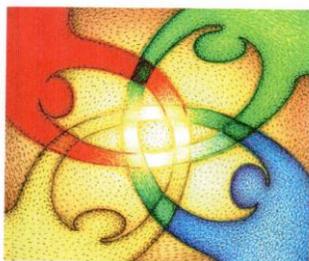


March Church of England School Attendance Policy



Written in conjunction with
Chichester Locality Group of Schools

Chichester Schools



Working Together)

Rationale

Every child has a right to education and parents are legally responsible for making sure that their child/children, once enrolled at a school, attend/s regularly and punctually. Regular attendance at school is the single most important factor in a child/children making appropriate progress and achieving success. Good regular and punctual attendance means doing well academically, developing better relationships with other children and positive behaviour. It also sets up good habits for when young people enter into work and life.

Principles

We recognise that children's learning is affected by their attendance and punctuality, as we aim to encourage everyone to aim high and try to achieve their full potential. The school provides a warm, welcoming and caring environment, within which everyone is valued and respected.

All school staff work with parents to help their children attend school punctually every day and to thereby meet the legal requirement that all children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular, full-time basis.

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason (e.g. illness or educated off-site).

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable (e.g. absences that have not been properly explained) or children who arrive too late to receive a mark in the register.

The school works in partnership with the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

The Governing Body agrees legally required targets for attendance each year.

Procedures

Attendance registers are taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and sent to the office for checking by 9.05am. The office staff contact the parents/carer of any child who has an unexplained absence before the end of the morning session. All absences are treated as unauthorised unless or until the school agrees on a satisfactory explanation. **Absence notes are collated by the school office and stored.**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Illness and other legitimate reasons

If a child is unfit for school, parents / carers are asked to inform the school on the first day of absence before 9.30am. When the child returns, he / she should bring a written note if they have not already texted/ e-mailed the school office with a reason. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested, such as a doctor's note. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, day trips, etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency e.g. bereavement or for exceptional medical appointments which take place during school time.

- Register codes

Appropriate codes are entered by the office staff. The Headteacher confirms any disputed codes.

- Late arrival

Children who arrive late to school must report to the school office, and the time of arrival and reason for being late written on the late log. The time of arrival is also noted on the register. Arrival at the school after 9.30am (30 minutes after the official start of school) is recorded as an unauthorised absence, unless a reasonable explanation is given.

- Holiday absence

The school will **not** authorise holiday in term time for any year group in line with DfE guidance.

- Appointments

Parents have a responsibility for ensuring that non-urgent medical and dental appointments are outside of the school day whenever possible. In exceptional cases, where this is not possible, parents have a responsibility for ensuring that only part and not all of the school day is missed.

- Communication with parents

If concerns about attendance or punctuality arise, the school will contact the parents/carers to discuss these and agree how this will be taken forward. A case file may be started, comprising documented phone calls, letters, meetings, agreed actions and review dates.

Throughout the year parents will be sent a colour-coded letter linked to cumulative attendance for their child from the start of the academic year, if

their child's attendance becomes a concern. Persistent absence is defined by the DfE as attendance below 90%

The school applies the following monitoring procedures:

- Electronic records
Attendance of all pupils is recorded electronically using the West Sussex SIMS system. This is up-dated regularly, and used to inform patterns and concerns across the school.
- Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI)
The school works in partnership with the Pupil Entitlement Officer, and seeks their advice on issues and matters arising from pupil absence. The initial responsibility to monitor, investigate and improve individual poor attendance lies with the school, and pupil case files will be kept. A referral to the Pupil Entitlement Officer will be considered if the child's absence is unauthorised for 25 sessions or more – (there are two sessions a day). A "Case Review Checklist", "A6 Referral Form" and a pupil's "Registration Certificate" will form part of this referral.

The attendance advice line (0330222 8200) is available for both parents and schools.

PEI@westsussex.gov.uk for all queries

FPN.EWS@westsussex.gov.uk for all FPN referrals and / or queries.

- Fixed Penalty Notices
The school, in conjunction with the Local Authority, is able to issue **Fixed Penalty Notices** to parents of pupils who have 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week consecutive period if attendance has been irregular.
- Governing Body
The Governing Body agree targets for school attendance each year. Issues and concerns may be raised with the Curriculum and Standards Committee. The attendance policy is agreed by the Curriculum and Standards Committee and reviewed every three years or whenever significant changes occur.
- Children Missing Education (CME)
- Children Missing Education (CME) Schools must liaise with CME when a parent withdraws a child to be home educated, or should they be unable to establish the whereabouts of a child who has been absent for more than 10 days without contact from the parents. CME guidance is stored in the front office and all communications logged. CME may also be a possible indicator of neglect, abuse and child sexual exploitation, so such absences should be notified to senior leaders / DSL at the first possible chance

Reviewed with the Chichester Locality July 2020