



## **Attendance Policy**

**Date: May 2023**

CEO, The Castle Partnership Trust: Sarah Watson  
Headteacher, Orchard Grove Primary School: Richard Healey

Due for review: Autumn term 2024

### **Purpose:**

- To encourage and facilitate a high level of attendance for all pupils in order that they maximise their educational achievement.
- To ensure no unauthorised absences.

### **Key Points:**

- Effective monitoring of attendance is vital.
- Registers must be accurate and kept in accordance with this policy.
- The appendices to this policy outline the roles (Appendix 1) and expectations of everyone involved in ensuring good attendance. These include
  - Parents
  - Pupils
  - ⇌ Teachers
  - ⇌ Phase leaders
  - Pastoral Support Assistants/Attendance Officers (School)
  - Headteacher/ Deputy Heads / Assistant Heads
  - Education Welfare Officer (County)

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Across the Trust good, excellent and outstanding attendance and punctuality are acknowledged and rewarded.

- Governors, Trustees and staff within the Trust recognise the high correlation between achievement and attendance and strive to maintain high levels of attendance for all pupils.
- Parents/ carers have the responsibility to ensure attendance at school. Unless there is a major health concern attendance should rarely drop below 96%.
- We ask for the cooperation of all parents/ carers in helping the school to monitor attendance closely.

Any planned medical absence should be notified by telephone or letter. As far as possible, appointments should be made out of school hours.

- Once the school has obtained confirmation, the school will authorise the absence if the reasons given are considered appropriate e.g. illness, unavoidable medical appointment etc. If the reasons given are not appropriate the absence will be considered as unauthorised and the parent/ carer contacted. The school will follow up any absence which has not been notified.
- **Holidays/ leave of absence in term time will not usually be authorised because they will affect a student's education.** There is **no automatic right** to take children away from school for a holiday. A leave of absence will only be given for exceptional circumstances. A Penalty Notice for over 10 sessions of unauthorised absence where the student's attendance falls below 95% may be issued.

Exceptional circumstances **may** include:

- Emergency service / forces personnel with proof of enforced holiday period.
- Forces personnel returning from or embarking on active service.

- Holiday industry employees with proof of this being the ONLY time period allowed by employer.
- A transcontinental leave request to see a terminally ill close relative.

If a leave of absence in term time is requested the following procedure must be followed:

- Parents should complete a form from the school office and return it to the school office (see example in Appendix 2).
- If the request is due to work commitments preventing time off at other times then evidence from the workplace should be provided.

### **Penalty Notices**

The Trust follows DfE guidance and will take legal action against parents/ carers who do not send their children to school regularly. We do try to work with parents/ carers to ensure there are no barriers to school attendance. If strategies for supporting regular attendance do not work, the Trust may take legal action. In the first instance, a Warning Penalty Notice may be issued. If this does not result in improved attendance, a fine may be issued (Appendix 3). The Trust works closely with the Education Attendance Service to ensure full attendance and adherence to procedures. At The Castle Partnership Trust, regular attendance is classed as attendance of 95% or more. Attendance below this level could result in the issue of a Warning Penalty Notice, Penalty Notice or court action.

### **Lateness**

Lateness of more than 30 minutes after registration will count as an absence from that session and will therefore require a note/ telephone call from parents. *If there is no good reason this will count as an unauthorised absence.* Lateness to school will be subject to sanctions unless there is a genuine reason.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

At Orchard Grove Primary School, we take a whole-school approach to maintain high attendance.

### **School Leadership Team**

- Be active in their approach to promote good attendance to pupils and their parents/ carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognize and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with.
- Nominate a senior manager (Richard Healey) to take the responsibility of overseeing the monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job.
- Report to the Local Governing Body termly on attendance records, data and provision.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.

- Develop and engage with multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend school.
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

### **Teachers and support staff**

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/ carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement.
- Ensure that they are fully up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue.
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken twice daily (see Appendix 4).
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed.
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

### **Parents and Carers**

- Engage with their children's education; supporting their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- Ensure and support their children's aspirations.
- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment.
- Follow the set school procedures for reporting absence of their child from school and include an expected date for return.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours.
- Use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises.
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of home learning, bedtime, etc, so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do in school about the importance of attendance.
- Do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make an exceptional request for this, they may do so to the Headteacher using the term time leave request form.

### **Strategies for promoting attendance**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between all parties. To help us all focus on promoting high attendance levels, methods include:

1. Attendance published in the school's newsletter and on social media.
2. Class attendance trophy to be awarded and celebrated in weekly celebration assembly.
3. Very good attendance highlighted and celebrated through the use of certificates.

### **Legal sanctions**

Sanctions are used as a means of enforcing attendance where there is reasonable expectation that improvement will be secured with their use.

Penalty Notices are an available sanction for the Local Authority as an alternative to prosecutions under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. They enable parents to discharge potential liability to a formal prosecution.

Penalty Notice Code of Conduct is considered in the following circumstances:

- There have been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the last 12 school weeks (including unauthorised lates) and the school, in consultation with the Education Safeguard Officer, believe this early intervention will resolve the poor attendance and stop the matter moving towards a prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- If a parent/ carer proceeds to take term time leave despite not being authorised by the Headteacher, there must be at least 10 continuous sessions of unauthorised term time leave taken.
- An excluded pupil is found in a public place, without their parent, during the school day. (A school is not deemed a public place for this legislation).
- A pupil is approached by, for example, a police officer or Education Welfare Officer, when out of school without reason.

This school is committed to ensuring full attendance and as such, we shall seek the use of statutory duties when required by liaison with the Local Authority.

If issued with a penalty notice, EACH parent must pay £60 per child within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payments must be made directly to the Local Authority.

A 'parent' is defined by section 576 of the Education Act 1996 as; 'all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means that a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with that child, is considered to be a parent in education law'.

If payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute that parent or withdraw the notice.

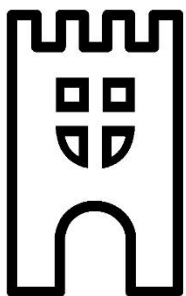


APPENDIX 1

**CEO:** Mrs S Watson

**Post Holders at Orchard Grove Primary School:**

Headteacher:	Mr Richard Healey
Head of Inclusion:	Mr Richard Healey
Data Manager:	Miss Clare Strange



# The Castle Partnership Trust

ACHIEVE | BELONG | PARTICIPATE

## REQUEST FOR TERM TIME LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Reminder to parents/carers: there is no automatic right to holidays within term time. We believe that children need to be in school to make the most of their education. There are situations which may be authorised, please refer to the Attendance Policy for further details. If your request is not authorised you run the risk of being fined.

School: Orchard Grove Primary School

NAME(S) OF STUDENT(S) 1 ..... CLASS .....  
2 ..... CLASS .....  
3 ..... CLASS .....

If you have children in another school who will also require leave of absence please give their names and school.

NAME(S) ..... SCHOOL .....

Please state your reasons for requesting term time leave of absence. If this is because your employer will not grant holiday during school holidays please attach a supporting letter from your employer:

### DATES REQUESTED:

FROM: ..... TO: ..... (inclusive) No of days .....

Please continue overleaf if necessary

Signature Parent/Carer ..... Date .....

**Please return this form to the school office prior to making any bookings and at least four weeks before the anticipated leave date where possible.**

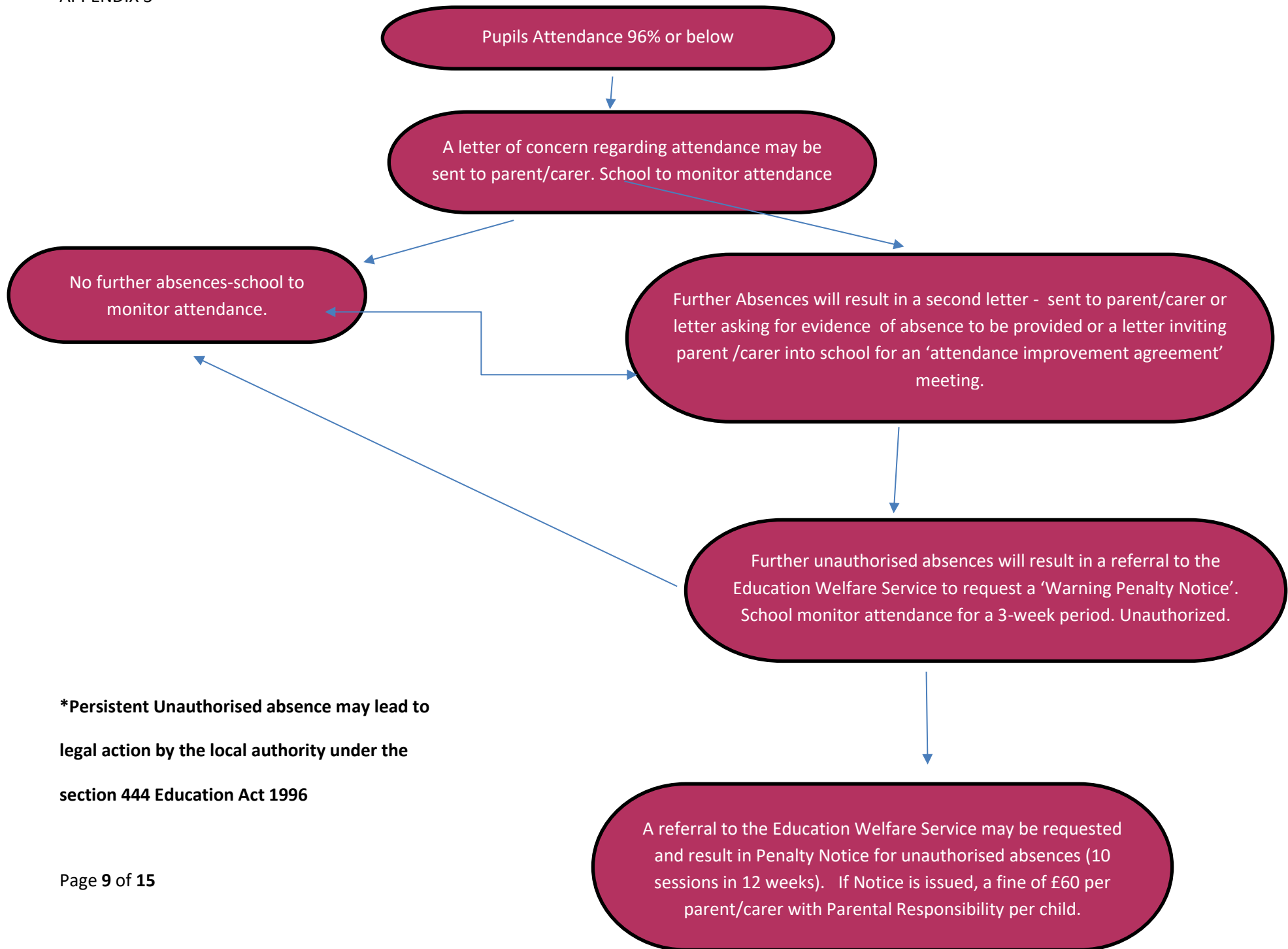
A confirmation letter will be sent to you once a decision has been made.

### For office use only:

Current Attendance Percentage: 1 ..... % 2 .....% 3 .....

Leave of absence authorised? YES/NO





**\*Persistent Unauthorised absence may lead to legal action by the local authority under the section 444 Education Act 1996**

**Attendance Information Sheet**

We would like to remind you about the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Missing lessons makes it hard to catch up and pupils have to work harder when they come back. Pupils attend school for 190 days per year; there are 175 non-school days a year for holiday, cultural experiences and family time. Any child with attendance of 90% or below is classed as a persistent absentee (PA) by the Government. Every school is required to take action to work with families to improve attendance. It may be useful for you to know what attendance figures mean for your child.

<b>100%</b>	<b>Excellent Attendance</b>
<b>Above 98%</b>	<b>Good Attendance</b> Pupils with attendance above 98% have had less than 4 days of absence in the year.
<b>Attendance Drops Below 96%</b>	If your child's attendance drops below 96% you may receive a letter highlighting this (see appendix 5 example).
<b>94%</b>	If your child's attendance drops to 94% you may receive a letter and be asked to attend a meeting (see appendix 5 example).
<b>92%</b>	If your child's attendance drops to 92% the Education Safeguarding Officer may become involved after a formal attendance meeting with the school where an attendance support plan can be put into place if necessary (see appendix 5 and 6 example).
<b>90% and below.</b>	<b>Persistent Absentee (PA) as defined by the DfE.</b> Pupils with 90% attendance have had 19 days over the year. Pupils with this attendance level are missing a month of school per year and may drop academically. Parents of pupils with this level of attendance may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or have legal action taken against them after a formal attendance meeting with the school (see appendix 5 example).
<b>85%</b>	<b>Exceptionally Low Attendance/Persistent Absentee</b> Pupils with 85% attendance have had 29 days' absence over the year. These pupils are missing 6 weeks of a school year; it will be very difficult for them to keep up with work and they may drop academically. A Fixed Penalty Notice may be served and should attendance not improve significantly after this, a referral may be made for legal action to be taken against parents for not ensuring their child attends school regularly.

**Registration**

The attendance register must be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion the school must record whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

AM registration:

- Start Time – 8:45am
- Late (L) after: 9:00am
- Late (U) after: 9:30am

PM registration:

- EYFS Start Time: 13:05
- KS1 Start Time: 13:05
- KS2 Start Time: 13:05

### Reporting an Absence

- All absences must be reported by 9.30 am each day (and on each subsequent day) by calling the school office (please leave a voicemail) or emailing the school office. If you know your child is going to be absent, please let us know in advance. If your child has been absent due to a medical appointment, please provide a copy of the appointment card/hospital letter.
- Medical evidence **may** be required if your child has a prolonged absence of more than three days. Medical evidence **must** be produced if we have previously written to you stating that no further absence due to illness will be authorised without it.

**Please note: We never ask for ‘doctor’s notes’ so please do not approach your GP asking for this.**

Examples of medical Evidence (this is the responsibility of the parent to provide to the school directly):

- Medical appointment card/printed slip
- Medical appointment letter
- Copy of prescription showing name and date
- Prescribed medication with pharmacist label showing name and date
- Hospital Discharge letter

### Punctuality

Arriving late to school and into lesson is very disruptive for the pupil, the teacher and other class members. It also means that late pupil themselves miss important input from teachers.

If for whatever reason, you know your child will be arriving late, please call the school office or provide your child with a written note.

### Children Missing Education (CME)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

All schools have a duty to inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register, who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent for a period of 10 school days or more. This duty does not apply when a pupil’s name is removed from the admission register at standard transition points – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school – unless the local authority requests that such returns are to be made.

A referral to the Local Authority Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) may be considered if there are any safeguarding concerns when a child is missing or for following up any rare, unexplained absence. Immediately notifying social services and the local authority’s ‘children missing in education’ team should a child who is known to be vulnerable be absent without explanation.

Safeguarding remains the highest priority for the school and will continue to be. There is a rigorous process for removing any pupil off roll. When the pupil is CME then reasonable enquiries are made to locate and find a new school. If it is the case that a pupil is moving school then first it is ensured that the child has arrived at the new

school. On both occasions off rolling forms are completed, accompanied by a CTF transfer. Under all circumstances it is ensured the child is safe and that all involved professionals are aware of the situation.



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Tel: 01823 711014  
office@orchardgroveschool.co.uk  
Headteacher: Mr Richard Healey

..... Road

Taunton  
Somerset  
TA .....

.....(Date).....

**RE: Attendance**

Dear .....

Pupil Name: .....

**Current Attendance:** .....

I am writing to inform you that ..... now has an attendance percentage that is a cause for concern due to the impact upon progress and wellbeing.

As a result, we have placed ..... on 'Attendance Persistently Absent' where we require a meeting to produce an 'Attendance Support Plan' so that improvement will be achieved. A member of the Senior Leadership team will be coordinating the meeting.

I have provisionally arranged the meeting for: .....

If you are unable to attend this meeting (minimum of one parent/ carer), then please contact the school and provide alternative dates/ times for us to meet.

Please note, the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1) states that if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/ her parent is guilty of an offence. .... has been 'persistently absent' (below 90%) for a prolonged period now despite informal support from the school to try and increase his attendance and you could therefore be at risk of prosecution. We hope that by putting into place an 'Attendance Support Plan' we can avoid this and increase ..... attendance towards 90%+ as quickly as possible.

It is essential that we meet to ensure the improved attendance of ..... Thank you for your support with this.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Healey  
Orchard Grove Headteacher

### ORCHARD GROVE ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PLAN

<b>Pupil Name:</b>	<b>Class:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Current Attendance:</b>	<b>PP (Y/N)</b>	<b>SEN (Y/N)</b>
<b>Present:</b>		
<b>Current Situation:</b>		
Pupil (if appropriate):		
Parent/Carer:		
School:		
<b>Concerns from school:</b>		
<b>Interventions:</b>		
<b>Targets:</b>		
<b>Review Date:</b>		
<b>Signatures:</b>		
Headteacher:		Date:
Parent/Carer (if appropriate):		Date:
Pupil (if appropriate):		Date:

