Attendance Policy

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Review Date and Summary of Changes

Date of review	Summary of changes
January 2025	New Trust policy introduced alongside charter
March 2026	Page 2 Changes to list of legislation Page 4 Change to title Page 8 Amendment to wording re notice to Improve Page 10 Amendment to wording re penalty notices Page 12 School Attendance Leads updated

Approved By:

Chief Executive Officer.   **24th March 2026**
Chair of the Standards and Safeguarding Committee.   **24th March 2026**

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Statement of intent

Omega Multi-Academy Trust, and all schools that are part of the Trust believe that, to facilitate strong progress, good attendance is essential. Children cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance.

- Ensuring equality and fair treatment for all.

- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our children.

- Rewarding regular attendance.

- Ensuring parents/carers follow the framework set in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory academy age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- to age, ability, and aptitude and

- to any special educational needs, they may have either by regular attendance at the academy or otherwise'.

Across the Trust, all stakeholders will demonstrate a relentless commitment to improving attendance and all our academies will create a culture which prioritises and obsesses about attendance and consistently promotes this message in our work. We will work tirelessly to secure an educational experience which achieves:

- Rates of attendance which are at or above the national average with persistent absenteeism (PA) falling below the national average.

- Exceptional student experiences for our young people which ensure that all our young people are safe and happy and want to attend the academy.

- Standardised procedures and rigorous systems for tracking, monitoring and effectively managing student attendance and absence which are responsive and impactful.

- Clear frameworks of accountability and stakeholder engagement as improving attendance is everyone's responsibility.

Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.

- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance.

- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.

- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

- To promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996

- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Roles and responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all Trust school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the schools record attendance accurately in the register, and share the required information with the DfE and local authorities.
    - Making sure the schools work effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
    - Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across school policies and ethos.
    - Making sure all schools attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources.
    - Making sure all schools have high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs.
    - Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
    - Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge.
    - Monitoring attendance figures for the whole Trust and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs.
    - Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance.
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance, including teachers from across The Trust, as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance.
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues.
    - The Trust and schools' legal requirements for keeping registers.
    - The Trust and schools' strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the trust and providing regular opportunities for staff from different schools to come together,

learn from each other and share resources.

- Holding Headteachers of the Trust schools to account for the implementation of this policy.

- Identifying and monitoring attendance patterns across the trust's schools to identify common issues and barriers, and share effective practice between schools.

The Trust Executive Team is responsible for:

- Driving attendance improvement across the Trust.

- Working more intensively with schools who require support to improve attendance..

- Acting as a central contact point for schools with attendance queries.

- Liaising with the DfE's regional teams for advice about wider support.

The Trust's Senior Attendance Champion (J Malone) is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the Trust.

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.

- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis.

- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance.

- Evaluation and review of the Omega Multi Academy Trust Attendance Charter (see appendix 2).

The Headteacher of the school is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school.

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.

- Issuing fixed-penalty notices where necessary through Warrington Borough Council Attendance Team for Great Sankey High School, Bradshaw Primary School, Burtonwood Primary School, Chapelford Village Primary School, Park Road Primary School and Westbrook Old Hall Primary School and Liverpool City Council Attendance Team for Alsop High School. The Headteacher may authorise the school Attendance Manager and Attendance Officers to submit requests for fixed- penalty notices to the appropriate local authority for the school.

- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers.

- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care

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(EHCP) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.

- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.

The School Attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data.

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the Headteacher.

- Working with Local Authority Attendance Officers to tackle persistent absence.

- Advising the Headteacher and appropriate member of staff (authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for:

- All class teachers (primary schools) and form tutors (secondary schools) are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office on the same day .

Designated school administration and attendance are responsible for:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school MIS system (Bromcom).

- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the designated appropriate member of staff (Attendance Officer, Pastoral Lead, Head of Year) where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.

- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person.

- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them).

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and on time.

- Call the school to report their child's absence before the school starts on the day of

absence on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.

- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

- Keep to any attendance contracts that are made with the school and/or local authority.

- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the appropriate staff member at the school, such as the class teacher, Head of Year, Pastoral Lead or Attendance Officer who can be contacted via telephone and/or email address.

Pupils are expected to:

- Primary schools- Attend school every day, on time.

- Secondary schools- Attend every timetabled session, on time.

- Sixth form- Call the school to report their absence before the school day starts and on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register (See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance code).

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by each school day according to the individual school start times which are published on the individual school websites. The register for the first session will be taken at the start of the school day and will be kept open no longer than 30 minutes after the start of the session

The register for the second session will be taken at the beginning of the session and will be kept open no longer than 30 minutes after the start of the session

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence, as soon as practically possible, by calling the school absence line.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:
- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will follow the Omega Multi-Academy Trust Attendance Charter and Omega Multi-Academy Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to ensure the safety of the child and to identify whether the absence is approved or not.

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent.

- Contact the parent/carer on each day the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's Youth Offending Team Officer.

- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance.

- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.

- Consider issuing a Notice to Improve (where support is appropriate but not engaged), or requesting a Penalty Notice from the local authority (where the national criteria are met and it is the most appropriate tool).☐

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the discretion of the Headteacher, 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, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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 two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, i accordance with school procedures. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments.

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong (s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made).

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school.

- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration).

- Attending provision arranged by the local authority.

- Attending work experience.

- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

Sanctions

We will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis. Outlined in the Attendance Charter.

Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

Before requesting the local authority to issue a penalty notice the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks).

- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil.

- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution.

- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, are not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences.

- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996

- Details of the support provided so far.

- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.

- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period.

- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

Omega Multi-Academy Trust Attendance Charter

The Omega Multi-Academy Trust Attendance Charter details information on how we address the following. See Appendix 2 for a copy of the Attendance Charter.

- Promoting positive attendance

- Responding to absence

- Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school (including pupils who are absent due to complex barriers to attendance, pupils absent due to mental physical ill health or SEND and pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence).

- Attendance monitoring including analysis of attendance data and how we use the data to improve attendance.

- Monitoring arrangements.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is

central to the Trust's strategy for improving attendance.

The Trust and schools will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.

- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

- Hold regular meetings in line with the Trust Attendance Charter with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:

  o Discuss attendance and engagement at school

  o Listen, and understand barriers to attendance

  o Explain the help that is available

  o Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence

  o Review any existing actions or interventions

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant.

- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence.

- Implement sanctions, where necessary.

Key School Attendance Leads

School	Attendance Lead	Attendance Manager
Alsop High School	Stephen Murphy s.murphy@omegamat.co.uk	Kellie Upton k.upton@ahs.omegamat.co.uk
Great Sankey High School	Rachael Wardle r.wardle@gshs.omegamat.co.uk	Alison Hales a.hales@gshs.omegamat.co.uk
Bradshaw Primary School	Rhian Hill R.Hill@bcps.omegamat.co.uk	Jane Bilton j.bilton@bps.omegamat.co.uk
Burtonwood Community Primary School	Jason Heatly j.heatley@bcps.omegamat.co.uk	Sandra Fairhurst s.fairhurst@bcps.omegamat.co.uk
Chapelford Village Primary School	Nicola Stewart n.stewart@cvps.omegamat.co.uk	Kelly Rowe k.rowe@cvps.omegamat.co.uk
Park Rd Community Primary School	Kathryn Quigley k.quigley@prps.omegamat.co.uk	Karen Dale k.dale@prps.omegamat.co.uk
Westbrook Old Hall Primary School	Kathryn Quigley k.quigley@wohp.omegamat.co.uk	Debbie Swanton d.swanton@wohp.omegamat.co.uk

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience

D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are:

		- In police detention - Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or - Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes

Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session

Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered

#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays