



Chester Diocesan Academies Trust

ATTENDANCE STRATEGY

2024-2026

*Jesus said
'Let them come to me' (Mt 19)*



Introduction -

The importance of school attendance

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families.

The foundation of securing good attendance is that schools are calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environments where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

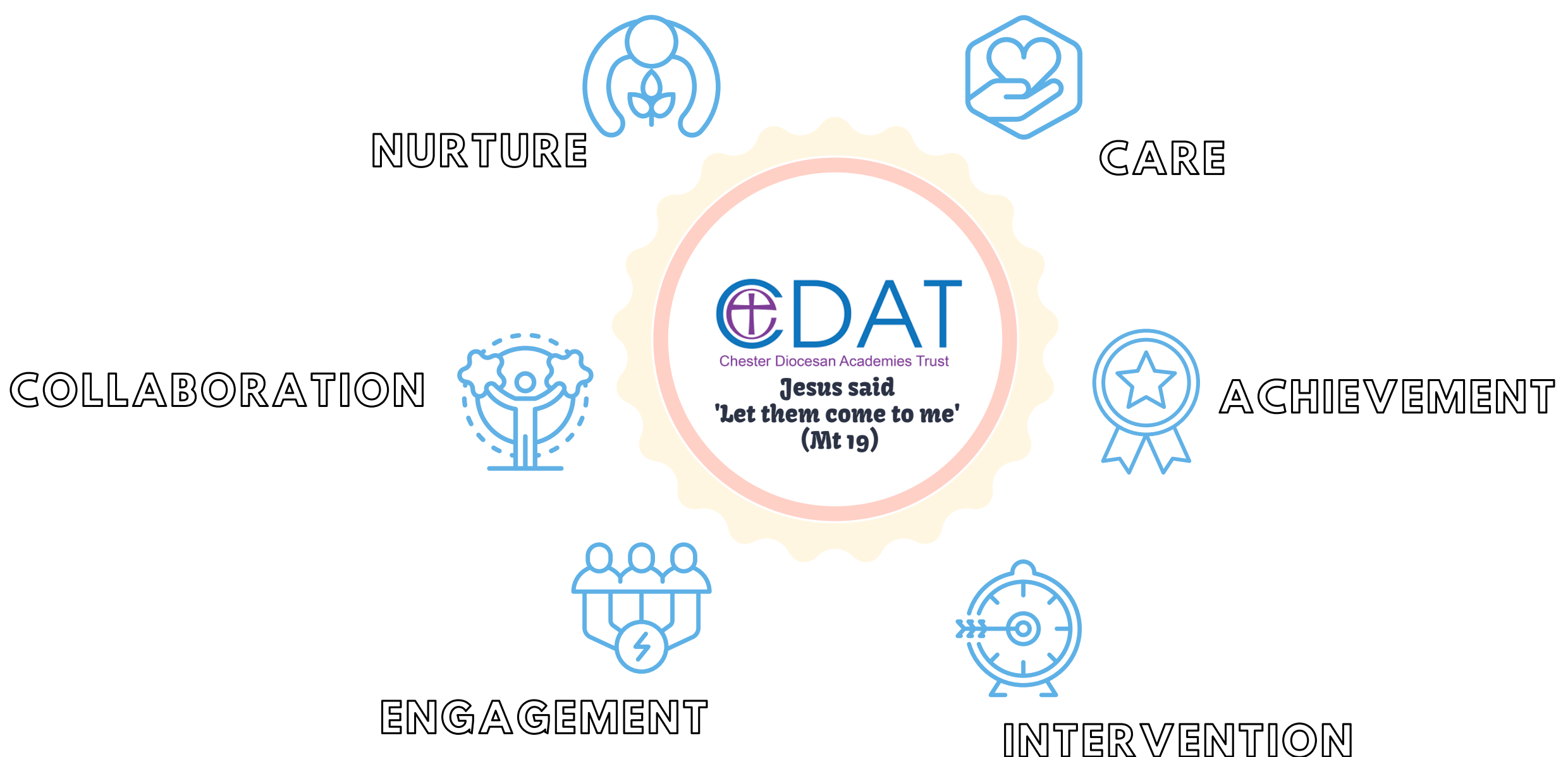
Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium.

It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust, governing body and other local partners

This strategy will set out the CDAT ethos for improving school attendance for all children. It is based around the 'Working Together To Improve School Attendance' document that has been written by the department for education.

It includes clear expectations for children, staff and the trust and is built around the following six key principles for excellent attendance.



Vision and Ethos

At CDAT our attendance strategy is rooted in Christian values, recognising the importance of regular school attendance not only for academic achievement but also for the holistic development of each child.

As stated in the Department for Education's document 'Working Together to Improve Attendance,' regular attendance is crucial for children to reach their full potential and succeed in their learning. Therefore, we are committed to fostering an environment in every school where attendance is prioritised and celebrated.

Our strategy revolves around the following principles:

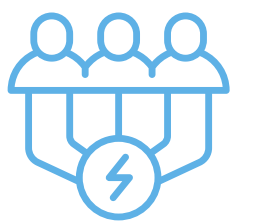
Nurturing Environments: Each of our schools will have a nurturing environment where every child feels valued and supported. Through solid relationships and close partnerships with families, we aim to address any barriers to attendance promptly and effectively.



Promoting Engagement: We understand that engaging lessons and a stimulating learning environment are key factors in encouraging regular attendance. A school curriculum will be designed to inspire curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, making school a place where children want to be.



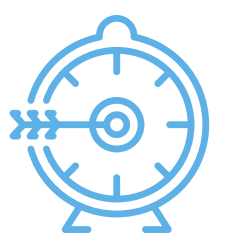
Collaborative Approach: We believe in working collaboratively with parents, carers, and relevant agencies to promote attendance. By fostering open communication and providing support where needed, we aim to ensure that every child attends school regularly and punctually.



Celebrating Achievement: We celebrate and recognise good attendance, reinforcing the message that attending school is both important and enjoyable. This may include certificates, praise, and special events but doesn't lose focus and therefore creates a culture where attendance is everyone's business.



Early Intervention: Schools will be proactive in identifying and addressing attendance issues at an early stage. Through robust monitoring and intervention procedures, we strive to support families in overcoming any challenges they may face in ensuring their child's regular attendance.



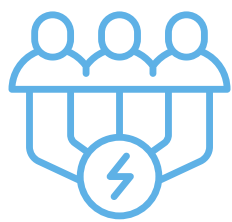
Pastoral Care: Schools will provide excellent pastoral support to children and families experiencing difficulties that may impact attendance. Staff will offer guidance, encouragement, and practical assistance to help overcome obstacles and enable children to attend school regularly.



In accordance with our Christian ethos and the guidance set out by the Department for Education, we are committed to promoting and maintaining high levels of attendance across our Multi Academy Trust.

TOGETHER, WE ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A CULTURE WHERE EVERY CHILD FEELS VALUED, SUPPORTED, AND EMPOWERED TO ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

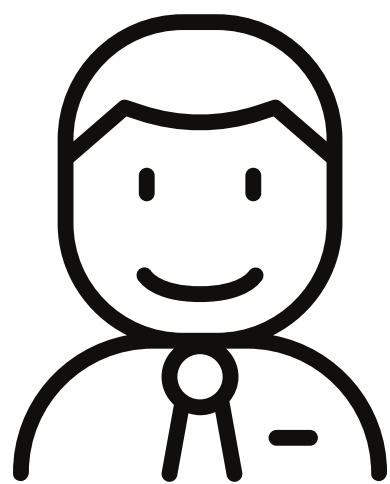




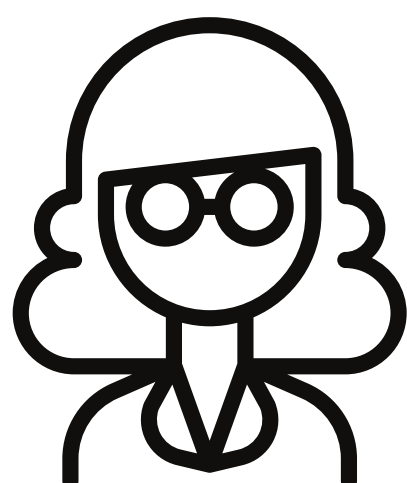
Collaborative Approach - Whole School Culture

Within CDAT, attendance is 'everyone's business' and we therefore aim to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

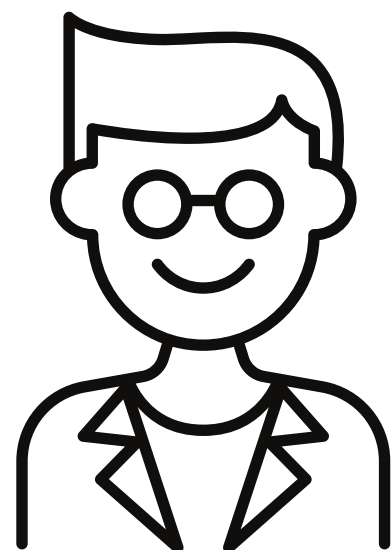
Ours schools will-



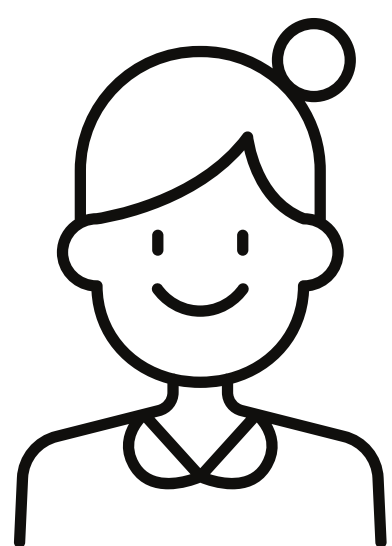
Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels. In doing so, schools should help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development. It should also include clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.



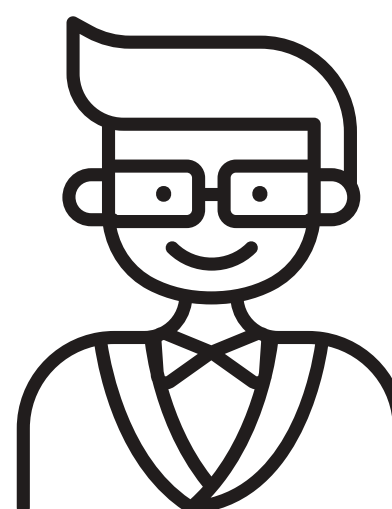
Recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.



Recognise the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students (including use of pupil premium).

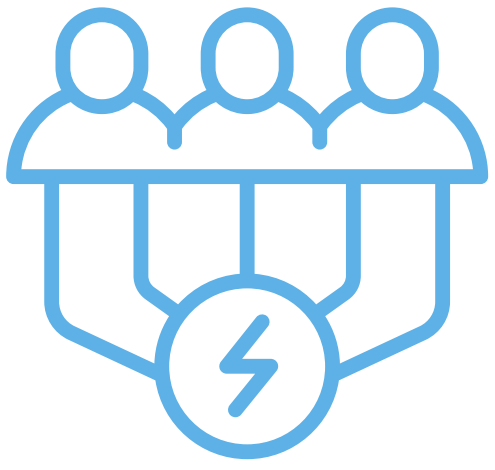


Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.



Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies or in registration periods. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.





How can we work together to improve attendance?

(Taken from DfE document 'Working Together to Improve School 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.

All partners should work together to:

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.





Celebrating Achievement- Target Setting

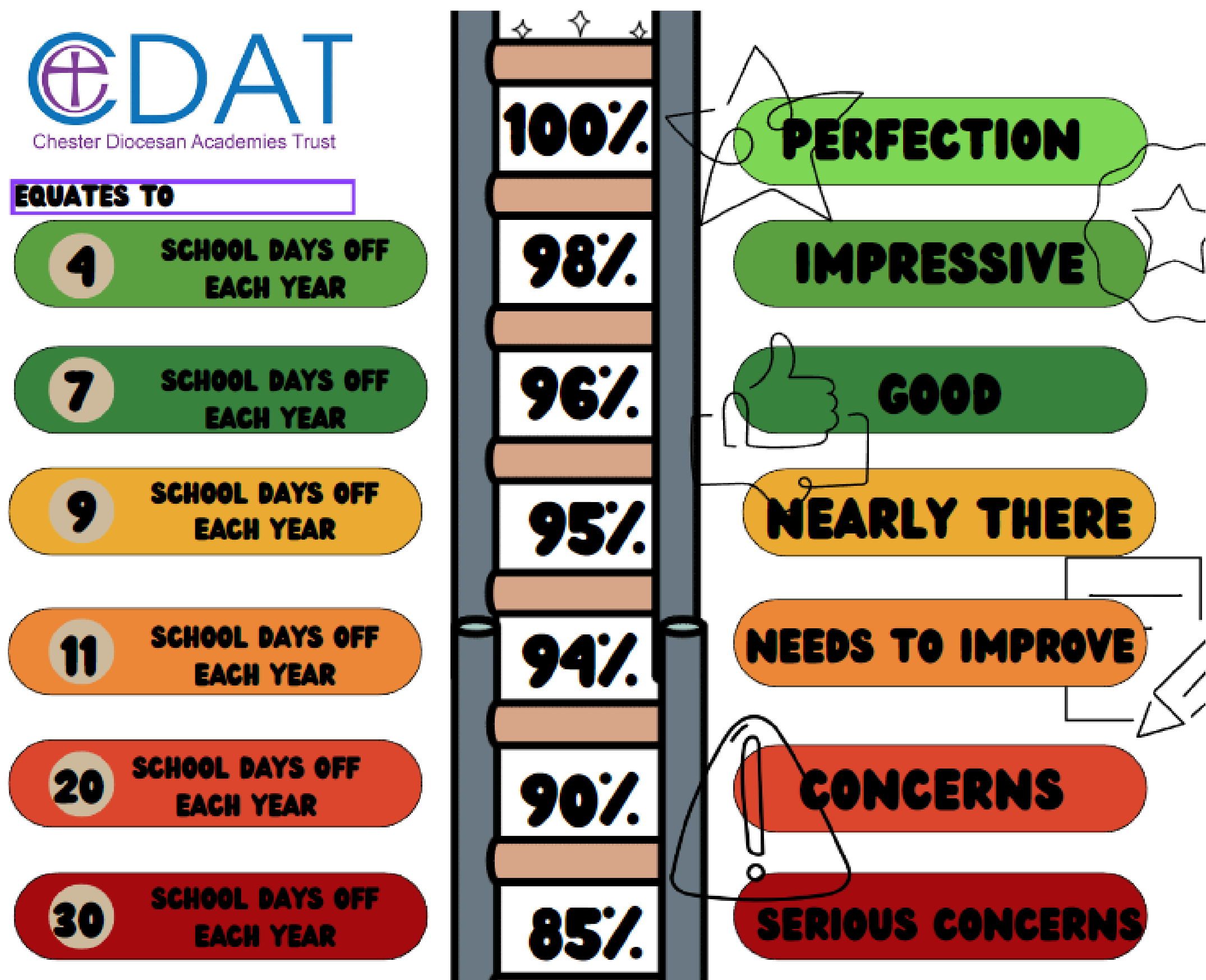
As a trust, we strive for all children to have good attendance, but recognise that at times 100% attendance may be unachievable for very good reasons. The trust aims to value all attendance over 96% as 'good' and has aspirational target of all schools achieving 98% attendance for all pupils.

Attempting to improve attendance using simplistic, competitive award schemes results in a few winners who are already winning and plenty of losers who cannot control their losing. All things being equal, attendance awards are a positive motivator for children to be in school more often. But all things are not equal. Unless safeguards are carefully designed, most attendance awards are ableist and fail any measure of equal opportunity.

Raw attendance awards almost certainly do more harm than good. Poor attendance and poverty are old friends. When social support is taken away from families, getting their children to school on time - or at all - becomes less important. Turning it into a competition might seem like a good way to motivate children to feel they are contributing to a team effort. In practice, it pushes the responsibility for attendance on to the child, and that is not a fair place for responsibility to lie.

PAUL DIX 'After The Adults Change'

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.



WE CELEBRATE AND RECOGNISE GOOD ATTENDANCE, REINFORCING THE MESSAGE THAT ATTENDING SCHOOL IS BOTH IMPORTANT AND ENJOYABLE



Early Intervention:

Schools will be proactive in identifying and addressing attendance issues at an early stage. Through robust monitoring and intervention procedures, we strive to support families in overcoming any challenges they may face in ensuring their child's regular attendance.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Prevention
of poor attendance through good whole school attendance management



ALL PUPILS
Developing good attendance patterns through effective whole school approach to attendance (including leadership, ethos and systems and processes)



PUPILS AT RISK OF POOR ATTENDANCE
Using attendance and absence data rigorously to support pupils with increasing levels of absence, arriving at school late or taking leave in term time without permission before it becomes a regular pattern

Early Intervention
to reduce absence before it becomes habitual

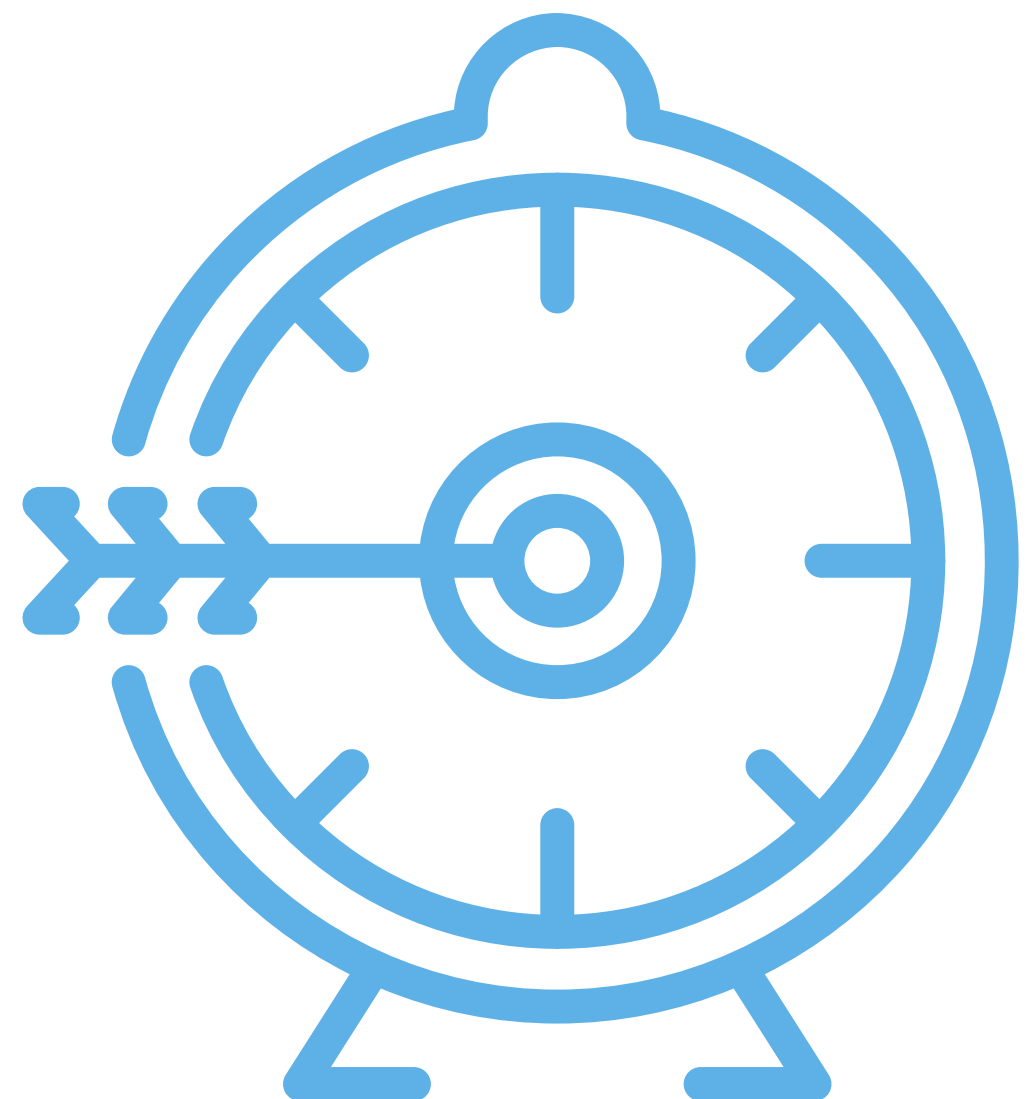


PUPILS WITH POOR ATTENDANCE
Intervening as early as possible and agreeing an action plan for pupils with high levels of absence and those demonstrating growing disengagement with school.

Targeted
reengagement of persistent and severely absent pupils.



PERSISTENTLY AND SEVERELY ABSENT PUPILS
Put additional targeted support in place, where necessary working with partners, and agree a joint approach with local authorities for all severely absent pupils.



Clear expectations for all

All pupils

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p> | <p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving</p> | <p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p> |

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p> | <p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p> | <p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p> |



Our Commitment...

When children attend a CDAT school they will...

Have access a high quality curriculum, which is carefully planned to build on previous learning to ensure children make the best possible progress.



“A day missed in the sequence can really impact on my learning.”

Experience wider opportunities to enhance the curriculum including trips out and visitors into school as well as opportunities to perform on stage and attend sports tournaments.

Build peer relationships and learn how to socialise with their friends in a therapeutic environment.



“I will make some of my friends for life at primary school!”

Access interventions to support both academic learning and nurture support for their social and emotional wellbeing.

At CDAT, we will listen, understand, empathise and provide support when children are unable to attend school – however we will not tolerate poor attendance and will always be proactive in helping our families to improve this, enabling children to return to the classroom as soon as possible.



