Chidham Parochial Primary School

Attendance Policy

Based on West Sussex County Council Model Attendance Policy

Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents about this policy when their children join our school and regularly thereafter through our school newsletter and other relevant opportunities.

This model policy is based on the statutory guidance from the Department for Education [DfE] Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on at least an **annual basis**. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on **1st September 2026** It is due for review on **1st September 2027.**

Headteacher: Mr Sebastian Olway
Policy date: **1st September 2026**
Review date: **1st September 2027**

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1. Introduction/Aim

At Chidham Parochial Primary School, improving school attendance is a shared responsibility, and a priority that underpins every child's right to learn, thrive and achieve. We value the attendance of all pupils. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity possible.

Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils, and governors to:

- Promote a positive and welcoming environment in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Promote strong attendance to support pupils' achievement by maintaining the highest possible standards of attendance and punctuality.
- Acknowledge the vital role all staff play in encouraging and sustaining good attendance.
- Establish a clear system for monitoring and responding to pupil absence, taking prompt action to address emerging patterns.
- Build and maintain positive relationships with families to ensure pupils receive the support they need to attend school regularly.
- Encourage effective support structures and champion multi-agency collaboration to improve attendance outcomes.
- Ensure parents understand their legal responsibilities and that all children can access the education to which they are entitled.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is based on the statutory guidance of the Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE).
It also reflects the following legislation:

- Education Act 1996
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2024
- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE 2026)

The government expects all schools to:

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.

The government expects all local authorities to:

- Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.
- Work with schools in their area to remove barriers to attendance.
- Provide each school with a named point of contact [Dedicated Schools Team link worker] to offer support to families who are experiencing attendance issues.
- Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.

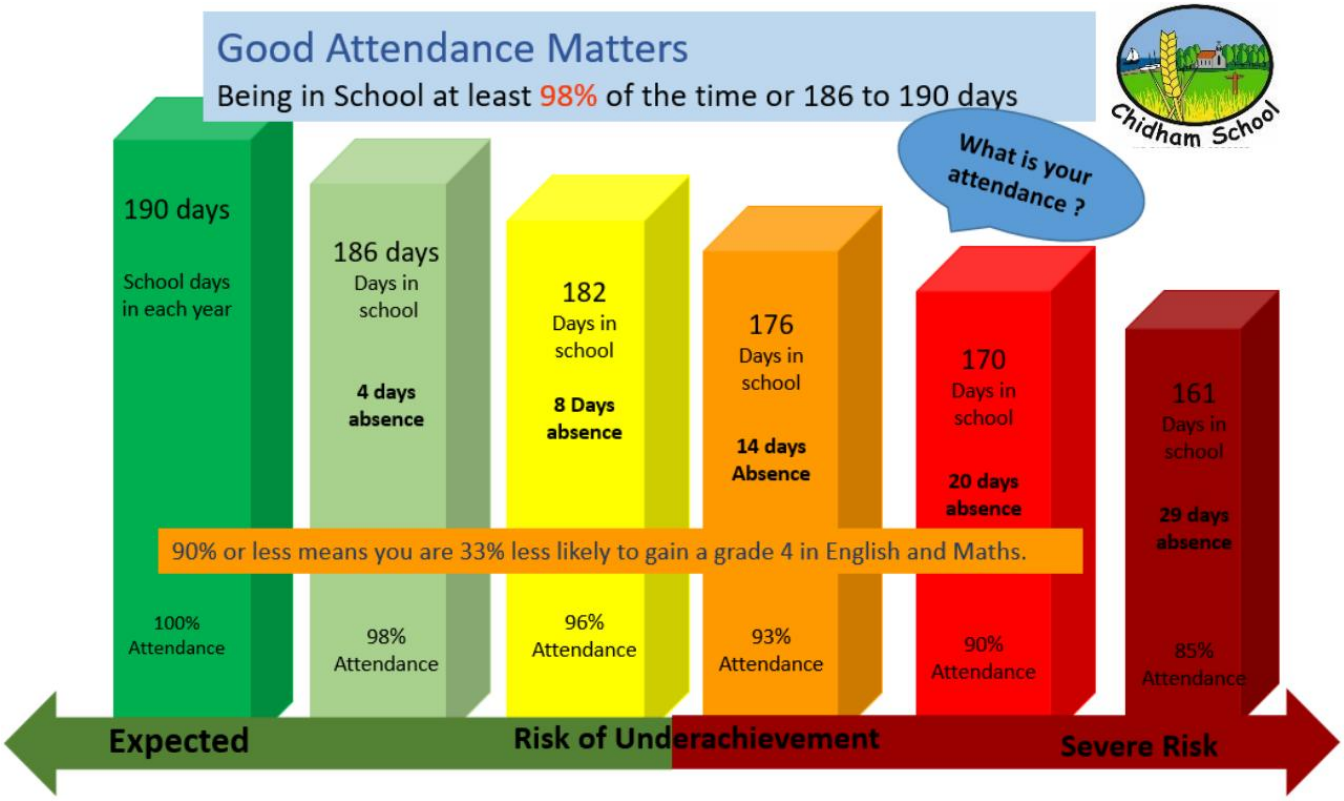
The government expects all parents to:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so with good notice.
- Book any medical appointments outside of the school day where possible.

A "parent" is defined as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not.
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and the Local Authority to ensure that they are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.



3. Roles and Responsibilities

At Chidham Parochial Primary School, we believe that improving school attendance is everyone's business. It is a shared responsibility by governors/trustees, all school staff, parents, pupils, the wider school community and multi-agency partners. We aim to always work in partnership with our parents.

Role	Name and contact
Attendance Lead	Sebastian Olway – office@chidham.w-sussex.sch.uk
Attendance Officer day-to-day	Dawn Hawthorne – office@chidham.w-sussex.sch.uk
Home School Link	Jessica Wilson– jwilson@chidham.w-sussex.sch.uk
Named Governor for Attendance	Danni Duthie (Safeguarding Governor)
Dedicated Schools Team Link Worker	Vannessa Simpson

Parents should also contact their child's class teacher with any initial concerns or questions about attendance. Class teacher contact details can be found on curriculum information letters sent out each term or emails can be sent via the school office.

The Governors recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it through the school's ethos and across its policies. They may take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Supporting their school to prioritise attendance and work together with leaders to set the whole school culture on attendance and belonging.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Using data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with similar schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy, which is published and publicised regularly so that it is easily accessible to pupils, parents and staff.

The Headteacher will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their families.
- Communicate attendance expectations to parents.
- Make sure all staff know the importance of good attendance and receive the training and professional development required.
- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Attendance Policy and ensure that it is reviewed **annually**.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance, implement effective strategies and review the impact.
- Share information and work collaboratively with the local authorities, schools and other local partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

The Attendance lead will:

- Promote and maintain positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Use data to analyse the attendance of different groups including young carers and implement early intervention strategies.
- Oversee the school's attendance management.

The Home School Link will:

- Provide enhanced attendance support to identify barriers and offer strategies
- Offer to meet with families and children to write raising attendance plans

All staff will:

- Promote good attendance in interactions with pupils and parents.
- Work to foster a sense of belonging with all pupils.
- Build positive relationships with pupils and families.

All teaching staff will:

- Accurately record attendance.
- Monitor attendance within their class.
- Play a vital role in promoting good attendance by noticing patterns of absence, speaking with pupils and raising concerns early.

All office staff will:

- Record reasons for absence.
- Follow up unexplained absence.
- Maintain accurate attendance records.

Here at Chidham Parochial Primary School we treat school attendance as a vital safeguarding issue, not just a pastoral or administrative matter. We expect pupils to achieve attendance of 95% or above wherever possible.

We request that parents:

- Ensure their child attends school every day and arrives on time.
- Report any instance of absence by 9.00am on the first day and every day thereafter, if applicable.
- Inform the school of the reason for absence and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible for example medical evidence.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact negatively on their child's attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.
- Work with the school to improve their child's attendance where necessary.

We request that pupils:

- Speak to a trusted adult if they are experiencing issues with their attendance.
- Attend all lessons on time and ready to learn.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

4. Categorising Absence and Attendance

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department for Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance [Appendix 5].

4.1 Leave of Absence

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance as families typically get 13 weeks of school holidays per year. Leave of absence should **not** be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

All absences associated with a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents who remove their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation will be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a fixed penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances.'

At Chidham Parochial Primary School, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances.' We will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing within 2 school weeks.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave **(see Appendix 1).** If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised. The school will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

A fixed penalty notice [FPN] request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should:

- The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken.
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

4.2 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parents notify the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must notify the school office in advance of their appointment to explain what the appointment is for, where it is and how long they expect to be out of school for. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In line with Department for Education guidance, if the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness/evidence provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging a pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent. We will invite parents to attend a support meeting as an appropriate early intervention strategy with our Home School Link Worker. As part of this support, we may invite our Dedicated Schools Team link worker, Vannessa Simpson, to work along with the family.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions and West Sussex's policies regarding supporting children with health issues, Supporting children with ongoing health needs. We will also consider whether an **Individual Healthcare Plan** is required.

4.3 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Chidham Parochial Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice of 1 month to the school.

For religious observance, if a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day using this code; the rest of the time would need a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion.
Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) page 86

4.4 Parent travelling for occupational purposes and Traveller Absence

Where a child's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for children from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes and where the whole family is travelling. Evidence maybe requested if a child's absence is below 90%.

Children must have attended at least 200 school sessions in the past 12 months if they are over six years old. (One school day has two sessions.)

Parents must be travelling for work and agree with the school beforehand. This means moving from place to place for your job.

Parents do not need to be of no fixed abode/travelling permanently: Some of the wording of the 2024 guidance has caused confusion. The Department for Education have confirmed that the 'mobile child' only needs to be of no fixed abode whilst the parent is trading/working.

The definition of 'no fixed abode' under the new guidance means that someone either does not have a settled place where they can live full-time, or they have a place where they can live full-time but they spend substantial periods of time not living there.

A mobile child could be a child whose family travels all year round as part of their trade or business and has no permanent address at all, but it also includes a child who does have a fixed place to live (like a house), but does not live there for a substantial part of the year, if their parent is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place.
If the child is absent from school while travelling with that parent, then code T applies.

Parents cannot use the T Code to take children out of school for events like weddings or funerals. Different codes are needed for these absences. The T Code cannot be used if someone other than the child's parents is taking them travelling.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

4.5 Unauthorised Absence

The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation which is accepted as such by the school. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not restricted to:

- Holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- Shopping trips or day trips.
- The pupil's or a family member's birthday.
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend [see Appendix 3 for NHS guidance]
- Absences taken without the authorisation of the school.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U' code. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, is counted as an absence for the session.
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments.
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

5. Our Procedures

5.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended in 2024 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

"Absence" as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

"Regular" attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised by the headteacher.

- The school day begins at **8.30am.**
- Pupils are expected to arrive by **8.45am**
- The morning register is taken at **9.00am** and closes at **9.15am**.
- The afternoon register is taken at **1.10pm.**
- The afternoon register will close at **1.20pm.**

Registers are legal records, and all schools must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date the data was entered. As the attendance register is

a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, all schools must ensure the register shows:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name of the person who made the amendment

On each occasion when the register is taken, the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admission register at the time. The codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics. The data helps schools, local authorities, and the government gain a greater understanding of the delivery of education and the level of, and reason for, absence. We ensure the consistent use of the attendance register and codes, including dual registration, flexi-schooling, no fixed abode, access arrangements, and when specific codes (e.g. Q, D, Y6, U) should be applied.

Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels for example, via written reports, parents' evenings.

We understand that attendance may be more complex for some families and barriers to attendance go beyond the school gate. As such, we will communicate with parents about school attendance in a supportive manner by:

- Setting clear expectations of good attendance.
- Building positive relationships with families.
- Using supportive language and working collaboratively with families.
- Sharing clear and relevant facts about the impact of missed lessons on pupil outcomes.
- Outlining the benefits of regular school attendance.
- Recognising efforts and improvements with attendance.
- Supporting families to access further advice and guidance when required.

5.2 Late Arrival at School

The school day begins at **8.45am** and all pupils are expected to arrive on time every day. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this time to assist with a smooth transition to lessons. All pupils arriving after registration are required to report to the main office with their parents to give a reason for lateness. If their arrival is before **9.15am** it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at **9.15am.** All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the session - U code otherwise referred to as 'Late after the close of register'. This is classified as an *unauthorised* absence for the session. The school will work with parents to address any patterns or repeated instances of late arrival.

5.3 Expected absence procedure for parents:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school, parents are expected to contact school by telephone call or email on the morning of the **first** day of absence and on **each subsequent day**, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then the school's absence protocols will be initiated.

If a child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at **9.15am** and where no reason for absence is known.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response is received, the child's named emergency contacts will be telephoned.
- For safeguarding purposes, a home visit may be conducted if school is unable to get hold of a parent due to their child's absence.
- School will contact the parent if a pupil leaves the school without permission.

In certain circumstances the school may also:

- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues and suggest ways to improve attendance.
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement.
- Investigate barriers to school attendance and work collaboratively with families on this issue.
- Refer to Dedicated Schools Team [DST] link worker for support, guidance, and advice.
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through West Sussex - Integrated Front Door [IFD]
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken.
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or consulting with the Children's Social Care or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns.

5.4 Attendance Recognition & Interventions

At Chidham Parochial Primary School, our vision begins with the statement: "*At Chidham, everyone is known, loved and belongs.*" We believe that strong attendance is rooted in children feeling valued, safe and connected to school. This strong sense of belonging creates a positive culture in which children enjoy learning and want to attend every day.

We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where all children are known as individuals and where barriers to attendance are identified and addressed as early as possible. Good attendance is recognised and celebrated regularly through class-based recognition, whole-school communication and positive engagement with children and families. Attendance improvement, as well as consistently good attendance, is acknowledged throughout the year.

Attendance Expectations and Monitoring
Our whole-school attendance target is 95% or above. Attendance is monitored closely by school leaders and the attendance team through regular analysis of attendance data.

Attendance information is:
- Shared regularly with staff to ensure attendance remains everyone's responsibility.
- Reported to families through newsletters, including whole-school and class attendance figures.
- Monitored by leaders to identify trends, patterns and emerging concerns.
- Reviewed by governors as part of their monitoring of school performance and safeguarding.

The attendance team meets at least fortnightly to analyse attendance data and identify children whose attendance may be causing concern. This enables the school to intervene promptly and provide support before attendance issues become entrenched.

Using Data to Target Support
Attendance data is used to identify:

- Children whose attendance is falling below expected levels.
- Children at risk of becoming persistently absent.
- Children who are persistently absent (below 90% attendance).
- Children who are severely absent (below 50% attendance).
- Groups of children or cohorts where attendance patterns indicate further investigation or support may be required.

Where children have a history of persistent or severe absence, the school will discuss attendance expectations with families at the earliest opportunity and work proactively to prevent difficulties from recurring.

Working in Partnership with Families
We recognise that positive relationships with families are central to improving attendance. Where attendance concerns arise, we adopt a supportive and graduated approach, seeking to understand the reasons behind poor attendance and working collaboratively with families to overcome barriers.

Attendance concerns will typically be addressed through a tiered approach:

Universal Support
- Promotion of good attendance through regular communication.
- Recognition and celebration of positive attendance and attendance improvement.
- Clear expectations shared with all families.

Early Intervention
- Contact from the class teacher where attendance begins to decline.
- Discussion with parents/carers to understand any emerging concerns and agree strategies for improvement.

Targeted Support
- Involvement of the school's Home School Link Worker (ELSA) to provide additional support and guidance for families.
- Attendance meetings with parents/carers to review concerns and agree actions.
- Closer monitoring of attendance and regular communication with families.

Intensive Support
- Formal attendance support plans where attendance remains a concern.
- Multi-agency support involving external professionals where appropriate.
- Referral to Local Authority services in line with statutory guidance where additional intervention is required.

Accessing Wider Support Services
We understand that attendance difficulties can arise from a wide range of circumstances. Where barriers to attendance are identified, we will work with families and external agencies to secure appropriate support.

This may include referrals to services that can assist parents and carers in promoting good attendance, improving family wellbeing or addressing specific needs affecting attendance. The school works closely with the Local Authority and other partner agencies to ensure families can access the support they need.

Where attendance concerns persist despite school-led support, or where statutory thresholds are met, support may be formalised in partnership with the Local Authority in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence
Reducing persistent and severe absence is a priority for the school. Through regular attendance reviews, early identification of concerns and effective partnership working with families, we aim to ensure that all children can benefit from regular school attendance. Children identified as persistently or severely absent will receive enhanced monitoring and support. The school will work with families to understand and address barriers to attendance,

establish clear expectations for improvement and, where necessary, coordinate support from external agencies and the Local Authority.

Monitor and Analyse attendance

The school will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and use this data to deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This will go beyond headline attendance percentages and will look at individual children, cohorts, year groups and young carers (including their punctuality) across the school.
- Use this analysis to further explore attendance patterns, provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors/senior leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and their families.
- Compare attendance data (at whole school, year group level) against similar schools using DfE reports and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Monitor the impact of school wide attendance initiatives and use the findings to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- Provide data and reports to support the monitoring work of the board or governing body and local authority when appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with the Local Authority and external agencies to evaluate reasons for absence and implement strategies to support families to minimise instances of their child's absence.

5.5 Support Systems

We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example: bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns, housing issues, mental health concerns etc. This will help the school to identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to achieve good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.
Strategies we may use to support you include:

We will work with families to identify and remove barriers to attendance wherever possible.

Support may include:

- Providing emotional wellbeing support through our ELSA and Home School Link Worker.
- Supporting children who may be experiencing friendship difficulties, anxiety or worries about attending school.
- Working closely with the SENDCo to ensure children with special educational needs and disabilities are appropriately supported.
- Making reasonable adjustments where attendance is being affected by a medical condition or additional need.
- Supporting children during periods of transition, including moving between year groups or joining the school.
- Working with families to establish routines and strategies that support regular attendance.
- Ensuring that children feel safe, valued and included within the school community.

Early Intervention
Rather than waiting for absence to become entrenched, we use attendance information to identify emerging concerns and offer support at the earliest opportunity. This may include:

- Reviewing attendance patterns and discussing any concerns with parents and carers.

- Exploring underlying barriers to attendance with children and families.
- Agreeing short-term attendance goals and practical strategies to improve attendance.
- Monitoring the impact of support and adapting provision where required.
- Maintaining regular contact with families to ensure concerns are addressed promptly.

Clear Communication
We are committed to promoting a positive culture around attendance through clear, consistent and supportive communication. We will:

- Share attendance expectations with children and families.
- Celebrate good attendance and improvements in attendance.
- Communicate concerns in a timely, respectful and supportive manner.
- Ensure families understand the importance of regular attendance and its impact on learning, wellbeing and future outcomes.
- Provide clear information about the support available when attendance difficulties arise.

Collaboration with Families and External Agencies
Effective partnership working is key to improving attendance. Where attendance concerns emerge, families are encouraged to contact the school's senior leader responsible for attendance to discuss the support available.

Where appropriate, the school may work with a range of external services to help address barriers to attendance, including health professionals, educational psychologists, Early Help services, social care, family support services and local authority attendance officers. Our aim is always to ensure that children and families receive the right support at the right time so that every child can attend school regularly and achieve their full potential.

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

5.6 Persistent Absence, Severe Absence and the use of legal interventions

At Chidham Parochial Primary School we will investigate any pupils whose data suggests that they are becoming persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%. This may include where children have been PA historically as well.

- Persistent absence (PA) is when a child misses 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.
- Severe absence (SA) is when a child misses 50% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level could affect a child's educational outcomes.

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' (SA) when their attendance drops to 50% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 190 sessions (95 days). Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational outcomes.

The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will initiate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support. West Sussex - Integrated Front Door [IFD]

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings through a fixed penalty notice [FPN].

6. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential, the following policies are integral to this approach:

- Data Protection Policy
- Safeguarding and child protection.
- Medical policies.
- Admissions.
- Anti-bullying.
- Exclusion.
- Special educational needs.
- Teaching and learning.
- Equality.
- Behaviour for learning and relationships.

7. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Working together to improve school attendance, DfE (2024)
- Children missing education, DfE (2025)
- Keeping children safe in education, DfE (2026)
- Working together to safeguard children, DfE (2026)
- A guide for schools on communicating with parents about attendance, DfE [2026]

8. Appendices

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

Appendix 1: Example leave of absence request form
Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances

Headteacher: Mr Sebastian Olway BA (Hons), MSc

Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances. In making a request for an authorised absence you will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional. Please note there is no general right to authorise absence for a family holiday. If you take your child out of school without permission, the absence will be unauthorised and records will show your child has taken unauthorised leave from school.

You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered

Section A – to the Headteacher

I wish to apply for

Child's name _____ Class _____

To be authorised as absent from school (please include the dates and times)

From _____ To _____ (inclusive dates)

Please indicate if you child has a sibling(s) at another school from whom you will also be requesting a leave of absence.

I will also being requesting absence for _____

At _____ School

Section B

Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence and the **circumstances** which make your **application exceptional;** and therefore the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks holiday your child has from school. If you are requesting to attend a specific event, for example a funeral, please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements. If you require additional space, please continue on the other side of the page

Section C

I am the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides. The information I have given on the form is correct.

Signature (parent/carer) _____ Date _____

☐ *I understand my request does not meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances and will be unauthorised.*

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended (as of 1st September 2013) to prohibit the proprietor (Headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence except where an application has made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Section D – for school use only

○ Request approved for _____ number of days from the dates and times

○ A personal discussion with you is requested. Please contact the school office to arrange a time to speak to the Headteacher.

○ Request not approved as the circumstances are not considered to constitute an exceptional reason and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's educational progress.

PLEASE NOTE: This leave of absence form serves as a Penalty Notice Warning Letter to parents/carers. Unauthorised absence during this period of time may be subject to a Penalty Notice for non-attendance being issued.

Headteacher _____ Date _____

Name of child: _____ Current attendance _____
Name of child: _____ Current attendance _____
Name of child: _____ Current attendance _____

Appendix 2: Example reply to leave of absence request

Dear **[insert parent's name]**,

RE: Absence during term time – Child Name (Child DOB)

Thank you for your application for absence in term time for Child's name. Whilst we appreciate your circumstances, Chidham Parochial Primary School do not approve any absences during term time unless they are due to exceptional circumstances as per the guidance from the Department of Education. If you choose to take your child out of school for the above unauthorised leave, we will notify the local authority and further action including legal action may be considered.

Please note that such a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £80 which increases to £160 if not paid within the first 21 days. Thereafter if the Penalty remains unpaid after 28 days this may result in legal action being taken against you. Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. If a 2nd fine is accrued within a rolling 3-year period, it then increases to a full £160 (they can't pay the lower rate) and if there is a 3rd referral in a rolling 3-year period, this will go straight to court. The fine does not go to the school.

I have noted the dates that [**Child Name**] will be absent from Chidham Parochial Primary School, Dates of leave and the registers will be marked with the G code (unauthorised family holiday) for this period.

If you would like to discuss the matter further, please contact the school on 01243572380 or email office@chidham.w-sussex.sch.uk

Yours sincerely,

Mr Sebastian Olway
Headteacher

Appendix 3: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

We expect pupils to attend school **95%** of the academic year.

How can I support my child's attendance and punctuality?

- Ensure your child arrives early or on time for school every day and is ready to learn. Arriving after registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils must be in class ready to be registered by **8:45 am**.
- If your child appears to be only slightly unwell, send them in to school. We have staff who will contact you if their condition deteriorates [see NHS guidance overleaf]
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the school of appointments in advance.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.

What should I do if my child is not 'fit' to go into school?

'On the day' absences:
On each day your child is unfit to come to school, please report this absence contact us on **01243 572 380** to let us know. In the message you must leave your child's full name and class and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official register.

Leave of Absence

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our 'Leave of absence request' form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted 1 month in advance of the leave of absence, via the school office or office@chidham.w-sussex.sch.uk. You will receive a response, to advise if the request has been approved or not approved.

What is the impact on my child of missing school?

Example infographic 1

Is my child too ill for school?

UK Government NHS

Does your child have a high temperature (38ºC or more)?

YES Keep them off school until it goes away.

NO Follow the guidance below.

Your child can usually go to school with a mild cough or cold if they are otherwise well. If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school or nursery on the first day and give them the reason.

Should go in	Should go in (let the school know)	Seek treatment before returning to school	Keep them off (at first)
A cough, cold or sore throat Fine with slight cough or common cold symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat or headache, as long as they're otherwise well and do not have a high temperature.	**Cold sores** Encourage them not to touch the blister or kiss anyone while they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups and towels.	**Impetigo** They'll need treatment from a pharmacist or GP, often with antibiotics. Keep them off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment. Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and not to share things like towels and cups with other children at school.	**Ear infection** If your child has an ear infection and a high temperature or severe earache, keep them off school until they're feeling better or their high temperature goes away.
Threadworms Speak to your pharmacist, who can recommend a treatment.	**Conjunctivitis** Fine unless they are feeling very unwell. Seek advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly.	**Ringworm** See your pharmacist unless it's on their scalp, in which case you should see a GP. It's fine for your child to go to school once they have started treatment.	**Measles** They'll need to see a GP. Call the GP surgery before you go in, as measles can spread to others easily. Keep your child off school for at least 4 days from when the rash first appears. They should also avoid close contact with babies and anyone who is pregnant or has a weakened immune system.
	Head lice & nits You can treat head lice and nits without seeing a GP.	**Scarlet fever** They'll need treatment with antibiotics from a GP. Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks. Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics.	**Vomiting & diarrhoea** Stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea due to illness for at least 2 days (48 hours).
	Hand, foot & mouth disease If they seem well enough to go to school, there's no need to keep them off. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues straight away and to wash their hands regularly.	**Chickenpox** Keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared.	
	Slapped cheek syndrome Once the rash appears, they're no longer infectious. Let the school or teacher know if you think your child has slapped cheek syndrome.		

Feeling worried or anxious: It's normal for any of us to feel worr ometimes. We may get a tummy ache or headache, or have problems eating or sleeping. Avoiding school can sometimes make a child's worries about goi school worse. If your child is struggling, please speak to school as soon as possible to explore available help. If your child is still struggling and it's affe their everyday life, you should contact GP or school nurse.

Appendix 4: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Students

Roles and responsibilities:

All members of the school community at Chidham Parochial Primary School have roles and responsibilities in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality.

Role of the pupils:

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the opportunities available.

All pupils will:

- Ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.
- Be aware of their current attendance record and targets.
- Be aware of the consequences of poor attendance or truancy.
- Arrive to lessons punctually.
- Not leave school without permission.
- Inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied or feel unhappy in school.

Appendix 5: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from Working Together to Improve School Attendance

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
B	Off-site educational activity approved by the school. Schools must also record the nature of the approved educational activity.	Examples of nature of activity • 1) Attending taster days at college • 2) Attending courses at college • 3) Attending unregistered alternative provision arranged by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority Schools must also record the nature of the provision	• Attending courses at college • Attending unregistered alternative provision such as, home tutoring
P	Sporting activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip	An educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff
W	Attending work experience	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the school as part of the pupil's education

Code	Definition	Scenario
Absent – leave of absence		
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance	Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	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
E	Excluded	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness
J1	Interview	Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
M	Medical appointment	Attending a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to
S	Study leave	Studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	

Code	Definition	Scenario
Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	This is linked to transport not other access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	The school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Adverse weather
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	In police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	An emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the parent.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given
U	Arrival after registration	A pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Administrative Codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens.
#	Planned whole school closure	Whole school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day/use of whole school as polling station