Learning Community Trust

ATTENDANCE POLICY 2026

Policy approved by	Standards Committee
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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Legal/Regulatory Requirements

This policy and its related procedures exist to ensure that LCT meets compliance with the following:

- Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (July 2026) and school attendance parental responsibility measures.
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Policy statement

The Learning Community Trust ('the LCT' or 'the Trust') is committed to providing an inclusive, compelling and transformative educational experience within a safe and nurturing environment to all pupils. We believe, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance are crucial to them fulfilling their potential. However, attendance within our academies is far more than just an academic consideration. We recognise the nature of our pupils and as a result, believe our attendance systems are our first line in safeguarding our young people and therefore a priority.

With that principle in mind, our academies' approach is to work in close partnership with our families to support a culture of attendance and safety; however, parents are responsible by law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should familiarise themselves with this attendance policy and should work closely with our academy staff to overcome any problems which may affect a child's attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance, we will investigate, identify, and strive, in strong partnership with parents and pupils, to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach, involving families fully, and outside agencies where appropriate, to ensure pupils are in school. We appreciate every family's circumstances are different, and we will always aim to work in partnership with to find a solution for issues that arise.

The Trust recognises that absence is often a symptom of wider safeguarding, welfare, wellbeing or unmet need. Attendance information forms an important part of the Trust's safeguarding systems and will be considered alongside all other relevant information when assessing risk, determining appropriate interventions and planning support for pupils and families. We recognise that improving attendance is most effective when schools, families, pupils and partner agencies work together to understand and address barriers to attendance.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- 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 and contact families to discuss this.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Responsibilities

The **Standards Committee** is responsible for:

- approving the policy and subsequent amendments to it.
- monitoring performance and providing onward assurance to Board that this is satisfactory.

The **Chief Executive Officer/Executive Team** are responsible for:

- reviewing this policy and recommending appropriate amendments.
- designing and providing training for staff on the policy and its related procedures.
- issuing guidance in relation to the use and implementation of procedures.
- investigating and responding to breaches of the policy and its related procedures.
- providing assurance to Standards Committee that the policy and procedures in place remain fit for purpose.
- approving any local adaptions to this policy and it's procedures at the Academy level.
- Setting high expectations of all academy leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the academy records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure school staff work effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure the academy's 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 the academy has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping academy leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with academy leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the academy's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the academy is struggling with attendance, working with academy leaders to develop an action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance 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 academies' legal requirements for keeping registers

    - The academies' 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 interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the Trust
- Holding the academy leaders to account for the implementation of this policy

The **Local Governing Board (LGB)** are responsible for:

- monitoring local implementation of this policy at the Academy level.
- escalating any concerns or non-compliance issues to the Trust.
- Setting high expectations of all academy leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Recognising and promoting the importance of attendance across academy policies and ethos
- Holding academy leaders to account regarding whether 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 the academy has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the academy's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, monitor progress in the delivery of the action plan to improve attendance
- Holding academy leaders to account for the implementation of this policy
- The link governor for attendance and safeguarding will meet with appropriate academy and trust staff throughout the academic year, analyse reports and provide updates within LGB meetings.

The **Headteacher/Principal** is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at their academy
- Monitoring academy-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
- Authorising the request of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or delegating attendance staff and the EWO to be able to do so
- 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 plan (EHCP) 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 **designated senior leader responsible for attendance ('Attendance Champion')** is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the academy
- 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
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Meeting with the appropriate link governor for covering attendance
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The contact details for the designated senior leader responsible for attendance can also be found on the academy's website.

The **academy attendance officer** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that daily registers are completed accurately and on time by staff
- Administration of first day contact procedures and ensuring that absent pupils are discussed at the daily safeguarding briefing
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see Section on Supporting Pupils who are absent or returning to school) and identifying areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher/Principal
- Escalating to, and working with, LCT Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent and severe absence, which may include the use of statutory procedures and fixed penalty notices
- Issuing School Attendance Letters (SALs) to parents where it is felt that attendance may need support

The contact details for the attendance officer can also be found on each academy's website.

The **Class teachers/form tutors** are responsible for recording attendance accurately on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the attendance officer in a timely manner, to enable safeguarding procedures to be implemented in the case of unexplained absence. (Staff refer to Appendix 2)

The **Academy Administration staff**, working alongside the attendance officer, will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the academy system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to other relevant staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- The academy's Family Liaison Officer or another member of staff may call at the family home to offer support and to keep in touch with the pupil and family during periods of absence in line with this policy (Staff refer to Appendix 2)

Where this policy refers to a **parent**, it refers to the adult the academy 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/timetabled session on time
- Call the academy to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the academy 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 or action plans that they make with the academy and/or local authority (Appendix 4)
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the relevant academy staff as identified in the attendance pages of each academy's website
- Adhere to LCT published policies regarding communication and visits from school staff when their child is absent from school

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend the academy every day on time, prepared for learning, and attend each lesson on time throughout the day
- Work in partnership with academy staff and parents to overcome any barriers to attendance where appropriate

The **Education Welfare Officers (EWO)** has a key role in ensuring the safety of our students through driving attendance improvements. The welfare aspect of the role is significant, and the relationships born from high level pastoral support of students and their families are of the utmost importance to the academy and the LCT.

The EWO role examines so many areas that cross into other aspects of academy systems but ultimately the role is to challenge attendance and provide support to all stakeholders that leads to the desired improvement. In addition, the quality assurance of academy systems allows our EWOs to appropriately challenge academy leaders in their approach to student attendance and safeguarding.

Each LCT academy has the support of an LCT EWO. The role of our EWOs considers all of the above statements and also includes the following:

- A solid understanding of the student/family for all our most vulnerable students, particularly those in severe and persistent absence
- Full engagement with students highlighted as being most vulnerable for attendance, and their families
- Oversee academy actions and become involved in processes after a SAL2 letter has been issued unless there are specific reasons why EWO intervention is not considered to be the most appropriate path
- Actively engage and work alongside external agencies to support all stakeholders
- To be present at Attendance Support Meetings (ASM) to support families and academy staff to put in place the most appropriate plan that will lead to attendance improvements and support the pupil.

Arrangements

The arrangements for this policy will be recorded within procedures which alongside this policy will be reviewed to ensure that they are kept up to date.

The Chief Executive Officer can approve amendments to the procedures such as:

- adaptations required to personalise the procedures to each Academy.
- correcting spelling and grammar mistakes.
- making consequential updates i.e. changes to names/job titles.
- making any other non-substantive changes that would not contradict this policy.

Any substantive changes to the procedures *(not required to personalise to the Academy)* or anything that requires a change to the policy itself will need to be approved by the Standards Committee first.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if warranted by internal or external events or changes and any amendments proposed submitted to Standards Committee for approval.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Named Responsible Individuals

For New Road Academy the:

- Headteacher/Principal is Andrea Bell (andrea.bell@lct.education)
- Designated senior leader responsible for attenda)nce ('Attendance Champion') is Heather Murphy (heather.murphy@lct.education)
- The academy attendance officer/s are Bell Uafua and Richenda Robinson (attendance.newroad@lcteducation)
- The Education Welfare Officer/s are Dawn Mitchell (Dawn.mitchell@lct.education), Bobby Kaur (bobby.kaur@lct.education) and Dan Santopietro (dan.santopietro@lct.education)
- The Family Liason Officer/s are Jill Cavalier (jill.cavalier@lct.education) and Kelly Peart (kelly.peart@lct.education)

See Policy above for full details of their delegated responsibilities.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.
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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- 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.

- EYFS Attendance (Nursery and Reception)
- For children below compulsory school age (CSA), academies will maintain accurate registers and follow first-day absence procedures in line with this policy.
- Where Reception children have a part-time start, sessions not timetabled will be recorded with **Code X (Not required to attend)**. Once the child is expected in

school, any non-attendance must be recorded using the appropriate authorised/unauthorised absence codes.

- Part-time arrangements must not continue beyond the point at which the child reaches CSA.
- Penalty notices do not apply to children below CSA but concerns about absence will still be discussed with families, with support put in place where necessary.
- All EYFS providers must follow up any absence in-line with this policy's RAG rating, including contacting emergency contacts, considering patterns/vulnerability, and where appropriate making referrals to social care or requesting police welfare checks.

Each academy must have a clear EYFS attendance statement shared with parents, setting out expectations, procedures, and escalation routes.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the academy absence line 01952 school phone number (see also Section 7). The parent must continue to call in each day to update the academy on any continuing absence.
(Staff refer to Appendix 2)

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. We may contact you by telephone or through a visit to gain more details about your child's absence and how we can support if appropriate. A member of academy staff or an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) may visit the family home to offer support and to keep in touch with the parents and their child.
Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the academy may ask for medical evidence, such as a copy of a prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily and will not ask parents to pay for evidence.
If the academy is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. We will endeavour to inform parents of this decision and are happy to discuss the reasons for this.

Planned absence

Attending an unavoidable medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent notifies the academy in advance of the appointment. An appointment card or letter may be requested. If a parent knows their child will be attending an appointment, they should give details to a member of the attendance staff so arrangements can be made to mark the register accordingly.

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. Section 5 outlines the term-time absences the academy can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

The academy gates open at:	8.30am and is closed at 8.40am. Students will then enter the school via the late door situated at the tennis centre end of the school, closing at 9am. Students attending after 9am will enter via main reception.
The academy day starts at (Morning register opens):	8.40am (register taken at 8.45am)
Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before register closes will receive an L code; this may result in school sanctions being put in place	
Register closes at:	The morning register will close no later than 30 minutes after the start of the morning session. At New Road Academy that is 9.15am
Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be recorded using code U (unauthorised absence) unless another code is more appropriate. Please note that code U assigns an absence mark for the whole morning session. This is in line with DfE guidance.	

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U)

All academies have a clear start of day welcome procedure.

Each academy is expected to analyse data for both late to the academy and late to registration to identify subgroups and drive appropriate interventions

Use of the academy's behaviour policy will be applied for both late to the academy and late to registration.

Academies should strive to review individual circumstances through meetings with pupils and parents to identify issues and introduce interventions/action plans.

Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the academy cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, academy staff may call at the home to check on your welfare in line with Appendix 2. If this is unsuccessful, we may make referrals to other agencies, including the academy's Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

If absence continues, the academy will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Each Learning Community Trust academy has an EWO attached who provides additional advice, support and guidance to both schools and families. If we are unable to

ascertain from a parent why their child is absent, we will take all necessary steps to do so. This may include contacting the Police, Family Connect, talking to friends and neighbours and other measures. **Safeguarding children is our priority, and we will do everything possible to ensure they are safe.** If we have not heard from them, parents should expect to hear from us.

- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer, social worker or other professionals involved with the family
- 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
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, our academies will request a Notice to Improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see Section on Sanctions below), as appropriate.

In line with statutory EYFS requirements, these safeguarding expectations apply equally to Nursery and Reception pupils. Even where children are not yet of compulsory school age, unexplained, prolonged or repeated absence must be treated as a safeguarding concern, with the same escalation pathways followed.

The Trust recognises that children missing education are at significant risk of harm. Unexplained absence, prolonged absence, irregular attendance patterns, and pupils who cease to attend without explanation will be managed in accordance with statutory Children Missing Education procedures and the Trust Safeguarding Policy.
The academy will work with local authorities and partner agencies to ensure pupils do not become lost from education.

Reporting attendance to parents/carers

LCT academies will regularly inform parents/carers of their child's attendance and absence levels; this can be seen daily through the MIS software, and through the use of regular progress reports. Parents/carers are always advised to contact the specific academy to gain further information if they have any concerns.

Academy attendance staff will be happy to provide a copy of a child's attendance record should you require it. If your child's attendance is at a level where we feel we need to draw this to their attention, this will be done in one of the following ways:

- A letter called a SAL (School Attendance Letter) may be sent to parents/carers, notifying them of their child's attendance and inviting them you to contact us if they need support. A copy of their attendance will be enclosed.
- A member of staff or the EWO may telephone parents to discuss their child's attendance and to offer support if there are issues affecting attendance or barriers making it difficult for a child to attend. Someone may also talk to your child in school to identify barriers and offer support.
- If the attendance continues to cause concern, parents may receive a follow-up letter, a home visit or an invitation to come to an 'Attendance Support Meeting' where they can discuss any issues with relevant staff (may include the Attendance Officer, Senior Attendance lead, EWO or pastoral support staff) and work together on a plan to ensure that their child is able to maximise the opportunities available to them at the academy by attending daily. Parents may also be offered referrals to other agencies or asked if they would like to be supported through the Early Help process. Early Help is about identifying problems within families early, and providing proactive support, helping to ensure that families receive the right support at the right time.

- If a child's attendance remains unsatisfactory, further referrals may be made, depending on the situation. A referral may be made to Telford & Wrekin's Council's Attendance Support Team, to Family Connect or to agencies who are best placed to support a child in overcoming any barriers to attendance. We will discuss this with each family dependent on their own unique circumstances.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances', considering the specific facts, circumstances, and the relevant context behind the request.

A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent. There is no specific definition of 'exceptional circumstances'; however, if the leave is for something that could otherwise be organised during school holidays, it is very unlikely to be granted. **A family holiday, or the cost of taking a family holiday being too expensive during school holiday periods, is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance**.

Any leave of absence during term time can be disruptive both to the child's learning and to the academy regardless of the reason for the leave. Academies will only consider authorising leave in term time where both:

- The application is made on the academy's 'Request for leave in term time' form, to the Principal in advance **(at least 2 weeks prior to departure)** of the leave by a parent the child normally lives with. **The legislation does not allow for retrospective permission to be granted**. The form can be requested from the academy or is available on the academy's website under 'Leave of Absence Request'. We recommend that trips are not booked until leave has been approved. Our Leave of Absence Request form needs to be returned to the school office or emailed or our attendance team for the approval of our Principal.
- There are exceptional circumstances, as agreed by the Principal for the leave, and in such circumstances the academy determines the length of any agreed leave in term time. If a child does not return to the academy on or by the agreed date, they will be at risk of losing their place at the academy. The Headteacher/Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see Sections on Unplanned Absence and Planned Absence for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. We set our dates in accordance with guidance from Telford & Wrekin Council.
- Mobile children travelling for occupational purposed – This includes children from communities such as Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people), circus families, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a mobile family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and this has been agreed with the academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision elsewhere.
- The term 'mobile child' is used to describe any child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business that

requires them to travel from place to place. This may be a child who has no permanent address or has a fixed address but must spend substantial time away due to their parents' work. Please discuss your circumstances with our school staff so that we can help you plan for periods of absence.

Sanctions

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

Sanctions and legal measures only apply once a child has reached compulsory school age (CSA). However, for children in Nursery and Reception who are below CSA, attendance concerns will still be addressed through early support, parental engagement, and escalation to safeguarding partners where necessary.

Penalty notices

The LCT adheres to the local code of conduct, national legislative and statutory guidance used by the local authorities within which our academies are located. In Telford & Wrekin Council, the local authority (LA) can issue penalty notices to fine parents for unauthorised absence of their child from the academy, where the child is of compulsory school age. Before issuing a penalty notice, the academy and the LA 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

If in an individual case the local authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, when parent(s) are deliberately or purposefully avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for events such as birthdays and taking their child out of school, or when there are only four pupil days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD Day or bank holiday.

Each parent who is responsible for the pupil's attendance 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.
Non payment of a Penalty Notice after 28 days will result in the pursuance of the prosecution process by the local authority under the provision of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, unless it is withdrawn for one of the reasons detailed in the strict criteria to 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, within a three-year period of the first PN being issued, the parent must pay a flat rate of £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 legal action will be taken instead.

Exclusion Penalty Notice

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during academy hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the academy has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). This is payable at the rate of £60 per parent if paid in the first 21 days, increasing to £120 per parent up to 28 days.

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 academy is located. 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 does not 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

The Attendance Support Team at Telford & Wrekin Council can be contacted on 01952 385220.

Strategies for promoting attendance

The profile of attendance and its importance must be evident in the academy at all times. The culture of attendance has to be of the highest profile to ensure our children understand the intrinsic link between good attendance, safety and future life choices.

As a result, the academy has the following expectations:

Expectations of in-academy actions to improve attendance culture	
LCT non negotiable	**Desirable**
• All pupils know their current attendance and have a strategy to improve it • Monitors have a regular attendance presence • Culture of poor punctuality being challenged through a range of strategies • Posters in key areas to promote good attendance	• Sending letters to parents whose child has 100% attendance • Recognising and rewarding most improved attendance where there is a history of poor attendance • Sending children to senior members of staff for commendation for efforts made towards improvement as well as for full attendance

• Half-termly parental contact as a part of newsletter to promote attendance • Letters of congratulations, certificates for good attendance which may be taken home • Recognition in assembly • The award of badges, merit, group/house points • The giving of prizes, class rewards such as mascots or a cup for the highest class or tutor group attendance. • Recording attendance on reports sent home, with positive comments for effort • Facilitating Attendance Support Meetings and Attendance Panels in academies to invite parents to attend for a discussion specifically about school attendance. This panel may include the community school nurse, a school governor or other relevant professional	

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

LCT academies pride themselves on their inclusivity and as a result, the approach to pupils and families who face complex barriers to attendance. Ultimately, LCT academies will emphasise the importance of academies being a safe place, where pupils really want to be, with the right ethos, engaging curriculums and lessons that inspire each individual.

Key principles expected from all LCT academies are:

- Gain a full and clear understanding of the pupil/family circumstances
- Offer early help either through the academy offer or through the local authority pathways
- Consider and drive engagement of external agency support
- Monitor progress through effective action planning and provide opportunities to review impact and reassess

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

LCT academies recognise the barriers and the link between mental or physical illness and/or SEND. The key principles all LCT academies will apply are:

- Discuss the underlying reasons for absence with pupil and parents
- Ascertain the support required for both home and the academy to improve attendance
- Devise an action plan (with medical professionals if required) for all parties to drive accountability to ultimately improve attendance or ensure that the pupil has access to an appropriate education

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the academy becomes aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs, the academy will inform the local authority.

For pupils with 15 days recorded absence due to illness, our academies have a statutory duty to record this absence with the local authority. At this stage, academy staff and/or EWO teams will need to discuss the absence in more detail and may ask for medical information so that we can best support your child.

Pupils accessing Alternative Provision

Where a pupil accesses Alternative Provision, the academy retains overall responsibility for the pupil's education, attendance, welfare and safeguarding.

- Ensure attendance information is received and reviewed promptly.
- Monitor patterns of absence and identify concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Work collaboratively with providers, families and external agencies to improve attendance and engagement.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding arrangement remain in place at all times
- Follow Trust procedures where attendance concerns arise
- Attendance information received from Alternative Providers will form part of the academy's attendance monitoring and safeguarding processes.

Pupils returning to the academy after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

The LCT recognises that reintegrating pupils back into education following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence is challenging. Each academy will work to the following principles:

- Gain a full understanding of the historical issues that have led to absence
- Assess and understand the current barriers to re-engaging in education
- Conduct a high-quality induction based on the knowledge gained from initial meetings; including baseline testing
- Clear and concise action plan to re-engage pupils into education with supportive interventions in place as appropriate
- Monitor and review the action plan at leadership level

Attendance monitoring

LCT academies hold attendance as one of the key factors in successful outcomes, but equally as important is the safeguarding aspect. We care deeply for our pupils, and we need to ensure they are safe and well at all times. As a result, we pride ourselves on going the extra mile to support pupils and families through robust first day response arrangements and ongoing attendance monitoring. We will make key decisions on a daily basis regarding the level of response required for absent pupils, including welfare calls, face-to-face contact, home visits, agency liaison and safeguarding interventions based on vulnerability, attendance history, identified risk and professional judgement.

LCT academies will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the academy and at an individual pupil level as appropriate
- Identify whether there are groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE and the local authority on request. The academy has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying academy-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The academy will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement

and share this with the governing body. This is also discussed by the Trust's Standards Committee and regularly reported to the LCT Board.

Analysing attendance

The academy will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance,
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The academy will

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see Section on Elective Home Education below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing body and academy leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other academies in the LCT, other schools/academies in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

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 each academy's strategy for improving attendance.

Particular consideration will be given to pupils who may be disproportionately affected by absence, including:

- pupils with SEND or an EHCP
- children looked after and previously looked after children
- children in need
- children subject to child protection plans
- young carers
- pupils accessing alternative provision
- pupils experiencing mental health difficulties
- pupils identified as persistently or severely absent

The Trust will seek to understand and address the barriers impacting attendance through a support-first approach which promotes engagement, inclusion and safeguarding.

The academy 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 with the parents of pupils who the academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at the academy
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - 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 academy will sensitively consider the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see Section on Sanctions, above)

Elective Home Education (EHE)

The Learning Community Trust is committed to supporting our pupils and families through all aspects of their lives. The Trust considers EHE to be the very last resort in the educational journey and as a result will request a Multi-Agency Meeting (MAM) with families and engage with the local authority to help to ensure that the correct decision is made in the best interests of the child or young person. We also have an Engagement & Reintegration Officer in post, who may contact you to discuss how we can help your child to remain in school, if we believe that we can provide you with additional support.

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 academy		
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 Staggered starts are now covered by this code
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

Appendix 2 – Attendance Tracking, First Day Contact and Attendance/Safeguarding Monitoring

Our academies have a robust understanding of their pupils and families. Using this knowledge is critical in making sure pupils attend and are, by default, safe. We use the information to create an agreed criteria that forms a tiered system to prioritise first day response by academy staff.

The academy follows the RAG protocol for first day response:

The GREEN and AMBER process is as follows:

- If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil, on the first morning of absence we will follow 'first day contact' procedures and contact the parent by telephone
- The expectation for text messages to be sent to all absent student families is 9.30am
- The expectation for all phone calls to be made and logged on Bromcom for analysis is 10.30am
- Details of communication will be logged on BROMCOM and if appropriate CPOMs

The RED process is as follows:

- Phone call to be made by 9.30am
- Details to be sent to the home visit driver/Family Liaison Officer by 9.45am

The following criteria is to be used to define the RAG ratings of our pupils. Professional judgement may be used to adjust a pupil's RAG rating but must be supported by external professionals and a risk assessment must be in place.

Pupil focus group	**Definition/Criteria**	**Additional Academy Attendance Action** All families will be contacted by school on first day of absence
RED *** *** **T&W – Complex/Acute**	EHCP LAC CSE CCE Social Workers CP Plan S47 Investigation Mental Health linked to suicide risk (Family/pupil)	Academies will make every effort to make face-to-face contact with the pupil and family every **3rd day of absence.** Face-to-face contact may take place through a home visit or video call. Daily attendance monitoring, first day response procedures and professional judgement remain in place. Where safeguarding concerns, vulnerability factors or risk assessments indicate a need for increased

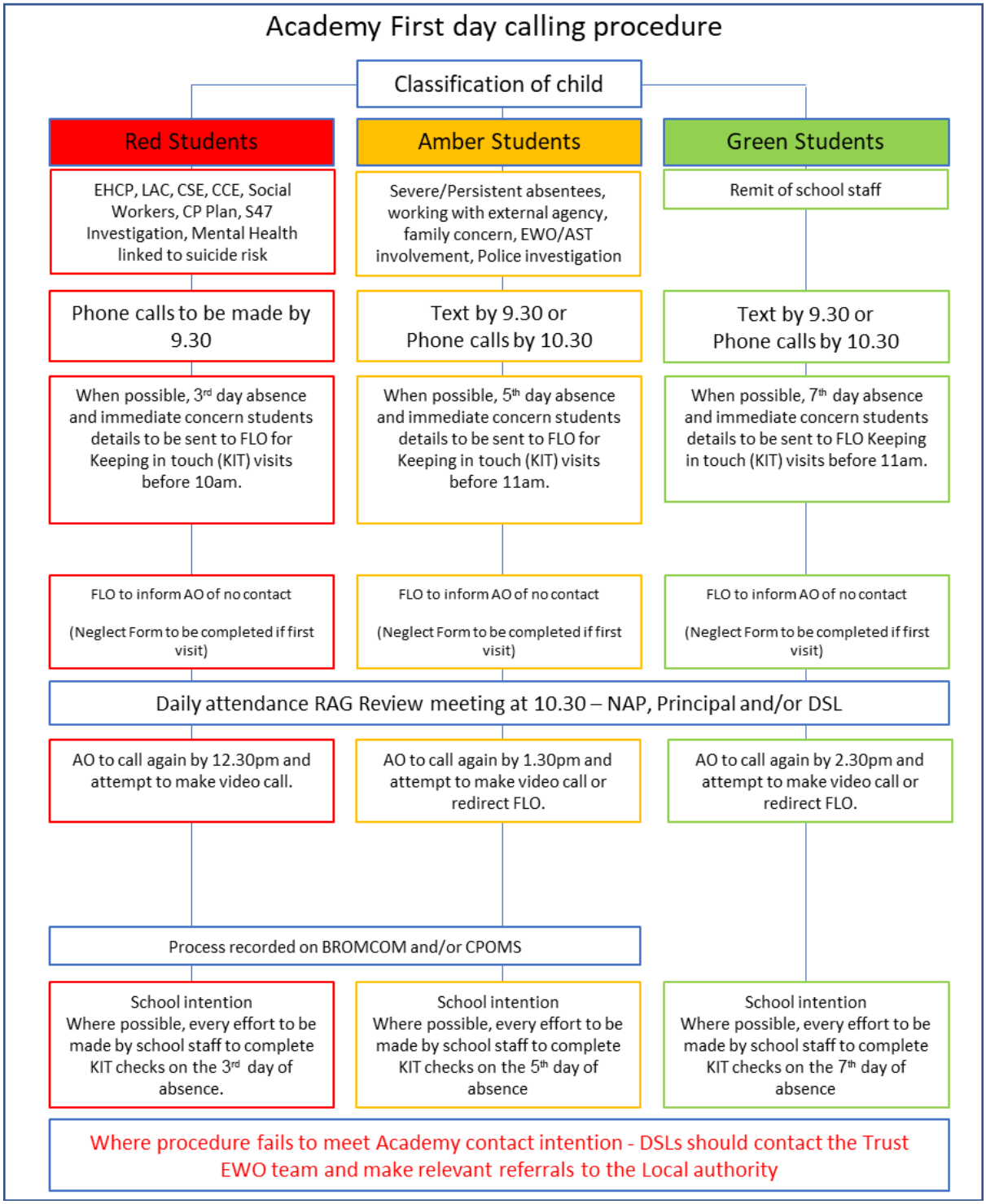
		contact, more frequent welfare checks and home visits may be undertaken.
AMBER **T&W - Vulnerable**	Severe and Persistent absentees Working with external agency Family concern EWO/AST involvement Police investigation	In addition to first day contact Academies will make every effort to make face-to-face contact with the pupil and family every 5th day of absence. Face-to face contact with pupil/family being a home visit or a video call Academies will contact and update linked external agencies where appropriate and may increase the frequency of contact where concerns escalate Academies will visit pupils on a more regular basis if they have additional concerns
GREEN **T&W - Universal**	Remit of School staff	In addition to first day contact Academies will make every effort to make face-to-face contact with the pupil and family every 7th day of absence. Face-to-face contact with pupil/family being a home visit or a video call Academies may increase the frequency of contact where attendance concerns, vulnerability indicators or safeguarding risks emerge.

The RAG monitoring timeframes represent minimum expectations for scheduled face-to-face welfare contact. They do not replace daily attendance monitoring, first day contact procedures or professional safeguarding decision-making. Academies retain the flexibility to increase the frequency of communication, welfare checks and home visits where circumstances require.

** Use LA threshold guidance and ensure all associated professionals are aware.

*** All pupils identified as RAG RED will have a full risk assessment (APPENDIX 3)

Appendix 2 – Academy First Day Calling Protocol



Outcome of poor attendance (Specific pupil level)

Stage A

Some pupils will have accessed the SAL (School Attendance Letter) approach to attendance improvement in their previous educational setting with their parents being familiar with the process. However, we believe that we need to have high expectations and use national formal processes to support improved attendance.

As a result, pupils under 95% attendance will be reviewed and a decision made if School Attendance Letters (SAL) SAL1 is appropriate (Areas to consider: point in academic year, illness etc…). It will be the decision of the Attendance Officer to send the SAL1 to parents where attendance is a concern

Academies' pastoral systems must work with the pupils to look at effective improvement targets

Stage B

The decision to escalate to a SAL2 letter should be decided 3 weeks following the issuing of the SAL 1.

The criteria for a SAL2 letter is the failure to improve significantly over the 3-week SAL1 period or for pupils who drop below 90% attendance. The AO can move to SAL2 before the pupil drops below 90% if they see no improvement over the first 2 weeks.

Poor attending pupils moving in from a previous school needs to show 'sufficient' improvement since moving from their previous setting.

It is expected that the 'Attendance Officer (AO)' and EWO are fully aware of the individual student issue. The academy will expect the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), to provide and enforce further actions.

At this stage, the pupil automatically becomes AMBER on the RAG system.

As an alternative to Stage A or B, if there is a rapid deterioration in attendance resulting in 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10-week period, you may receive a Notice to Improve from the Local Authority, or a Penalty Notice if it is felt that this is the appropriate course of action.

Stage C

If there is no significant improvement throughout the Stage B process, there will be an invitation to the parents to an 'Attendance Support Meeting' (ASM) either at the academy or at the home. This important meeting should include a senior member of staff, parent, pupil, the appropriate member(s) of school staff and will usually include the EWO. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding attendance.

The academy will support the pupil's re-integration where a pupil is returning after an absence of longer than two weeks. In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence, then a 'Reintegration Plan' can be implemented. The plan should include members of the academy staff (as appropriate) and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil's needs as possible. This plan will be subject to a 3-week review prior to possible escalation to the Attendance Support Team.

The academy will always aim to provide early help advice and support to the family, undertaking an Early Help Assessment if appropriate and making a referral to Strengthening Families or other agencies if it is felt the family would benefit from additional support.

In order to ensure the success of this policy, every member of the academy staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.

Pupil Risk Assessment template

Pupil Risk Assessment

Name of pupil:		**Date Written:**	
Assessment compiled by:		**Review Date:**	

Purchase of Risk Assessment
•
Summary of historical and current concerns
•

Current Agencies/Professionals involved		
Agency/Professional	**Name**	**Contact details**

Academy/Staff based actions:							
	Identified Risk to pupil and others	**HOW LIKELY?**	**SEVERITY**	**RAG**	**Preventative Actions taken by Academy**	**Staff Lead**	**If Actions Fail……escalation pathway**
		5=Certain 4=Probable 3=Possible 2=Not impossible 1=Never	*5=Extreme 4=High 3=Moderate 2=Minor 1=None*	*20-25 = RED 10-19 = Amber 1-9 = Green*			
1					•		
2					•		
3					•		
4					•		

Home Visits/Modified Timetable/Alternative Provision Actions:							
Identified Risk to student and others		**HOW LIKELY?** *5=Certain 4=Probable 3=Possible 2=Not impossible 1=Never*	**SEVERITY** *5=Extreme 4=High 3=Moderate 2=Minor 1=None*	**RAG** *20-25 = RED 10-19 = Amber 1-9 = Green*	**Preventative Actions taken by Academy**	**Staff Lead**	**If Actions Fail……escalation pathway**
1					•		
2					•		
3					•		
4					•		
4					•		

Next steps					
•					
Summary checks					
Has this document been reviewed by the EWO?		Y N	Has this document been shared with external agencies?		Y N
Has this document been approved by the DSL?		Y N	Is the Headteacher/Principal aware of all aspects of this pupil?		Y N
Signed (Writer):	**Date:**		**Signed DSL:**	**Date:**	