

## **Attendance Policy**

### **AIMS**

#### **Our attendance policy aims to:**

- Support pupils and their parents/carers to fulfil their responsibility in making sure that their child receives a full-time education and is always punctual so that they can access that education to the best of their ability.
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

### **BEING AT SCHOOL**

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Regular attendance is essential in order to maximise the educational opportunities available for pupils. Reinforcing the importance of consistent attendance and punctuality also encourages pupils to become resilient, hardworking young people who develop their ability to persevere as they prepare for life after education. It is our aim to work as a community around the child so that parents/carers and the Talentum Learning Trust's staff can work in partnership to ensure that all children have full and equal access to all that our schools have to offer.

As an Academy Trust, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our policies on: safeguarding, behaviour and SEN. Please also follow this link for further advice:  
<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

## **General Principles**

The Parent of every child of compulsory school age is required to ensure that their child receives a full time education suitable to the child's ability, age, aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The failure of a parent to secure regular attendance of their school registered child of compulsory school age can lead to a penalty notice or prosecution. Local authorities (LAs) and schools have legal responsibilities regarding accurate recording of a pupil's attendance.

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen.

From September 2013, all 16 year-olds will be required to continue in education or training, until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. From September 2015 they will be required to continue until their 18th birthday.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 require schools to take attendance registers twice a day: once at the start of the first/morning session of each school day and once during the second/afternoon session.

### **In their register, schools are required to record whether pupils are:**

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

### **Where a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, schools have a responsibility to:**

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Indicate in their register whether the absence is authorised by the school or unauthorised



- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is then used to download data to the school census.

Churnet View Middle School have employed VIP Education who are an Independent Education Welfare Company. They will work with the school to raise attendance and deal with welfare matters. They will communicate with you as parents/carers if there is an issue they can support us with.

## EXPECTATIONS

### **We expect that all pupils will:**

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher/tutor or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance **We expect that all parents/carers will:**
- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- Be supportive of the school and do their utmost to work with the school to address any concerns raised over attendance and punctuality. **This may involve:** addressing concerns raised in letters sent from the school, communicating via phone or e-mail, attending meetings relating to the attendance and punctuality of their child.
- Ensure that they contact the school office via telephone daily on absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

Although parents may offer a reason, only the headteacher can authorise the absence. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received. Parents/Carers must notify the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with the expected date of return. **In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body will be requested.**

### **Punctuality**

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. Therefore, it is paramount that all pupils arrive at school on time. The main playground is supervised from 8.30am for students and the school doors are open from 8.40am until 8.50am.

### **Late Arrival before the register has closed (please see additional guidance in Co-Vid Appendix around staggered start times):**

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.

- Registration takes place at 8.50am
- Pupils who arrive after 8.50am will be recorded as late to school.
- Registers close at 9.20am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence. The absence will only be authorised if an explanation is given by the parents/carers that is deemed satisfactory by the school. The absence will be unauthorised unless there is justifiable cause for it. Statutory action/prosecution by the local authority may then be taken where appropriate.
- Pupils who arrive after the close of register must report immediately to the school reception to ensure that we can be responsible for them whilst they are in school.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.00pm.
- Persistent lateness may be referred to Education Welfare. A pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.
- The school operates a Late Gate and a member of staff will be in attendance at the gate to make a record of any pupils who come in to school late. Unless there is an explanation that the school deems to be satisfactory for the lateness, sanctions will be issued to any pupils coming to school late. These



sanctions will be issued by the member of staff operating the Late Gate or any other member of staff within school who has been made aware of the lateness.

### **Penalty Notice for persistent lateness**

Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning could be issued. **This has now changed to 10 marks**, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. You are therefore encouraged where possible to ensure your child attends school on time. However, if your child is late you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as they may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

### **Off-Site Educational Activities:**

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity:

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

### **Categories of absence:**

Present at School Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

### **Illness (not medical or dental appointments)**

Parents must notify the school on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. If there is a concern over the illness or doubt over the authenticity of it, the school will record the absence as unauthorised until medical evidence to support the illness is provided by parents/carers. This may take the form of a prescription, appointment card or form of correspondence from the medical practitioner involved.

Where possible, parents should make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

### **Other Authorised Circumstances:**

This is a leave of absence authorised by the school but it is only given in exceptional circumstances. For example: serious family illness or bereavement. The school will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background behind the request.

### **Excluded (No alternative provision made)**

This will count as an authorised absence. Alternative provision will be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion.

### **Leave of Absence**

Parents/Carers are strongly discouraged from taking any leave of absence during term-time. The school holiday dates and end of Key Stage Assessment dates are published a year in advance and leave of absence **will not** be authorised during these assessment periods. INSET days are published as soon as the Trust have agreed these, but may be subject to change. In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations (appendix 1), a Leave of Absence/ Holiday during term time will **NOT** be authorised. The Headteacher's and Governors have determined that:

- **In exceptional circumstances** permission may be granted for a maximum of five days of holiday providing your child has a good (95% or higher) attendance record over the previous three terms. The head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave.
- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher on behalf of the Talentum Trust Governors, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the pupil's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year.
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare will be notified.
- Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

All requests for Leave of Absence will be responded to in writing outlining the conditions of leave granted. If a pupil fails to return, and contact with the parents



has not been made or received, the school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. This means that the child will lose their school place.

### **Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time**

From 1 January 2018 **any** period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. Your head teacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by your head teacher to the local authority.

### **Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness**

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

### **Religious observance**

Churnet View Middle School acknowledges the multi-cultural and multi-faith nature of British society. The school will authorise up to two days annually any occasion that may be considered to fall under this category. Parents must complete a written request to the headteacher for absences due to these circumstances.

### **Traveller Absence:**

Traveller children are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school. If the school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised.

The Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

When in or around Staffordshire, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

Churnet View Middle School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months.

Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil's school place will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

Churnet View Middle School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in ongoing dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

Advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and inform the school regarding proposed return dates

Churnet View Middle School will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return. Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

#### **Some examples of Authorised absences:**

- Genuine illness of the pupil
- Hospital/dental/doctors appointment for the pupil. Although the school does ask that these appointments are made outside of school hours where possible.
- Major religious observances
- Visits to prospective new schools
- External exams or educational assessments.

#### **Unauthorised Absence:**

##### **Some examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:**

- A pupil's/family member's birthday



□

- Shopping for uniform
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes
- Oversleeping
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Family holidays
- Looking after other children / other family member □ Appointments for other family members.
- Visit to a theme park;
- A birthday treat;

### **Deletions from the Register**

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, pupils can be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age  
Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after the school has tried to locate the student.
- A medical condition prevents attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and the school has tried to locate the pupil.
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after the school has tried to locate the pupil.
- Death of a pupil.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

In order to ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils, allow them to maximise their time in education, and prepare them fully for life after school, Churnet View

Middle School believes that school attendance is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders surrounding a child: parents/carers, school staff, governors, pupils and the wider community.

### **Roles and Expectations:**

- During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.
- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school. In line with the school mobile phone policy, pupils are not to use their mobile phones or other smart devices to make contact with parents/carers should they feel ill. This must be done through the school reception if deemed necessary by the school staff. Sanctions may be applied to any pupils who find themselves in breach of these rules.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission, their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the students as a missing person.

### **The school/governors will:**

Encourage and promote excellent attendance and punctuality with pupils and parents/carers

- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Regularly review the the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance



- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly or where there are concerns over punctuality
- Meet regularly with VIP Education and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order
- Complete home visits to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils
- Hold assemblies to promote and maintain a culture for positive attendance and punctuality
- Hold attendance clinics with parents to support with concerns over attendance and punctuality
- Make parents/carers aware of the percentage attendance of their child through the use of a staged letter system
- Will notify the Local Authority (LA) after 15 days sickness
- Will notify EWO after 10 days unexplained absence
- Talk to your child when we have a concern about attendance

**So that all pupils have an equal chance to access their education as fully as possible, the school requests that parents/carers will:**

- Provide at least two emergency contact numbers for the school
- Support the school with the implementation of the attendance policy and any sanctions that it has been deemed necessary to put in place
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible
- Talk to their child about school and education. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance and being punctual within the home environment

- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations  
Avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to become involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time.

## **PENALTY NOTICES**

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave and may also be issued if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note the following changes that are due to be implemented:

- The Headteacher can now request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when students are taken out of school for 5 or more day's Leave of Absence without school authorisation.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance. □  
Penalty notices are issued to each parent, for each child.

## **4 - Using Attendance Data**

- A pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

□

- The Attendance Administrator/Manager will provide relevant teachers with regular attendance for each pupil within their form group/class.

Pupils will be grouped into categories based on their percentage attendance as follows:

**GREEN GROUP**  
**96.5% - 100%**  
**WELL DONE - THIS IS EXCELLENT!**  
**THIS IS EXCELLENT! If you are in this group, you have been absent for less than two weeks in the whole year or you may have attended school every day!**

**YELLOW GROUP**  
**90% - 96.4%**  
**This is below the National Expectation. You could be missing up to two weeks of learning in the whole year!**

**RED GROUP**  
**Less than 90%**  
**PERSISTENT ABSENCE PUPIL: You are now a Persistent Absence Pupil and are missing more than 6 weeks of learning in the school year!**

Attendance during the school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which approximates to this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

## **FAILURE TO ENSURE REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

Churnet View Middle School holds regular attendance panels in partnership with **VIP Education** and in conjunction with the EWO. Any parents whose children are identified as a cause for concern will be invited to attend. If there is no improvement in school attendance, the school will refer to EWO who will work with the school and parents in support of pupils who are failing to attend school on a regular basis. **VIP Education** can be contacted at any time by the attendance officer if there are any additional concerns. Where concerns are identified regarding attendance/punctuality/welfare then a home visit might be made. Individual plans may be drawn up between the school/authority and the parent/carer and pupil to support improvements

Education Welfare may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their Child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officers. Before a Penalty notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

### **Support Available:**

**It is recognised that there may be factors in a child's life which affect attendance in a negative way such as problems at home or in school.** Parents are asked to make the school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance:

- The encouragement of open and honest discussion with parents, carers and pupils
- Referrals to support agencies
- Parenting contracts
- Attendance/punctuality report cards
- Student Voice activities
- Access to Friendship/nurture groups
- Encouragement of a culture which celebrates achievements with attendance and positive punctuality
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support

- Use of our Learning Focus Unit or our SEND provision
- Reintegration support packages

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Churnet View Middle School will consider the use of legal sanctions.

## **CHANGING SCHOOLS**

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform our schools as soon as possible.

A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the student will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- A new home address if appropriate

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority Tracking Officer and Education Welfare.

## **Children Missing Education**

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.

Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii) (see Annex A).

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the



whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause. Schools must also arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. This information can be found in the Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England statutory guidance.

### **Information Sharing**

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with: a. the full name of the pupil; b. the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives; c. at least two telephone numbers of the parent with whom the pupil lives; d. the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable; e. the name of pupil's destination school and the pupil's expected start date there, if applicable; and f. the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register (see Annex A).

All schools are required to notify the local authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. Schools will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.

ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNORS ON: March 2022

POLICY REVIEW DATE: March 2024