



# ATTENDANCE CHARTER

V4.0

# ATTENDANCE CHARTER v4.0

## STATEMENT OF INTENT

Attendance is one of the biggest challenges facing the school system today. The aim of the Omega MAT Attendance Charter is to ensure equity and efficacy in our approach to ensuring good attendance across all schools within our Trust, based on the strongest practice across the sector. This is to ensure we achieve our commitment to improve attendance and **tackle persistent absence**. This Charter is built upon the following theory of action:

1. Tackle Persistent Absence		
If we	Then	So that
Define & embed a trust-wide Attendance Charter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We will unite behind a <b>vision for best-practice</b>;</li> <li>✓ We will co-construct evidence-informed, <b>Omega MAT policy, systems and practice</b>, to ensure aligned approach in all schools, learning from the most impactful practice across the Trust, regionally and nationally;</li> <li>✓ We will establish an <b>Attendance Leader Network</b> to support leaders in each school, ensuring there is equity in expertise and impact;</li> <li>✓ We will roll-out <b>Attendance Deep Dives</b> to review our work, report on its impact and refine our approach to relentlessly drive improvement;</li> <li>✓ Positive attendance will be <b>promoted as a cultural norm</b> in each of our schools.</li> <li>✓ All schools will adopt a <b>unified approach</b> to tackling pupil absence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Professional confidence amongst Attendance Leads is enhanced;</li> <li>✓ Best practice is shared and applied;</li> <li>✓ The Trust is assured that schools are doing all they can to secure positive attendance and tackle absence;</li> <li>✓ Rates of attendance will improve;</li> <li>✓ Persistent absence will reduce, especially for disadvantaged students and those with SEND;</li> <li>✓ Severe absence will reduce, especially for disadvantaged students and those with SEND.</li> </ul>

The Attendance Charter is organised into 8 discrete strands to guide the work of our schools:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  <p><b>Strand 1: Promoting Positive Attendance</b></p>     |  <p><b>Strand 5: School/Academy leadership</b></p>             |
|  <p><b>Strand 2: Creating the right conditions</b></p>     |  <p><b>Strand 6: Trust Oversight and Quality Assurance</b></p> |
|  <p><b>Strand 3: Responding to absence</b></p>             |  <p><b>Strand 7: Expertise Development</b></p>                 |
|  <p><b>Strand 4: Intervening to improve attendance</b></p> |  <p><b>Strand 8: Governance</b></p>                            |



# Strand 1: Promoting Positive Attendance

Our ambition is to have every child in school every day. The communication strategy for each school within the trust should inspire and motivate students about the wider benefits of school. This is about making school 'unmissable'.

Communication should be personalised for different children, families and communities to connect them with the school experience.

All schools will plan an Annual Programme for Attendance and Punctuality Events across the Academic Year.

## Parents

- **Develop effective relationships to educate and support.**
- Standard letters to be utilised at key stages of absence (see toolkit).
- **Personalised** communication such as emails, 'nudge letters' where these will engage specific parents more effectively.
- Frequent parent updates regarding their child's attendance, reported in 'Days Absent' rather than percentages, and compare to children nationally and/or their peers.
- Regular updates on Social Media promoting positive attendance, weekly attendance updates and celebrating successes.
- School Websites have standardised Attendance Pages including:
  - Timings of the school day.
  - Clear, uncomplicated attendance procedures.
  - A simple visual guide re. impact of absence and lateness.
  - Clear academic calendar.
  - Signposting to support (mental health, support services)
- Posters/signage evident in every school reception: family-friendly, sign-posting for explicit support to improve attendance.
- Attendance team to attend parents evenings.
- Attendance is a key focus at all transition events.
- Targeted communications driven by analytics (level of absence, vulnerability, characteristics, group, barriers).
- Parental communications regarding attendance will be developed to target heritage language, driven by community demographic.



## Use of Analytics:

- Leaders utilise last year's data trends to identify families 'at-risk' of persistent absence. Target communication at those 'at risk' families.
- Leaders utilise last year's data/in-year data trends to identify 'at risk' days of the week/weeks in the year and target communication to incentivise attendance during those days.

## Pupils

- **Share expectations termly, and revisit where necessary.**
- Weekly assembly: set expectations and celebrate success.
- Pastoral Leaders/Senior Leaders circulate classes to check on every class and their attendance, praising those present for being in school.
- Involve student leadership team with attendance strategy.
- Posters/signage evident around all schools:
  - child friendly.
  - sign posting for specific support for underlying issues.
- 'Tell Us' button available to those who need it.
- Attendance display board centrally, updated weekly and discussed in assemblies.
- Direct communication with pupils regarding their attendance, by class teacher/form tutor.
- Rewards students for positive attendance. Examples include:
  - Attendance League (Pizza Party for Best Class Attendance every half-term).
  - Individual rewards as per School Rewards/Behaviour Policy, focused on Attendance and Attendance Improvement.



- Leaders utilise previous year's attendance data to pre-empt and plan for individual pupil interventions/mentoring to promote positive attendance.
- Leaders utilise current cumulative and weekly attendance data to communicate and celebrate current attendance by year-group through assemblies.
- Leaders utilise current year-to-date attendance for individual pupils to praise/celebrate/reward consistently good attendance.
- Leaders utilise weekly individual pupil data to celebrate and reward improved attendance.
- Leaders utilise previous and in-year attendance data to incentivise attendance on days where poor attendance is evident.

## Staff

- **Ensure all staff are aware of the expectations of their role in the promotion of good school attendance.**
- Weekly Reporting/Sharing of headline Attendance Data.
- Form Tutor/Class Dashboards shared weekly, include:
  - Week-by-week overview of attendance by pupil
  - Risk of Persistent Absence (RPA)
  - Persistent Absence (PA)
  - Severe Absence (SA)
  - Persistent Lates
- Form Tutor/Class Attendance Display Updates (Weekly)



- Leaders utilise weekly attendance data to inform staff regarding whole-school attendance.
- Teachers utilise weekly dashboards to inform dialogue with students in their class/form to promote positive attendance, challenge absence and support improvement.



Learners' sense of belonging in the school community can be a cause of absenteeism - if a learner does not feel that they belong within their school community, their risk of absence is higher.

The relationship between belonging and attendance is not new to those within the education sector. However, belonging doesn't happen by accident, and intentionality is paramount.

We encourage our school leaders and those responsible for governance to continue to remain curious about the extent to which our local policies and practices promote a sense of belonging, and conversely, the extent to which they can make attendance difficult for some young people, especially if they have been absent.

## Considerations for all school leaders

### The Power of Welcome: Soft Landings on Arrival

Omega MAT School Leaders will ensure the welcoming standard is upheld by every adult;

- All staff are ready to welcome pupils into the building, every day;
- Leaders are placed at the gate to welcome pupils (and parents where appropriate)
- Regularly audit the school entrance: Is it welcoming and aspirational?
- Class teachers/Form Tutors/Pastoral Leaders:
  - Create a welcoming, form-room/classroom environment
  - Welcome students back after absence; we missed you!
  - Hold catch-up conversations so pupils know what is happening and why they have come back at a great time!
  - Interact with pupils throughout the day, take an interest in them as individuals. Check that they have enjoyed their morning!
  - Challenge lateness sensitively; celebrate the fact they are in school!

### School Food Standards

The food available to our pupils should be of the highest standard, providing nutritious and appealing options for all children.

Driven by frequent pupil surveys, Omega MAT School Leaders should rigorously monitor the quality of the food on offer to pupils and intervene to ensure this meets the needs and wants of the children.

### Uniform Policies and Affordability

Omega MAT advocates for uniform policies that are universally affordable.

Where branded uniform is a requirement, schools should appoint a colleague within school to coordinate a **uniform exchange**, enabling uniform to be recycled and shared at no cost to vulnerable families.

### Behaviour and Uniform Policies

Consider the stringent application of uniform policies, particularly in relation to make-up, false eye-lashes and finger nails.

If there is no health and safety risk, gentle reminders of expectations are appropriate. Don't let the self-esteem of a pupil impact their attendance!

### Make school unmissable

Publish the school calendar so that parents and pupils know what is happening in school – ensure unmissable events are scheduled and promoted on anticipated 'high-absence' days/weeks.

### Curriculum Review

Is the curriculum representative, inclusive and accessible for all pupils, through its content and delivery?

### Pupil Toilets

The Trust will invest in refurbished toilets in all schools where this is required.

School Leaders should promote respectful use of the toilets and ensure effective monitoring to maintain toilets to the highest standards.

### Sanitary Products / Period Poverty

Sanitary products will be made available to all pupils, in toilets and via student services/school offices.

Access to toilets will be always be granted where pupils require access to sanitary products.

### Clubs and support networks

Provide opportunities for small-group interactions through inclusive in-school extra-curricular activities.

Review these to monitor attendance and engagement from pupils at risk of persistent absence.

Regular student voice to review extra-curricular offer.

### Relationship Mapping

Identify existing relationships between school-based staff and pupils and/or parents at risk of persistent absence.

Establish a single-point of contact to build trust between home and school.

Use this relationship to mentor, support and advocate for high-risk pupils/families. This will strengthen relationships, increase individual sense of belonging, build confidence and raise aspirations.

### The Power of Feeling Welcome: Soft Landings in Lessons

#### We will warmly welcome our pupils after absence:

- Positive meet and greet, consistency matters/familiar setting matters so students shouldn't arrive back finding they have lost their seat in the seating plan etc.
- Smile. Meet and greet conversation includes "I hope you are feeling better" gently remind them about key routines, where the equipment is etc
- "This seat has been waiting for you." "How are you doing?"
- Treat return as low key as possible.
- Always have all students' books/folders out. – even those who are frequently absent!
- Keep a return to lesson folder- for pupils who have missed lessons it can be useful to keep a bank of teacher models or worked examples to stick in books so that, upon returning, they have these to refer to and can see what they are working towards.
- Know your students and their needs (SEND, EAL, visual processing etc.)

#### We will reassure our pupils after absence:

- Cold-calling/No-hands questioning can make return to lessons harder! **Handle with care!**
- Quiet word along the lines of "I won't ask you any questions about what we have covered in the last x lessons so don't worry" "Take each lesson at a time." "Today is a good day to be back in class." "We'll work together to catch you up."
- Acknowledge the pupil and let them know that as long as they try their best in that lesson then that's all we need to see.
- Quiet word during the lesson about how we will catch them up, so they know there's a strategy and that they are valued.
- Keep everything positive ... "you have come back at the best time! This is the perfect time to be back"

#### We will provide an opportunity for early success:

- Try to include at least one accessible question;
- Examples - Write down everything you know about... You can use words, pictures, diagrams, symbols, or formulas. Include an opinion question/Retrieval Grid
- Having a teacher exercise book where you might model and rehearse the task alongside students - perhaps under a visualiser - and then simply photocopy these sequences for absent students or offer your book as a quick revision tool before moving on.
- Provide key vocabulary.
- Give a big-picture recap.
- Provide targeted support; assess, adapt, and adjust.

#### We will be positive:

- Praise engagement, build the relationship based on positives.
- Ask the questions they did well in during the lesson again at the end, so they leave the lesson on a real positive.
- Refer back to the good answers given, bring those pupils into the conversation, use their good work as an example.
- "Catch-them being good" as early in the lesson as possible.

### Know the needs of your pupils; all of them!

- Make sure teachers and support staff are fully aware of the individual needs of pupils in their classes
- Make sure staff are appropriately supported to meet those needs, through high-quality professional development.



## Strand 3: Responding to absence

An early response to absence is essential and is mandatory in all Omega MAT Schools. Whenever absence occurs, we need to assure ourselves that the young people in our care are safe and to take urgent action when there is a safeguarding concern. Further to this, we are committed to early intervention to address and reduce absence before it becomes habitual.

Strand 3 details the reactive action to be taken when student absence occurs.

### Daily Actions

All registers close no longer than 30 minutes after the start of the rollcall. This allows lateness to be consistently and proactively identified, reported and managed.

- Parents are expected to contact school when their child is absent and to explain the reason for absence (reinforced in Communications Strategy).
- Attendance line calls to be fielded as efficiently as possible, recording reason for absence on registers (in accordance with DfE guidance).
- Ensure voicemails are checked to ensure no safeguarding actions are required. Record reason for absence on registers (in accordance with DfE guidance).
- Confirm attendance for any pupils who are educated off-site (such as in Alternative Provision), and students with approved Part-Time Timetables.
- Convene Daily Attendance Meetings (Designated Attendance Lead with Attendance Officers/Attendance Administrative Staff) – see agenda below.
- Daily Attendance Register Check.
- Action missing marks.
- Check appropriate coding.
- Missing register reminders to staff every lesson.

### Weekly Action

Weekly actions ensure weekly reporting processes provide accurate data and target proactive actions for the following week:

- Weekly register check to ensure coding is accurate and appropriate (in accordance with DfE guidance)
- Attendance tracker update.
- Weekly communication to all staff: Headline attendance figures (comparison to national, local and previous year). Celebrate success, encourage collective action.
- Weekly communication to class/form tutors: Signpost to Form/Class Dashboard, prompt attendance conversations with pupils.
- Weekly communication to parents; “Your child has attended X out of a possible X school sessions”.
- Identify students with emerging patterns of absence and add to ‘Watch List’ for subsequent weeks.
  - Risk of Persistent Absence.
  - Risk of Severe Absence.
  - Persistent Lates.
- Weekly ‘Team Around School’ meeting for intervention planning. Agree next steps for individual students:
  - Agree ‘nudge actions’ for following week.
  - Graduated letters/meetings/referrals for internal and external support.
- Attendance Manager/Attendance Lead meetings with allocated Local Authority Attendance Officer.

### Day 1 Absence - Actions

Action on Day 1 of absence is critical to safeguard children and to intervene early to minimise the risk of further absence:

- Identify absent students, for whom no parental contact has been received.
- Triage – prioritise according to risk (highest risk students first, vulnerable students/students on ‘watch list’ for immediate action, safeguarding concerns/Persistent Absent/Severely Absent students or risk thereof).
- First day phone-calls to be completed for all students who are absent with no reason/parental contact. Complete as soon as possible after close of registers).
- Communicate through appropriate Apps, such as Bromcom Parent App or SeeSaw in addition to SMS, Telephone calls etc
- Home visits where no contact can be made on Day 1 Phone Calls.
- Alert calls to social care for ‘watch list’ students – liaise with Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### Day 3 Absence - Actions

Action after multiple days of absence is critical to safeguard children and to intervene early to minimise the risk of further absence:

- Identify students absent for 3 or more days.
- Check reason for absence and consider appropriateness.
- If suitable reason, check welfare with phone-call to parents/carers.
- Home visits in all cases where child has been absent for three days or more and reason is not completely justified (eg hospital admission).
- Alert calls to social care for ‘watch-list’ students – liaise with Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### Daily Attendance Meeting: Agenda

Attendance meeting coordinates the safeguarding activity to be undertaken each day, and drives a reactive programme of home visits to secure improved attendance during the day:

- Attendance Team Welfare/Workload Check-in.
- Attendance Officers/Admin to identify ‘absent students’ for whom no valid explanation has been received (from parents or through First-Day Phone calls).
- Use Daily Absence Dashboard to prioritise and plan home visits.
- Agree targets for conversion to present PM Mark.
- Plan effective route for home visits to maximise efficiency.
- Agree further action required (Alert calls to social care for ‘watch list’ students – liaise with Designated Safeguarding Lead).



# Strand 4: Intervening to improve attendance

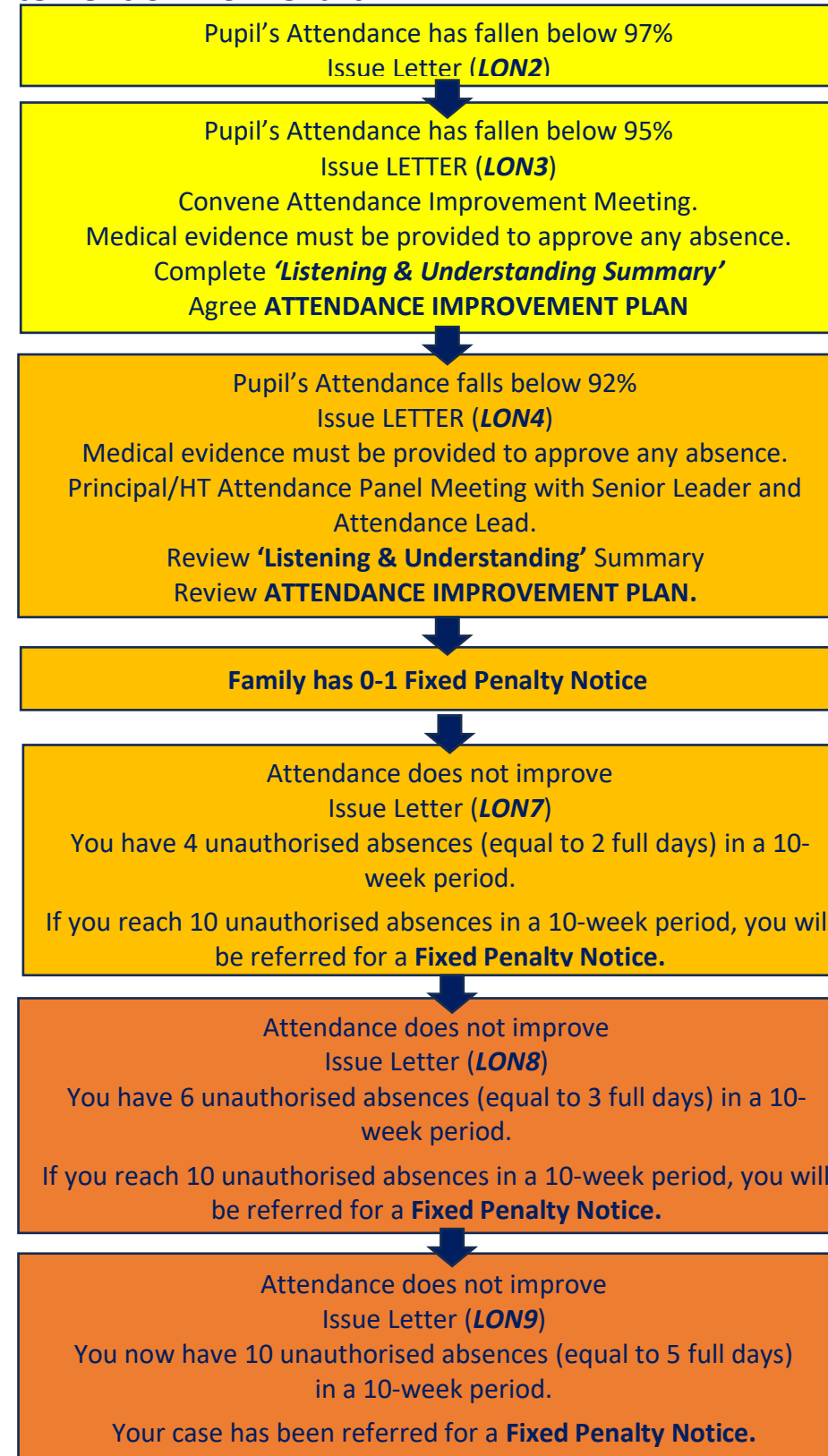
Attendance is everybody's responsibility and senior leadership teams strive to develop a culture where all parties are clear on their role and therefore can be held to account. To enable all parties to fulfil their role, clear systems and procedures are implemented which are understood by all and applied consistently.

The key principle, underpinning our approach of early intervention, is to develop a voluntary partnership with both parents and pupils with the aim to understand barriers and work with families to remove them.

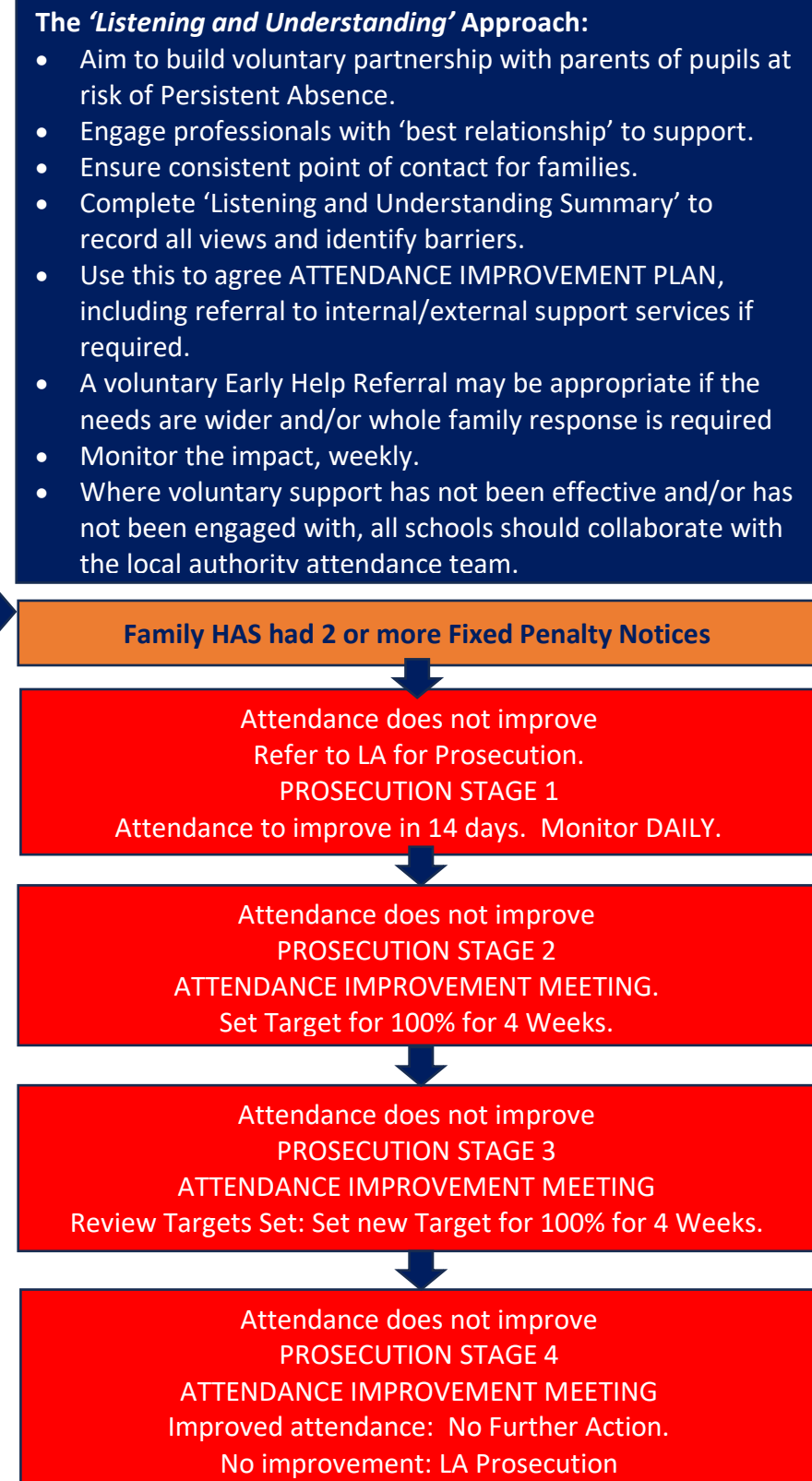
## Graduated Response:

<b>100%</b> Accessing all learning	<p><b>NOTE: LEADERS MUST SENSE CHECK ALL ACTIONS, CONSIDERING CONTEXT, TIME OF YEAR AND APPROPRIATENESS – USE PROFESSIONAL DISCRETION!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly 'acknowledgment' of 100% attendance to parents/carers.</li> <li>Half-Termly letter (<b>LON1</b>) sent to all parents of pupils with 97% attendance and above, acknowledging excellent attendance.</li> <li>Students over 97% qualify for rewards.</li> </ul>
<b>97-99.9%</b> Missing some learning	<p><b>When attendance falls below 97%:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter of Notification (<b>LON2</b>) sent to parents.</li> </ul> <p><b>If attendance continues to decline and falls below 95%:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter of Notification (<b>LON3</b>) sent to parents when attendance falls below 95%.</li> <li>Parents/Carers invited to an <b>Attendance Improvement Meeting</b>, pupil present for meeting (if age appropriate).</li> <li>Meeting held in parents/carers absence if they do not attend. Attendance targets for at least 4 weeks set.</li> <li>Progress/concerns obtained from teachers prior to meeting and shared with parents/carers.</li> <li>'<b>Listening and Understanding Summary</b>' completed.</li> <li>Medical evidence requested to authorise subsequent absences and parents/carers requested to encourage pupils to attend with minor illnesses.</li> <li><b>Attendance Improvement Plan</b> sent by post (hand delivered if parents/carers did not attend).</li> <li>If pupil achieve targets a letter (<b>LON6</b>) is sent to parents/carers acknowledging improvement.</li> <li>Increased home visits to students on attendance targets.</li> </ul>
<b>92-96.9%</b> Risk of underachievement 'Get to Green'	<p><b>When attendance falls below 92%:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter of Notification (<b>LON4</b>) sent to parents.</li> <li>Parents/carers are invited to a further <b>Attendance Improvement Meeting</b>. Principal/Headteacher or designated senior leader to attend.</li> <li>Risk of Fixed Penalty/Prosecution if no immediate and maintained improvement.</li> <li><b>Attendance Improvement Plan</b> sent by post/hand delivered after the meeting. A minimum of 4 weeks targets set.</li> <li>If pupils achieve the targets a letter (<b>LON6</b>) is sent to parents/carers acknowledging improvement.</li> </ul>
<b>&lt;92%</b> High risk of underachievement	<p><b>When attendance falls below 90%:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter of Notification (<b>LON5</b>) sent to parents.</li> <li>Referral to LA Attendance Support Team</li> <li>Fixed Penalty/Prosecution referral submitted to the Local Authority as appropriate.</li> <li>Consider in-school action such as PA specific classes/Tutor Groups (Secondary only).</li> </ul>
<b>&lt;90%</b> Serious risk of underachievement	
<b>&lt;50%</b> Serious risk of underachievement	

## Intervention Flow Chart



## Targeted Intervention





Improving attendance is everyone’s responsibility. Omega MAT will designate a member of the Executive Team to take responsibility for ensuring the essence of this Attendance Charter is implemented consistently in all schools. Similarly, all Omega MAT schools must appoint/identify a designated Senior Leader with overall accountability for championing and improving attendance in their school.

## Roles and Responsibilities

<p><b>Trust Designated Attendance Lead</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead the Attendance Leader Network to periodically review, develop and reinforce the Omega MAT Attendance Charter.</li> <li>Share national updates and drive collaboration in their implementation.</li> <li>Work with the Directors of Education to quality assure the implementation of the Omega MAT Attendance Charter in all schools.</li> <li>Report attendance trends, risks and actions to the Executive team, weekly.</li> <li>Coordinate the Promotion of Positive Attendance on school websites and social media to ensure consistency.</li> <li>Ensure Designated Attendance Leads in schools are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in securing good attendance and ensure colleagues are held to account for consistent implementation.</li> <li>Ensure systems to drive attendance are understood by all, implemented and applied consistently.</li> </ul> <p><b>Headteachers/Principals (all schools)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote positive attendance across their school.</li> <li>Support the attendance lead in attendance review meetings with parents as required.</li> <li>Report to Local Governing Board/Trust using standard Attendance Dashboards, with a narrative that details trends, risks and action taken about Attendance.</li> <li>Ensure attendance is a focus of all line management meetings, as relevant to function (See Strand 2 – Creating the right conditions).</li> </ul>	<p><b>School Designated Attendance Lead</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and communicate a sharp vision/action plan for attendance improvement in their school.</li> <li>Use previous data to fully understand the triggers for poor attendance in their school.</li> <li>Implement the Omega MAT Attendance Charter as a central strategy/policy.</li> <li>Ensure all parties are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in securing good attendance and ensure colleagues are held to account for consistent implementation.</li> <li>Lead the attendance team/function in their school to quality assure and support as required.</li> <li>Ensure timely and accurate sharing of Attendance Data/Trackers with appropriate staff.</li> <li>Lead the daily attendance meeting and retain daily oversight of attendance data, trends and drive a dynamic response.</li> <li>Support in home visits/attendance review meetings with families as required.</li> <li>Retain oversight of attendance at Alternative/Off-site Provision, ensuring safeguarding processes are appropriate and respond to patterns of absence.</li> <li>Report attendance trends, risks and actions to the Senior Leadership Team, weekly.</li> <li>Coordinate the Promotion of Positive Attendance (Strand 1) with students, parents and staff.</li> <li>Ensure systems to drive attendance are understood by all, implemented and applied consistently, up to and including statutory legal action.</li> <li>Liaise closely with the Safeguarding Team, Inclusion and External Agencies as required.</li> </ul> <p><b>Attendance Officers/Admin</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify pupils who are absent and ensure daily contact where no reason for absence has been received.</li> <li>Plan and complete home visits as required.</li> <li>Attend daily attendance meeting.</li> <li>Ensure accurate coding of attendance registers.</li> <li>Monitor vulnerable students/PA/SPA and drive interventions (see Strand 4 – Intervening to improve attendance).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Senior Leaders/Pastoral Leaders (all schools)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote positive attendance across their school.</li> <li>Support the attendance lead in attendance review meetings with parents as required.</li> <li>Support in making contact with families for children under their remit who are falling behind with learning due to poor attendance.</li> <li>Ensure teachers are utilising attendance dashboards effectively and are promoting good attendance in their classes/forms.</li> <li>Ensure attendance is a focus of all line management meetings, as relevant to function (See Strand 2 – Creating the right conditions)</li> </ul> <p><b>Teachers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote positive attendance within their classes/form groups.</li> <li>Praise/reward pupils for positive attendance/improved attendance.</li> <li>Use the Weekly Attendance Tracker/Dashboard to track changes in attendance for children in their class/form, supporting those pupils to improve their attendance.</li> <li>Work with parents of pupils who are falling behind with learning due to poor attendance (messages through Bromcom/See Saw etc).</li> <li>Promote positive attendance within the classroom.</li> <li>Ensure the conditions in their classroom promote positive attendance (see Strand 2 - Creating the right conditions).</li> </ul>
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## Strategic Leadership Activity





The Trust has a responsibility to ensure each of its constituent schools/academies secures strong attendance and does everything possible to ensure all children attend school, every day. With this in mind, the trust will utilise existing systems and processes to seek assurance, drive standards and ensure accountability for the effective implementation and execution of the Trust Attendance Charter, and the systems and processes therein.

## Summary of Trust Assurance Activity

### Collaborative Review (CR)

All Headteachers/Principals are entitled to regular Collaborative Reviews. This is a critical forum in the evaluation/self-evaluation of our schools and requires open and honest dialogue between school leaders and the Trust.

A key feature of Collaborative Review is 'stepping in' to the routines of the school to experience strengths and understand risks.

This is a supportive, solution-focused forum where participants explore strategies for the sharing of best-practice, as well as agreeing actions to mitigate risk and enhance performance.

**Attendance Focus:**

- School Attendance, Persistent Absence and Severe Absence will be retained as a standing agenda item.

**Frequency:**

Collaborative Reviews will take place twice per half-term.

**Who will be involved:**

- School/Academy Headteacher/Principal.
- Director of Education.
- School leaders as identified/invited.

### Safeguarding Supervision Meeting

All Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) in schools/academies are entitled to regular Safeguarding Supervision meetings with the Trust Director of Safeguarding and People Services. These focus on casework, single central records and attendance.

A key feature of Safeguarding Supervision Meetings is 'stepping in' to key record-keeping systems and processes to seek assurance. Attendance will be a key line of inquiry to seek assurance with regard to the link between Attendance practitioners and Safeguarding teams within schools.

**Attendance Focus:**

- Persistent Absence and Severe Absence will be retained as a standing agenda item.
- There will be a specific focus on the link between absence and safeguarding procedures, Children Missing Education (CME), pupils on part-time timetables and those attending Alternative Provision.

**Frequency:**

Safeguarding Supervision Meetings take place half-terminally, or more frequently driven by risk/need.

**Who will be involved:**

- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Director of Safeguarding & People Services

### Attendance Focused Reviews (AFR)

Focused Review are a core element of the School Improvement Strategy for the Trust. Focused Reviews explore a specific area of school operations and may fulfil a statutory requirement or provide an additional level of assurance to the school/Trust.

All schools will be supported by a Attendance Focused Review (AFR), to review the school's implementation of the Omega MAT Attendance Charter.

**Attendance Focus:**

- Evaluate the local implementation of the Omega MAT Attendance Charter and its impact on headline attendance, persistent absence and severe absence.
- Ensure schools are meeting the requirements of "Working Together to Improve School Attendance".

**Frequency:**

AFR will take place at least once during the academic year. Where concerns are identified, a 'revisit' review may be scheduled.

**Who will be involved:**

- School/Academy Designated Attendance Lead
- Trust Designated Attendance Lead
- Director of Education/CEO
- School/Academy Link Governor

### School Performance Review (SPR)

School Performance Review is a structured review of the overall performance of each school/academy. SPR reviews all aspects of school performance driven by the key performance data that is available at key points in the academic year.

Headline attendance data will be a key focus of each School Performance Review meeting.

**Attendance Focus:**

- Evaluate the efficacy of the Attendance Charter and its impact on headline attendance, persistent absence and severe absence in each school.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of implementation/execution of policies/procedures based on evidence from CR and AFR.

**Frequency:**

SPR/SSP will take place four times per year.

**Who will be involved:**

- Headteacher/Principal
- Director of Education
- Director of Safeguarding & People Services
- Chief Executive Officer

## Omega Analytics Dashboards:

### DASHBOARD 1: ATTENDANCE HEADLINES

- Cumulative Attendance – All pupils/by attribute
- Attendance Trend – Week-by-week, compared to previous year
- Comparison to Local and National figures
- Reasons for Absence (% absence codes)
- Cumulative Attendance = By year group

### DASHBOARD 2: ABSENCE HEADLINES

- Cumulative absence – All/Groups (% and #)
- Persistent Absence - All/Groups (% and #)
- Severe Absence - All/Groups (% and #)
- Comparison to Local and National figures
- Comparison to same point previous year
- Interactive Map and Student Lists

### DASHBOARDS 3-6: WEEKLY TRENDS (GROUPS)

- Absence Trends by Week
- Discrete Dashboard for each of PP, SEND, EAL and Gender
- Comparison to same point previous year
- Interactive to identify lists of students with absence on key days/key weeks

### DASHBOARD 7: DAY/WEEK TRENDS

- Attendance by week
- Comparison to same week previous year
- Expandable to show day/year group trends
- RAG coded to show improvement/decline week-by-week

### DASHBOARD 8: ATTENDANCE CODING SUMMARY

- % Marks by Attendance Code - (%)
- % Marks by Date - (% and #); Lates (U Code %)
- Interactive student lists linked to each selected day/code
- Supports Register Quality Assurance

### DASHBOARD 9: YEAR GROUP DASHBOARD

- % Attendance, YTD, this week, last week
- % Attendance, Key Groups
- PA (% and #); SA(% and #)
- Interactive student lists (Colour Coded)
- Reasons for Absence (% absence codes)

### DASHBOARD 9: TUTOR GROUP DASHBOARD

- % Attendance, YTD, this week, last week
- % Attendance, Key Groups
- PA (% and #); SA(% and #)
- Interactive student lists (Colour coded by risk)
- Reasons for Absence (% absence codes)

### DASHBOARD 10: DAILY ABSENCE DASHBOARD

- Pupils Absent today, by Year group
- Colour coded by risk
- Interactive Map to support home visit planning
- Daily View to show impact of homevisits (AM vs PM)





Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and to safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. This Charter commits to a broad range of training which is mandatory in all schools, as well as training which is recommended based on best practice.

## Summary of Training & Development

### All colleagues (Mandatory Training)

#### School/Trust Induction Systems and Processes

- Attendance, and the role all colleagues have in promoting positive attendance.
- Attendance will be included as a focus in all school induction programmes.
- The Trust/School systems and processes relating to school attendance will be included within staff operational guidance.

#### Basic Awareness Training (Annually, plus periodic refresher training)

As a minimum, training on attendance should ensure that all staff understand:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances;
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers;
- school and trust strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance;
- the processes for working with partners to provide intensive support to pupils who need it.

#### Emotionally Based School Avoidance Training (EBSA Training)

All Omega MAT Schools are mandated to ensure EBSA Basic Awareness Training is delivered in each school during the 2024-25 Academic Year.

### Attendance-focused Leaders/Teams (Mandatory Development)

#### Specialist Attendance Lead Practitioner Training

Designated Attendance Leads should ensure that colleagues with a specified attendance function should receive their basic training (see All Colleagues) and additionally, they should be trained to be highly effective practitioners, including:

- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data;
- the required skills to effectively support pupils in overcoming barriers to attendance;
- building effective relationships with families;
- awareness of referral practices, as attendance relates to Safeguarding.

To support this, Omega MAT ensures all schools buy into Local Authority Service Level Agreements to engage Educational Welfare Teams in their locality.

#### Attendance Leader Network (via Omega Leadership Group)

Omega MAT schools benefit from opportunities to bring together colleagues from different schools to learn from each other's expertise and share best practice and to develop effective interventions.

During 2024-25, the Attendance Leader Network will be a core function of the Omega Leadership Group, with Attendance and Tackling Absence being a core strategic commitment at trust level.

This network will convene half-termly and will be chaired by the Trust Designated Attendance Lead (Director of Safeguarding and People Services).

### Best-practice Training (Recommended)

#### ELSA Training

- The ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) intervention was originally developed and designed to build the capacity of schools to support the emotional needs of their pupils from within their own resources.
- This is achieved by training teaching assistants to develop and deliver individualised support programmes to meet the emotional needs of children and teenagers in their care.
- It recognises that children learn better and are happier in school if their emotional needs are also addressed.
- There are registered ELSA Trainers within Omega Multi Academy Trust, whose expertise can be shared/deployed to support the augmentation of the ELSA programme.

#### Attendance Support and Development Programme

- This programme is delivered by the charity School-Home-Support, and is targeted for Attendance Leads in the Liverpool City Region. Leaders at Alsop High School are engaging with this training.
- Omega Leadership Group and the Attendance Leader Network will provide opportunities to share the learning from this programme to support other Attendance Leads in developing their expertise.

## What works? What the research tells us...

The evidence to clearly define what works in improving school attendance is highly contentious and inconclusive. In 2022, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) published a report assessing the evidence, and highlighting eight key themes and categories of support that appeared to show some efficacy in improving attendance. These are summarised as follows:

#### MENTORING

- Pairing pupils with an older peer or adult who acts as a positive role model.
- Mentoring was most impactful when sessions were delivered on a 1:1 basis, at least once per week.

#### PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

- Communications to promote benefits of good attendance, current trends and 'nudge' communications.
- Targeted personalised engagement to communicate with and engage critical parents.

#### RESPONSIVE AND TARGETED APPROACHES

- Responds to and targets attendance barriers in their design and approach
- Requires data driven identification of need, professional curiosity to explore/diagnose barriers and creative packages of support.

#### TEACHING OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

- Aim to build social and emotional skills that are correlated with school attendance
- Build resilience or self-regulation that might assist when barriers to attendance arise.

#### BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTIONS

- Aim to reduce absence by solving school behaviour issues which may lead to more positive relationships at school.
- Especially important where bullying is cited as a barrier.

#### MEAL PROVISION

- School breakfast and lunch programme, can provide nutritional benefits and reduce sickness absence.
- Provision of food can drive engagement for financial/economic reasons.

#### INCENTIVES AND DISINCENTIVES

- Interventions that offer reward for good attendance, and improved attendance.
- Penalties for families where attendance is low.

#### EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Provide additional educational opportunities outside of the regular curriculum that inspire pupils and make school unmissable.



Department for Education (DfE) guidance is clear that improving attendance begins at board level, meaning governing boards should:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set a whole school culture;
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance;
- Regularly review attendance data to ensure support is focused on the pupils who need it.

## The role of governance in school attendance

### Attendance Policy

An effective whole-school culture of high attendance is underpinned by a clear attendance policy.

Omega Multi-Academy Trust has agreed to adopt one attendance policy which covers all our schools.

#### The policy will:

- Meet expectations set out in *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (section one);
- Be tailored to the needs of individual schools and the barriers to attendance pupils experience (as identified through analysis of school-level attendance data) ;
- Account for the specific needs of certain pupils and pupil groups;
- Be easily accessible to staff, pupils and parents and published on the school/trust website;
- Be sent to parents when pupils join, at the start of each school year and when it is updated;
- Set out how the school/trust works with local partners to help improve attendance (for example, local authority attendance support teams, health care, police, and social care).

Attendance improvement does not happen in isolation; it should also be prioritised in wider policies and improvement strategies, including:

- Safeguarding;
- Support for disadvantaged pupils;
- Behaviour management;
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

### Attendance Culture

Good attendance is the responsibility of everyone who works in our schools. This Charter aims to promote good attendance and mandate clear actions to drive and improve attendance at school level.

#### Working with families:

Good attendance starts with close and productive relationships with parents and pupils. In the first instance, all schools are expected to:

- work with pupils and parents to address any in-school barriers to attendance;
- understand any barriers that may exist outside school, meeting with pupils and parents, agreeing actions and making referrals to services and organisations where appropriate .

Where absence intensifies, additional action may include:

- individual and specialist support such as mentoring, out of hours learning or alternative provision;
- formal conversations with parents, providing an opportunity to listen but also for the school to set out potential (legal) consequences.

#### Improvement notices and fines:

Where voluntary support has not been successful, schools should work with the local authority to intensify support, issue a notice to improve and pursue legal action if all other routes have failed.

- A Notice to Improve gives parents a final chance to engage in support to improve their child’s attendance.
- Penalty notices (fines) are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child regularly attends school – from September 2024, schools must consider a penalty notice where a pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

### Data and Monitoring

Governing boards should regularly (likely on a termly basis) review attendance data and improvement efforts at board meetings. This should include:

- Thorough examination of recent and historic trends and patterns, using the Omega MAT Attendance Dashboards;
- Benchmarking against comparator schools within the local authority, region and nationwide;
- Paying particular attention to pupil groups that face entrenched barriers to attendance (specific to the school’s context but may include vulnerable groups such as pupils who have a social worker, are from a background or ethnicity where attendance has historically been low or are eligible for free school meals);
- Checking that pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities are given additional support where needed – whilst many pupils may experience difficulties, they are still expected to attend school regularly;
- Working with school leaders to set goals and outline areas for support and challenge.

Schools that are struggling with attendance improvement should also be developing an action plan that is reviewed and evaluated regularly (this may form part of a wider school improvement plan).

Omega MAT governing boards will appoint a link governor/trustee to focus on attendance. This governor/trustee will work directly with the senior member of staff leading on attendance at Trust/school level.

## Leaders will welcome challenge - Questions to ask to seek assurance:

- Do all staff receive appropriate training to support good attendance?
- How are staff supported to consistently communicate the importance of attendance with parents and pupils?
- Do staff who have a specific attendance function receive regular training to support their role in improving attendance?
- Do these staff have enough dedicated time/capacity to carry out their role?
- Do we learn about attendance improvement from other schools/trusts, especially those with similar challenges?
- Are parents and carers aware of the school attendance policy? Do parents and carers understand what is expected of them?
- How have we considered parents and pupil’s views in our Action Plans to improve attendance?

- Is our School Improvement Plan clear about what we are doing to improve school attendance?
- Are we committing the right resource to tackling absence?
- How have we adapted our plans where needed?
- Do all pupils feel welcome and supported at school?
- What plans are in place to work with the local authority to support severe absentees (Missing 50%+) and Persistent Absentees (Missing 10%+)? How are we driving a multi-agency response? What impact are these plans having?

**Remember to follow up questions to seek assurance:**  
“How do we know?”; “What can we do about it?”

- How does our attendance and absence data compare to local and national averages? How does it compare to last year?
- What about attendance for pupils with SEND? Or those eligible for Free School Meals? How does that compare to local and national figures? Is the work we are doing having the impact we intended?
- Which groups of pupils should we be particularly concerned about? What is being done to improve their attendance?
- What patterns or trends are emerging from comparing weekly, half-termly and annual absence data?
- How does absence impact attainment?
- How have we evaluated the effectiveness of our attendance policies and guidance?