlikely to achieve as well as they could.

*Persistent Absence is defined as: 10% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

** Severe Absence is defined as: 50% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

Appendix 4 – Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late Arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstance
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study Leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised Absence		

G	Unauthorised Holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
Other		
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel because of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half term/bank holiday

Appendix 5 – Creating a Positive Attendance Culture

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, therefore, Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School expects everyone to uphold their responsibilities for promoting good attendance.

To do this, everyone must understand their role in promoting a positive culture of attendance and be clear about what is required of them individually as well as how they need to work together in partnership with others.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

In summary, we create a positive attendance culture by:

- Focusing on routines, responses, and relationships.
- Exploiting the opportunities to work together with families in a respectful partnership.
- Use data to underpin all attendance strategies.
- Access the school's wider support network, including resources from Our Lady and All Saints Catholic MAC and Solihull Local Authority.
- Ensuring school leaders lead the culture of attendance being everyone's responsibility.
- Ensuring all staff take responsibility; attendance is a common thread running through the school.
- Initiating support and maintaining a relentless focus on parental engagement.
- Being creative, using strategies and systems which work for the individual pupil.

Appendix 6 – Attendance Factsheet – Questions and Answers

Attendance Factsheet with Questions and Answers

Why is it so important for my child to regularly attend school?

We want your child to thrive in Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School every day. We build strong and enduring relationships because we believe this is the foundation pupils need to fully engage in our community, to feel a sense of belonging and to become the people of God they are called to be.

Every child has a right to access education, and everyone is responsible for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality. Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School are committed to providing the highest quality of education to our pupils and we recognise the clear link between attendance and the attainment of our pupils.

Under **section 444 (1)** of the **Education Act 1996** (EA 1996), a parent commits an offence if they fail to ensure their child’s regular attendance at a school where the child is registered. We therefore enforce the use of statutory action to encourage and promote attendance, this is done to ensure that all pupils can benefit from their legal right to receive an education

There are 190 school days each year, this means that there are 175 non-school days a year.

Attendance %	Rating	Days absent	Description
100%	Perfect Attendance	0	This is the best chance of success for your child
97%	Good Attendance	5	
Below 95%	Improvement Required	95% = 9 days	Less chance of your child succeeding as it is harder for them to make progress .
90% or below	Persistent Absent Attendance is causing concern.	30 or more	Your child is likely to have significant gaps in their learning. They are unlikely to achieve as well as they could.

*Persistent Absence is defined as: 10% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil’s possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

** Severe Absence is defined as: 50% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

What happens if my child's is persistently absent (attendance of 90% or below)?

Our Lady of the Wayside School's Attendance Champion will review attendance data of all pupils each half-term (six times a year). Where a pupil has attendance at, or below, 90%, they are classified as being persistently absent. Where a pupil is persistently absent, the Attendance Champion will consider the level of intervention required; Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3. In making this decision, the Attendance Champion will consider:

- Was the absence authorised or unauthorised.
- The reason for the absence e.g. holiday absence, illness etc.
- Pupil's absence data over time, including previous academic years.
- The pattern or trend of absence e.g. is the poor attendance figure due to a block of absence or regular absence over a prolonged period of time.

Level 1 Intervention: pupil's attendance is at or below 90%

- Parents will receive a Level 1 attendance letter informing them that their child has been classified as being persistently absent.
- If a pupil absence includes unauthorised absence, the Attendance Champion will inform parents that future unauthorised absence may result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.
- The Attendance Champion will monitor the attendance of Level 1 pupils on a weekly basis.
- Where attendance is improving, and the pupil's attendance is above 90%, an improvement letter will be issued to parents and the pupil will no longer be classified as requiring Level 1 attendance intervention.
- If attendance begins to cause additional concerns, the Attendance Champion will move the pupil to Level 2.

Level 2 Intervention: pupil's attendance is at or below 90% and is causing some concern.

- Parents will receive a Level 2 attendance letter informing them that their child has been classified as being persistently absent from education and their absence is causing some concern.
- Parents will be asked to contact school to arrange a meeting to discuss their child's attendance and how school can support the pupil and the family.
- The meeting will be chaired by the Attendance Champion. Where possible, the class teacher and the school's commissioned Education Welfare Officer will also be present.
- If a pupil absence includes unauthorised absence, the Attendance Champion will inform parents that future unauthorised absence may result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.
- The Attendance Champion will monitor the attendance of Level 2 pupils on a weekly basis.
- Where attendance is improving, and the pupil's attendance is above 90%, an improvement letter will be issued to parents and the pupil will no longer be classified as Level 2.

- Where attendance is causing additional concerns, the Attendance Champion will move the pupil to Level 3.

Level 3: pupil's attendance is at or below 90% and is causing serious concern.

- Parents will receive a Level 3 attendance letter informing parents that their child has been classified as being persistently absent from school and their child's attendance is a cause of serious concern.
- Parents will be asked to contact school to arrange a meeting to discuss their child's attendance and how school can support the pupil and the family. This will be formalised into an '*Attendance Support Plan*' (ASP).
- Level 3 attendance meetings, and the accompanying ASP, will be overseen and managed by a senior member of staff supported by the Attendance Champion. Present in the meeting will be the Attendance Champion, our commissioned Education Welfare Officer and the class teacher.
- If a pupil absence includes unauthorised absence, the Attendance Champion will inform parents that future unauthorised absence may result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice
- The Attendance Champion will monitor the attendance of Level 3 pupils on a daily basis.
- Where attendance is improving, and the pupil's attendance is above 90%, an improvement letter will be issued to parents and the pupil will no longer be classified as Level 3.

What is the purpose of an Attendance Support Plan?

An Attendance Support Plan will be created to support pupils who are classified as Level 3 attendance. An Attendance Support Plan will include:

- Impact of poor attendance on the pupil
- Current attendance barriers/difficulties
- Strategies to improve attendance
- Parent and pupil voice
- Attendance target

What is the role of an Education Welfare Support Officer?

Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School has commissioned the services of an Education Welfare Support Officer to:

- Assist school in the monitoring and analysis of pupil attendance.
- Share and advise school on attendance best practice.
- Support families who child's attendance is causing concern.
- Assist school in safe and well home visits.
- Advise parents on their responsibility to ensure their child regularly attends school.
- Support school with attendance policy and procedures.

Can I request a leave of absence for my child?

Yes, parents are able to request a leave of absence by completing an Our Lady of the Wayside Leave of Absence Request Form. These are available from the school office and

from our school website. We ask, wherever possible, for parents to provide a minimum of two weeks notice.

Absence for purposes of leave during term time can only be authorised by the Headteacher within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006). "Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the

circumstances are exceptional." Under the Regulations, retrospective authorisation for leave in exceptional circumstances is not permitted. Headteachers can also determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are: 'rare; significant; unavoidable and short'. Holidays during term time will not usually be considered as exceptional circumstances. The following guiding principles apply:

- Term-times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off a year including weekends and school holidays.
- The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is wholly at the Headteacher's discretion based on their assessment and merits of each individual request.
- If an event cannot be reasonably scheduled outside of term-time, then it would be normal to authorise absence for such an event – holidays are therefore not considered 'exceptional circumstances'. It is acceptable for the Headteacher to take a pupil's record of attendance into account when making absence-related decisions.
- We will take the needs of the families of service personnel into account if this prevents them from being able to take family holidays during scheduled holiday time.
- We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special needs and/or disabilities.

Can I request a leave of absence for my child for a religious festival or a religious rite?

Yes, the following might be considered as exceptional circumstance:

- Religious festivals: the school should authorise any absence where the parent/carer's religious organisation sets the day as a religious festival. For example: There are two key festivals in Islam, Eid-ul-Fitr (celebration that takes place at the end of Ramadan, the period of fasting) and Eid-ul-Adha (festival of sacrifice). The dates of these key events are set according to the Islamic calendar. Muslim families usually need to take one or two days to celebrate these important festivals. Absences may be recorded as R.
- Religious rites e.g. Bar Mitzvah, Holy Communion. The Headteacher will consider each request for leave of absence individually to determine the number of days approved.
- Close family wedding if dates cannot be during school holidays.
- Illness or death of an immediate family member; the Headteacher will consider time needed for the length of journey when child needs to travel abroad.

- Child, parent/carer requiring medical treatment overseas or elsewhere in the UK due to language barrier or requiring specialist treatment elsewhere.
- Cultural celebrations such as Chinese New Year or Diwali. Cultural celebrations give children a feeling of belonging and make them feel part of their culture. This sense of identity is like a natural buoy for a child's emotional health.
- Children attending their annual exam in their home country. There are exams which are compulsory in some EU countries. They are normally during holidays but can occasionally be requested during term time.
- Child, parent/ carer's visa have been revoked and they need to return to their birth country whilst pursuing the renewal of a visa.

Can I request an authorised leave of absence for my child for an educational event?

Depending on the context and the circumstances, this absence may be assessed as your child being educated off-site and authorisation will be given by the Headteacher. Parents will be required to complete a Leave of Absence Request Form and to provide as much information as possible. School will contact parents in circumstances where this is deemed as a pupil being educated off-site.

My child's leave of absence request has not been authorised by the Headteacher. Can I still take them out of school?

This is a decision for you as their parent. If you decide to go ahead with the leave of absence, your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Each parent can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice by the Solihull Local Authority for their child's non-attendance. The penalty is £60 and this rises to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. There is no right of appeal against a Fixed Penalty Notice. If this is not paid, the Local Authority can proceed to prosecution or withdraw the notice. The Local Authority can also prosecute parents for non-attendance without issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice.

My child is ill, will this absence be authorised?

It can be really tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school when they appear unwell. The NHS has produced some really helpful guidance to assist parents - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

If your child is ill, their absence will normally be authorised. Where there are concerns regarding your child's attendance, school may request additional medical evidence before authorising the absence. If medical evidence is not provided, this may result in this absence being recorded as unauthorised.

Does lateness affect my child's attendance?

The school gates are open from 8:30am and the school day starts at 8:55am. All pupils should be in their classroom at this time.

The first (morning) registration session starts at 8:55am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by 9:05am. The register closes at 9:05am. Pupils who arrive in school after 9:05am, after the close of registration, will be registered with a U code –

present but arrived at school after the close of registration. U codes impact on your child's overall attendance and can result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

When will school share my child's attendance figure?

In addition to persistent absent letters, approximately every six weeks you will be informed of your child's attendance figure via their Pupil Report Card. There is an opportunity to discuss your child's attendance during Pupil Review Meetings.

Parents are able to request a copy of their child's attendance register at any time via the school office.

Appendix 7 – Leave of Absence Request Form

Leave of Absence Request Form

Absence for purposes of leave during term time can only be authorised by the Headteacher within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations (2006). “Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional.” Under the Regulations, retrospective authorisation for leave in exceptional circumstances is not permitted. Headteachers can also determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional circumstances’ are that they are: ‘rare; significant; unavoidable and short’. Holidays during term time will not usually be considered as exceptional circumstances.

Section A: Pupil Information

Name of pupil:
Class:
Date of birth:
Address:

Section B: Leave of absence requested dates

First date of absence:
Date returning to school:
Number of school days that your child will be absent from school:

Section C: Leave of absence category (please tick)

Holiday	
Compassionate leave (e.g. family bereavement)	
Religious event	
Sporting competition	
Music or drama event	
Cultural celebration	
Medical appointment (e.g. planned medical procedure)	
Other	

Section D: Please detail below any exceptional circumstances.

Please include supporting documentation *e.g. wedding invitation, medical appointment letter etc.*

Section E: Parent details

Name of parent completing this leave of absence request:

Relationship to pupil:
Signature:
Date:

For School Use Only

Pupil's current attendance	
Exceptional circumstances apply	
Supporting evidence provided	

Authorised absence	
Unauthorised absence	

Date Leave of Absence Form received:	
Date Leave of Absence Form reviewed:	
Date outcome letter issued to parents:	

Appendix 8 - Letter Templates

Persistent Absence – Level 1 Intervention Letter

LEVEL 1 INTERVENTION: ATTENDANCE – BELOW 90%

As a school, we have a legal duty to regularly review pupil's attendance. Pupils can be absent from school for a variety of legitimate reasons and these can be authorised by School. Both authorised, and unauthorised attendance, is included in your child's attendance figure.

Your child's attendance for this academic year is currently: %.
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Our school attendance systems flags up pupils whose attendance falls below 90%. A pupil who has attendance below 90% are classified as being persistently absent. When this arises, we write to parents to make them aware that their child's attendance is causing concern.

We have included, with this letter, an Our Lady of the Wayside attendance fact sheet and a copy of your child's attendance register. Please note, where a pupil absence includes 10 or more unauthorised absence (equivalent to 5 school days), the School may refer your child's absence to Solihull Council which may result in a Penalty Notice being issued to each parent. The Penalty Notice is a fine of up to £120 for failure to comply with the law on school attendance. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: *'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence.'*

Next Step: Your child's attendance has been classified as intervention **Level 1**. Where a pupil's attendance is classified as Level 1, their attendance is subject to additional monitoring to ensure their attendance improves. If attendance concerns persist, your child's attendance will be escalated to intervention Level 2 and you will be asked to attend an attendance meeting here in school.

We are here to support you and to work in partnership with you and your child to ensure they have great attendance.

Please feel free to contact myself if you wish to discuss your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sue Lloyd
Our Lady of the Wayside School Attendance Champion

Persistent Absence – Level 2 Intervention Letter

LEVEL 2 INTERVENTION: ATTENDANCE BELOW 90%

As a school, we have a legal duty to regularly review pupil's attendance. Pupils can be absent from school for a variety of legitimate reasons and these can be authorised by School. Both authorised, and unauthorised attendance, is included in your child's attendance figure.

Your child's attendance for this academic year is currently: %.

Our school attendance systems flags up pupils whose attendance falls below 90%. A pupil who has attendance below 90% are classified as being persistently absent. When this arises, we write to parents to make them aware that their child's attendance is causing concern.

We have included, with this letter, an Our Lady of the Wayside attendance fact sheet and a copy of your child's attendance register. Please note, where a pupil absence includes 10 or more unauthorised absence (equivalent to 5 school days) the School may refer your child's absence to Solihull Council which may result in a Penalty Notice being issued to each parent. The Penalty Notice is a fine of up to £120 for failure to comply with the law on school attendance. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: *'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence.'*

Next Step: Your child's attendance has been classified as intervention **Level 2**. Where a pupil's attendance is classified as intervention Level 2, we ask parents to attend an attendance meeting. This will be chaired by myself and, where possible, your child's class teacher and Mrs Anita Gray (Education Welfare Support Officer) will be present. The purpose of the meeting is to share School's concerns and to discuss how we can support you, and your child, in improving their attendance.

If I could please ask for you to contact myself to arrange a convenient appointment; please call the school office on 0121 744 6852.

We are here to support you and to work in partnership with you and your child to ensure they have great attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sue Lloyd
Our Lady of the Wayside School Attendance Champion

Persistent Absence – Level 3 Intervention Letter

LEVEL 3 INTERVENTION: ATTENDANCE BELOW 90%

As a school, we have a legal duty to regularly review pupil's attendance. Pupils can be absent from school for a variety of legitimate reasons and these can be authorised by School. Both authorised, and unauthorised attendance, is included in your child's attendance figure.

Your child's attendance for this academic year is currently: %.

Our school attendance systems flags up pupils whose attendance falls below 90%. A pupil who has attendance below 90% are classified as being persistently absent. When this arises, we write to parents to make them aware that their child's attendance is causing concern.

We have included, with this letter, an Our Lady of the Wayside attendance fact sheet and a copy of your child's attendance register. Please note, where a pupil absence includes 10 or more unauthorised absence (equivalent to 5 school days) the School may refer your child's absence to Solihull Council which may result in a Penalty Notice being issued to each parent. The Penalty Notice is a fine of up to £120 for failure to comply with the law on school attendance. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: *'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence.'*

Next Step: Your child's attendance has been classified as intervention **Level 3**. Where a pupil's attendance is classified as intervention Level 3, we ask parents to attend an attendance meeting where an Attendance Support Plan is formulated and agreed for your child. This meeting will be chaired by Mr Taylor (Headteacher) or Mrs Ashcroft (Deputy Headteacher) and will be supported by myself, Mrs Anita Gray (Education Welfare Support) and your child's class teacher. The purpose of the meeting is to share concerns, discuss current attendance barriers/difficulties and agree strategies aimed at improving your child's attendance. These discussions will be formalised into an Attendance Support Plan.

If I could please ask for you to contact myself to arrange a convenient appointment; please call the school office on 0121 744 6852.

We are here to support you and to work in partnership with you and your child to ensure they have great attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sue Lloyd
Our Lady of the Wayside School Attendance Champion

Persistent Absence – Attendance Improvement Letter

LEVEL 1 INTERVENTION: ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT

As a school, we have a legal duty to regularly review pupil's attendance. Pupils can be absent from school for a variety of legitimate reasons and these can be authorised by School. Both authorised, and unauthorised attendance, is included in your child's attendance figure.

<p>Your child's attendance for this academic year is currently: %.</p>
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We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate **NAME** for the improvement in their attendance. As your child's attendance is now above 90%, they are no longer classified as a persistent absent and will no longer receive Level 1 support from school.

We have included, with this letter, an Our Lady of the Wayside attendance fact sheet and a copy of your child's attendance register.

We also wish to thank you for all your effort and support in improving your child's attendance.

Please feel free to contact myself if you wish to discuss your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sue Lloyd
Our Lady of the Wayside School Attendance Champion

Leave of Absence Request - Authorised

Thank you for submitting your recent leave of absence request form in respect of the above pupil.

I write to confirm that, on this occasion, I am able to authorise your child's leave of absence due to the exceptional circumstances that you have outlined.

The absence will therefore be marked as authorised in the attendance register.

Yours sincerely

Mr B.Taylor
Headteacher

Leave of Absence Request - Unauthorised

Thank you for submitting your recent leave of absence request form in respect of the above pupil.

On this occasion, I am unable to authorise your child's leave of absence.

Absence for purposes of leave during term time can only be authorised by the Headteacher within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations (2006). "*Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional*". **Section 444 of the Education Act 1996** states that: '*If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence*'.

This means that children are expected to attend school every day unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are: '*rare; significant; unavoidable and short*'

I have carefully considered your request and do not accept that the absence is unavoidable.

If you decide to go ahead with the proposed leave of absence, (*name of child*) absence of (*how many sessions*) will be marked in the register as unauthorised. Attendance of pupils, both authorised and unauthorised, is regularly reviewed by Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School. Unauthorised absences may result in Solihull Council issuing a Penalty Notice to each parent. The Penalty Notice is a fine of up to £120 for failure to comply with the law on school attendance.

Yours sincerely

Mr Ben Taylor

Headteacher

Absence Illness – Medical Information

In order to be to authorise this absence as illness, can I please ask for you to provide additional information such as medical evidence.

Telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent will not be accepted as medical evidence. Acceptable forms of medical evidence include:

- Medical card with one appointment entered with the pupil's name and surgery stamp included, signed by the receptionist
- Letter from a professional such as a hospital consultant
- Evidence of consultation with NHS 111
- Medication prescribed by a GP
- Copy of prescription
- Print screen of medical notes / call log
- Letters detailing hospital appointments Doctor or GP 'sick notes' are not required, and we do not expect parents to request these from their GPs.

If you are unable to provide additional information, (*name of child*) absence of (*how many sessions*) will be marked in the register as unauthorised.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: 'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence'.

This means that children are expected to attend school every day unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable. Attendance of pupils, both authorised and unauthorised, is regularly reviewed by Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School. Unauthorised absences may result in Solihull Council issuing a Penalty Notice to each parent. The Penalty Notice is a fine of up to £120 for failure to comply with the law on school attendance.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Debbie Enstone, Headteacher