

GREGORY HUGHES ~ Headteacher

6th November 2024



Dear Parents and Carers,

The schools of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic 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 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 (01522 501137)
- 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.

As part of our commitment to maintaining high levels of school attendance, we would like to inform you about some important changes regarding holidays/leave of absences in Term Time. These changes align with the Department for Education (DFE) updated guidance on improving school attendance, effective from 19th August 2024 in collaboration with the Local Authority.

The DFE emphasises that term-time holiday/leave of absences should be avoided. Absences during this time can significantly impact your child's education. We kindly request that you plan holidays/leave of absences during school holidays to minimise disruption in learning. Any such absences will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If you believe there are exceptional circumstances that require a term-time holiday/leave of absence, please submit a written request to the school as soon as possible. We will assess each case individually and provide guidance accordingly. However, if we determine that the circumstances do not qualify as exceptional, we will notify you in writing, indicating that you may be subject to a penalty notice issued by the local authority, which could result in legal action, please see below.

Penalty notices and prosecution.

A Penalty Notice issued for a Leave of Absence/Holiday not agreed by the school is 5 days (10 sessions) with in a 10 week period.

A Penalty Notice can be issued under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents 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**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty**

See below for further information:

Penalty Notice	Details
First Notice in a 3 year period :	Issued to each parent. Charged at £80 if paid within 21 days £160 if paid within 28 days.
Second Notice in a 3 year period :	Issued to each parent. Charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
Third Notice in a 3 year period :	Alternative action should be taken, for example prosecution or other attendance legal interventions. Fines per parent are capped at two within any three-year period. If a parent is prosecuted for their child's non-attendance, they could face a Magistrates court appearance and a fine of up to £2,500 and/or prison.

It is important to note that fines are a last resort, and parents are offered support from the school regarding attendance concerns, and are discouraged from taking holidays in term time. It is also important to note that if there are also attendance concerns, then further action can be taken in the form of Penalty Notices for persistent/non attendance. Please refer to our attendance policy for more information:

<https://www.st-hughs-catholic-primary.co.uk/information/policies/>

We are implementing this in line with Government and CMAT requirements as of this current term.

Thank you for your cooperation in ensuring that your child's education remains a priority. If you have any questions, or you would like any support with the attendance of your child, feel free to contact the school office.

Yours sincerely



Mr G Hughes
Headteacher