CHARTRIDGE COMBINED SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

This policy was approved October 2025
The policy is to be reviewed October 2027

Chartridge Combined School
Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

Chartridge Combined School aims to provide an environment in which every child can thrive and reach their full potential. Regular attendance is fundamental to academic achievement, personal development, and wellbeing.

This policy outlines how Chartridge Combined School, in partnership with parents, pupils, and the Local Authority, promotes and secures regular attendance in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (2024).

Attendance is everyone's responsibility. By working together, we can ensure that every pupil benefits fully from their time in school.

2. The Importance of Regular Attendance

Every day in school matters. Regular attendance is directly linked to high achievement and strong progress. Absence, even for a short period, can disrupt learning and affect a pupil's confidence, social relationships, and sense of belonging. Attendance issues may sometimes indicate wider safeguarding or wellbeing needs. Chartridge School will follow its safeguarding procedures and work with relevant agencies if a pattern of absence raises concern about a child's welfare.

3. Promoting Good Attendance

Chartridge Combined School promotes good attendance through positive relationships, early intervention, and clear communication. We will:
- Address attendance concerns swiftly and supportively.
- Work with parents to remove barriers to attendance through early help and pastoral support.
- Liaise with the Local Authority's Attendance Team when attendance does not improve.

The school records attendance using the DfE's national Attendance codes in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulation 2024.

4. Understanding Types of Absence

Every absence must be recorded as authorised or unauthorised. This classification is made by the school, not by parents.

Authorised Absence includes:
- Genuine illness.
- Medical or dental appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours.
- Recognised religious observance.

- Exceptional circumstances agreed by the Headteacher.

Unauthorised Absence includes:
- Holidays in term time without permission.
- Absence without explanation.
- Children kept off school for non-medical reasons (e.g. birthdays, shopping, childcare).
- Persistent lateness after registers close.

Parents must provide a clear reason for any absence, preferably in writing or by email from a known address.

5. Persistent and Severe Absence

A child is defined as a Persistent Absentee (PA) if their attendance falls below 90%, and as Severely Absent if below 50%.

The school monitors attendance rigorously. When attendance falls below 90%, parents will be contacted and support offered. If attendance continues to cause concern, the school may invite parents to a formal meeting and involve the Local Authority Attendance Team.

Persistent or severe absence may result in legal action in line with the Education Act 1996.

6. Procedures for Absence Reporting

If a child is absent, parents must:
- Contact the school office by 9.00am on the first day of absence.
- Provide updates each day unless a clear timeframe is known from the outset.

If the school has not received a message by 9.05am, the Attendance Officer will contact parents.

If absences persist or reasons are unclear, the Headteacher may invite parents to a meeting to discuss support. Where attendance drops below 87%, a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team may be made.

7. Lateness and Punctuality

Poor punctuality affects learning and disrupts the start of the day.

- The school gates open at 8.35am and close at 8.50am. Teachers collect children from the playground at 8.45.
- Registration takes place at 8.45am.
- Pupils arriving after 8.50am will receive a late mark.
- Pupils arriving after 9.05am will be marked as having arrived after the register has closed and will have an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

Repeated lateness will be discussed with parents. Persistent lateness may result in a referral to the Attendance Team.

8. Exceptional Leave (Term-Time Leave of Absence)
The Headteacher may only authorise leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances. There is no legal entitlement to holidays during term time.

Exceptional leave will normally be refused when:
- A child's attendance is below 95%.
- There is evidence of previous or repeated requests.
- The timing conflicts with assessments, SATs, or transition periods.

Unauthorised leave of absence may result in a Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority to each parent (currently £80 per parent per child, rising to £160 if unpaid after 21 days).

8. Attendance Support and Intervention

Following the 2024 DfE guidance, Chartridge School adopts a tiered approach to improving attendance:
- Universal Support: High-quality communication, monitoring, and positive reinforcement for all pupils.
- Targeted Support: Early intervention for pupils at risk of persistent absence, including meetings and attendance plans.
- Intensive Support: Coordinated multi-agency work for pupils with complex barriers, including referrals to Early Help or external agencies.

Attendance Support Plans will be developed and reviewed collaboratively with parents where concerns persist.

9. County Attendance Team

If school-level interventions do not result in improvement, the matter may be referred to the Buckinghamshire County Attendance Team (CAT).

The CAT can issue Penalty Notices or take legal action where unauthorised absences continue. Parents may also contact the team directly for advice at countyattendanceteam@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

- Mrs Riley and Mrs Harper, Attendance Officers: Monitor attendance daily, contact parents regarding absences, and maintain accurate records.
- Mr Alexandre, Headteacher: Senior Attendance Champion - Oversees attendance strategy, meets with parents where attendance is a concern, and ensures compliance with statutory duties.
- All Staff: Promote positive attendance and raise concerns promptly.
- Parents: Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and inform the school of any barriers to attendance.
- Governing Body: Monitors attendance data termly via the Headteacher's Report and ensures compliance with national expectations.

12. Data, Monitoring and Reporting

Attendance data is recorded daily, monitored weekly, and analysed termly by senior leaders. Trends, concerns, and progress towards targets are reported to the Governing Body each term.

Attendance data is shared with the Department for Education and the Local Authority as required.

13. Legal Framework

This policy complies with the following legislation and guidance:
- Education Act 1996 (sections 434, 444, 551).
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended).
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, 2024).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2024).

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if statutory guidance changes.

Approved by Governors: Autumn 2025
Review Date: Autumn 2027