

# Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

## Letter 1: Start of the academic year – pupils of compulsory school age

### Attendance

Dear Parents and Carers,

The schools of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust are committed to working in partnership with pupils, parents and carers to promote regular and punctual attendance. Good attendance supports pupils' learning, progress, wellbeing and sense of belonging.

Occasional days of absence can accumulate over the school year. We therefore ask parents and carers to:

- ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time;
- contact the school by 9.00 a.m. on the first day of absence using the Arbor App;
- if the absence continues, provide a clear reason for every absence using the Arbor App by 9.00 a.m. each day and continue to update the school where the absence continues;
- inform the school promptly about any difficulties that may affect attendance or punctuality;
- arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible;
- where an appointment must take place during the school day, ensure that the pupil attends school before and returns after the appointment where reasonably possible;
- maintain appropriate morning and bedtime routines; and
- avoid requesting leave during term time.

#### Illness-related absence

If your child is too ill to attend school, you must report the absence in accordance with the school's procedures, explain the nature of the illness and provide an expected return date where possible.

The school may request reasonable supporting information where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the reason given for an absence, or where illness-related absence is prolonged or repeated. Any request will be reasonable and proportionate. The school will consider the information available when deciding whether to authorise the absence and will inform you where an absence is to be recorded as unauthorised.

If you are unsure whether your child is well enough to attend, please contact the school for advice. If your child attends but becomes too unwell to remain in school, we will contact you.

#### Leave during term time

Parents and carers **should not book holidays during term time**. Leave of absence during term time is not an entitlement and a family holiday will not normally constitute an exceptional circumstance.

If you believe that exceptional circumstances require your child to be absent during term time, you must submit a written request to the headteacher in advance and as soon as the need is known. Each request will be considered individually. The headteacher will determine whether exceptional circumstances exist and, if leave is granted, the number of school days authorised.

Any leave taken without prior approval, or any absence taken beyond the period authorised by the headteacher, will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where unauthorised absence meets the national threshold, the school will normally request that the local authority consider issuing a penalty notice, in accordance with the National Framework and the relevant local authority's code of conduct.

### **Penalty notices and prosecution**

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for ensuring that their child receives an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs.

Where a child is registered at a school, a parent may commit an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 if the child fails to attend regularly. Sections 444A and 444B provide for penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution in appropriate cases.

The national threshold is **10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks**. Ten sessions are normally equivalent to five school days. The sessions:

- do not have to be consecutive;
- may arise from different types of unauthorised absence; and
- may span different terms or school years.

A separate penalty notice may be issued to each liable parent for each child.

| <b>Penalty notice</b>                                                         | <b>Amount or action</b>                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>First notice within a three-year period</b>                                | £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.                                                                                                 |
| <b>Second notice to the same parent for the same child within three years</b> | £160, payable within 28 days. There is no reduced rate.                                                                                                             |
| <b>Third or subsequent occasion within the three-year period</b>              | A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child. The local authority will consider alternative action, which may include prosecution. |

The three-year period begins on the date the first penalty notice is issued.

For emerging or persistent attendance concerns, the school will work with pupils and families to understand barriers and provide appropriate support. Where support has not been successful, has not been engaged with or is not appropriate—for example, in the case of an unauthorised term-time holiday—further action may be considered.

Further information is available in the Trust's Pupil Attendance Policy, which can be found at [Policies and Guidance - Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust](#).

Thank you for working with us to support your child's regular and punctual attendance. If you have questions or require support with your child's attendance, please contact the school.

Yours sincerely,

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust