



**Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Primary School
A Voluntary Academy**

School Mission Statement

To Love, Live and Learn in the Light of Christ

*The Our Lady family learn together with love and faith in Jesus, to
become the people God calls us to be.*

Our School is part of the Church's Mission to pass on the good news of Christ's Gospel through learning, worship and the formation of character in a caring environment, which embodies Christian values and discipline. God has created every child out of love and the human dignity of each will be rightfully valued and respected.

Our School community will embrace a spirit of welcome, fairness and understanding as it strives to recognise God's Grace within each of us and within our whole community.

Attendance Policy 2022

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Deputy Headteacher and can be contacted via 01529 304373.

3.4 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.10am and by 12.55pm.

3.5 School Office Staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time to prevent persistent absence and persistent lateness.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Avoid booking holidays during term time.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day
- Be on time and be appropriately equipped for the day

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.10am. Pupils arriving after 9.10am will be marked with a U code. This code is recorded as unauthorised absence even if the pupil arrives at school for the remainder of the day.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.55am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

Parents/carers are to leave a voice mail on the school's answering system if they cannot speak to a member of staff detailing the reason for the pupil's absence.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. The school will ask to see a copy of the appointment whether this is in the form of a letter or confirmation of an appointment on an app.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours

where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (9.10am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as using the 'U' code, which records as an 'unauthorised absence' even though the pupil has arrived in school.

The importance of arriving at school on time;

- Arriving late at school may cause embarrassment for the child
- Pupils' arriving late is disruptive, not only to their own learning, but the learning of others
- Pupils may miss something important such as lesson plans or instructions on how to complete a piece of work
- Lateness can affect how students form friendship groups. Social interaction with peers before school is important
- Pupils are marked present. The register is not only a legal document it also provides evidence that pupils have arrived in school and are safe
- Punctuality shows reliability and is a valuable attribute for future working life. Future universities, colleges and employers look for reliability. A good record of attendance and punctuality is an indication of this and they may request to see this in the future

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police or make a referral to Children's Services if there is reason to believe there is a safeguarding concern.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents and carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. Each month SLT will monitor attendance data and contact parents/carers where there is concern that the pupil's attendance is falling below 97%. Parents/carers will be informed via letter, or may be invited into school for a face-to-face meeting. Parents/carers are informed weekly, via the school's newsletter, the attendance data for each class.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. A leave of absence is **not a parental right**. In accordance with government guidelines, the application must be made 12 days in advance by

completing a leave of absence request form. The head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' where a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional. Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 12 days weeks before the absence. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

School will not agree a 'leave of absence' in circumstances such as:

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term

If parents/carers take pupils on holiday during term time the school will not provide extra work. The pupil will be expected to catch up with any work they have missed when they return from the holiday.

Leave of absence that has not been approved will therefore be unauthorised and may lead to a referral being made to the local authority for action.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) 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 the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or

withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance is encouraged in the following ways;

- Accurate completion of registers in school
- Attendance checks at appropriate times
- Recording of good attendance on individual progress reports
- Establishing a mechanism for supporting those parents/carers and carers who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty attending, including home visits by the education welfare officer if necessary
- An efficient use of computerised registration systems can provide valuable attendance data which can assist speedy analysis and timely responses by the academy
- Sending parents/carers termly/weekly absence figures as appropriate including positive letters of encouragement
- An 'improved attendance' award for any students showing a significant improvement in attendance, as appropriate
- Celebrating outstanding attendance during achievement assemblies every half term in school, as appropriate

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data monthly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Attendance meetings

- Parents/Carers of students with poor attendance may be invited to attend an attendance meeting. This may include a variety of professionals involved with student welfare. The aim of this meeting is to improve future attendance and prevent the need for referral to the relevant Local Authority to begin legal processes.

Home visits may be undertaken:

- If child is a Persistent Absentee
- If school is concerned for a child's safety.
- That they are used as a supportive measure to work with families.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Children missing in education

- Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.
- The designated staff will monitor unauthorised absences and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority particularly where children go missing on repeat occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day in conjunction with '**Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities**'.
- Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Relationships and Behaviour policy

Issued: September 2022

Next review date: September 2023

Ratified by Governors – September 2022

Signed..... Head Teacher

Appendix 1: 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 circumstances
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	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as

	absence	agreed with the school
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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

Code	Definition	Scenario
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 as a result 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/INSET day

Appendix 2:

Optional information for school newsletter or leaflet.

Dear Parents and carers,

The schools of the Multi Academy Trust are committed to working together with parents and carers to ensure the highest possible attendance, which will in turn support the progress of our children.

It is important for parents/carers to remember that the occasional or few days off due to illness, holidays or family events can mount up and lead to children's attendance levels falling. This can have a negative impact on their progress in school and affect their wellbeing.

With this in mind, you can support the school, and your child, to achieve attendance targets by:

- Making sure your child attends school regularly and on time.
- Contacting school on the first day of any absence on XXXXXXXX
- Informing school of any problems that may impact on your child's attendance, punctuality and learning
- Arrange routine medical appointments outside of school time. If this is not possible, please bring your child in prior to their appointment and ensure they return to school afterwards.
- Ensuring children are ready for school by having good morning and bedtime routines.
- Consider whether it is appropriate to bring your child into school in the morning if they feel a little under the weather. The school office will contact you if we feel they need to go home.
- Ensure that you do not book holidays in term time. **Please note:** In line with government regulations we are advised not to authorise holidays taken in term time.
- If you feel your child is too ill to come to school, please try to provide medical evidence. This can be prescription medication, an appointment card or a prescription.

Below is a table of how school absence could affect your pupil's ability to access the curriculum.

Above 97%	Above 97%. Less than 6 days' absence a year: Excellent attendance! Pupils with this attendance should have access to the majority of the taught curriculum.
95%	95%. Less than 10 days' absence in a year: Attendance needs to improve! Pupils with this attendance are likely to access the majority curriculum but will miss out on important educational experiences.
90%	90%. 19 days' absence over the year: Pupils with this attendance are missing <u>1 month</u> of school per year and will miss key curriculum areas; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.
85%	85%. 29 days' absence in a year: These pupils are missing <u>6 weeks</u> of school per year, it will be very difficult for them to access the curriculum and achieve their best.
80%	80%. Pupils with this attendance are missing the equivalent of <u>1 day</u> for every week of school. It will be almost impossible to access all of the curriculum.

**No holiday in term time, Lincolnshire School's Letter:
School Logo and letter head⁸**

Date

Dear Parents and Carers

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Attendance and punctuality in school is vitally important and is one of the key ways in which we safeguard children, ensuring that they are happy, safe and well each day, learning and fulfilling their potential, both academic and personal. If children are not at school, or if they regularly arrive late, this job becomes much harder and poor or irregular attendance is considered a safeguarding concern – children need to 'attend to attain'.

The Local Authority have asked us to stress the importance of attendance, now more than ever – including full engagement with all remote learning if any pupils are isolating due to Covid-19. We know that the vast majority of parents/carers support excellent attendance at our school and I would also thank parents/carers for their vigilance in not sending children to school with any possible Covid-19 symptoms – we are aware of the effects of this on your child's attendance record and will always consider the reasons behind absence when monitoring pupil attendance.

The attached letter outlines Lincolnshire's position on holidays during term time and is something that we are asked to address and send to each parent directly, each year, in order to guarantee that all parents/carers have received and read it – we understand that families will have received multiple copies⁹.

Part of my role this year is to monitor the attendance and reasons for absence for all children and groups of children in the school and I am incredibly pleased to report that attendance continues to be good with the school operating at an average of 94% since the start of term. It has also been great to see how happy and eager the children are in school, although we continue to assess and address the impacts of the pandemic, both on their academic progress and personal wellbeing.

Nationally, children are expected to have attendance of 96% or above and this is monitored on a monthly basis. Any pupils who fall below this are identified and monitored if the attendance of any pupils falls below 90%, XXXX or XXXX will contact the family to discuss this and begin to work with them on improving attendance over the following weeks. We will also be monitoring lateness and any families who are regularly late will also be contacted to discuss how to improve punctuality.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support in ensuring your children are in school and on time each day, maintaining the great attendance of pupils at our school. We appreciate that all children have periods of illness but hope that you understand the importance of our ongoing work to ensure all children have the same access to a full-time education in order to achieve their full potential.

With best wishes,

XXXXXX

Dear

CHILD(REN)'S NAME(S):

DOB:

I am writing to inform you that The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 have been amended and came into force from 1 September 2013. The amendments have removed reference to family holiday and extended leave, as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. Therefore, the previous arrangement whereby schools could grant up to ten days of authorised holiday/absence has now ceased.

As a result, a request for leave of absence will not be granted for the purpose of a holiday **unless deemed to be 'exceptional circumstances'**.

If you wish to seek approval for any request of absence for your child(ren) from school, then you must apply in writing to me, at least four weeks in advance of the requested for absence. You should only then remove your child(ren) if the absence has been authorised, and notified to you in writing by the school. Any exceptional circumstances must be clearly set out in the written request to the me. I will consider each case upon its merits.

If you then choose to take your child out of school during term time and it is **not** deemed to be exceptional circumstances and/or has not been approved by the school, then this will be coded as an unauthorised absence and a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued for the period of absence. Failure to pay the Fixed Penalty may result in further legal action being taken against you.

A Fixed Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children at their school under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents/carers a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.¹¹**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.**

Please note: A Fixed Penalty Notice can also be issued if your child is seen in a public place within the first 5 days of an exclusion from their school.

- **Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes it a duty for parents/carers in relation to pupils subject to a fixed period or permanent exclusion to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of any such exclusion. If a child is present in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion during school hours the parent may be guilty of an offence for which they can be prosecuted by the LA before a magistrates' court or issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for £60.00 or £120.00.**

If you have any concerns regarding this, please contact **XXXXXXX** for all Pastoral matters.

We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely

XXXXXXX
Headteacher

90% and under attendance letter.

Date

Attendance

Dear [Parent/carers],

As a school, we are legally obliged to regularly monitor the attendance rates of all our pupils. The National Average for school attendance is 97% and, where attendance has dropped below this, we have a duty to inform you.

I have been analysing [school's] attendance data. It has come to my attention that [child] has now hit the target percentage attendance of [%] and is now classed as a persistent absentee, due to [reason]. Please ensure that [child] attends school at every possible opportunity throughout the coming year to improve [pronoun] attendance. Please find attached a copy of [child's] individual attendance overview and note the number of absences.

Guidance from the government with regards to attendance can be found in the document https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

DFE guidance states:

- *The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.*
- *Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.*

Going forward, I will now be requiring medical evidence for [child's] further absences. This can include screenshots of text messages from GPs for appointments, photographs of prescriptions or appointment card/letters. **We do not require doctor's notes.**

I urge you to put some importance on this matter and I am more than happy to discuss or meet with you. I look forward to working with you and improving [child's] school attendance to enable [pronoun] to meet [pronoun] full potential and look forward and to see improvements in [pronoun] attendance for the remainder of this term and until the end of the year.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Punctuality.

Dear Parents / Carers,

Re: Punctuality

We are writing to children's families to emphasise the importance of being in school on time as there have been numerous incidents of some families routinely arriving late to school.

During covid and these uncertain times, (School name) have a duty of care to make sure that children and their parents/carers are safe and are not crossing bubbles. Punctuality is crucial during this time so this does not happen in order to stop the spread of the virus and keep everyone as safe as possible.

Children who arrive late are greatly disadvantaged because they miss starting the day with their peers and the beginning of lessons. This means that they are often unsettled and confused about tasks. Their teacher will not always be able to re explain work.

It is also very important that children establish good routines and habits in preparation for the rest of their lives. Punctuality is a life skill that they need to develop whilst they are young.

It is essential that you ensure that your child arrives at school on time to prevent disruption to your child's own learning and that of others. We will continue to focus on the importance of punctuality and regular attendance with children through class work and school assemblies. I have enclosed a copy of the current school start and end of day times for your reference, this is also displayed on the school gates and in classroom windows.

We are required to monitor children's punctuality and attendance. On-going lateness (after the class register has been taken) is classified as an unauthorised absence and this is contrary to The Education Act.

We understand that there may be rare occasions when you are unavoidably late due to unforeseen circumstances. On these occasions please make sure that you contact the school office to inform us when you will arrive.

If you are experiencing difficulties with punctuality and would like to talk to us about it, please contact myself or (Other contact in school).

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Guidance for Parents and Carers (FIXED PENALTY NOTICES)

School attendance and the law

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 gives powers to the Local Authority to issue penalty notices where a parent/carer is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance.

Why has it been introduced?

Increasing school attendance is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's achievement chances, disrupts school routines and the learning of others and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer term life opportunities.

What is a penalty notice?

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are unauthorised by school. Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under section 444 of the education act 1996. A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court whilst still securing an improvement in a pupil's attendance?

Payment of a penalty notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

What are the costs?

Payment within 28 days of receipt of a notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 42 days. This payment is per parent, per child.

When are they used?

Lincolnshire considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that penalty notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs:

- Overt truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps)
- Inappropriate parentally condoned absence
- Excessive Holidays in term time or excessive delayed return from an extended holiday without prior school permission
- Failure to return to school on the agreed date (may also result in your child losing their school place)
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)

In every case (a pupil will have had a minimum of 20 % of school sessions lost to unauthorised absence during the current half term or ten consecutive days of unauthorised absences before a Penalty Notice is considered.

The Authority never takes such action lightly and would far rather work with parents/ carers to improve attendance without having to resort to any enforcement actions. Attendance is of such importance to all of us however that the authority will use the powers if this is the only way of securing a child's schooling.

Is a warning given?

In most instances, you will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued. This will include details of your child's absences and will tell of the period of time during which an improvement is expected. In that time your child must have no unauthorised absences from school.

Is there an appeal process?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning you can make representation should you wish.

How do I pay?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the penalty notice. You need to be aware that payment in part or by instalment is not an option with penalty notices.

What happens if I do not pay?

You have up to 42 days from receipt to pay the penalty notice in full, after which the authority is required under the act to commence proceedings in the Magistrates court for the original offence of poor attendance by your child.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. However it may be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school and support agencies.

Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

It is very important that you speak with the school at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about your child's attendance.
