



Attendance Guide for Parents and Carers

“Attendance Matters”

Working Together to Help Every Student Thrive

OUR ATTENDANCE TARGET: 96% OR ABOVE

Welcome

At Church Stretton School, we want every student to be happy, healthy, confident and successful and to make the most of every opportunity that school provides.

Being in school is about much more than an attendance percentage. Every day gives students opportunities to learn, spend time with friends, develop positive relationships with trusted adults, take part in new experiences and build the routines and confidence that support their wellbeing.

We know that there will be times when children are genuinely too unwell to attend, and we also recognise that some young people experience other barriers that can make coming to school difficult.

Our approach is based on working together with families. We want to celebrate good attendance, recognise improvements, understand difficulties and provide support as early as possible when it is needed.

This guide explains our expectations around attendance, why being in school matters and what you should do if your child is unwell or struggling to attend.

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1. Our attendance target – 96%

Our school attendance target is 96% or above for every student.

We recognise that percentages alone do not always show the real impact of absence. It can be more helpful to think about attendance in terms of the days, lessons, friendships and experiences that a young person misses.

There are 190 school days in an academic year, and students have five lessons each day.

Attendance	Days missed in a year	Lessons missed
96% – our school target	8 days	40 lessons
90%	19 days	95 lessons
80%	38 days	190 lessons

80% attendance means missing 38 school days – more than seven weeks of school and more than an entire half-term of education. Over the five years of school, 80% attendance each year means you would almost miss a whole year of school, and nearly 1000 lessons.

Learning builds from one lesson to the next. Missing lessons can therefore leave gaps in knowledge that make future learning more difficult.

Students may also miss:

- time with friends;
- practical activities and discussions;
- trips and enrichment opportunities;
- assemblies and celebrations;
- pastoral support;
- sporting, musical and extracurricular activities;
- opportunities to build confidence and independence; and
- the everyday experiences that help them feel part of our school community.

Every day – and every lesson – really does matter.

2. Letting us know your child is absent

If your child is not going to attend school, parents and carers must inform us **before 9:00am on each day of absence** and tell us the reason why they will not be attending.

Telephone

01694 722209

Please leave a message giving your child's name, tutor group and reason for absence.

Email

attendance.officer@csschool.co.uk

Please do not assume that the school will know why your child is absent. Good communication helps us to account for every student, safeguard our young people and maintain accurate attendance records.

If your child is not in school and you have not informed us, we will contact you to find out why they are not attending. If we are unable to contact you, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

3. When your child is unwell

We completely understand that children and young people become ill. There will be mornings when a student wakes up genuinely unwell and is not fit to attend school.

Sometimes it can be difficult to decide whether your child is well enough to come in.

The NHS provides helpful guidance for parents about common childhood illnesses and symptoms, including when a child should stay at home and when they can attend school.

[NHS – Is my child too ill for school?](#)

We encourage parents and carers to use this guidance when deciding whether their child is well enough to attend. For example, NHS advice explains that children with minor coughs, colds, sore throats or headaches can usually still attend school provided they are otherwise well and do not have a high temperature. There are, of course, illnesses and circumstances where children should remain at home, and families should follow NHS guidance.

Feeling better later in the day?

We encourage a “come in when you can” approach where appropriate.

If your child wakes feeling unwell but improves during the morning, please consider bringing them into school later rather than keeping them at home for the entire day. If a student feels better by lunchtime, for example, coming into school for the afternoon means that they can attend some of their lessons rather than missing all five.

Part of a school day is better than missing the whole school day.

Coming in but still feeling slightly unwell?

If your child has been unwell but feels able to try coming into school, please inform their Head of Year. Let us know that they have been unwell but are coming in and trying. This allows us to keep an eye on them, provide appropriate pastoral support and help them manage their school day.

We would much rather work with a young person who is trying to attend than have them feel that they have to manage on their own.

Medication

Where appropriate and in accordance with our school's medication policy, students may bring a single dose of medication, such as paracetamol, to help them manage minor symptoms during the school day. Medication is for their use only and must never be shared with another student.

4. Every lesson counts

It can be easy to think that a day or two away from school will not make much difference. However, absence adds up surprisingly quickly. Research shows that students who are absent from school in the first 4 weeks are over 50% more likely to end up with attendance below 90% for the year. Think about the number of lessons missed.

1 day absent = 5 lessons missed

2 days absent = 10 lessons missed

5 days absent = 25 lessons missed

10 days absent = 50 lessons missed

20 days absent = 100 lessons missed

Students may be able to copy notes or complete work afterwards, but they cannot fully recreate the teacher explanation, class discussion, questioning, practical activity, feedback or collaborative learning that took place while they were away. This is why we encourage students to attend whenever they are well enough and able to do so.

5. Attendance and achievement

There is a clear relationship between regular attendance and educational achievement. National evidence shows that pupils with stronger attendance achieve better educational outcomes than pupils who miss more school.

The Department for Education reports that secondary pupils with 95–100% attendance are nearly twice as likely to achieve strong GCSE results at grades 9–5 as pupils with 90–95% attendance.

It also reports that Year 11 pupils who miss between two and four weeks of school have around half the odds of achieving a grade 5 in English and mathematics compared with similar pupils who attend regularly.

Attendance therefore matters throughout secondary school – not simply when students reach Year 11. Regular attendance gives students the best opportunity to keep up with learning, build knowledge over time and achieve the outcomes of which they are capable.

6. Attendance, routine and wellbeing

Being in school is about much more than academic achievement. For many young people, school provides an important daily routine. It gives them opportunities to:

- see their friends;
- build relationships with trusted adults;
- feel part of a community;
- experience success;
- exercise and take part in activities;
- develop confidence and independence;
- access pastoral support; and
- maintain a regular daily routine.

These experiences can all contribute positively to a young person's wellbeing. Regular attendance also helps students remain connected to their peers and their school. Longer periods away can sometimes make returning feel more difficult, particularly if a student worries about missed work, friendships or what people might say when they return.

That is why early communication is so important.

7. When coming to school feels difficult

We know that there can be times when attending school feels difficult. A young person may be experiencing anxiety, friendship difficulties, challenges at home, worries about learning or another issue that makes coming into school harder.

Sometimes difficulties with attending school begin gradually and the early signs can be quite subtle. Parents and carers may notice that attendance is becoming a little more patchy, or that a pattern is beginning to develop. For example, your child may regularly say that they do not want to attend on a particular day, ask to miss the same lesson each week, complain of a tummy ache or headache on certain mornings, or find it difficult to sleep the night before particular school days.

These patterns can be important. They may help us understand whether there is something about a particular lesson, day, friendship, situation or part of the school routine that is making attendance feel more difficult. Noticing a pattern does not necessarily mean that there is a serious problem, but it is worth paying attention to changes in your child's usual behaviour and talking to them about what might be behind them.

School avoidance can sometimes develop from these small changes. Mornings may gradually become more difficult, worries can increase and staying at home can begin to feel easier than coming into school. The longer this continues, the harder returning can sometimes feel.

This is why early support is so important. Please do not feel that you need to wait until your child's attendance has fallen significantly before speaking to us. If you begin to notice changes or patterns, let us know. The earlier we can understand what is happening and work together with you and your child, the easier it can be to put appropriate support in place, maintain their connection with school and help them continue attending.

If this happens, please talk to us early.

Your child's Head of Year is an important first point of contact. They know the students in their year group well and can work with your child, you as a family and other members of staff to understand what is making attendance difficult and identify appropriate support.

Year Group	Head of Year	Email
Year 7	Mr Kirkby	guy.kirkby1@cssschool.co.uk
Years 8 & 10	Mr Elkins	alistair.elkins@cssschool.co.uk
Years 9 & 11	Ms Gajny	yvonne.gajny@cssschool.co.uk

Our aim is not simply to get students through the school gate. We want students to feel safe, supported, connected and successful when they are here.

By talking to us, we can begin to understand what is making attendance difficult and consider what support might help. Maintaining some attendance can also be very important. We will always work with families and young people to support them in maintaining their connection with school and rebuilding positive routines.

You do not need to wait until attendance has become a serious concern before asking us for help.

8. Working together

We monitor attendance carefully throughout the school year. When a students' attendance drops below our 96% target, we will be in regular contact with parents and carers.

Our aim in contacting you is not simply to tell you an attendance percentage. We want to:

- make sure you know how much education has been missed;
- understand whether there are barriers affecting attendance;
- listen to you and your child;
- identify support where appropriate;
- agree how we can work together to improve attendance; and
- recognise improvements when they happen.

Small improvements matter.

An extra morning, an extra day or an extra week of good attendance all add up to more learning, more time with friends and more opportunities. As attendance begins to fall, we want to get in touch early so that we can understand what may be getting in the way and work together to help.

9. Holidays during term time

We ask all families to arrange holidays and family trips during the school holidays.

Holidays during term time will not be authorised.

A term-time holiday means more than simply missing the number of days a family is away. Students miss the sequence of learning taking place in their lessons and may return to find that their classes have moved on to new material.

They also miss discussions, practical work, feedback, assessments and experiences that cannot simply be recreated afterwards.

With 13 weeks each year when school is closed to students, we ask families to use these periods for holidays wherever possible and protect the 190 days available for education.

10. Appointments and other absence

Whenever possible please try to make medical appointments outside of the school day. We do understand that this isn't always possible. However, even if an appointment is during the day try, to minimise the number of lessons missed by returning to school after the appointment. If a medical appointment takes place during the school day, please provide a copy of the appointment card or letter so that the correct attendance code can be applied.

For any other absence, parents and carers are required to complete a Leave of Absence in Term Time form (LATT). These circumstances include:

- Taking part in a regulated performance
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence.

The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

The LATT form can be accessed on the link below (and on the school website) and should be returned to the attendance officer for consideration.

[LATT form](#)

10. Key Contacts

If you would like to discuss any aspects of attendance, please contact our Attendance Officer who will be happy to help support you with attendance issues or queries that you may have.

Email: attendance.officer@cssschool.co.uk or 01694 722209

Worried about your child's attendance or wellbeing?

Please contact your child's Head of Year as early as possible:

You do not need to wait for us to contact you. If something is making it difficult for your child to attend regularly, please tell us early so that we can work together.

If your child has been unwell but is feeling well enough to come into school and give the day a try, you are also welcome to email their Head of Year to let them know. This means that we can be aware of the situation, check in with your child and provide some additional support during the school day if they need it.

There is also support available from the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO), Stephanie Burn, who works closely with pupils, families and school staff to help promote positive attendance. Stephanie can offer advice, guidance and practical support to help identify and overcome any barriers that may be affecting a child's attendance, as well as signpost families to any additional services that may be helpful.

If you have any concerns about your child's attendance or would like to discuss any difficulties they may be experiencing, please feel free to get in touch with Stephanie using the contact details below. Early conversations can often help ensure the right support is in place.

Stephanie Burn

stephanie.burn@shropshire.gov.uk
Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Attendance Matters

Working Together to Help Every Student Thrive

At Church Stretton School, we want the same thing that parents and carers want; for our young people to be happy, healthy, confident and successful, and to leave school having achieved their potential.

Regular attendance gives them the strongest possible foundation to do this.

- **Aim for 96% or above**
- **Every day in school counts**
- **Every lesson matters**
- **If your child is struggling to attend, talk to us early so that we can help**

Thank you for working in partnership with us to give every student the best possible opportunity to thrive.

Church Stretton School