

2026-2027 Attendance Policy Statement

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DCAT Statutory Policy					
DCAT Non-statutory Policy					
DCAT Model Optional Policy					
Academy Policy				✓	
Local Authority Policy					

Our **vision** for our Trust is we exist to:

Help every child achieve their God-given potential

Our **aims** are clear. We aim to be a Trust in which:

Developing the whole child means pupils achieve and maximise their potential

Continued development of staff is valued and improves education for young people

All schools are improving and perform above national expectations

The distinct Christian identity of each academy develops and is celebrated

Our work as a Trust is underpinned by shared **values**. They are taken from the Church of England's vision for Education and guide the work of Trust Centre team. They are:

Aspiration

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4 vs 13).

Wisdom

Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise (Proverbs 19 vs 20)

Respect

So in everything do to others what you would have them do to you (Matthew 7 vs 12)

Our vision of helping every child achieve their God-given potential is aligned with the Church of England's vision for education and is underpinned by the Bible verse from John: *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

We believe that children can achieve their full educational potential if they attend school regularly and behave well. However, we recognise that some just need support to do so.

1. Introduction and Statutory framework

The March CE Primary School aims to maximise attendance and secure high levels of punctuality in order to ensure that all pupils have full access to their education. If allowed to remain unchecked persistent absence and lateness can significantly impact on a pupils progress and achievement. Our regular communication with parents play a vital role in ensuring that this is achieved.

In line with the 1996 Education Act, we expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We will endeavour to encourage our children to attend, and where necessary put in place support plans to help achieve this.

Following the release of the DfE '[Working together to improve school attendance' guidance \(May 2022\)](#), the school has adapted this policy to reflect its recommendations.

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.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. We strive to create a happy and rewarding environment for all children where they feel safe and nurtured therefore wanting to come to school. We will make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

We recognise that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. At all times, parents are encouraged to take an active role in the school life and to share and support their children's learning. Through our home-school agreement, parents agree to ensuring their child's the regular and punctual attendance. As part of our annual written reports to parents, the children's attendance records are shared.

2. Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. All class teachers carry out regular checks on attendance. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon.

Registers are checked after morning registration and the Office Manager and the Deputy and Headteacher follow up any concerns. All absences and persistent lateness are investigated.

If a pupil is absent and the school has not been contacted, parents will be telephoned to check on why a pupil is not in school. This is also followed up by an absence text via School App.

Attendance data is held electronically on our School Management Information System, accessible by the Headteacher and those responsible for overseeing attendance who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.

The Head, Deputy Headteacher and Office Manager monitor the attendance of pupils each week. Where necessary, parents/carers will be notified by letter when their child's attendance drops below the 95%. If attendance drops to below 90% a review takes place, and a letter is written informing the parent/carer of a two weekly monitoring period over six weeks. This letter also contains a warning that should attendance not improve during this time a referral to WSCC Pupil Entitlement Officer may be applied for.

The school sets attendance targets each year. The Senior Leadership Team and Governors agree these at a Full Board meeting early in the school year. Targets are challenging but realistic, and are based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school has signed up to the Chichester Locality Policy. This is a Chichester wide policy for promoting attendance for children and young people. It is a collaborative approach to promote good attendance at school across Chichester. School leaders and governors who have accepted this Policy agree to work together to implement it a copy is available on the website.

3. Punctuality and lateness

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start at the start of the school day. The Office Manager monitors lateness of pupils as punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is of extreme importance therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. Pupils may arrive at school from 8.30am where members of staff are on our playground and go straight to class. There is no supervision on site for children before this time and the school is not legally responsible for them (with the exception of our breakfast club).

Registration starts at 8.30am morning registers close fifteen minutes after registration times. Afternoon registers will close five minutes after registration times. A pupil that arrives after this time will be marked as 'late' unless the school have previously acknowledged the reason for their late arrival into school.

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Headteacher or Deputy and the Office Manager will write to the parents/carers. If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school will make a formal referral to WSCC.

Registration finishes at 8.45 am, any child arriving after this time will need to sign in through the front office. This will be marked as 'late' and a reason will need to be provided. The school regularly reviews punctuality and reasons for lateness.

4. Authorised and unauthorised attendance

Only the school within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents, and it is a statutory requirement for the Headteacher or Office Manager / Deputy Headteacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised.

Wherever reasonably possible, we expect parents to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time if this is not possible please give as much written notice as possible with a copy of the appointment, this can be in the form of a letter, card, text or email. The codes for absences are included in each register.

If a child is absent from school for whatever reason the parent must inform the school in person, in writing, by telephone, email or text as soon as possible. The normal routine is to telephone the school on the first morning of absence. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed.

Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the school received no reason or explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given. Absences may also be unauthorised if a child is missing too much education due to illness with where no medical evidence is provided.

5. Leave of Absence

The Government issued new guidance in May 2022 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and Working together to improve school attendance (2022).

- Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Exceptional circumstances being defined as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.

- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence, which are made by the resident parent.
- Applications for Leave of Absence, which are made in advance and refused, will result in the absence being unauthorised, which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- If an absence has not been requested by the parent, it is up to the parent to prove otherwise, a Fixed Penalty Notice can be applied upon the child's return to school on this provision. For example, medical evidence would be required for a child reported as unwell.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to West Sussex County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Fixed penalty notices are served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends. Fixed penalty notices can be used by schools where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and the absence constitutes an offence.

Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences, which should usually be the parent or parents with day-to-day responsibility for the pupil's attendance.

West Sussex local authority can give each parent a fine of £80, rising to £160 if you do not pay within 21 days.

From the 2024 to 2025 school year, each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period.

If you get a second fine in 3 years it will be £160. If you do not pay the fine in 28 days you may be taken to court for keeping your child out of school.

If your child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years you will not be fined but may be taken to court.

If the penalty is not paid by the end of the 28 day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies, or withdraw the notice. Parent(s) can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired, and full payment has not been made. There is no right of appeal by parents against a fixed penalty notice.

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.

The March CE Primary understands that holidays are generally less expensive during term time but this does **NOT** count as an exceptional circumstance.

Leave which is taken for the following reasons will **not** be authorised:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake
- Booked by another family member
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
- Family birthdays

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Why attendance matters:

Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance

- 14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance

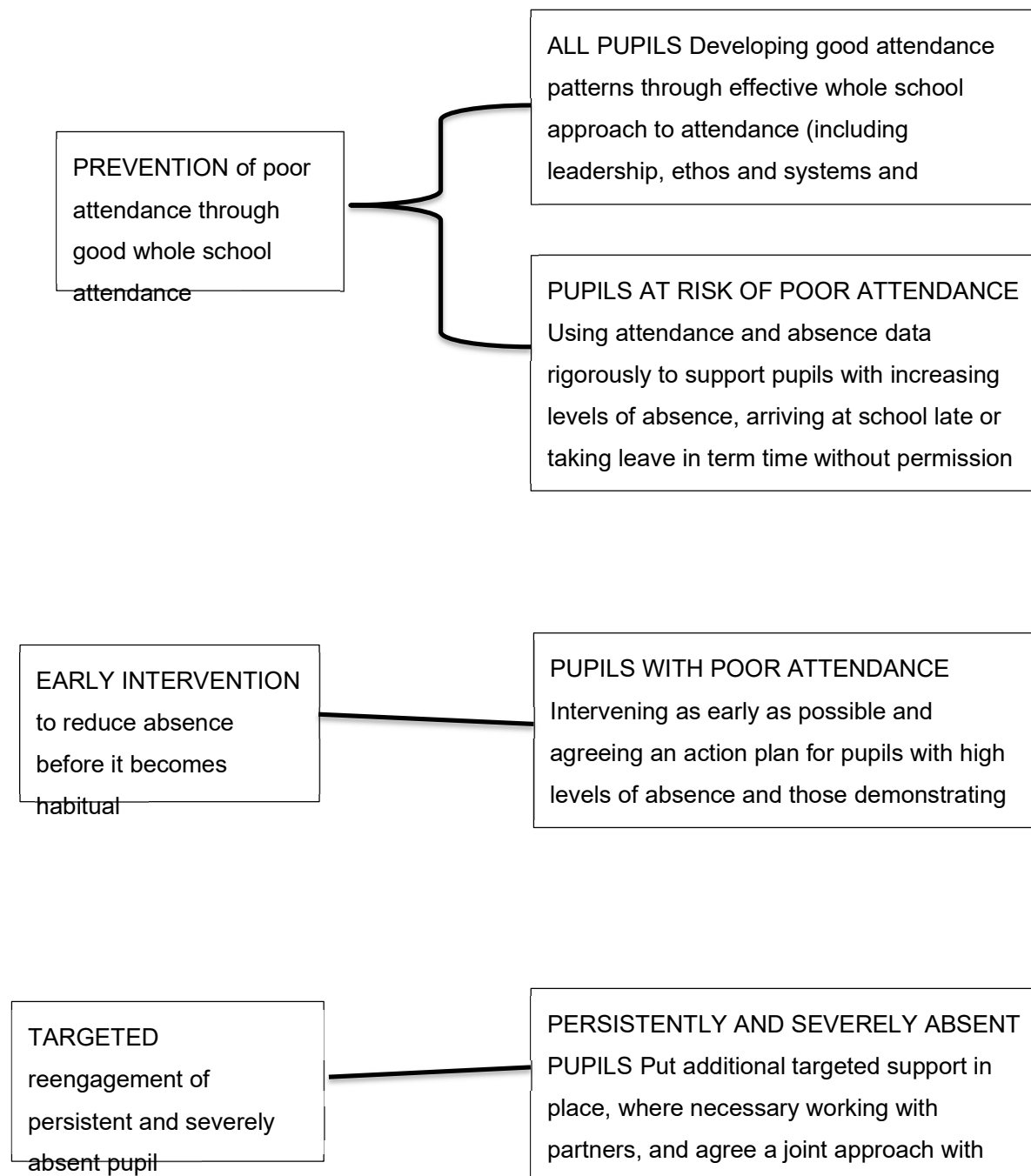
If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

At the March, the staff and Governors endeavour to support parents in the responsibility of attendance by:

- an environment in which pupils feel welcomed and valued. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken
- making every effort to match learning tasks to pupils' needs
- collating attendance data weekly, monthly and termly and analysing it in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice
- celebrating attendance in achievement assemblies by rewarding certificates, class rewards
- parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, the school portal, parents' evenings etc) of the importance of good attendance
- The Headteacher will make a termly report to governors on attendance
- The Headteacher and SENCo may liaise with other agencies when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing difficulties some secondary schools make links with the school and the Year 6 pupils to help with a smooth transfer to their school. Discussions will identify those pupils who may require extra support during this process

- If the school and other partners have facilitated all avenues of support and the appropriate educational support has been provided, yet severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect.
- The school may need to be conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases. Where these remain, a full children's social care assessment may be required. KCSIE 2024 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Effective school attendance improvement and management



7. Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body will act alongside the Headteacher to monitor the attendance of all children and vulnerable groups (Pupil Premium, FSM, SEN etc) and ensure that this policy is being followed.

8. Role of WSCC

On those occasions when a pattern of poor attendance or lateness is developing the Headteacher will work directly with the family to seek solutions. Should the attendance drop to below 90% or the school are unable to change consistent poor attendance then a referral to WSCC will follow. The function of WSCC at this stage is the Compliance / Enforcement part of the service which delivers the Local Authorities statutory response where attendance has fallen below 90% or there are 10 or more unauthorised sessions in a ten-week block.

9. Data Analysis

The school collects and stores attendance data using its management information systems.

The school provides attendance data to the DFE, sending data about the school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics. The school uses the attendance data to identify whether or not there are particular groups of children, whose absences may be a cause for concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils.

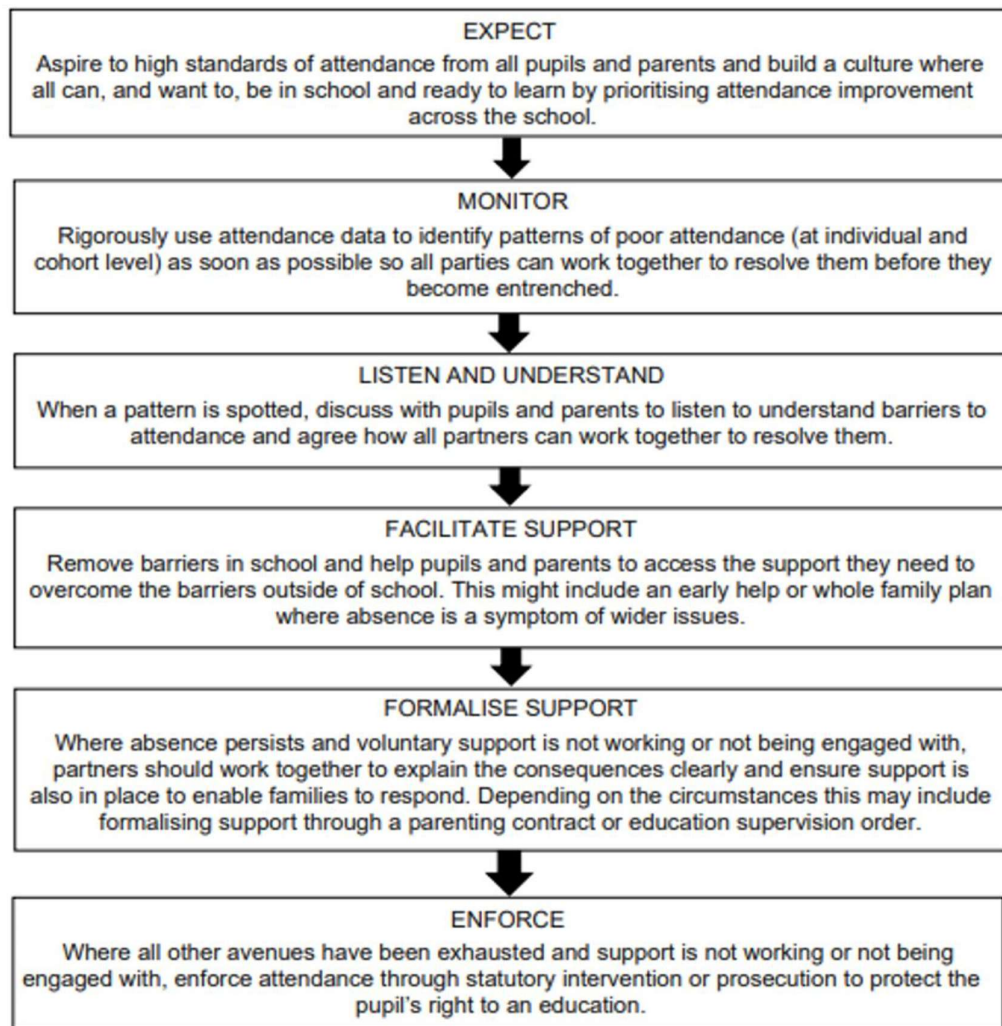
Where attendance is a concern, the school will use data to analyse attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example ethnicity or gender, FSM or Pupil Premium. The school uses attendance data to identify the main causes of absences within the school and to act to address and improve those areas.

The school will use data to monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support.

10. Working together to improve attendance.

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families.

The March CE Primary works together with all partners to:



11. Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as they are for any other pupil. The school will work with parents to improve attendance if necessary. This could include:

- Reasonable adjustments
- Referrals to external partners, where appropriate.
- Establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance.

- Ensure data is regularly monitored for these groups including at board and governing body meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority. Additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.

Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education.

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

12. Dual registration

In circumstances, where it has been agreed that the pupil will be registered at more than one school, the pupil's name will remain on the admission register. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending another school on a temporary basis, such as a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school.

13. Collaborative working – Chichester Locality Policy

The March CE Primary works with the local communities (including voluntary and community groups) to help remove the barriers to attendance that families experience. In some cases, ~~families will experience the same or similar barriers to attendance for multiple children who~~ attend different schools in the area. As such, it is of mutual benefit for such schools to work together where possible. This will be particularly beneficial in supporting transition between feeder schools.

14. Attendance legal intervention

The school aims to work together with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.

Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case-by-case basis.

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.