



Our Lady's Preparatory School and Nursery

Attendance Policy 7.2

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and trustees in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance. Attendance is everyone's responsibility and thus all staff, SLT, Senior Attendance Champion and Trustees work collaboratively to promote, monitor and celebrate good attendance.

Introduction

To ensure children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them, we expect and encourage regular, full and punctual attendance at Our Lady's. We recognise our responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, having access to learning throughout the whole school day. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind and those who are frequently absent from school develop large gaps in their learning which may impact on their progress.

Our policy applies to all children at Our Lady's, and this policy is made available to all parents of pupils on the Our Lady's website. Although parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head and Trustees work with other professionals and agencies to encourage and support all pupils to develop good attendance habits.

Mr Boynes (Acting Head and DSL) is the Senior Attendance Champion at Our Lady's. He oversees the implementation of this policy and can be contacted on office@olps.co.uk or 01344 773394. The Senior Attendance Champion is also the person whom parents should approach for more detailed support on attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

1. Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
2. Raise awareness of parents and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
3. Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff, and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.

4. Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
5. Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

1. Clearly communicated attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, trustees, parents and pupils.
2. Ensuring that parents understand their responsibility for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually, working with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality where needed and not permitting absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances.
3. Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility, appropriate to their age and development, for their own good school attendance and punctuality.
4. Effective communication with parents, pupils, staff and trustees on school attendance matters.
5. Appropriate registration processes using the codes defined in the government guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance, with consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
6. Attendance data, routinely reviewed by Tutors and the Senior Attendance Champion, and reported to Trustees at least termly, with attendance trends, persistent absence, severe absence, punctuality data and the impact of support strategies reviewed as part of the school's safeguarding and pastoral oversight arrangements. Trustees should ensure that attendance records are kept and comply with legislation. To that end, the trustee responsible for safeguarding will meet with the DSL/SAC once every half term.
7. Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
8. Promoting and incentivising good attendance by being a "magnetic" school, to which the pupils are attracted and are eager to come and learn. This is reflected in our attendance rate and the fact that unauthorised absence is almost unknown.
9. Celebrating full attendance of pupils for example at the end of term awards, assembly instruction and planned work in PSHCEE.

Registration

Timings

Pupils are expected to attend school in accordance with our published term dates. Our procedures for registration and early start require pupils to arrive before 8.45am.

Registration in the morning is at 8.45am although the registration session continues until 9.15am. If a pupil arrives between these times they will be marked as late (L). Any pupil who has not arrived in school and whose whereabouts are unknown at 9.15am will be marked N in the register.

Registration in the afternoon is at 1.30pm although the registration session continues until 1.45pm. If a pupil arrives between these times they will be marked as late (L). Any pupil whose whereabouts are unknown at 1.45pm will be marked N in the register.

These registration timings are the same every day, for all pupils. Pupils will not be marked present if they were not in school at registration, though if a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they would be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Immediate follow-up of Unexplained Absence

After registration closes in both morning and afternoon sessions, the Office Staff check registers to ensure all pupils are present and any unexpected non-attendance (code N) is followed up. If the absentee has siblings at the school, a member of staff will check the register to see if the siblings are also absent. If a child is unaccounted for and the parent has not contacted the school by 9.30am (2pm in the unlikely event of unexpected absence in the afternoon) then the School Office will telephone parents in the first instance and then the other emergency contacts held for the child. Messages will be left, if possible, should there be no reply. If there is no response to these telephone calls, contact will then be attempted by email/text.

These registers are securely and confidentially filed on our computer system. It is a regulatory requirement that attendance and admission registers are electronic. These registers are legal records and schools must preserve every entry in them for 6 years from the date the data was entered.

Lateness and Absence in the official Register of Attendance

As outlined above, the morning register session is at 8.45am and pupils arriving after that but before 9.15am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

In accordance with regulations, any child who arrives for school after the registration session is closed (i.e. after 9.15am or after 1.45pm) will be marked as having an absence for the session (code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Code O applies if no reason for absence is established to the school's satisfaction. Please see below that only the school can determine if a reason for absence is sufficient to define absence as authorised.

Where there is persistent lateness parents will be contacted by the Senior Attendance Champion advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Appendix 1 contains the full list of attendance and absence codes from the government guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

Absences

Definitions: Authorised absence and Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Procedure for unanticipated absence

*Parents should phone the OLPS Main Office on **01344 773394** by 09.00 am to report an absence.*

Parents should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised as defined above. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence, as this information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence, we request these details from parents. If this information is not provided the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O).

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork. Where, over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from parents for the school to make their own enquiries.

Attendance regulations require the school to report to the Local Authority any pupil who is anticipated to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative days due to illness.

Mental Health and Attendance

The school recognises that attendance difficulties may sometimes arise because of emotional wellbeing, anxiety, mental health needs or other barriers that make school attendance challenging.

Where attendance concerns are linked to emotional wellbeing or mental health, the school will work closely with pupils, parents and relevant professionals to identify appropriate support. The school will seek to understand the underlying causes of absence and, where necessary, implement reasonable adjustments, support plans or phased reintegration arrangements to help pupils attend regularly and successfully.

We recognise that successful attendance support is based upon strong relationships, early intervention, understanding individual circumstances and maintaining high expectations while providing appropriate support.

Leave of Absence from School - Our Approach

At Our Lady's School, we recognise that family life can include important events, opportunities, or challenges that may affect school attendance.

Like every school, we are required to follow national guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). This guidance sets out the circumstances in which schools may authorise leave of absence. All

requests must be made in advance, discussed with the parent or carer the child normally lives with, and may or may not be agreed by the school.

Parents who wish to request a short period of absence (e.g. for a medical appointment) are asked to notify the Class Teacher and the School Office on 01344 773394 or office@olps.co.uk

Parents who wish to request a period of absence in exceptional circumstances (e.g. family bereavement) are asked to email the Head to request permission.

When Leave Requests May Be Considered

Under current regulations, leave of absence may be considered in the following circumstances:

1. Participation in a regulated performance or employment abroad, with a licence issued by the local authority.
2. Attendance at an interview for entry to another educational setting or for future employment.
3. Study leave for public examinations (this does not include internal or mock examinations).
4. Temporary, time-limited part-time timetable in exceptional circumstances, with agreed attendance dates and times.
5. Other exceptional circumstances, considered on a case-by-case basis by the school.

Each request is considered individually, taking into account the child's circumstances and relevant background information. Where leave is granted, the school will determine the appropriate length of time a pupil may be absent.

Understanding "Exceptional Circumstances"

Government guidance explains that holidays, leisure, or recreational activities are not considered exceptional circumstances. This means that absence requests for such activities during term time will not be authorised by the Head.

Schools are expected to consider each application individually and in line with the regulations. Our Lady's does not apply blanket policies under which leaves of absence are granted automatically in response to any particular circumstances or events.

We recognise that this may feel restrictive, particularly for families who previously experienced greater flexibility. This reflects national expectations, rather than any change in Our Lady's commitment to trust, wellbeing, and meaningful learning experiences and we encourage families to plan trips, experiences, and family time during holiday periods.

Unauthorised Absence During Term Time

If a holiday or absence occurs during term time without authorisation, schools are required to follow national guidance. This may involve the local authority's Attendance Support Team and early intervention where appropriate. At Our Lady's, our aim is always to approach these situations with understanding, open communication, and care for each child's wellbeing and learning.

Children with poor attendance

Good attendance is an important part of being a member of a community, and vital for making the most from what the school can offer. Every effort will be made by the school to ensure that children are able to attend school regularly by working closely with parents and children.

The Senior Attendance Champion reviews attendance data at least half termly and more frequently where concerns arise. This monitoring includes individual pupils, vulnerable groups, pupils with SEND, pupils with medical needs and pupils whose attendance patterns indicate emerging concerns. Attendance data is analysed to identify trends, barriers to attendance, persistent absence and punctuality concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Attendance information is shared routinely with the Acting Head and Trustees to ensure effective oversight and to support a culture in which good attendance is valued and promoted across the whole school.

When a pupil's level of attendance falls below 97%, contact will be made with parents to discuss further. If attendance falls below 95% a meeting will be arranged with the senior attendance champion. There will be opportunities for the parent to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim of supporting the family to improve attendance. The school will ensure that those missing school because of mental or physical ill health, or those with SEND, will be given extra support in line with the individual needs of pupils. If levels of attendance fall below 92%, the Head will write a Letter of Concern to parents, following which a meeting will be held to discuss support. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over an agreed period then the school may make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

Although the National Framework for Penalty Notices does not apply in the independent sector, significant concern about attendance may arise for example if a child has missed 10 school sessions (5 days), without permission or explanation and the school will contact the Local Authority and follow their guidance. The Senior Attendance Champion will liaise over unauthorised absence with the DSL, who will take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children are absent or go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day.

Persistent and Severe Absence

The school uses nationally recognised attendance measures when monitoring attendance.

A pupil whose attendance falls below **90%** is considered to be **persistently absent**.

A pupil whose attendance falls below **50%** is considered to be **severely absent**.

Pupils whose attendance falls into either category will receive enhanced monitoring and support. The school will work proactively with parents, pupils and relevant agencies to identify and remove barriers to attendance, with the aim of securing sustained improvement wherever possible.

Working with Other Agencies

The school recognises that attendance concerns may sometimes be linked to wider safeguarding, health, SEND, family or social circumstances. Where appropriate, we will work collaboratively with external professionals and services to understand and address barriers to attendance.

This may include liaison with the Local Authority Attendance Service, Early Help services, health professionals, social care teams, SEND professionals and other agencies involved in supporting the child and family. Our aim is always to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils through timely intervention, support and partnership working.

Children Missing in Education (Please also refer to our CME Policy)

In the circumstances of a child going missing who is not known to any other agencies, the school will make reasonable enquiries to establish a child's whereabouts and welfare where attendance concerns

arise. Where a child has been absent for 10 consecutive school days without satisfactory explanation and reasonable enquiries have not established the child's whereabouts, the Head will notify the Education Welfare Service/Children Missing Education Officer in accordance with local authority procedures. Prior to doing so, the school will make enquiries to ascertain whether the child is still residing at the home address and is not attending or whether the child is missing.

Young Carers

Some pupils may have responsibilities at home as a young carer which can increase barriers to regular attendance. Young carers are recorded in the school census and where a pupil's caring role may be contributing to absence, we work in partnership with the pupil and their parents to understand barriers to attendance and to put appropriate support in place. Where needs extend beyond the school gates, we work with the local authority to facilitate access to support through local early help arrangements and other relevant organisations. Where it appears that a young carer may have needs for support (or the young carer or their parent requests it) the local authority must carry out a young carer's needs assessment under section 17ZA of the Children Act 1989.

Reporting – Leavers & Joiners

The school will notify the Local Authority when a pupil is added (within 5 days) or removed from the admissions register outside the normal transfer points. We will use the designated procedure for Wokingham and Bracknell Councils; providing details of leavers, including contact details for parents and the destination school if known.

EYFS Mandatory Monitoring & Escalation Procedures

Multi-Contact Rule: In line with the EYFS mandate, parents of EYFS children must provide at least two independent emergency contact details upon enrolment. This ensures alternative avenues of communication are immediately available if an absence cannot be verified with the primary caregiver.

Definition of Prolonged EYFS Absence: An absence is flagged as "prolonged" if an EYFS child misses two consecutive scheduled sessions without a valid, verified explanation from a parent or guardian.

The Follow-Up Protocol: If an EYFS pupil triggers a prolonged or unexplained absence, Our Lady's will execute the following safety steps:

1. **Immediate Contact:** Staff will call the primary contact. If there is no response, the secondary emergency contacts will be immediately pursued to confirm the child's safety and whereabouts.
2. **Written Notification:** If phone contact fails, a formal written communication (email notification) will be dispatched within 24 hours of the trigger.
3. **Safeguarding Review:** The Senior Attendance Champion will cross-reference the absence pattern with our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to identify any underlying trends. If a child's welfare cannot be visually or verbally verified, Our Lady's reserves the right to conduct a safe-and-well home visit or escalate the matter directly to the Local Authority's Early Help or safeguarding services.

Early Years Funding Implications: For children accessing funded early education places, prolonged absences lasting 4 consecutive weeks within a single funding period must, by law, be reported directly to the Local Authority Early Years Funding Team, which may jeopardize the child's funded placement.

Working Together

Our priority is to support every child's learning and wellbeing while meeting our statutory responsibilities. We encourage parents to discuss any potential leave requests as early as possible. We are committed to listening carefully to families, explaining decisions clearly, and working in partnership in a respectful and compassionate way.

Monitoring & review

The school will review this Policy annually. This policy is to be read with regard to our Child Missing in Education and Safeguarding Policy. More frequent revision may occur if any guidance or advice published by the DfE or other relevant bodies makes this necessary.

Reviewed: 15 July 2026

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Boynes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

D Boynes
Acting Headmaster

To be reviewed: 12 months from "Reviewed" date

Appendix 1

Absence and attendance codes

Attendance codes are prescribed by the Department for Education and may be amended from time to time. The School will apply attendance codes in accordance with the current version of the Department for Education's Working together to improve school attendance guidance and associated regulations.

Codes:

- / \ - present for morning and afternoon sessions.
- I – Illness (not a medical or dental appointment).
- M – Attending medical/dental appointment.
- C – Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.
- R – Religious observance.
- E – Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision has been made.
- T – Parent travelling for occupational purposes.
- S – Study leave.
- C1 – Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
- J1 – Attending an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.
- C2 – Leave of absence for a temporary part-time timetable agreed by the school.
- B – Attending any other approved educational activity arranged by the school. K – Alternative provision arranged by the LA.
- L – Late arrival before the register is closed (during the 30 mins 'grace' period).
- P – Approved sporting activity.
- V – Attending an educational visit or trip.
- W – Work experience.
- G – Holiday not granted by the school.
- N – Reason for absence not yet established.
- O – Absent in other or unknown circumstances.
- U – Arrived in school after the register closed.
- D – Dual registration, so attending another school where registered.
- X – Pupils of non-compulsory school age absent when they are not timetabled to attend (e.g. EYFS).
- Q – Unable to attend because the school cannot reasonably provide access arrangements.
- Y1 – Transport normally provided not being available.
- Y2 – Widespread disruption to travel.
- Y3 – Part of school premises being closed.
- Y4 – Whole school site being unexpectedly closed.
- Y5 – Pupil is in criminal justice detention.
- Y6 – Public health guidance or law not to attend.
- Y7 – Any other unavoidable cause preventing attendance.
- Z – Prospective pupil not on admission register.

- Planned whole school closure (holidays).