



Attendance Policy

October 2025

Approved by	Date	Review Schedule	Date of next review
Trust Board	23/10/25	Every year	Oct 2026

Saint Paul teaches, 'the body is not made up of one part but of many.'

Chester Diocesan Learning Trust recognises and nurtures the unique gifts, skills and talents within our whole community.

We will empower adults and children to grow in character and mind, shaping a better future.

Shaping better futures; one body, many parts.

Contents

1.	Aims	3
2.	The Importance of School Attendance	3
3.	Attendance and Punctuality – Lost Learning Hours	4
4.	Legislation and Guidance	4
5.	Roles and Responsibilities	4
6.	Statement of Expectations	6
7.	Attendance Procedures	7
8.	The School's Response to Attendance Issues / Attendance Pathways	7
9.	Celebrating Achievement – Target Setting	8
10.	Leave of Absence Including Holidays in Term Time	9
11.	Part Time Timetables	9
11.	Children Missing from Education / Absent from Education	10
13.	Elective Home Education	10
14.	Absence Codes	10

1. Aims

Chester Diocesan Learning Trust (CDLT) is committed to providing a full education to all pupils that embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

CDLT schools provide a welcoming and caring environment where every pupil feels safe and valued.

CDLT recognise that regular attendance and excellent punctuality are essential in ensuring pupils make sustained academic progress and social development.

Our schools work in partnership with pupils and their parents or carers to promote the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Regular and punctual attendance is vital in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum, as valuable learning time is lost when pupils are absent or late.

As a Trust, we are committed to meeting our obligations with regard to school attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Identifying and acting promptly to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the right support in place to ensure they attend school.
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending school.

2. The Importance of School Attendance

Regular attendance at school is vital to support pupils to achieve and help them get the best possible start in life. Good attendance is central to pupils' academic achievement and personal development.

Going to school helps to develop:

- friendships
- social skills
- team values
- life skills
- cultural awareness
- career pathways

3. Attendance and Punctuality – Lost Learning Hours

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Sessions	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	1.4 Weeks	45 Lessons
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	3.4 Weeks	95 Lessons
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	5.4 Weeks	145 Lessons
80%	36 Days	72 Sessions	7.1 Weeks	180 Lessons
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	9.3 Weeks	240 Lessons

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the DfE document 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (September 2024) and refers to the DfE statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and responsibilities that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016, 2023 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2025
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024
- Mental Health Issues Affecting a Pupil's Attendance: Guidance for Schools (February 2023)

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Trust Board

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Setting Trust-wide policy, ensuring that this meets statutory requirements and is adopted by all of the Trust's academies

- Setting high expectations of Trust leaders in relation to student attendance
- Regularly reviewing and challenging Trust-wide attendance data and holding Trust leaders to account around the application of the Trust policy

Trust Central Team

The Trust's central team is responsible for:

Promoting the importance of student attendance across the Trust

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Holding school leaders to account for the application of this policy and the impact of this on attendance data
- Reviewing and challenging attendance data on a regular basis
- Provide schools with training and updates
- Share effective practice across schools

Headteacher

Responsibilities include:

- Acting as or appointing a member of staff as Attendance Lead
- Implementing the school attendance policy and reviewing its effectiveness
- Monitoring school-level absence data and sharing this information with the LGC in the Headteacher's Termly Report.
- Ensuring staff receive appropriate training
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed penalty notices where necessary
- Having an oversight of data analysis regarding attendance
- Working with families to support attendance.
- Communicating with the SENDCo, Mental Health Lead and the LA to support attendance. Ensuring there are clear procedures for reporting absence

Attendance Leads

Schools may appoint an attendance lead with delegated responsibilities, including:

- Development and review of the attendance policy
- Producing and distributing attendance information for parents/carers
- Setting and monitoring targets for improving attendance within the school, and evaluating targets with the senior leadership team
- Supporting all school staff in their work related to attendance
- Collating attendance data as required for senior leadership team, DfE, LA and LSB
- Identifying individual pupils with known punctuality/attendance issues, and ensuring these pupils are monitored closely
- Referring pupils to the EWO when attendance gives cause for concern, and liaising with the EWO to develop strategies to support these pupils/families.
- Liaising with other partner agencies and services towards improving and developing strategies to raise levels of attendance.

Class Teachers

Class teachers will promote and support good attendance by:

- Completing registers accurately and promptly as per the school's attendance policy
- Giving attendance a high profile and emphasising the importance of school attendance
- Making pupils feel welcome and supporting them after an absence or when late to school
- Liaising with other school staff and responding to attendance issues promptly.
- Supporting the Trust/whole school ethos of promoting good attendance.

The Local Governing Committee (LGC)

The LGC will:

- Receive information from the Headteacher on attendance in the Headteacher's termly report.
- Support the school in setting attendance targets.
- Support the school in planning a response where attendance is a cause for concern.
- Support the school in its efforts to raise attendance.
- Support the school by attending strategic meetings or attendance panels as appropriate.

Office Staff

School office staff may be responsible for taking calls from parents/carers and pupils about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it accurately. They will also transfer calls from parents/carers and pupils to the correct pastoral staff, attendance officers or SLT in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance. They will input codes accurately and ensure that late pupils and pupils leaving during the day are accounted for. Office staff work closely with the attendance and safeguarding team.

6. Statement of Expectations

What our schools expect of pupils:

- To attend school every day, unless in exceptional circumstances.
- To arrive on time, appropriately prepared for the day
- To report to their class teacher for registration, or to the school office if late
- To tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending school These expectations depend upon the age and needs of individual pupils.

What our schools expect of parents/carers:

- To fulfil their statutory responsibility by ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time.
- To ensure they contact the school as per reporting procedures if their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure their child arrives on time, and is well prepared for the day (equipment, homework completed, PE kit etc.)
- To contact the school (class teacher/headteacher/admin staff) whenever a problem arises that may keep their child from attending school.
- To inform the admin staff of any forthcoming appointments and, where possible, make appointments outside of the school day. Evidence of an appointment must be shown to the school office staff.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child

- To take holidays in the school holiday period only; special leave in term time will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances – see appendix for list of absence codes.

What parents can expect of their school:

- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- First day contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing prior notification
- Prompt action when any problems are identified
- Close liaison with the Education Welfare Officer, LA and Early Help Team to assist and support parents and pupils
- Notification to parents/carers of their child's attendance record through annual reports sent home.

7. Attendance Procedures

Registration procedures

These will vary according to individual schools, and be detailed in each school's own specific policies.

Safeguarding

Children may be at risk if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis is considered to be a safeguarding matter.

As part of first day call procedures outlined, schools may make home visits to ascertain the wellbeing of pupils. In any instance, where a pupil has not attended and the school has not been contacted with what it deems an acceptable reason, then a home visit will be considered. The school will speak to their safeguarding leads for additional advice where necessary, and where appropriate DSLs contact their Local Authority Safeguarding Partnership for support.

8. The School's Response to Attendance Issues / Following Attendance Pathways

The school will identify and monitor pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern. The Trust will set a target for attendance, to be reviewed each academic year.

The Trust target for the academic year 2025-26 is 96%.

Pupils falling below 95% will receive their first 'light touch' letter and monitor at 3-4 week intervals, sending letters 2 and 3 if there is no improvement.

If attendance continues to fall to below 90%, as defined by the DfE a child will be deemed to be 'Persistently Absent' (PA). Absence at this level is likely to cause considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and the school will need parent/carer's fullest support and co-operation to address this. If not taken up already, Early Help support should be offered again. Parents will be invited to a formal attendance meeting in school with the Headteacher/Attendance Lead.

After a monitoring period of 3-4 weeks, if there is no sign of improvement the school may start the formal Local Authority attendance pathway, informing the LA Inclusion and Attendance team and beginning with letter 1.

A support plan will be created for the family, and further professional help accessed if not already in place. Regular review meetings will be held in school to monitor progress.

Children whose attendance continues to fall to below 50% are deemed to be Severely Absent (SA) and will need a specific targeted plan. This should be created in liaison with support from the school's Local Authority.

Parents should be advised that failure to comply with the above interventions could eventually lead to the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices, or prosecution in court. The Local Authority will contact parents regarding the issuing of fines or any other legal action.

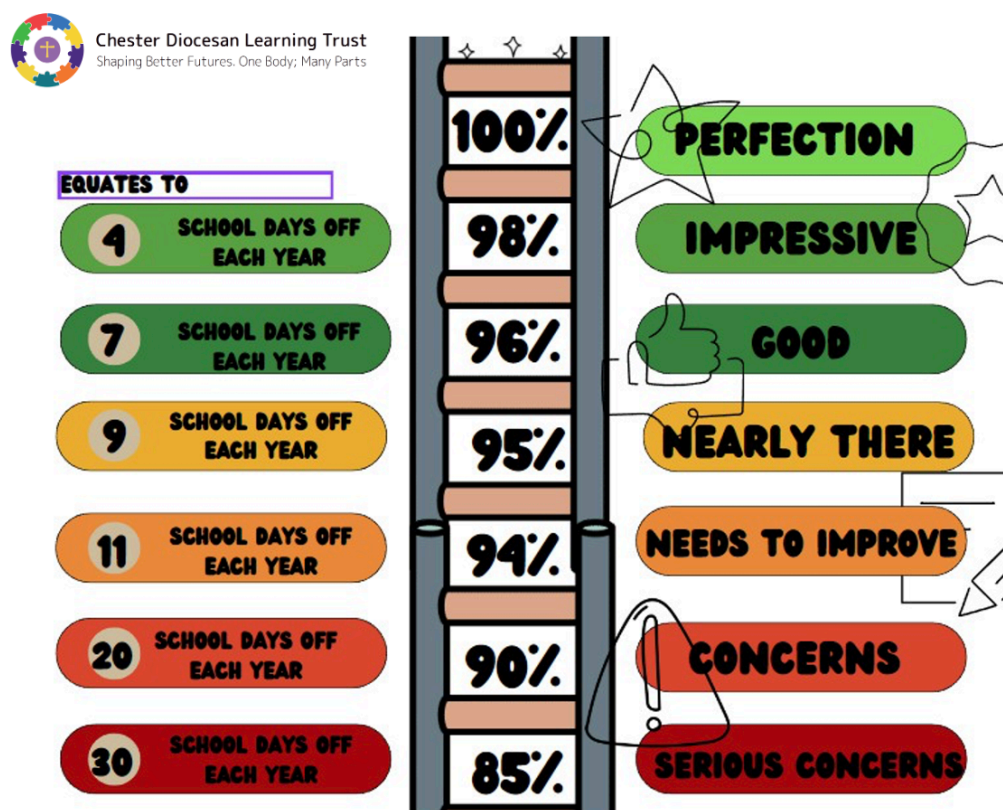
All absences will be assessed against current DfE guidance.

When a child receives 10 unauthorised absences in any rolling 10-week period, the school must consider the next steps. This could include unauthorised absence (O codes), unauthorised lateness (U codes), unauthorised term time leave (G codes) or a combination of these codes.

9. Celebrating Achievement – Target Setting

As a trust, we strive for all children to have good attendance, but recognise that at times 100% attendance may be unachievable for very good reasons. The trust aims to value all attendance over 96% as 'good' and has an aspirational target of all schools achieving 98% attendance for all pupils.

The diagram below is a useful visual to help children, staff and parents understand the numbers around attendance and what this means in real terms.



10. Leave of Absence Including Holidays in Term Time

The law states that parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for term time holidays. The Trust will not authorise holidays in term time. Our schools will refer any cases of unauthorised holiday absence that meet Local Authority thresholds for the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Under new DfE Guidance, Local Authorities will only issue two fixed penalty notices in a rolling 3 year period. Fixed penalty notices are issued per parent, per child for any leave of absence of 5 days or more.

Offence 1 – FPN of £160 per parent/per child This FPN will be reduced to £80 per parent/per child if paid within 21 days.

Offence 2 – FPN of £160 per parent/per child. No reduction. Offence 3 – LA consider prosecution through the magistrates' court.

If parents do decide to take their child out of school during term time, school should be notified by the completion of a leave of absence request form at least 20 days prior to the date of absence.

Families requesting leave of absence for the purposes of Religious Observance should speak to their headteacher for guidance.

11. Part-Time Timetables

CDLT recognise that in some circumstances, a part-time timetable might be appropriate for a pupil.

In some circumstances, pupils' education may be provided partially at school and partially at another educational setting or through education otherwise than at a school in line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Time away from school to receive education in other ways must be recorded in the attendance register using the appropriate codes.

The trust must be notified of any such arrangements.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible.

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have the agreement of the Trust Inclusion Lead.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process.

In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part time timetable for a prolonged period.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process.

If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

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 record the absence accordingly (C2).

12. Children Missing from Education / Absent from Education

Children who cannot be located, or their families contacted, will be considered missing from education. The LA Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with specific Local Authority procedures. If the family/ child is still deemed missing after 20 school days they may lose their school place and be removed from the school roll.

Similarly, schools will pay particular attention to those pupils whose persistent absence is impacting severely upon their education, and classed as 'absent from education'.

KCSIE Sept 2025, para 177: *Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect. Child sexual and child criminal exploitation – particularly county lines. It is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.*

These cases will be discussed with SLT/Safeguarding leads to ensure that appropriate and robust action is taken to address concerns.

13. Elective Home Education

Should, after careful consideration, a parent decide to educate their child at home, the school should ask for confirmation of this in writing. The school may then remove the child from the school roll immediately, informing Elective Home Education. The school is under no obligation to keep the child's place open.

14. Absence Codes

According to the DfE guidance the following codes are used on the register:

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration

L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		

T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school

N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays