



**OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Attendance Policy

**Our Lady Star of the Sea RCVA
Primary School**



Academic Year

2022-23

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Attendance Policy

Our Lady Star of the Sea RCVA Primary School

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Author of document:	Miss J. Jones	Job role:	Exec. Headteacher
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Attendance key contact List

Name	Role	Contact details
Miss J. Jones	Exec. Head Teacher	0191 586 3895
Mrs C. Taylor	Assistant Headteacher	0191 586 3895
Mrs P. Fullard	Office Admin.	0191 586 3895
Mrs P. Kelly	Admin Manager	0191 586 3895
	Class Teachers	0191 586 3895

Who in school can help if you are experiencing difficulty / require help and support:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Mrs P. Fullard	Office Admin.	0191 586 3895
Mrs P. Kelly	Admin Manager	0191 586 3895
Mrs L. Huntington	Emotional Well-being Support	0191 586 3895



Our Lady Star of the Sea RCVA Primary School

Attendance Policy

Our Lady Star of the Sea RCVA Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Why is regular attendance so important?

Being in school every day that it is open, is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. There is a renewed national focus on maximising pupils' time in the classroom, as evidence shows that the pupils with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.

Here's what the data shows:

Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.

Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.

Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.

Generally, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2 and KS4, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Our School recognises the importance of good attendance and actively promotes attendance through rewards and incentives.

Children and parents are reminded that good attendance ensures children:

- do not miss out on lessons and the important building blocks of learning
- feel confident in their learning since they are a part of the progression of lessons
- are not playing catch-up
- form good relationships with staff and peers
- develop a good understanding of the importance of punctuality and attendance which is vital for employability and good work ethic in adult life
- reach their potential
- understand the school and class rules and feel part of the school community

The school believes that good attendance plays a significant part in ensuring children:

- receive their educational entitlement
- develop good relationships which support their emotional well-being and social skills
- are supported by the school's Behaviour Policy and Antibullying work
- are well supported in their learning and that children with SEND are provided with the necessary interventions and support in order to make at least good progress
- have positive experiences and that disadvantaged pupils receive a wealth of experiences and opportunities which support their learning and understanding of the World we live in

This policy is supported by our policies on:

- Keeping Children Safe in School
- E-Safety Policy
- Antibullying
- Behaviour Management
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Child on Child Abuse

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

1. Expectations

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our pupils is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

We will ensure that:

- All pupils have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum and for Religious Education the Diocesan approved scheme for RE.
- Attendance is a priority across the school.
- Aspire to high standards on attendance.
- Pupils will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of pupils.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.
- The school provides a warm, safe and welcoming environment for children to learn in
- Lessons, activities and extra-curricular opportunities cater for the needs of all children and enrich the lives of pupils within our school
- All staff; Teachers, TAs, Admin and support staff ensure that they provide a supportive network for both children and parents
- The ethos and culture within the school creates an atmosphere where children want to be in school
- Incentives promote good attendance and children understand the importance of good attendance.

2. Attendance data

The school uses the attendance data to target attendance improvement. This is shared via the Headteacher's Report to Governors and presented at termly meetings.

The school rigorously uses attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance. This is overseen by the Exec. Headteacher and involves Admin staff and teachers.

✓ **Teachers ensure that:**

- attendance registers are completed at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and chase up any absences with office Admin staff
- they encourage children's good attendance by reminding them of the importance of attendance and how poor attendance impacts on learning
- give out attendance awards – certificates, prizes etc.

✓ **Office Admin:**

- Receive and record all telephone calls/e-mails/ParentPay contacts, notes from parents relating to children's absences and record reasons for absence on the registration system - SIMS
- If children are absent and no information has been received by the school – Admin staff phone parents to ascertain reasons for absence
- If there is no response to telephone calls – letters may be sent to parents or home visits arranged (Home visits would normally involve The Headteacher and one of the Admin staff)
- Look for patterns in children's absences – contact parent regarding patterns in absences
- Send out letters alerting parents to the number of days absence and percentage attendance – trigger points of letters:
 - ✚ Between 91% and 94 % - telephone call to alert parents of potential attendance issue
 - ✚ Under 91% - letter of concern and invitation to an attendance meeting to discuss support etc.

Strategies to address attendance issues:

✓ **Individual level:**

✚ **Admin staff daily:**

- Receive and record telephone calls re absences
- Where phone calls are not received – phone parents to request information
- If telephone calls are not answered – messages are left requesting parent to contact the school asap
- Further calls are made throughout the day until calls are answered
- If there is no response to telephone calls the child is marked as 'unauthorised'
- If the child does not return the next day the above process is repeated and if there is no contact by the end of the second day - the school will arrange a Home Visit – this will take place on day 3 (presuming child has not returned on day 3 and no information has been received by the school)
- Record pupil absences as 'unauthorised' if no reason has been provided by the parent/s for the pupil's absence

✚ **Admin staff weekly:**

- Every Monday Admin staff look at the previous week's attendance for individual children – checking for patterns in absences
- Percentage attendance reports and individual attendance certificates are scrutinised to identify patterns
- If patterns are evident in individual children's attendance certificates – previous weeks' attendance is checked and action is taken if repeated patterns are identified
- Information documented in child's chronology and an alert put onto CPOMs for the attention of the 'Attendance Champion/s'
- Attendance Champion/s to liaise with Admin staff (every Monday morning) to discuss issues and to arrange formal meetings as appropriate with parents to offer support and advice

✚ **Admin staff – monthly:**

- Satisfactory attendance is considered by the DfE as 96%.
- Admin staff review pupil attendance and pupils with attendance –
 - ❖ Between 91 to 94 % – parents will receive a telephone call to alert them to a potential risk and asking if there is a problem that we can support with
 - ❖ Attendance 90% or below – parents will be sent a letter indicating the number of days absence and inviting parents to a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss support from the school
- All contact with parents re attendance is recorded on SIMs
- Chronologies are updated as contact or issues arise

✓ **Cohort level:**

- ✚ Every Friday Admin staff produce a Year group Attendance league table – this is presented to the school during the Friday morning Award Assembly. The Year group with the best attendance receives a certificate
- ✚ Governors receive attendance information every term – this is in the Headteacher's Report to Governors and is discussed at Governing Body meetings. (*NB. Individual pupil's attendance is not discussed*).

3. Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance

When a pattern is spotted the school will discuss this with pupils and parents to ascertain and understand the barriers to attendance. From discussions a support plan will be developed.

The steps taken will be:

- ✓ A letter is sent out to parents inviting them in to talk with the Headteacher
- ✓ During the meeting the following areas will be addressed:
 - ✚ School concerns (what the data is showing)
 - ✚ Barriers causing poor attendance
 - ✚ Support from the school
 - ✚ Agreed support plan

It is hoped that through a supportive partnership between the school and parents the issue of poor attendance will be effectively resolved and attendance will improve.

4. Facilitate support

The school intends to help to remove barriers linked to poor attendance and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers both inside and outside of school. This may include an early help or whole family plan or referral to the Health Services where there are wider issues affecting attendance. The school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence will involve:

- ✓ Discussion with parents
- ✓ Providing a supportive network – this may involve:
 - ✚ School staff – Headteacher, class teacher, school counsellor, trusted adult ,... etc
 - ✚ Early Help – Family Worker
 - ✚ Health Service – School Nurse
 - ✚ Attendance and Inclusion Team - when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority

5. Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, supportive partners will explain to parents the consequences of continued attendance issues and clearly set out within a supportive network the consequences of formal action. Within this process opportunities will be given to enable families to respond.

Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

6. Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

General / frequently asked questions

When can children be absent from school?

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly.

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet; or
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school. In most circumstances, however, your child is required to attend another school temporarily during such absences.

These are the only circumstances where schools can permit your child to be absent.

What do I need to do if my child needs to be absent from school for one of those reasons?

You should contact their school as early as possible to explain why. If not, your child's school will contact you on the first morning of their absence to find out why.

All parents can request a 'leave of absence' for their child which gives them permission to be absent from school. Leaves of absence must be applied for before your child will be absent and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Your child's headteacher has the final say over whether to approve the request and how long your child can be absent.

Their decision will be made after considering the specific facts and circumstances behind your request.

Can I take my child on holiday during term time?

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid requesting leaves of absence for holidays unless it is unavoidable.

As leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that your child's headteacher will agree a leave of absence for a family holiday.

If permission is refused and you keep your child off school on the days requested, you are likely to be committing an offence and be issued a fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted by your local authority.



Attendance Matters



Attendance Procedures and Absence Processes

Attendance and absence management

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

The school actively promotes good attendance and punctuality through:

- Providing a safe and caring school environment – with Safeguarding and the emotional well-being of all stakeholders in the school having high priority
- Setting out clear expectations re punctuality and attendance – this is linked to Induction evenings for new parents, school assemblies and newsletters
- Gem Power – promoting ‘independence’ and ‘resilience’
- A stimulating and motivating curriculum
- Teachers and support staff who promote good behaviour and a loving, caring and forgiving environment
- Pupil voice – children know that the staff listen to them and they are confident that they can speak freely and trust that their concerns are addressed.
- Providing free uniform to all pupils
- Providing Homework packs

- A system of rewards is in place:
 - ✚ Praise
 - ✚ Certificates
 - ✚ Badges
 - ✚ Trophies
 - ✚ End of term incentive rewards

Communication

The school requests that all parents please remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

It is vital, that school can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The school will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child’s absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to, for example medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child’s attendance then we may contact you by phone, letter, invite you to a meeting or make a visit to your home.

As a parent you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child’s attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us and we can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn’t ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance.

If your child is unable to attend school you must phone (0191 586 3895) or e-mail (p3507.admin@durhamlearning.net) to provide an explanation for your child's absence – this should take place on the first day of absence and updates should be provided if the absence is to continue passed the first day. Reasons for absence are recorded within the child's registration certificate.

If the school does not receive a phone call or e-mail on the first day of absence then a member of the Admin staff (Mrs Fullard or Mrs Kelly) will phone you. It is important that calls from the school should be answered since Admin staff will repeatedly call parents until they receive a response. (Please note that by not answering the telephone this results in additional work for staff, unnecessary repeated calls and may lead to staff visiting your home.)

On the first day of absence

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Doctors and dentist's appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to. Appointment cards should be presented to the Admin staff as proof of attendance.

Periods of extended absence

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received, the school will contact you to verify the absence and take any relevant action in relation to assuring itself of the child's welfare.

This may involve:

- ✓ School staff visiting your home eg. Headteacher, teacher or attendance officer
- ✓ Arranging for a Health Visitor or School Nurse to visit your home
- ✓ Referral to Early Help
- ✓ Referral to Inclusion and Attendance team

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

Punctuality:

Registration times are:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|---------|
| ➤ Class 1 & 2 (RY and Y1) | 8:40am | 12:45pm |
| ➤ Class 3 (Y2 and 3) | 8:50am | 1:00pm |
| ➤ Class 4 (Y4 and 5) | 9:00am | 1:00pm |
| ➤ Class 5 (Y6) | 9:10am | 1:00pm |

At which point the pupil entry gates will be locked and all pupils must enter by the main entrance. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after this time then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (*a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered*).

If your child is late for school:

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (SIMs).

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions

- ✓ Parents will be contacted to discuss reasons for lateness
- ✓ Support will be offered and targets set to improve punctuality

If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason

- ✓ Parents will be invited into school to discuss the matter with the Exec. Headteacher or Deputy
- ✓ A support plan will be drawn up to help improve punctuality
- ✓ Office Admin staff may agree to ring parents every morning to ensure that children are out of bed and preparing to come to school

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality

- ✓ Formal meeting will take place involving parent, Exec. Headteacher and Inclusion and Attendance officer
- ✓ Formal contract set up to improve attendance/punctuality
- ✓ Consequences of failure to improve will be discussed providing parents with an opportunity to respond to possible actions

Help & Support

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer.

Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people.

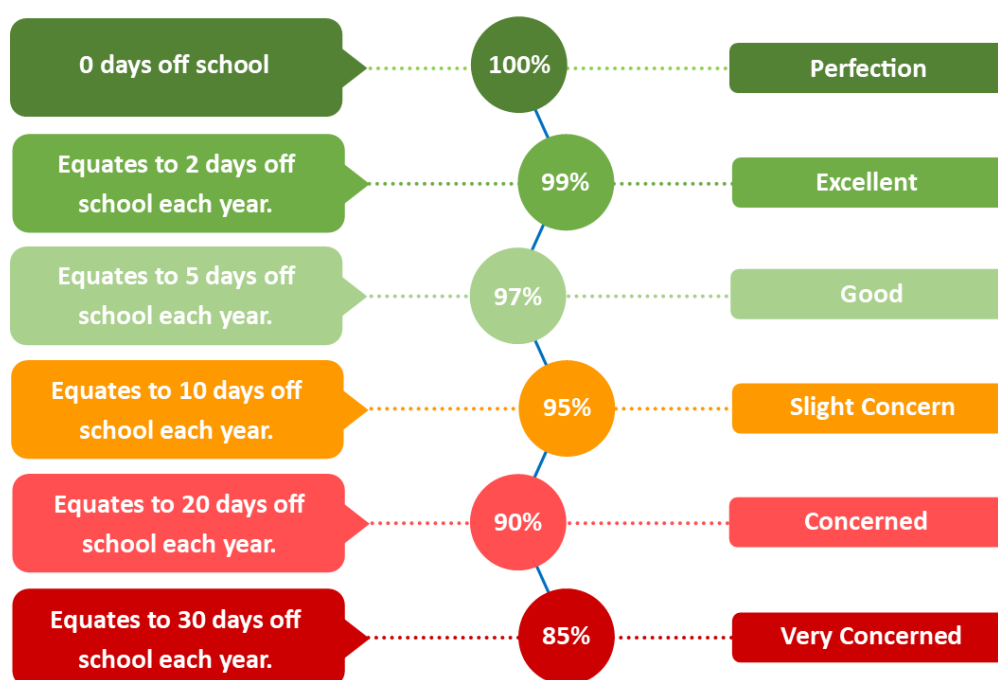
Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are only able to grant leave of absence during term time **when there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.



Pupils with specific needs

Some children may have specific needs relating to SEND or health and the school will apply this policy considering individual circumstances of pupils and families – the policy will be applied consistently and fairly and will reflect the specific barriers to attendance.

In development and implementation of this policy, the school has considered obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Children Missing from Education

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

The School will officially report any child missing from education to the Children Missing from Education Team. This team will then act upon information received to locate the missing child/ren – reporting back progress to the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Please see key contact list and details at the start of this document.

✓ Miss J. Jones	Exec. Headteacher	DSL	Attendance Champion
✓ Mrs C. Taylor	Ass. Headteacher	DSL	Deputy Attendance Champion
✓ Mrs P. Fullard	Admin Officer		Attendance officer
✓ Mrs P. Kelly	Admin Manager		Attendance officer



Governing Body:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed to parents and staff.
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and pupils to implement the policy effectively.
- Ensure regular meetings of the behaviour and attendance sub-committee take place and they will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance. The governor's meetings will review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to be fully aware and supportive of expected attendance targets for the year.
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off site.

School Leadership Team:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with pupils and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the policy and its effectiveness, with annual review of full policy.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure government legislation on attendance is complied with and that the leadership team are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them.
- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take responsibility for overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to the job.
- Report to the Behaviour and Attendance Governors Sub Committee meeting each term on attendance records, data and provision.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.

Teachers and support staff:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with pupils and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Ensure the senior manager responsible for overseeing attendance and any other relevant personnel are kept fully aware of and up to date with any concerns relating to pupils that may impact on their attendance.
- Ensure compliance with regulation and guidance on attendance.
- Work professionally with parents, carers, pupils and relevant agencies to secure improvements in attendance via appropriate support or enforcement measures.
- Ensure understanding and are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Parents / Carers:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, we expect that parents / carers will:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy regarding absences, ill health, medical or dental appointments, leave of absence in term time and punctuality.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences.
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance and work with staff in resolving any issues that may be having an impact on their child.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime etc so that the child is used to consistency and the school becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same messages at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.

Attendance and Attainment

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our pupils is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

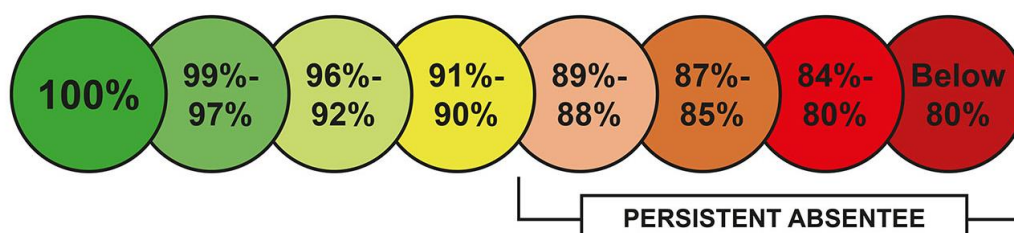
We will ensure that:

- All pupils have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Pupils will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of pupils.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

The school aim is to ensure that pupils' attendance is at least 96% so that each child has the best experiences and educational opportunities as possible. In order for this to be achieved, everyone at Our Lady Star of the Sea RCVA Primary will work hard to support pupils and their families and to remove any barriers that may disrupt a child's attendance.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

On Time: First Time, Every Time



Which CIRCLE are you in?

What can we do to help your child improve their attendance?