



Lesmahagow High School

Promoting Excellent Attendance



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Introduction

Every child of school age has the right to education. They have the right to feel connected to their community and to have opportunities to develop positive relationship with their peers.

This policy has been developed in line with *Included, Engaged and Involved (Part 1): A Positive Approach to the Promotion and Management of Attendance in Scottish Schools* <https://www.gov.scot/publications/included-engaged-involved-part-1-positive-approach-promotion-management-attendance-scottish-schools/> and South Lanarkshire Council's A5 Operating Procedure: *Managing Attendance and Absence*.

One of our key priorities is to ensure that inclusion, equity and equality are at the heart of what we do. Absence from school, whatever the cause, disrupts learning, can have an adverse impact on participation, attainment, peer relationships, health and wellbeing and ultimately positive life outcomes for our children and young people.



Attendance and Late Coming

At Lesmahagow High School, we believe excellent attendance and punctuality are key to ensuring pupils reach their full potential and reap the benefits from high quality teaching and learning. Young people should endeavour to be at school every day and on time, ready to learn.

However, we appreciate that, at times, pupils may be absent from school due to unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances. If this is the case, we require parents and carers to inform the school by calling the school number and leaving a message on our designated answer machine or by speaking with one of our office staff. Please detail the reason for the absence and expected duration, especially if absences are expected to be longer than one day. In addition, any appointments that students have should be indicated in advance so that this can be recorded on our system, preventing unnecessary attendance messages being sent. This can be done by providing a letter at Tutor time, to the office or by calling the school.

If a student is absent without reason, a text message will be sent by the school to the parent or carer to inform them of this and a response is expected.

Any absence which is planned or expected to last for a substantial period of time, should be explained to a student's Pupil Support teacher and followed up in writing.

Research shows that excellent attendance leads to improved attainment and achievement.

- Highest 20% of attainment by pupils had an average attendance of 97%.
- Lowest 20% of attainment by pupils had an average attendance of 76%

Q When is **90%** NOT considered to be a positive outcome?

A When it is linked to **attendance**

- ▶ **90%** attendance = **1/2 day** missed every week!
- ▶ **1 school year** at 90% attendance = **4 weeks** of learning missed!
- ▶ Over **5 years** of school = **1/2 school year** missed!

Poor attendance = less chance of success

Good attendance means...

BEING IN SCHOOL
At least **95%** of the time

Best chance of success

It is expected that all students *will* achieve at least a 95% attendance rate across an academic year. Students will be absent for unavoidable reasons but we ask for parent/carer support in ensuring students attend school regularly and meet the local authority and government's expectations. Any problems preventing regular attendance should be explained to the student's Pupil Support teacher at the earliest possible stage to ensure the relevant supports can be implemented to help students attend school regularly. The earlier the support, the more successful the outcome.

The school will monitor all pupil's attendance closely and will contact parents and carers if we have a concern. The school will implement a wide range of measures and supports where a student's attendance is an issue. Where there is no improvement following the implementation of school interventions, it may be necessary to follow the local authority's staged intervention attendance procedures and seek support from external agencies to help bring about positive change and support the student back to regular attendance.

In a bid to encourage excellent attendance, students who represent the school at events and functions are expected to have at least 95% attendance. In addition, students who wish to attend events such as school dances, trips and sporting events should also have an excellent level of attendance. There will always be exceptions to this based on individual circumstances, so we encourage parents/carers to contact the school if they have any concerns.



Promoting Excellent Attendance

Young people are more likely to be motivated to attend school when they feel fully included, engaged and involved in the wider life of the school. Promoting excellent attendance is a multi-faceted activity and requires schools to promote positive relationships within an inclusive ethos and culture.

The cumulative impact of missed days at school can have detrimental and long lasting consequences and can significantly impact on positive destinations and outcomes for young people. Table 1 illustrates the cumulative effect of random days missed from school, in any single academic year, and the potential impact on participation and learning.

Table 1

I'm not missing much...

<i>Attendance</i>	<i>Days Missed</i>	<i>Impact</i>
100 % Attendance	0 Days missed	Gives a child and young person the best chance of success and ensures that their full potential is achieved
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 week and 4 days learning missed	Is likely to make it harder to achieve full potential and secure the best possible outcomes
90% Attendance	19 days of Absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed	
85% Attendance	27 Days of Absence 5 weeks and 3 days of Learning Missed Almost half a term missed	Is likely to impact significantly on learning and progress which can lead to poorer outcomes in achievement, wellbeing and social and emotional development
80% Attendance	36 days of Absence 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed Half of a term missed	
75% Attendance	45 Days of Absence 9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed Almost 1 whole term missed	
<p>If a pupil by the end of S5 has 90% attendance, in aggregate over their school career, they will have the equivalent of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ a day off per week • 18 days off per year • 247 days off over their school career of 12 academic years, equivalent to over 1 year of lost education 		



Late Coming

Students who arrive late to school should go to the school office to sign in with a member of our office staff. The pupil will then be marked as such or provided a slip to take to class. This ensures our system can be updated to reflect that the student is now in the school building.

If a pupil is regularly late, Pupil Support staff will contact parents and carers regarding our concerns and may arrange a meeting to discuss possible supports.

It's only 10 minutes...

Late by...	That equals...	Which is...
10 minutes per day	50 minutes per week	Nearly 1 and half weeks per year
20 minutes per day	1 hr 40 minutes per week	Over 2 and half week per year
30 minutes per day	Half a day per week	4 weeks per year
1 hour per day	1 day per week	8 weeks per year

Every day and minute counts!

If you want your child to be successful at school, excellent attendance and punctuality matters.

In order to highlight the importance of excellent attendance and promote this throughout the school, points for attendance will be added to our House Group competitions promotional posters and updates will be shared periodically outside our Pupil Support office.



Staged Intervention and Supports

Early and effective intervention is crucial in supporting attendance at school. Interventions require to be implemented before situations reach crisis point and the potential for re-engagement with school becomes more challenging.

When considering approaches and strategies to promote excellent attendance, we will:

1. Ensure that our policy is clear and accessible to all
2. Ensure parent/carer understanding of attendance processes using a range of media including visuals and posters
3. Encourage development of key relationships between staff and parent/carer
4. Use multi-agency partnership approaches, where appropriate
5. Regularly review and analyse attendance data
6. Implement, regularly monitor and evaluate targeted interventions for young people at the appropriate level of staged intervention
7. Ensure timely communication with parent/carers and young people where appropriate
8. Use a range of approaches to build relationships between home and school (where possible)
9. Maintain regular, informal contact and encourage parent/carers to view the school as a source of support and help

Many issues relating to school absence can be dealt with quickly and promptly by using 'within' school supports and by ensuring that there are positive relationships in place to support young people and their families. When absence from school becomes a more significant concern then it is important that we follow the staged intervention process.

A staged intervention framework for managing attendance that complements the established model of staged intervention for children with additional support needs, has been adopted to assist school staff to promote excellent attendance on a whole school and individual level. This ensures that young people and their families are included, engaged and involved in addressing attendance issues.

When attendance becomes a concern, the supports available are aimed at ensuring we improve then maintain a young person's attendance.

Please see Appendix 1 for more information on the Staged Intervention Framework and our Six Steps Approach (page 13) which reflects this information in relation to our school context and procedures.



Responsibilities of Stakeholders

Pupils

- Arrive at school on time to start at 8:40am.
- Arrive at classes on time and ready to work. Avoid taking longer routes and speaking with staff without informing your current class teacher.
- Attend classes throughout the day as per their timetable.
- Return to school building from interval and lunch in plenty of time to use the toilets or purchase water before going to class. This should not be done after the bell has gone.
- Ensure notes and letters in regard to attendance and absences are handed to Tutor teachers, the office staff or Pupil Support, where required.
- Ensure you maintain excellent levels of attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

Parents/carers

- Contact the school at your earliest convenience to inform of your child's absence, potential duration of absence and estimated return date.
- Inform the school of permitted absences such as medical appointments prior to the date and time.
- Contact the school regarding concerns or issues that may have the potential to lead to school absences.
- Liaise with Pupil Support and SMT, where applicable, to help support your child to attend on a regular basis, especially if attendance has become an issue.

Tutors

- Record and monitor attendance as per school guidance.
- Discuss anomalies, late coming and absences with pupils and request confirmation from parent/carer, where required.
- Issue request form, if applicable for parent/carer to return.
- In form Pupil Support of any concerns.
- Ensure requests for permissible absences are sent to the office and attendance notes kept within tutor folder.

Class Teachers

- Mark pupils according to guidance - all pupils to be marked as *TBC* if absent, unless otherwise stated. This must be done promptly.
- Speak with pupils who regularly miss your class or who have been raised as a discrepancy in your previous lesson.
- Adopt a supportive and encouraging approach to pupils who have missed class.
- Pass concerns to Faculty Head teachers and share concerns at departmental meetings.



- For ongoing concerns contact Pupil Support with Faculty Head teacher's knowledge.
- Reinforce the importance of excellent attendance utilising posters and conversation.

Faculty Head Teachers

- Request update from teachers on general attendance in class.
- Speak with pupils who are continuously missing class.
- Where appropriate contact home where this issue aligns with other issues within the department.
- Attendance should be a permanent point on departmental meeting agendas.
- Reinforce the need for excellent attendance across the faculty to all pupils and encourage staff to do the same.

Pupil Support

- Oversee and monitor attendance for House Group on a weekly basis.
- Support young people to attend school regularly through the offer of support, where required.
- Discuss anomalies, late coming and absences with parent/carer where there is serious concern. This includes monitoring period-by-period attendance.
- Follow staged intervention procedure for monitoring, supporting and responding to attendance concerns. Concerns raised and discussed at in school departmental meeting.
- Liaise with departmental staff regarding specific attendance issues relating to subjects.
- Communicate with parents/carers regarding attendance concerns through email, phone conversations and meetings.
- Liaise with SMT and SMPS where attendance issues increase in severity.
- Access within school and external agency support where required and contribute to meetings where attendance has been raised as concern.

SMT

- Monitor year group attendance and discuss with Pupil Support concerns.
- Promote excellent attendance via media platforms and school assemblies/announcements.
- Support students back to school with Pupil Support following long term absence.
- Meet with parents/carers when attendance concern requires, as per staged intervention.
- Utilise the support of SMPS when required.



Office Staff

- Monitor calls every morning and throughout the day and record any notified absence or future absence.
- Inform Pupil Support of issues and reasons for absence on a daily basis.
- Monitor period by period attendance through SEEMiS Anomalies Report and inform a member of ELT when a pupil's attendance changes.
- Update our school system SEEMiS with appropriate attendance codes which includes coding pupils who are attending visits, college, work experience etc.
- Provided updated attendance information to Pupil Support on a weekly basis to help with monitoring pupil attendance.

Supporting Excellent Attendance

At Lesmahagow High School, we endeavour to take a supportive approach to promoting excellent attendance. We have various in-school and external supports we can call on where required.

We aim to include parents/carers and young people in deciding these supports as this is key to ensuring young people feel included, which is more likely to produce a positive response and outcome.

Examples of supports can be found in appendix 2. Although not an exhaustive list, it details a range of approaches we can adopt to support young people back to school.

Learning from Home

Where a student is unable to attend school for medical reasons, exceptional circumstances etc. we will endeavour to ensure work is provided so they are able to continue with their learning. Through the use of Show my Homework and Google Classrooms, we hope to ensure young people receive sufficient support and class work to allow them to continue progressing in line with their peers. Although our main aim to provide support digitally, alternative options can be discussed including paper copies where internet and ICT concerns render working from home impossible or difficult.

Where ICT proves a barrier to this, we will also aim to support families, where appropriate, by offering the use of ICT on a loan basis.



Recording and Monitoring Attendance - Overview

- Pupil Support teachers for Kerse, Logan and Milton House Groups have responsibility for monitoring the attendance of young people. This involves liaison with the young person and their parent/carer, members of staff, members of the multiagency team and associated partner agencies and all associated administration. There may be occasions when the attendance issue may require to be escalated to the appropriate member of the senior management team.
- Attendance is recorded more frequently on a period by period basis, and completed by a certain time during certain periods to ensure we have the most update daily attendance as possible. From this, anomalies are identified and the office staff are informed.
- Initial attendance is taken during Tutor time between 8:40-8:50am. In the event of a young person's absence, the school will endeavour to establish a reason for the absence if there has been no contact from the parent/carer or young person.
- In the event of a young person changing from present to absent during the school day, an anomaly slip is sent to the school office where a member of our Extended Leadership Team is informed who checks the school for the young person. If the young person is not present within the school, then a text to the main contact will be sent, informing them of a change in attendance and seeking a reason for this absence. We aim to send this within one hour of being notified of a change in attendance.
- The office monitor phone calls and answer machine messages in order to log details of all communications a young person's absence - date, time of call or text, letter, school staff involved, anticipated date of return.
- Where no notification of absence has been received and the contact (e.g. text) has not been responded to, this will be followed up as soon as is reasonably practicable by the young person's pupil support teacher.
- If contact has not been possible and the school has cause for concern then we may consider contacting the child or young person's emergency contacts or make contact with other agencies involved with the child or young person and/or family.
- In every case of non-attendance of care experienced or vulnerable children and young people, there should be immediate follow up. In the case of children and



young people who are care experienced, looked after at home, away from home, in kinship care or foster care, the assigned social worker should also be contacted.

- The school will aim to be pro-active and engage in dialogue as early as possible in a supportive manner with parent/carers to build communication and trust. We will not wait until absence has reached a trigger which would prompt communication in the form of a letter or phone call with parent/carers to establish the reason/cause of the absence. We aim to exercise an element of discretion as there may be occasions when the school is aware of the reason for the absence and a letter or call may not be appropriate.
- We record all attendance on our school system (SEEMiS) using a comprehensive list of codes that classifies the reason for attendance, authorised absences and unauthorised absences.

Attendance Letters

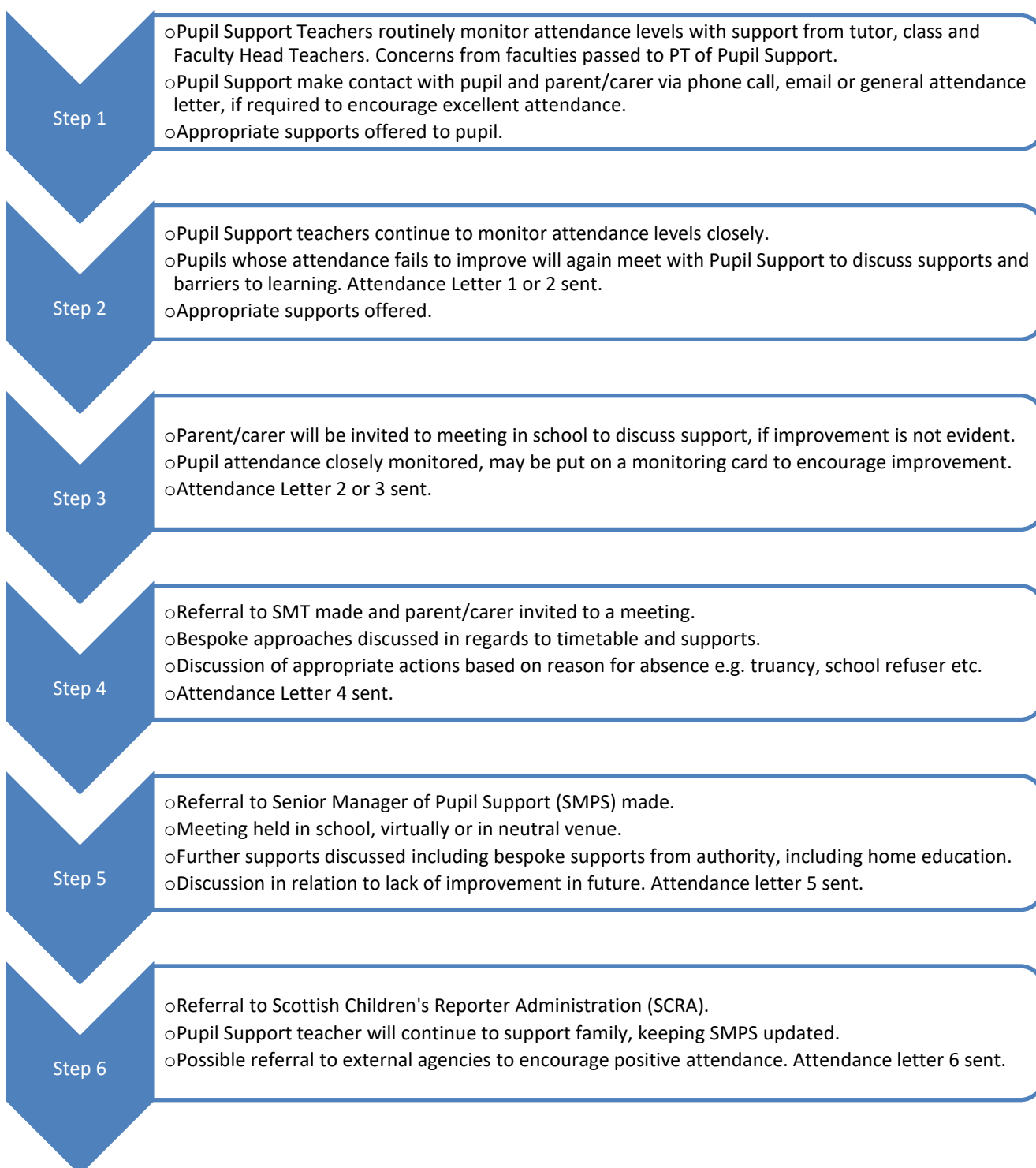
The school use the revised attendance letters as established by South Lanarkshire Council. These letters are aimed at highlighting the school's concerns in regard to pupil attendance and set out actions in order to address attendance issues and ultimately support young people back to a more regular and consistent attendance pattern.

Letter	Description
General Attendance Letter	Letter to encourage regular attendance. This is a school specific letter and not part of the suite of letters below.
Letter 1	Draws attention to deterioration in attendance; encourages improvement and contact with school.
Letter 1a	Letter acknowledging improvement and encouraging this to continue.
Letter 2	Further concerns / lack of improvement; invite parent/carer/guardian to attend meeting in school with PT/PT Pupil Support in Secondary).
Letter 3	Informal Warning; invite to attend meeting with DHT.
Letter 4	Formal Warning; invite to attend meeting with HT.
Letter 5	Local Authority Intervention; invite to attend meeting with HT/DHT and Senior Manager of Pupil Support (SMPS).
Letter 6	Local Authority Intervention and informing of further action; JAT multi-agency discussion and plan; HT/DHT and SMPS follow up meeting with parent/carer.

NB. These letters often refer to total number of absences. Please be mindful that one absence equates to one half day of school e.g. 1 full day = 2 absences (am and pm).



Our Six Step Approach



NB. Depending on historic attendance issues or knowledge of attendance related issues, the school may move between steps (both backwards and forwards) to help promote a positive change to attendance.



Review Date:

August 2025

RESPECT

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Appendix 1: Staged Intervention Framework for Managing Attendance (South)

Staged Intervention Level	Description of Action to be taken	Att Level	Secondary
<p style="text-align: center;">One</p> <p>School based intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teacher routinely monitors attendance of all pupils • Cause for concern identified and appropriate letter (or alternative form of contact) is sent, making contact with parents • Assess possible barriers to attendance and wellbeing and identify supports to overcome them (<i>Appendix A (ii) Attendance: Risks and Interventions</i>) • Complete staged intervention level 1 planning paperwork, outlining a plan to improve attendance outcomes, • Review attendance and take next step; attendance improves or move to stage 2 	<= 95%	<p>Letter 1</p> <p>Letter 1a</p> <p>Letter 2</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Two</p> <p>School based intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teacher and Principal Teacher routinely monitor attendance of all pupils with Stage 1 intervention • Cause for concern identified and appropriate letter is sent, making contact with parents • Assess possible barriers to attendance and wellbeing and identify supports to overcome them (<i>Appendix A (ii) Attendance: Risks and Interventions</i>) • Complete staged intervention level 2 planning paperwork, outlining a plan to improve attendance outcomes, • Review attendance and take next step; attendance improves or move to stage 3 	<= 90%	<p>Letter 3</p> <p>Letter 4</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Three</p> <p>Education Resources based intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of Senior Management Team and Senior Manager (Pupil Support) routinely monitor attendance of all pupils with Stage 2 interventions • Send appropriate letter, making contact with parents • Assess possible barriers to attendance and wellbeing and identify supports to overcome them (<i>Appendix A (ii) Attendance: Risks and Interventions</i>) • Request assistance from other education personnel as appropriate; Youth, Family and Community Learning Service; Education Psychological Services; Specialist Support Team; KEAR; Pathfinders Project etc. • Consider use of the School Refusal Scale (Education Psychological Services, SLC 2010) at this stage. • Complete staged intervention level 3 planning paperwork (ASP), outlining a plan to improve attendance outcomes, • Review attendance and take next step; attendance improves or move to stage 4 	<= 85%	<p>Letter 5</p>

<h1 style="text-align: center;">Four</h1> <p style="text-align: center;">Multi-Agency Intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of Senior Management Team and Senior Manager (Pupil Support) monitor and review attendance of all pupils with Stage 3 interventions. • Send appropriate letter, making contact with parents • Assess possible barriers to attendance and wellbeing and identify supports to overcome them (<i>Appendix A (ii) Attendance: Risks and Interventions</i>) • Request assistance from other agencies: social work; health; police; housing as appropriate • Complete staged intervention level 4 planning paperwork (review and update ASP), outlining a plan to improve attendance outcomes, • Review attendance and take next step; attendance improves or move to refer to Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA) 	<p style="text-align: center;"><= 80%</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Letter 6</p>
	<p>Referral to Reporter Ref: Framework for Inclusion and Equality (Inclusive Education Service, January 2018) Practice Guide 25.</p>		



Appendix 2: Attendance Risks and Supports

Risk and Interventions			
Risk Area	SHANARRI	Risk Description	Possible Supports
Transportation	SAFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty getting organised in time for school • Difficulties with other young people on way to/from school • Difficulties with transport to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft start / early finish • Check in with key staff • Nurture • Breakfast club • Social stories about getting ready for school • Provision of uniform • Provision of resources and equipment • Targets and rewards • Discussion with transport providers • Alternate routes to school

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Feeling Safe in School	SAFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety about being away from caregiver • Anxiety about travelling to school in area • Anxiety about other pupils' behaviour towards them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in with key staff • Nurture • Breakfast Club • Interval and Lunch arrangements • Clubs and activities • Safe Space in School • Buddy • Circle of Friends • Out of class early • Careful class placement • Seating arrangements in class • Pass out card • Adapted timetable
Health	HEALTHY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical/mental health issues supported by GP • Substance misuse • Poor sleep routines • Other medical issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in with key staff • Nurture • Breakfast club • Health Care Plans • Operating procedure A25 Drug Misuse in Schools • Request for Assistance (RfA) to appropriate services; for example Sleep Scotland; Addiction Action; Social Work • Safe place • Transition support
Learning	ACHIEVING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty settling to learn • Anxiety about academic levels / performance / demands • Difficulty engaging with / accepting direction from members of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in with key staff • Behaviour Additional Support Plan (BASP) • Risk Assessment • Learning Additional Support Plan • Targets and rewards

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visual timetable• Pass out card• Differentiation of appropriate learning activities• Careful class placement• Seating arrangements in class• Interval and Lunch arrangements• SSA Support• Literacy/Numeracy interventions• Adapted timetable• Clubs and Activities• Consider appropriate learning pathway and pupil subject choice• Consider level of SQA presentation
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Home	NURTURED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for family members (parent/sibling) • Transitional home placements (homelessness/LAC) • Concern for safety of family member (domestic abuse/medical/substance misuse) • Whereabouts unknown during school day • Police concern during school day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in with key staff • Provision of uniform / resources / equipment • Pass out card • Breakfast club • Nurture • RfA to appropriate services; social work; young carers; counselling services • Soft start / early finish • Consider home learning demands
Social	INCLUDED, RESPECTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties with peers (social communication / gang related) • Discrimination related issue (racism/sectarianism/gender) • Lack of confidence in abilities • Perceived bullying • Lack of intrinsic motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in with key staff • Nurture • Safe places at lunch/interval • Lunch menus in advance • RFA to appropriate services; Skills Development Scotland; use of motivational groups; police • Targets and rewards • BASP • Risk Assessment • School Support Assistant Support Differentiation • Amended / adapted timetable • Careful class placement • Seating arrangements in classes • Circle of friends • Buddy

