

Our Lady's RC Primary School



Attendance Policy

Date Adopted	Autumn 2017
Last reviewed by Staff	Autumn 2017
Person Responsible	Headteacher
Date of Next Review	Autumn 2020
Version	4.0

Signed: (Person Responsible) **Date:**

Signed: (Headteacher) **Date:**

Signed: (Chair/Governor) **Date:**

"Learning and loving together; we grow with Jesus"

Our Core Values

During our September 2015 INSET day we renewed both our Mission Statement and Core Values.

During the day the feedback from parents, and the views expressed by the children during sessions in the previous summer term played a prominent role in the decisions we made.



Our new Mission Statement is:

"Learning and loving together; we grow with Jesus"

The Core Values that provide the foundation for that Mission are:

Faithful
Nurturing
Respectful

Positive
Forgiving
Honest

Safe
Fair

NURTURE

The School's six nurturing principles sum up our practice and theory. They underpin the context, organisation and curriculum.

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. the importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
4. Language as a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives



Our Mission is represented by this design. As with the statement itself, the logo was developed by all stakeholders, with the children in particular providing the symbolic ideas of **growth – the tree**, **love – the hearts** and **Christ – the Cross**

At Our Lady's, we aim for the stars! Children who attend less, have poor attendance tend to achieve less. The majority of pupils at Our Lady's have brilliant attendance. As a school we aim for 97%. We strive to maximise each child's attendance as we can only directly influence a child's education if they are in school. Please help us to help you support your child, by bringing them into school, communicating with us, telling us about any ongoing issues and making sure that they are here on time.

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential to enable all pupils to gain the maximum benefit from the opportunities provided throughout their education. Improving attendance and punctuality is a vital element of school improvement and as research indicates, positively impacts on the levels of achievement of pupils.

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.'

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DfE Nov 2016

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and, act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parent/carer to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

In response to this we aim to:

- To establish and sustain improved levels of attendance above 97%.
- To ensure that registers are completed accurately, consistently and reliably and that analysis of attendance data is used to provide an effective monitoring system and to inform practice and target resources.
- To identify pupils and groups of pupils whose absence or lateness is giving cause for concern and target resources to work toward the resolution of any difficulties being experienced.
- To reduce the percentage of persistent absentees (attendance 90% and below).
- To promote an effective whole-school approach to the management of attendance where each member of the school community, including staff, governors, parents and pupils are aware of their roles and responsibilities and makes an effective contribution.
- To establish working partnerships with parents, other support agencies and the wider community to address attendance issues.
- To ensure that policy and procedures on attendance and punctuality are effective and applied consistently in practice.

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Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

At Our Lady's R.C. Primary School, we aim to promote and reward good attendance and punctuality in a positive way.

We have best class attendance that is reported to the children in our weekly assembly. We also monitor lateness and the class with the least late marks for that week will receive an additional 5 minutes break time.

Teachers are required by law to take an attendance register twice a day – once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session.

Staff and pupils should regard registrations as an integral part of the school day and an opportunity to greet each other in a polite and appropriate manner.

We ask that parents/carers ensure their children arrive on time for registration.

Where children are late or absent, a good and honest explanation must be offered by the parent/carer. Only a school can authorise an absence. If your child is ill or cannot go to school for some reason, you need to contact the school by telephone no later than 9.30am and/or by letter to tell them. You can also email the school if preferred at enquiries@admin.aspullourladys.wigan.sch.uk. The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence.

The school will attempt to contact parents/carers by phone on the morning of the first absence if no contact has been made by 9.30am, to seek an explanation for the absence. In light of the Coroner's report (case Oct 2016 – see attendance file), in cases where the pupil (or parent/carer) might be particularly vulnerable, the school will send members of staff to the home address (SLT and another) when contact cannot be made.

Please be aware that when a parent/carer telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may be unauthorised.

Keeping your child off school with minor ailments e.g. a slight cold, is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped appointment card, prescription or medicine bottle which must be shown to a member of the school office.

There are only a few valid reasons why your child should be absent. If your child has been away from school without you giving any reason, the school will contact you to find out why. This may be by phone or letter or an invitation to a meeting in school. If we cannot get a reason or gain contact with you, this will be marked down as an unauthorised absence and is also a safeguarding concern. We will then contact Wigan Children's safeguarding Hub (CSH) and then the 'Duty Team' at Social Services, if we feel this is necessary, and may request an official welfare check. Please ensure your contact details are always up to date to avoid this situation.

In cases where punctuality or absence is a concern, we will look to work in partnership with parents/carers to identify reasons for the poor attendance and to support the family until attendance improves.

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Good attendance will be encouraged and recognised by all staff. We will be introducing a traffic light system to help track, support and celebrate great attendance. Letters will be sent home termly indicating your child's percentage of attendance as follows:

- Red: 90% and under
- Amber: 90.1 – 96.9%
- Green: 97 – 100%

Persistent Absence (PA)

From the beginning of the academic year 2015/16 the government reduced the persistent absence threshold from 15% to 10%. This now means that a pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee if they miss 10 per cent or more of their own possible sessions, rather than if they reach a standard of threshold of absence sessions. A guide to Absence Statistics DfE May 2016.

Effect on Pupils and Families

For pupils that are on roll at the start of the academic year, (therefore expected to attend 190 days 380 sessions) who have missed 38 sessions (19 school days) at any point during that year, will now be classified as a PA pupil.

To prevent pupils from falling into this category, the school Attendance and Punctuality manager tracks and monitors pupil's attendance on a fortnightly basis. Pupils are closely monitored and appropriate interventions will be made. This could include letters, phone call, home visits and meetings in school.

Please see Persistent Absence Flowchart appendix.. and Attendance letters in appendix

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) To age, ability and aptitude and
 - (b) To any special educational needs he / she may have
- Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

Section 444 (1) and (1A) state;

(1)If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, their parent/carer is guilty of an offence.

(1A)If in the circumstances mentioned in subsection (1) the parent/carer know that their child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails without reasonable justification to cause him to do so, he is guilty of an offence.

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

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Expectations and procedures for the Early Years

At Our Lady's R.C. Primary School all children under the age of 5 are included and expected to follow the school attendance and punctuality policy. Regular attendance and punctuality for under 5's is essential if children are to achieve their full potential and build solid foundations for a successful learning journey throughout school.

We expect pupils who are under 5 and have a place at School to attend on a regular basis.

If a child's attendance or punctuality falls below the school target of 97% and the school has not received any reasonable explanation from parents/carers regarding their child's absence, normal school attendance procedures and interventions will follow.

Punctuality

Lateness can be very disruptive both for the child who is late and for his/her peers. It impacts on both their social interaction and learning. When a child arrives late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson, this can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of their academic ability.

The school gates open at 8.30am and close at 8.55am, the time that school day starts. After this time children will need to come into school via the main entrance and be registered by a member of the office staff.

Registration is at 8.55am. The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at this time. Entries into school after 8.55am and up to 9.30am will be marked in the register as 'Late' (L). Any pupil who is arriving late on a regular basis, will be followed up with the appropriate intervention. This could include letters, phone calls, home visits and meetings in school.

Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be marked in the registers as an 'unauthorised late' (U). Unauthorised lates are classed as an absence and could result in an Education Penalty Notice.

Parents are expected to collect their child at 3.35pm.

Please see Punctuality letters in appendix 3

Holiday in term time

Time off school for family holidays is not a right. Schools have discretion only in 'exceptional circumstances' to authorise a holiday if they believe it is a genuine reason. Holidays taken in term time will result in the absence being unauthorised and action may be taken for School Non-Attendance by referral to Wigan Council Attendance Enforcement Team which could result in Penalty Notices being issued.

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Education Penalty Notices (EPN)

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. This means that when a pupil has unauthorised absence from school. This means that when a pupil has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more, in any term (where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence) or if their child persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration, their parents or carers may receive any Education Penalty Notice of £60 per parent per pupil if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. The Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution.

This also includes leave of absence which is taken without a prior request being made; truancy, parentally-controlled absence, persistent lateness and leave taken after a prior request has been made and parents/carers have been informed that the period of absence would be classed as unauthorised but the leave is taken regardless of this advice.

Children Missing Education

Schools have safeguarding duties under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.

Where a child has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Please refer to Wigan Children Missing Education Policy

How will 'Good Attendance' be encouraged?

- Accurate, consistent registration and prompt follow up
- Praise from the Headteacher for good/improved attendance
- Welcoming poor attenders back into class in a positive manner
- Informing parents/carers of measures to improve attendance and celebrations of success e.g. letter home, newsletter

Early Help

Intervening early can be critical to achieving positive outcomes for children. The Children Act (2004) states our Statutory Duty to co-operate, it emphasises the need for Local Authorities and relevant partners to work together to meet children's needs. Early Help Assessment is Wigan's response to this statutory duty to co-operate and it replaces the CAF process.

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Wigan Children's Safeguarding Hub is responsible for monitoring and promotion of the Early Help Framework on behalf of WCSB. All children should have their needs assessed holistically and if receiving support over and above the universal provision, this is to be recorded and co-ordinated using the Early Help Framework. This is detailed with the Wigan Children Safeguarding Board Threshold of Need Document. For further information contact CSH 01942 486262.

The Early Help process allows professionals to work with families to identify children's needs at a very early stage. It is designed to draw out the strengths and areas for development within a family. Following an assessment, an action plan is developed then reviewed on a regular basis until outcomes have been achieved.

School will use the Early Help process where a family needs a further support plan following initial intervention – we may also refer to other agencies i.e. Startwell for additional targeted support.

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Appendix 1 - Examples
Authorising absences

REASON FOR ABSENCE	AUTHORISED (or no. of days to be authorised) OR UNAUTHORISED	Comments/notes for discussion – code to be used for absence
Travelling to Morris dancing competition Friday and Monday for weekend competition	Unauthorised absence	
Attending Local Authority 'Music Play Day'	Educated off site	
Attending cycling championship	Unauthorised absence	
Day to travel to cycling championship e.g. Isle of Man	Unauthorised absence	
Travelling to football tournament – request for Friday afternoon to travel to location for weekend	Unauthorised absence	
Travelling sporting tournament – request for a day (or 2 days) to travel to location for weekend tournament	Unauthorised absence	
Head lice (time off to treat pupil – ½ day)	Authorised absence	
Head lice one day or more	1 day authorised absence	
Parent ill and unable to bring child to school	Unauthorised absence	
Unable to travel home after weekend away because parent was ill and unable to drive	Unauthorised absence	
Flight delayed on returning from holiday	Unauthorised absence	
Attending funeral	Authorised absence	
Pupil still upset after funeral	Unauthorised absence	
Pupil upset due to being in trouble at school previous day	Unauthorised absence	
Allegation of bullying – will not let child attend school	Unauthorised absence	
Kept awake during night by new baby/poorly sibling/incident	Unauthorised absence	
Staying off school for 1 day to visit Mum and new baby sibling in hospital	Unauthorised absence	
Pupil didn't sleep well night before	Unauthorised absence	
Pupil tired weekend away/holiday	Unauthorised absence	
Pupil tired after school residential OAA weekend away	Unauthorised absence	
Parent unable to get pupil to school due to poorly sibling at home	Unauthorised absence	
To watch the cycling Tour of Britain passing through	Unauthorised absence	
To attend 'Britain's Got Talent' audition		
Brother/relative passing out in Army	1 day authorised absence	
Parent or sibling graduation ceremony	1 day authorised absence	
Travelling to London as parent participating in London Marathon in aid of charity	Unauthorised absence	
Death of mother/father/sibling	Authorised absence	
Religious festival	1 day authorised absence	

USEFUL LINKS SECTION

REGISTER AND ADMISSION ROLL KEEPING

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Attendance Targets

The legal requirements are found in:

The education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007

Guidance documents on attendance/safeguarding/exclusion

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities).

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration regulations).

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website;

Working together to Safeguard Children

Children Missing Education statutory guidance from the DfE

Keeping Children safe in Education

Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units

Local Authority Supported Transfer Protocol

PUNCTUALITY MEETING

Dear Parent/Carer of (enter child's name),

During a weekly register check I have noted your child has arrived late on a number of occasions.

The school doors open at 8:45am and registration begins promptly at 8:55am.

Between (date) and (date) you child arrived late on () occasions.

When a child arrives late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson, this can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of their academic ability.

We understand that your child may be late as a 'one off' but persistent lateness is not acceptable.

We are concerned that you child's punctuality has fallen to (xx%) and I would like to discuss this with you in more detail.

Please come into school on (date/time)

Yours sincerely,

INVITE TO EARLY HELP

Dear Parent/Carer of (enter child's name),

I would like to invite you to an Early Help meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is to complete an Early Help Assessment, identify any support you may need and devise an Action Plan focussed around your child's needs.

If it is identified that you require a more targeted service, we will call a Team Around the Child meeting (TAC) and invite the appropriate agency to contribute towards meeting your child's needs.

Please come to school on (insert date/time)

Yours sincerely,

ATTENDANCE REQUIRE IMPROVEMENT

Dear Parent/carer of (enter child's name)

During a routine attendance check of all children, it was noted that your child has been absent on a number of occasions in recent weeks.

Between (date) and (date) your child was absent on () occasions.

I am aware that you have let school know the reasons for these absences however, regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning, and as I am sure you are aware it is a legal requirement. Good attendance enable pupils to keep up with the work required.

The table below shows how absence impacts upon attendance each term and over the year.

Attendance Percentage	Day Missed over an average school term (approximately)	Days missed over a school year (approximately)
100%	0	0
95%	3.5	9.5
90%	6.5	19
85%	10	28.5

I will continue to monitor your child's attendance and look forward to seeing an improvement. If we can support you in any way at this stage, please come into school and a member of the school office staff will assist you further.

Where there is a medical issue, please ensure we have relevant doctor's notes and appointment details so we can authorise the absences. Should attendance fail to improve, we may request that you attend a meeting in school to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

ATTENDANCE MEETING

Dear Parent/Carer of (enter child's name),

During a routine attendance check of all at school, I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance has now dropped below the school target of 97% and is currently (insert percentage) which is starting to cause us concern. I am sure you are aware that attendance below 90% is now classed as Persistent Absence and may result in involvement from the Local Authority.

In order to ensure that we work together to improve your child's attendance this year, I would like you to attend a meeting in school at (time and date). At this meeting, we will be able to look in detail at your child's attendance pattern and agree on a way forward to ensure that we see this figure improve.

Please come to school on (date/time).

Yours sincerely,

PUNCTUALITY REQUIRE IMPROVEMENT

Dear Parent/carer of (enter child's name),

During a weekly register check I have noted you child has arrived late on a number of occasions,

The school doors open at 8:45am and registration begins at 8:55am.

Between (date) and (date) your child arrived late on () occasions.

When a child arrives late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson, this can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of their academic ability.

The table below shows how punctuality impacts upon attendance over one academic year.

Minutes Late per day	Days lost (over 1 full academic year)
5	3
10	6.5
15	10
20	13
30	19

We understand that a child may be late as a 'one off' but persistent lateness is not acceptable.

Your child's punctuality is beginning to cause us concern and we look forward to seeing this improve over the coming weeks. If we can support you in any way at this stage, please come in to school and a member of the school office staff will assist you further.

Should your child's punctuality fail to improve, we may request that you attend a meeting in school to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,