



Attendance Policy

At Churnet View Middle School, we believe that excellent attendance is fundamental to a pupil's success, wellbeing and future opportunities. Regular attendance allows pupils to access the full curriculum, build positive relationships with staff and peers, develop confidence and resilience, and achieve their academic potential. Attending school regularly also plays an important role in safeguarding, helping to ensure that pupils remain visible, supported and safe.

We are committed to creating a culture in which attendance is valued by all members of the school community. We recognise that improving attendance is a shared responsibility involving pupils, parents and carers, school staff, governors, the local authority and a range of external agencies. Our approach focuses on building strong relationships with families, identifying barriers to attendance early and providing the right support at the right time.

The Importance of Attendance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to receive a suitable full-time education. Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly unless there is a valid reason for absence.

Research continues to demonstrate a clear relationship between attendance and attainment. Pupils who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve strong outcomes, develop positive wellbeing and successfully progress into further education, training and employment. Conversely, absence from school can negatively impact learning, relationships, confidence and future opportunities.

Attendance is also an important safeguarding measure. Children who are absent from school repeatedly or for prolonged periods may be at increased risk of neglect, exploitation, mental health difficulties or other vulnerabilities. For this reason, attendance concerns are considered as part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

Our Attendance Culture

Churnet View Middle School is committed to ensuring pupils want to attend school. We believe that good attendance begins with pupils feeling safe, valued, supported and successful.

We will:

- Promote attendance through assemblies, tutor time and communication with families.
- Celebrate and recognise positive attendance.
- Maintain high expectations for all pupils.
- Work in partnership with families to remove barriers to attendance.
- Provide support before problems become entrenched.

- Ensure attendance remains a standing priority across school improvement, safeguarding and pastoral systems.

Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Attendance Champion

The school has a designated Senior Attendance Champion who has strategic responsibility for attendance improvement across the school. This role includes monitoring attendance patterns, evaluating interventions, supporting staff and working with the Local Authority and external agencies.

Senior Attendance Champion: Mrs A Silk (Assistant Headteacher)

School Staff

Attendance is everyone's responsibility. All staff will promote positive attendance, challenge absence appropriately, identify attendance concerns and work collaboratively with pupils and families to improve attendance. Staff will ensure attendance concerns are shared promptly with relevant pastoral or safeguarding colleagues.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure their child receives a suitable full-time education. Parents are expected to ensure their child attends school regularly, arrives punctually and is prepared for the school day.

Parents and carers should:

- Notify the school of absence before 9:00am on each day of absence.
- Engage positively with support offered by the school.
- Attend attendance meetings when requested.
- Inform the school of changes in circumstances.
- Provide at least two emergency contact numbers.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.

Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly, arrive on time and engage positively with support provided to help them achieve good attendance.

Attendance and Safeguarding

The school recognises that attendance concerns can indicate wider welfare or safeguarding issues. A pattern of absence may be linked to neglect, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, mental health concerns, family difficulties, peer difficulties or other vulnerabilities.

Attendance concerns may therefore be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, where appropriate, referred to Early Help, Family Help, Children's Social Care or other external services. Attendance information forms part of the school's wider safeguarding systems and monitoring arrangements.

Registration and Punctuality

The school day begins at 8:50am. Pupils should arrive on site by 8:45am so that they are ready to begin learning promptly.

The attendance register is taken:

- Morning registration: 8:50am
- Afternoon registration: 12:50pm

Pupils arriving after 8:50am but before the register closes at 9:20am will be recorded using the national late code (L). Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be recorded using code U unless there is an acceptable reason for the lateness. Persistent lateness disrupts learning and may lead to attendance intervention and support.

Reporting Absence

If a pupil is absent, parents and carers must notify the school before 9:00am on the first day of absence. This can be completed through:

- Telephone
- Arbor App
- Other approved communication methods

If no contact is received, the school will undertake first-day calling procedures. Where concerns remain, further attempts will be made to contact parents and, where appropriate, home visits may be undertaken as part of safeguarding procedures.

Illness and Medical Appointments

The school understands that pupils will occasionally be absent due to illness. In most circumstances, a parent's explanation of illness will be accepted. The school will not routinely request medical evidence for every illness absence and does not operate a blanket requirement for medical proof after a specified number of days.

However, where there are genuine concerns regarding the authenticity of an illness, or where absences become prolonged, repeated or significantly impact attendance, the school may request evidence. This may include:

- Appointment letters
- Prescriptions
- Consultant or hospital letters
- Medical advice provided by healthcare professionals

Such evidence may help the school understand a pupil's needs and implement appropriate support and reasonable adjustments where required. Where possible, medical appointments should be arranged outside school hours. If this is not possible, pupils should attend school before and after the appointment whenever practical.

SEND, Medical Needs and Mental Health

The school recognises that some pupils face additional barriers to attendance due to SEND, disability, physical health conditions or mental health difficulties. These pupils remain entitled to a full-time education and the school will work in partnership with families and external professionals to support attendance wherever possible.

Support may include:

- Pastoral action plans.
- Reasonable adjustments.
- Modified routines.
- Reintegration support.
- Temporary phased returns.
- Multi-agency support arrangements.

Where appropriate, attendance support will align with Education, Health and Care Plans and other support plans already in place.

Young Carers

The school recognises that pupils with caring responsibilities may face additional attendance barriers. We will work with pupils, families and external agencies to identify support needs, remove barriers where possible and ensure pupils can access education successfully.

Understanding Attendance Levels

The school aims for all pupils to achieve attendance of at least 96%.

Green Category	Attendance is 96% to 100% Pupils are attending regularly and accessing their education successfully.
Yellow Category	Attendance is 90% to 95% Attendance is below the school's expectation and may require monitoring or support.
Persistent Absence	Attendance at or below 90%. Pupils are classed nationally as Persistently Absent and require targeted intervention.
Severe Absence	These pupils will receive intensive support involving the school, Local Authority and other services where appropriate

Leave of Absence During Term Time

The Government's expectation is that pupils attend school during term time.

The Headteacher may only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Every application will be considered individually based on the specific circumstances presented. The school does not operate automatic approval for particular events or circumstances.

Family holidays, leisure activities and recreational trips will not normally be considered exceptional circumstances.

All requests must be submitted in advance using the school's Leave of Absence request form. Retrospective applications cannot be authorised and any resulting absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

Attendance Support Framework

The school follows the Department for Education's graduated attendance approach.

- 1. Expect**
Promoting clear attendance expectations for all pupils and families.
- 2. Monitor**
Regular attendance analysis to identify concerns early.
- 3. Listen and Understand**
Working with pupils and families to establish barriers to attendance.
- 4. Facilitate Support**
Providing pastoral support and access to wider services including Early Help and Family Help where appropriate.
- 5. Formalise Support**
Developing Attendance Contracts, Education Supervision Orders or other formal interventions where required.
- 6. Enforce**
Using legal intervention as a final step where support has not been successful or engaged with.

Part-Time Timetables

All pupils are entitled to full-time education. A part-time timetable will only be used in exceptional circumstances where it is in a pupil's best interests and forms part of a wider support or reintegration plan. It must:

- Be agreed with parents/carers.
- Include clear review dates.
- Have an identified end date.
- Be regularly monitored.
- Never be used as a behaviour management strategy.

The expectation will always be a return to full-time education at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

Legal Intervention

Where voluntary support has not improved attendance, or where support is not appropriate, the school may work with Staffordshire Local Authority to consider legal intervention. This may include:

- Notices to Improve
- Attendance Contracts

- Education Supervision Orders
- Penalty Notices
- Attendance Prosecution

Legal interventions are considered only after careful review of each individual case and in accordance with national guidance.

Penalty Notices

The national threshold for considering a Penalty Notice is ten sessions (equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling ten-school-week period.

If issued:

- The first penalty notice is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice within three years is £160.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued within the same three-year period and alternative legal action will be considered.

Children Missing Education

The school has a statutory duty to work with the Local Authority to identify and support children missing education.

Where a pupil has prolonged unexplained absence or cannot be located, reasonable enquiries will be undertaken jointly with the Local Authority before any consideration is given to removing the pupil from roll. The school will comply fully with all statutory pupil registration and attendance regulations.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Board, or sooner if changes in legislation, statutory guidance or local circumstances necessitate revision.