

Lecale Trinity Grammar School



Attendance Policy

Latest Review: *September 2026*

Next Review: *September 2027*

Person Responsible: *Mrs G Lundy*

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Signed:

Carmel M-Carter

Mission Statement

Our mission is to nurture every pupil in an inclusive community, rich in faith and kindness, working together with integrity, empowering all to achieve through excellence in educational provision.

RATIONALE

“Good” attendance at school is not only linked to academic achievement, but it is connected to pupils’ emotional health and wellbeing and supports them to thrive within their community.”

Attendance Matters Strategy, DENI 2024

Lecale Trinity Grammar School is a Lasallian Catholic Voluntary Grammar School, where collectively we strive to embed into each aspect of school life, the core principles of:

Faith in the Presence of God

Inclusive Community

Respect for all Persons

Quality Education

Concern for the Poor and Social Justice

In line with our mission statement and values, we will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure. We are committed to nurturing an understanding of our values and to equipping our pupils with the knowledge and skills to make decisions in light of these values. It is a community where every child matters. We also recognise the importance of nurturing a culture where attendance is promoted and valued and where intervention and support is prioritised. In Lecale Trinity Grammar School, we aim to ensure that:

Leadership at every level is committed to prioritising attendance in the interest of pupils

Effective early intervention

Appropriate support for pupils

Effective collaboration and engagement

As such, we have actively involved our pupils in the development of this policy, and in the process monitoring and review.

We aim to encourage **every** pupil to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance in order to take full advantage of the learning experiences available to them. We recognise the very strong link that exists between a pupil's level of attendance and their achievement. This link is shared with pupils and parents.

As such, Lecale Trinity Grammar School aims to promote maximum attendance from all our pupils so they may achieve their full potential. **We aim for 100% and ask for 95% as a minimum.**

Pupils who have 100% attendance throughout the year will receive special commendation. Poor attendance impacts negatively on pupil performance. In light of this, we acknowledge our fundamental role in ensuring good patterns of attendance and also acknowledge parents’ legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified. All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance and pastoral staff will liaise with home and other agencies about a child's attendance when this is appropriate.

In Lecale Trinity Grammar School, good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such with awards such as certificates and prizes. Throughout the school, all pupils will set attendance targets at individual and class level.

Policy Aims:

The aim of this policy is to ensure an effective system for recording attendance, recording reasons for non-attendance and efficient systems in place to respond to issues related to attendance.

- to strive to achieve the Northern Ireland average for attendance for nonselective post primary schools, as set out by the Department of Education
- to improve attendance by actively involving parents, carers, pupils and outside agencies through advice, support and guidance
- to provide advice, support and guidance to parents/carers and pupils
- to improve attendance to help impact positively on achievement of all pupils
- to improve attendance and punctuality which will enhance the pupil's sense of belonging to the school community
- to develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance and punctuality
- to ensure compliance with all statutory requirements as laid down by the Department of Education
- to promote good relationships with the Educational Welfare Service
- to instill good habits and values for adult and working life
- to raise pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- to develop an attendance reward scheme which recognises pupils' attendance achievements

The school has a statutory obligation to record daily attendance for every pupil. To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education which can be found at the following link: [Circular 2023 11 for 2023 24 Academic Year - Attendance Guidance and Absence Recording By Schools.pdf \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/circulars/circulars2023/circular202311for202324academicyear-attendanceguidanceandabsencerecordingbyschools.pdf)

Linked Policies

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such should be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

Pastoral Care Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Acronyms used in this policy:

Pupil Progress and Support Leader (PPSL)

Assistant Pupil Progress and Support Leader (APPSL)

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has the ultimate responsibility for school attendance but this is delegated on a day-to-day basis to the Principal. The Board of Governors has a responsibility to monitor school attendance and the effectiveness of the school's Attendance Policy into practice.

The Principal reports to the Board of Governors about attendance issues on a regular basis.

The Board of Governors provides support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring attendance is a regular agenda item at meetings.

Principal/Vice-Principal/Senior Leadership Team

The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance. Teachers should bring any concerns to her attention. The Principal has the role, along with the Board of Governors, for determining resources and staffing to deal with attendance issues, ensuring the Board of Governors are informed about attendance issues and ensuring statistical information is provided as required by government.

The Vice-Principal (Pastoral Lead) will meet with the Education Welfare Officer every four weeks, where possible, to discuss attendance issues and will review referrals to the Education Welfare Service, where necessary. The Vice-Principal (Pastoral Lead) will collate attendance data from all Vice-Principals.

The Vice-Principal responsible for each Key Stage will:

- Meet regularly with the Year Group Senior Leader to review attendance and pastoral data.
- Make a referral to the Education Welfare Service if improvement in attendance is not achieved.
- Collate and report attendance information.
- Take responsibility for overall monitoring of attendance of their assigned Key Stage.
- Present attendance data to the Vice-Principal (Pastoral Lead).

The Pupil Progress and Support Leader (PPSL) and Assistant Pupil Progress and Support Leader (APPSL) will monitor the attendance of their Year Group and highlight pupils causing concern to the assigned Senior Leader.

The Senior Leadership Team

Each Senior Leader will:

- Support the PPSL to monitor attendance of their assigned Year Group and pupils identified within their area of responsibility. They will meet weekly with the PPSL to review attendance and pastoral issues of their Year Group.
- Keep the relevant Vice-Principal informed about matters relating to attendance.

The Form Teacher:

- Talk to individual pupils about their attendance.
- Promote class attendance through the pastoral programme, assemblies and daily registration time.
- Monitor attendance by accurately marking registers on a daily basis, requesting that reasons for absence are submitted on the School App OR sending absence notes to the Office.
- Follow up when reason for absence is not given (pupils should not have N codes on their registration certificates for more than 5 days).
- Form Teachers will follow up with student and parent/guardian until a reason for absence is established. Failure to produce a valid reason for absence will be recorded a 'D' on attendance certificate by Office staff.
- Refer pupils to the PPSL as required.

The Class Teacher:

Teaching staff regularly monitor attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions.

Teaching staff should:

- Check class register and enter details for their pupils.
- Promote class attendance.
- Talk to individual pupils about their lesson attendance.
- Ensure that the online record for the class matches the actual attendance for the class. Amend as necessary.
- Edit an individual's attendance record, to do this click on the "Preserve" button to change it to "Overwrite".
- Record lates to class using 'L'code and a comment option on SIMS to detail number of minutes late.
- Notify the Attendance Administration Officer if a pupil is absent from class but has been registered in school previous to this or they have a concern relating to an absence. This should be an email/call to the Administration Officer who can inform if the absence is authorised. If absence is not authorised, the Administration Officer will contact a member of SLT who will decide on next steps.

To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2023/11, which can be found at the following link: [Circular 2023 11 for 2023 24 Academic Year - Attendance Guidance and Absence Recording By Schools.pdf](#) ([education-ni.gov.uk](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk))

Lecale Trinity Grammar School is committed to working with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Administration Staff:

Administration staff have an important role to play in monitoring attendance in school. The following are some of the roles they may undertake:

- Operating SIMS
- Taking phone messages from parents when pupils are absent
- Making phone calls to parents regarding absence on request
- Maintaining the late register
- Compiling SIMS records of absentees - include information received from SchoolComms or other contact made with parents
- Collating registration data
- Operating the SchoolComms System in relation to attendance/absences
- Sending absence/late reports to staff
- Printing the Fire Register

Parents:

Whilst it is accepted that there are instances when a pupil cannot attend school due to illness, personal circumstances or other commitments, it is expected that pupils and their parents/carers will make every effort to keep disruptions to school attendance to a minimum. In the instance where absence is caused by a significant medical or other pastoral event the school will make every effort to support the pupil whose education is affected.

We expect our parents to:

- Be familiar and follow the school's procedures regarding absence and punctuality.
- Make every effort to ensure that their child attends school and is punctual.
- Communicate with the relevant member of staff where pastoral issues exist which may impact on their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Support the school when sanctions are to be imposed due to truancy or persistent lateness.
- To take holidays during non-term time
- To arrange appointments such as medical/dental outside of school hours.
- Attend parental meetings/interviews with regard to addressing attendance issues.

Pupils:

In Lecale Trinity Grammar School, pupils are expected to value the opportunity to engage in full time education. We expect our pupils to:

- Attend school during term time and to arrive by 9am for registration.
- To meet or exceed the school's attendance target of 95%.
- Communicate promptly with the Form Teacher to explain planned or unforeseen absence.
- Arrive punctually and prepared for each class on their daily timetable.
- With their Form Teacher, set, monitor and review a termly target for their attendance.
- Keep a record of both their target and actual attendance in their Pupil Planner.
- Follow the school procedures when late for school.
- To catch up on work missed while absent.
- To attend all classes required for their timetable.
- To follow school sanctions in relation to attendance/missing class.
- To engage in support and intervention to improve attendance.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Registration

The school day commences at 9.00 am with morning registration taking place during the Registration Period lesson. All pupils should be in Form Class by 9.00am. If a student arrives after 9.15am they should be directed to the office to sign in. If a pupil arrives late to any lesson the class teacher should record this using the code 'L' with an indication in the comments relating to the number of minutes late and reason provided.

Procedure For Dealing With Absence

- Parents are expected to contact the school before 9.00 am on the first day of the pupil's absence **or** advise of an absence via the SchoolComms App or telephone/letter.
- Administration Staff will record the absence on SIMS.
- Administration Staff will contact parents via SchoolComms on the first day of absence if no message has been received unless instructed to the contrary by the Form Teacher/Pupil Progress and Support Leader.
- As a follow up, a routine telephone contact from the Form Teacher by the third day of an absence will be made. All such calls should be noted in SIMS using the Communication Log.
- A printout of pupil absences is generated from the C2k system each morning by Administration Staff and emailed to all staff including any reasons provided.
- Teachers who have been granted approval to take groups of pupils out of class/school for field trips, sporting activities, drama, music, debates, industrial visits etc. **must**, as soon as possible, in advance (at least one day), e-mail the list of names of pupils involved to all staff and give a copy of the list into the office so that those pupils will then obtain a 'present' mark.
- Arrangements will be made for work to be obtained and sent home by the Form Teacher if a prolonged absence is inevitable and a "Welcoming" strategy should be put in place on the pupil's return - coordinated by the Pupil Progress and Support Leader.
- Before returning to school, parents are expected to give a reason for the absence via the SchoolComms App.
- The Administration Staff record the absent as "authorised" or "unauthorised" on the basis of the explanation given (using the "Absence Codes" provided) and records it on SIMS.
- The Form Teacher should be alert to persistent and/or 'concerned' absences and should flag these through the school's Pastoral System to the PPSL to take appropriate action.
- If truancy is suspected, the Form Teacher should initiate immediate action.
- Parents should be invited to meet with Form Teacher/Pupil Progress and Support Leader if necessary.
- In serious cases pupils will be referred to the E.W.O.
- Form Teachers should view the session attendance pattern for the whole week (and for previous weeks) and deal with absences which have not been accounted for

Family holidays during Term Time

Missing school (either face-to-face or virtual learning at home) at any time is detrimental to a child's education therefore family holidays or other appointments e.g. doctor or dentist should be arranged, where possible, outside school hours. Lecale Trinity Grammar School discourages holidays during term time as this can have a significant impact on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time, which have not been agreed, will be categorised as an unauthorised absence.

EDUCATION AND WELFARE SERVICE

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their children's education. If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85% and there is also a concern, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

To enable the Education Welfare Service to offer a quality service to Lecale Trinity Grammar School, early detection and good communication between teaching staff and the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) is essential.

Within Lecale Trinity Grammar School the EWO will:

1. Investigate and follow up on cases of non-school attendance.
2. Provide information about children's home circumstances and factors that may be affecting school performance and attendance.
3. Interview pupils in the identification of attendance/welfare issues.
4. Convene case planning meetings in conjunction with teaching staff, parents and pupils to develop a plan of action for dealing with absence/welfare issues.
5. Mediate between teachers and families when misunderstanding and difficulties arise.
6. Meet regularly with Vice-Principals and relevant staff to discuss attendance matters and support.

LEAVING THE SCHOOL PREMISES DURING THE DAY -PLANNED

If a pupil plans to leave the school during the day, a parent may give permission in one of two ways:

1. Providing the Form Teacher or Pupil Progress and Support Leader with a signed letter in advance of the absence. This should ideally be done during registration. The Form Teacher or Pupil Progress and Support Leader will record on SIMS that they have given permission for early release and the reason for it by inserting a comment and the time of release on SIMS **OR**
2. Requesting permission via the *Advise of Future Absence* section of the SchoolComms App. In this case the office staff will record the permission and relevant code on SIMS.

Form Teachers will monitor the frequency of the requests for early release and liaise with PPSLs who will make contact with parents/guardians where there are concerns over the frequency or pattern.

The pupil should report to reception to be signed out and have the relevant code inserted on their attendance record by a member of the administration team. Under NO circumstances should a pupil leave the school without having been signed out or without parental permission. Pupils in Years 8-12 should be collected by a parent for safeguarding issues.

LEAVING THE SCHOOL PREMISES DURING THE DAY – UNPLANNED

When a pupil becomes ill or has an injury during the course of the school day, parents/carers will be contacted by phone and, if necessary, will be asked to make arrangements for the collection of the pupil. Ideally a student who becomes ill should report to their the Form Teacher or PPSL who will record the permission to go home in a comment on SIMS or via phone call or email to the office staff. When the FT/PPSL are not available, any member of staff may assist the student. Office staff will contact parents and sign the student out/update SIMS accordingly.

TRUANCY

Truancy from school will merit a sanction. The level of sanction will be determined by the seriousness and extent of the absence from school. In the case where there is an underlying pastoral issue the school will make every effort to support to the pupil.

If a pupil is found to have left the premises without prior permission:

- Parents will be informed that their child is out of school without permission.
- In the event of the school being unable to make parental contact, the PSNI would be informed.
- The Positive Behaviour Management Policy will be followed.
- If truancy happens more than once, Parent/Carers will be invited in for a meeting to discuss the problem.
- If a pupil 'absconds' for the entire day, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed and parents will be invited to school for a meeting to discuss issues raised.
- Class truancy within school will be dealt with by the Form Teacher in line with the Positive Behaviour Management Policy.

The EWO visits the school regularly and examines attendance statistics of those less than 85%. To formalise this, a Service Level Agreement has been drawn up between the EWO and the school. It is recommended that the EWO meets with the Senior Leadership Team monthly to review attendance.

PUNCTUALITY/LATENESS

Lecale Trinity Grammar School places a great deal of importance on the need to be punctual and to arrive to school on time. Not only does it make for a good start to the school day but also it shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids disruption of teaching.

- All children who arrive into school after Registration/Assembly ends at 9.15am will be recorded as 'late'.
- Any pupil who arrives after first class has started (9.15 am) will be required to sign in at Reception. Notified absences will be amended by the administration staff. Parents should communicate early morning appointments in advance via Schoolcomms so the lateness does not affect attendance.
- The PPSL will monitor instances of lateness. Pupils who accumulate 3 unauthorised incidences of lateness will be required to undertake an opportunity for additional learning in line with the Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy. The PPSL will inform Parents/Carers that this is taking place by requesting that Office Administration Staff issue the letter in Appendix 4. If the problem persists, the PPSL will arrange to meet with parent/carer and the pupil to discuss strategies to support the student.
- The number of lates will revert to 0 at the start of each new term.

ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE

Lecale Trinity Grammar School believes that good attendance and punctuality are to be encouraged at every opportunity. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend regularly and are punctual. However, the school currently has a whole school promotion to encourage regular attendance and punctuality.

Procedures for Dealing with Poor Attendance

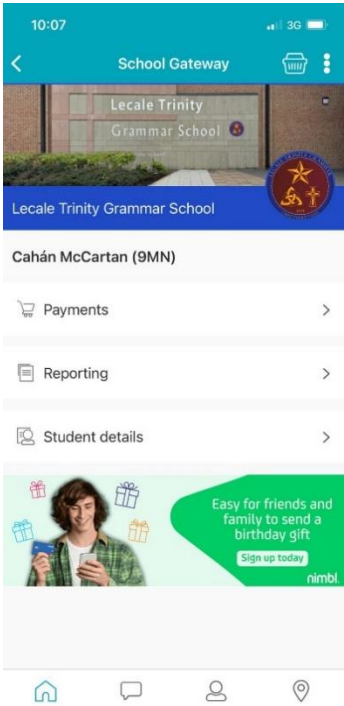
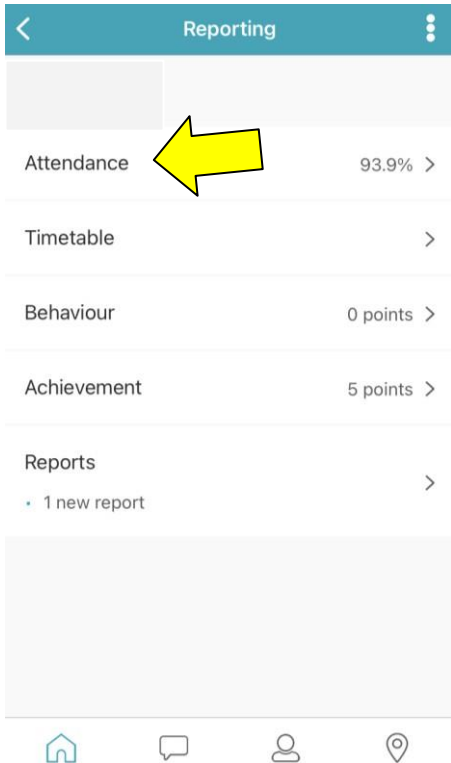
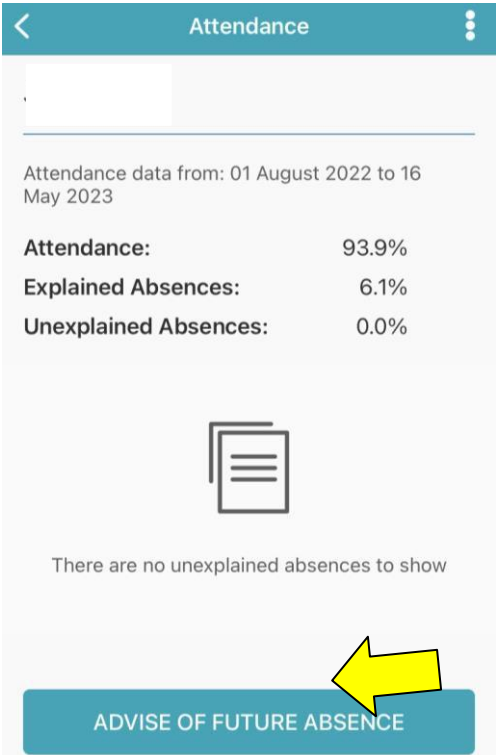
In line with the DE Guidance for 'Schools Monitoring and Reporting Pupil Attendance Using Absence Tiers' document, Lecale Trinity Grammar School will monitor pupil attendance using the Absence Tier system. The Absence Tier report will be run by SLT Attendance Officer on the first Monday of each month and shared at the subsequent SLT meeting. Pastoral Teams will act on the data from this report in accordance with the procedures outlined in Appendix 2. The Pastoral Team will carefully consider the context of the individual absences when applying the procedures outlined in Appendix 2

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to determine the success or otherwise of the attendance strategies employed within the school.

REPORTING AN ABSENCE USING SCHOOL GATEWAY APP

Appendix 1

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4
Selecting the 'Reporting' tab from the homepage	Select the 'Attendance' tab	Select the 'Advise of Future Absence' tab	Detail the name of the pupils, the date of the absence and the reason and press send.
			<i>Type in the reason for absence</i>

Category	% Attendance	School Actions
Tier 1a: Regular Attendance	96%-100%	- PPSL/Form Teacher continues to monitor - Live attendance data is shared with parents and carers via the Gateway App
Tier 1b: At Risk Attendance	90-95%	- Form Teacher to inform pupil they are in the 'At Risk' category. Discussion with pupil about reasons for absence. - PPSL continues to monitor
Tier 2: High Risk Attendance	85%-90%	- PPSL to inform pupil they are in the 'High Risk Attendance' category. Discussion with pupil about reasons for absence. - PPSL phone call with parents/carers to advise pupil is now in 'High Risk Attendance' category. - PPSL to send Tier 2 High Risk Attendance letter to parents/carers via School Office (Appendix 3) <u>If attendance does not improve...</u> - PPSL meeting with parents/carers to discuss strategies to improve attendance - Potential referral to Educational Welfare Service
Tier 3: Severe Risk Attendance	Below 85%	- PPSL to send Tier 3 Severe High Attendance letter (Appendix 3) to parents/carers via School Office - Referral to Educational Welfare Service - SLT meeting with parents/carers and EWO - Possible engagement of other external agencies - Potential court action



TIER 2

HIGH RISK ATTENDANCE LETTER

Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing to advise you that _____ currently has an absence rate of _____.

Absence rates of 10% or more are classed by the Education Authority as 'chronic absence' and such absence is shared with the Education Welfare Service who can intervene to offer support.

We are therefore writing to inform you that we will continue to monitor _____ attendance over the coming weeks and we hope to see an improvement. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to support you in trying to achieve this. Should we fail to see improvements in attendance then a referral to the Educational Welfare Service may be necessary so strategies can be put in place to encourage improved attendance.

We seek to work in partnership with parents and carers and if you wish to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact the school and ask to speak to your child's Pupil Progress and Support Leader.

Yours sincerely

Pupil Progress and Support Leader



TIER 3

VERY HIGH RISK ATTENDANCE LETTER

Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing to advise you that _____ currently has an absence rate of _____.

Absence rates of 20% or more are classed by the Education Authority as 'severe chronic absence' and such absence is shared with the Education Welfare Service who can intervene to offer support.

We are therefore writing to inform you that we will continue to monitor _____ attendance over the coming weeks and we hope to see an improvement. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to support you in trying to achieve this. Should we fail to see improvements in attendance then a referral to the Educational Welfare Service may be necessary so strategies can be put in place to encourage improved attendance.

We seek to work in partnership with parents and carers and if you wish to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact the school and ask to speak to your child's Pupil Progress and Support Leader

Yours sincerely

Pupil Progress and Support Leader



LECALE TRINITY GRAMMAR SCHOOL
FAITH IN EVERY CHILD

PRINCIPAL DR. F MOORE

Dear _____

Date _____

Re: Additional Opportunity for Learning

Your child _____ - has been late to school on more than 3 occasions this term. This is cause for concern.

In order to compensate for missed learning time, an Additional Opportunity for Learning has been arranged for _____. S/he should attend the one-hour session (3.20pm – 4.20pm) in the Assembly Hall in the Lower Lasallian Building on _____

I trust that we have your full support in this matter.

Please countersign this letter to give permission for your child to remain in school from 3.30-4.30 on _____ and return it to your child’s Form Teacher as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Pupil Progress and Support Leader

Signature of Parent/Carer: **Date:** ____/____/____