



The  
**Maltby** Learning Trust

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy (Secondary)

Date Last Reviewed: March 2020  
Reviewed by: Executive Principal  
Approved by: CEO

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Each Academy within the Maltby Learning Trust (MLT) encourages 100% attendance and punctuality for all students. The Trust expects all students to attend regularly and arrive at lessons on time, in order to take full advantage and access the full-time educational opportunities they are entitled to. The expectation is that parent/carers will ensure that their child or young person arrives at the Academy on time every day and support the MLT's policies and procedures regarding attendance and punctuality.

In order to achieve excellent attendance, MLT Academies provide welcoming, safe and secure environments where students feel valued. In addition, each Academy works hard to create a stimulating and accessible curriculum with high quality teaching for every student, together with a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Attendance is inevitably bound up within the ethos of MLT Academies and the networks of relationships that exist within it.

## 2. WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS CRITICAL

**Learning and Achievement:** There is a clear link between high attendance and high achievement. We expect all students and parents/carers to know their attendance/absence from school.

- Of students who miss more than 50% of school, only 3% manage to achieve 5 GCSEs at the National standard including English and Maths.
- Of students who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% manage to achieve 5 GCSEs at the National standard including English and Maths.
- Of students who miss less than 5% of school, 73% achieve 5 GCSEs at the National standard including English and Maths.

### **Safeguarding:**

A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each student is everyone's responsibility and within the context of our school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for a child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend our school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

## 3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

## 4. ACADEMY RESPONSIBILITY

To encourage excellent attendance, the Academy:

- Ensure all staff understand their role in ensuring good attendance and punctuality, and in reducing absence including Persistent Absence.

- Provide regular attendance monitoring by Attendance Officers in conjunction with Pastoral, Inclusion and Safeguarding Teams, including acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Ensure students with good and rapidly improving attendance and/or punctuality are recognised and rewarded.
- Ensure students with poor attendance and/or punctuality are investigated through Academy referral procedures and challenged through Academy and Local Authority sanctions.
- Ensure parents/carers are supported to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and are punctual in attending at the start of the school day and in secondary academies, at the start of each lesson.
- Ensure students and their parents/carers are made aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality and are informed of the consequences when it is not.
- Report to parents/carers regularly on how their child is performing in the Academy, what their attendance and punctuality rates are and how these relate to their attainment and progress and Academy target.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying both individual and Tutor group achievements (updated on a weekly basis).
- Reward individual students' 100% weekly attendance.
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates issued in assemblies on a termly basis.
- Inform parents/carers through a letter or direct contact once their child's attendance falls below 97%, the student maybe be placed on monitoring with an attendance plan.

## 5. PARENTS/CARERS RESPONSIBILITY:

To encourage excellent attendance, parents/carers:

- Have a legal duty to send their children to school regularly and risk prosecution if they fail in this duty. Only the Academy, within the context of the law, can approve absence.
- Cannot approve absence.
- Should attempt to arrange appointments for their child or young person outside normal Academy hours whenever possible. Wherever possible the student will be expected to attend school before and/or after the appointment.

## 6. STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY:

To encourage excellent attendance, students:

- Must ensure that they arrive promptly, attend all morning and afternoon sessions and timetabled lessons punctually.
- Discuss promptly with the Attendance Team any problems that may affect their attendance.
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

NB. Permission to leave the site will normally only be given for fixed term exclusion, or authorised medical/dental appointments.

## 7. ATTENDANCE TEAM RESPONSIBILITY:

To encourage excellent attendance, the attendance team:

- Carefully monitor the attendance and punctuality of all students.
- Identify any attendance problems and students who are at risk of persistent absence.

- Liaise closely with pastoral, inclusion and/or safeguarding staff as well as the Principal to support attendance and punctuality initiatives.
- Ensure class teachers and/or form tutors liaise proactively with the Team to help identify and address attendance issues.
- Take relevant action where attendance is a cause for concern e.g. telephone parents/carers to discuss the problem, make home visits, organise meetings with parents/carers to decide on the appropriate intervention.
- Pursue enforcement action where no significant improvement has been made to attendance, as required by the 'Attendance Matters Pathway for Schools' (appendix 1). This is the process agreed by the Local Authority and all schools to address irregular or non-school attendance.
- On discovering truancy, inform the student's parents/carers and Tutor the same day and ensure appropriate sanctions are applied.

## 8. TEACHING STAFF

To encourage excellent attendance, teaching staff:

- Monitor class attendance and report any cause for concern to the Attendance Officer, SLT staff member or the Principal.
- Have frequent discussion with students about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Support students who have been absent in making up missed work.

NB. Subject teachers in secondary Academies will follow up suspicious absences by informing the Tutor and Pastoral Teams of any discrepancies immediately. They query persistent or frequent absences with the Tutor to ensure that it is not 'selective truancy'.

## 9. REGISTERS

Registers are completed using the Academy's SIMS information system (a paper copy is always available should the SIMS system not be operable).

Registers are legal documents and must be taken clearly and accurately, using the correct symbols/codes. (see Appendix 1). All schools are required by law to keep an attendance register and no gaps in registration can be left. The attendance register must be taken at the start of the first session of each school day (morning) and once during the second session (afternoon) of the school day to mark whether every student is:

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

Any amendments made to the register will include both the original and amended entry, reason and date of amendment and staff member making the amendment.

Registers must be taken within the first 10 minutes of each registration session (and at the start of each lesson in Secondary Academies). Failure to do so will result in a formal reminder and potentially a disciplinary. The Attendance Team will check that teaching staff are completing registers promptly and accurately.

Secondary Academies will complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning, the start of registration/ period 1 and at the beginning of period 4. The register will close at 9.30am and 1.05pm.

If a student arrives after the register has closed, s/he should report to reception to be entered as

late. Students arriving after the registration has closed without an acceptable reason, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.

## 10. ILLNESS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

If a student becomes genuinely unwell during the day, they will be sent to Reception by their Teacher/Pastoral Manager. Students should not contact parents/carers directly.

Staff will then assess the illness and make decisions about whether parents/carers need to be informed and whether a student will be sent home, wait and/or return to class.

No student should leave the Academy premises for such arising medical reasons without staff permission (based on whether contact has been made with a parent/carer at home).

In the event of a student being genuinely unwell and unable to continue with the Academy day, contact will be made with the parent/carer. In the interest of safeguarding students, arrangements will be made for the student to be collected by parent/carer or other nominated family member.

Appropriate First Aid will be administered where deemed necessary by a trained First Aider.

## 11. ABSENCE PROCEDURE

On the first day of a student's absence, parents/carers should contact the Academy to report the absence. This should be done by a telephone call to reception and at the earliest opportunity (by 8.30am), giving a reason for the absence and a date when the child or young person is expected to return. Parents/carers should contact the Academy on each subsequent day of absence.

If the absence involves physical injury, with implications upon the student's return to the Academy, a risk assessment will be carried out by the SENDCO for each specific case.

## 12. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from our Secondary Academies has to be classified by the Attendance Officer (not by parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Unauthorised absences are those which Maltby Learning Trust does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carer's keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Absence for illness when attendance is below 97% unless medical evidence is provided;
- Truancy before or during the school day;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) - A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance falls to 90% or below for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child or young person's educational prospects and the fullest support and co-operation is needed from parent/carers to tackle this.

Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority; parents/carers will be informed of this immediately and remedial action will be taken.

### 13. PUNCTUALITY PROCEDURE

Students arriving after registration time will receive a late mark (L) in the register. If a student is going to be late, parents/carers have a responsibility to inform the Academy of their child's lateness by telephone.

Registers close at 9.30am. Children arriving after this time must report to the attendance office.

A text message will be sent to parents/carers before 10am indicating lateness or absence if no contact has been made by parent/carers to explain this.

Avoidable and persistent lateness in Secondary Academies will result in a detention.

Students will be challenged for poor punctuality as follows:

- Late to Tutor period will result in a detention (30 minutes on the same day)
- Late marks to lessons will result in a signature on the student's conduct card or similar note in the planner. (Five signatures equal a detention, 30 minutes the next day)

Ultimately, the parent/carer of a child or young person who frequently arrives late at school can be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court under the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure their child attends regularly.

### 14. SUPPORTING AND ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE

Whilst any child or young person may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the Academy, the parents/carers and the child or young person. If a child or young person is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. Condoning absence, particularly at an early age, can lead to habitual patterns of non-attendance and can give students the impression that attendance does not matter.

Parents/carers can support students by:

- Ensuring regular routines and early bed times.
- Helping with homework.
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before.
- Providing a healthy breakfast.
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly to the school.
- Retaining open and honest communication with the child or young person's school.
- Being positive about school (even if a parent/carers own experience was less than positive).

## 15. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The MLT or Academy Principals are no longer able to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time. The Principal may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any student absent during term time, unless granted by the Principal because of exceptional circumstances, will be recorded as 'unauthorised' absence.

All requests for leave of absence should be in writing to the Principal and will be considered on an individual basis taking into account individual circumstances. The request for leave of absence form can be obtained from reception/student reception and must be returned to the Academy Attendance Team at least one month in advance of the absence.

A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority where 'a student has been taken on holiday during term time, the absence has not been authorised by the school, and the child's attendance is below the Local Authority average for the previous school year or 3 terms.'

The penalty is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receiving a notice and £120 if paid after this but within 28 days.

## 16. ANALYSING AND REPORTING ATTENDANCE DATA

The Attendance Team review attendance on a daily basis and monitor this continually, producing reports every half term. These reports compare attendance data with the national average and are shared with Academy Governors and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases.

All teachers should look out for any patterns in absence and investigate or report their concerns to the Attendance Team and/or Pastoral teams as appropriate. If a student's attendance level drops below 97% (academy specific) the cause will be investigated by the Academy Attendance Team who will liaise with parents/carers.

As well as liaising with parents/carers, the Attendance Team reports concerns about attendance to the Principal; and advises when fixed penalty notices should be issued. The Principal is responsible for ensuring the Attendance policy is implemented consistently across the school and reporting to the Local Governance Committee (LGC). The LGC are responsible for monitoring attendance data for the Academy on at least a termly basis.

## 17. MONITORING ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY AT OFF SITE PROVISION

Where students attend external provision, weekly registration certificates are received from the external providers. These are monitored and any concerns reported to the Attendance Team/SLT.

## 18. FIXED TERM PENALTY NOTICE AND/OR PROSECUTION

Reducing unauthorised absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a student's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

Truancing can also leave a student vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child or young person fails to attend school regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (absences without a valid reason). Parents/carers are legally responsible for making sure their child attends regularly and

punctually. This applies even if children are missing school without the knowledge of their parent/carer.

In line with the Local Authority 'Attendance Matters Pathway for Schools' (appendix 1), parents/carers can be prosecuted, fined up to £2,500 and/or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child or young person attends school regularly and punctually. Alternatively, the Local Authority may supervise a family for at least a year or until attendance improves to a satisfactory level, under the terms of an Education Supervision Order.

## 19. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures and refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census which explains the Persistent Absence threshold. These are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

The Education Act 1996

The Education Act 2002

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

## APPENDIX ONE: ATTENDANCE CODES

The following codes are used for recording absence and attendance in schools; these codes are set out in the Department for Education's guidance on school attendance.

### Attendance codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

### Absence codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

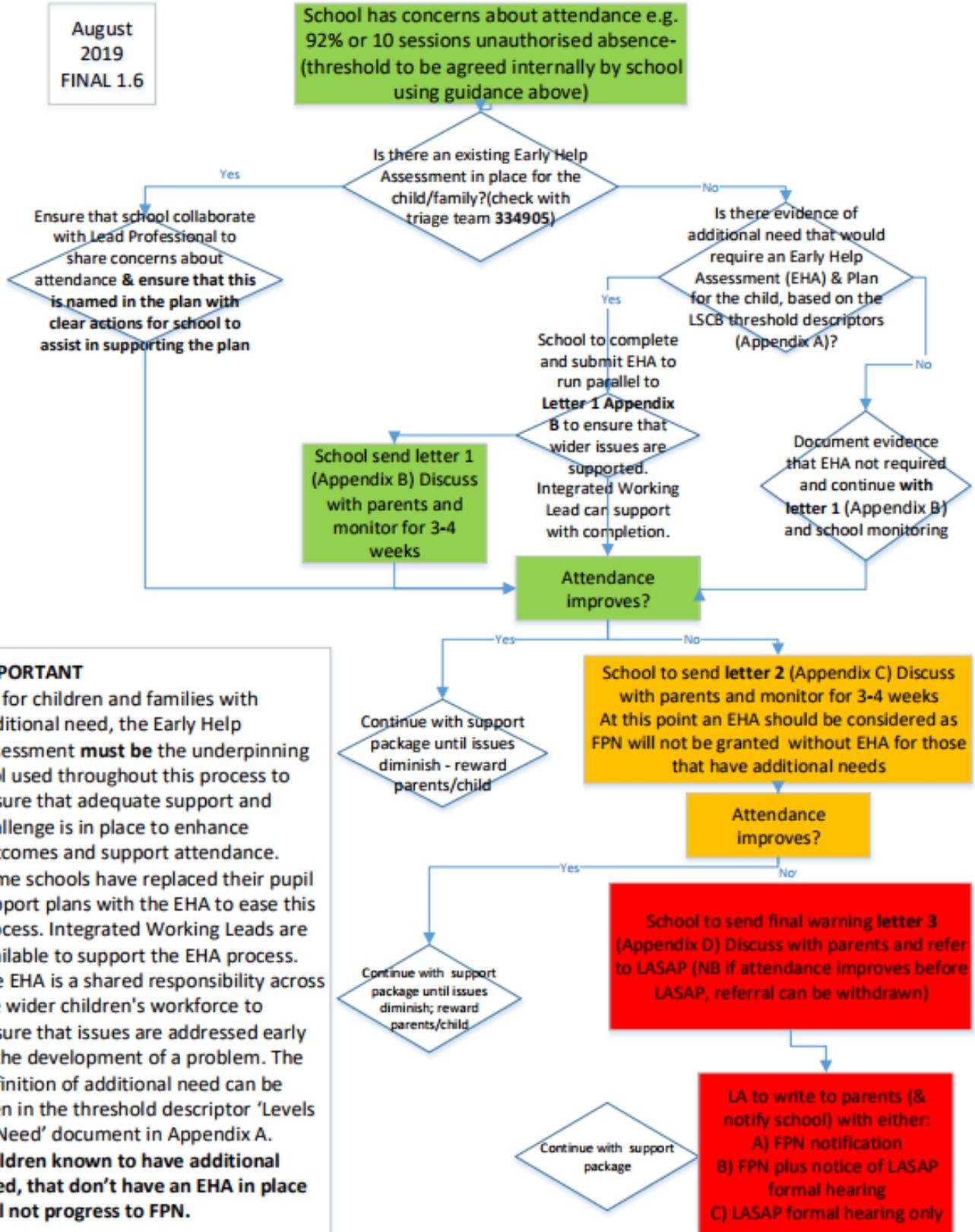
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their GCSEs
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when reason emerges)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

### Administrative codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel or student is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Rotherham Early Help 'Attendance Matters' Local Authority Pathway for Schools Part 1 of 2

August 2019  
FINAL 1.6



**IMPORTANT**  
NB for children and families with additional need, the Early Help Assessment **must be** the underpinning tool used throughout this process to ensure that adequate support and challenge is in place to enhance outcomes and support attendance. Some schools have replaced their pupil support plans with the EHA to ease this process. Integrated Working Leads are available to support the EHA process. The EHA is a shared responsibility across the wider children's workforce to ensure that issues are addressed early in the development of a problem. The definition of additional need can be seen in the threshold descriptor 'Levels of Need' document in Appendix A. **Children known to have additional need, that don't have an EHA in place will not progress to FPN.**

## PART 2

### Early Help & Family Engagement Service

#### School Attendance Matters Pathway Guidance for Schools (Part 2 of 2 to be used in conjunction with Part 1 pathway visual)



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This guidance document is **part 2 of 2** and accompanies **Part 1 Attendance Matters Local Authority Pathway for Schools**. This guidance is intended to assist schools in implementing the pathway effectively in order to support enhanced school attendance and to trigger enforcement when all strategies have been tried and exhausted.

1. The Local Authority has offered guidance in relation to thresholds for poor attendance of 92% or ten sessions of unauthorised absence. The Local Authority has based this on concerns about attendance approaching persistent absence which is 90%. It is important, however, that schools are aware that they are free to apply their own threshold (within reason) and 92% is not an imposed level. The school must however ensure that the School Attendance Policy makes the school target clear to parents/carers when a child secures a school place.
2. If a child's attendance falls below the threshold set by school; the school should inform parents and take action.
3. The initial step in this process is to have a conversation with child/parents/carers.
4. If the action taken by the school does not have the desired effect; the school should check whether there is a current existing Early Help Assessment in place for the child and family. School can do this in one of the following ways:
  - Ask the School's named Early Help Link Worker<sup>i</sup> to check the system
  - Ask one of the two Attendance Lead's to check the system  
[lisa.marriott@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.marriott@rotherham.gov.uk) [Kathryn.wiltshire@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:Kathryn.wiltshire@rotherham.gov.uk)
  - Calling the Early Help Triage Team on 01709 334905
5. If there is an existing Early Help Assessment in place; the school should make contact with the Lead Professional to share concerns about attendance and ensure that this is named in the plan with clear actions for school to assist in supporting the plan.
6. Liaising with the Lead Professional and contributing to the existing plan is important as there may be other concerns held (not necessarily related to the child in your school) and it is vital that as professionals we 'join the dots' to ensure that communication is robust. Many Serious Case Reviews cite lack of professional collaboration as a contributory factor to serious concerns about children.
7. If there is not an Early Help Assessment in place; it is important, given the concerns about attendance, that school complete the assessment for children where there is evidence of additional need<sup>ii</sup>. This is vital in order to understand fully the issues that may be affecting attendance and where required, bring in appropriate agencies to support the child and family.
8. The Early Help Integrated Working Lead is available to support schools in completing the Early Help Assessment. See below for the IWL for your locality area:
  - Amanda Millington- NORTH [amanda.millington@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.millington@rotherham.gov.uk)
  - Sam Blyth and Beverly Garbett- SOUTH [samantha.blyth@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:samantha.blyth@rotherham.gov.uk)  
[beverly.garbett@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:beverly.garbett@rotherham.gov.uk)

- Louise Depledge - CENTRAL [louise.depledge@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:louise.depledge@rotherham.gov.uk)
- Rachel Fletcher- Borough Wide [rachel.fletcher@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.fletcher@rotherham.gov.uk)

9. If the family are resistant to having an Early Help Assessment, it is important to reassure them that the process is in place to ensure that the right support is offered to them. Families can often be fearful of interventions such as the Early Help Assessment and reassurance is key to this in order to help the family understand that the process is not an enforcement action but a way of understanding needs and getting the right support.
10. If, after reassurance and persistence, the family are still unwilling to engage; then school should continue with the 'Attendance Matters Pathway' and enforcement action can then be considered. NB all stages of the pathway must be undertaken (stages 1-3). It is important in the instance of non-engagement that the school records all evidence<sup>iii</sup> related to attempts to support the family, as this will be required later should enforcement action be pursued. Lack of evidence (recorded in a timely fashion, as attempts to engage are made) will result in a rejection of the FPN or other enforcement. The Early Help Attendance Leads are available to discuss cases and give advice should this be required.
11. The Attendance Matters Pathway contains a series of three letters, sent at different junctures by schools with set timeframes in between. It is important to send the letters in the sequence described in the pathway. This is essential to ensure consistent approaches across Rotherham and equitable processes are implemented for families.
12. Letter 1 is the first in the series. This has been designed to support school in sharing the concerns with parents and emphasise the need for improved attendance as well as offering support. If attendance shows an improvement after letter 1, no further letters should be sent.
13. Letter 2 is the second in the series and should be used when support has been offered and/or taken-up, but attendance has nevertheless not shown improvement. NB Before sending letter 2, a 3-4 week gap should be given to allow for an improvement to take place. Documented evidence of when letters were sent, should be recorded, as this will be required if the case later progresses to enforcement.
14. Letter 3 should be sent if there is still no improvement in attendance and at this stage, the letter makes clear to parents/carers that they are highly likely to be subject to enforcement action. NB if attendance improves between letter 3 and the LASAP school may wish to either a) withdraw the referral or b) this will be taken into account at LASAP.
15. At the letter 3 stage school should also complete and submit a referral to the Local Authority School Attendance Panel<sup>iv</sup>. (LASAP) The LASAP is Rotherham's multi-disciplinary decision making forum that oversees enforcement action under the provision of the Education Act (1996) with regards to parental responsibility for regular school attendance. The Chair of this group is the Early Help Head of Service and a range of agencies attend regularly. When schools have a case being heard at LASAP they will be invited, as will parents and the child where appropriate.
16. Following referral to LASAP there will be one of three outcomes as follows:
  - FPN issued
  - FPN and decision to hear formal at a future LASAP
  - Decision to hear formally at next LASAP
  - Referral rejected and school notified of reasons

17. We are familiar with families that improve attendance whilst progressing through the pathway, however at a later date, attendance again deteriorates. This can be extremely difficult for schools to manage and repeating past processes can be frustrating and is not in the best interests of the child. Schools should therefore be aware that if there has been less than a twelve week period between the initial improvement and subsequent deterioration, and this can be evidenced, schools do not need to start from the beginning of the pathway; but can start from the place where they last were (i.e. re-join the pathway where they left off.)

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*See Early Help Link Worker for Schools Document (2019) ii*

*See Rotherham Safeguarding Board Levels of Need document iii*

*E.G. evidence of letters; home visits; minutes of meetings; pastoral support documentation; school level support offered etc. iv See 2019 LASAP Referral process and note **all other versions should be deleted.***