

Castlefield Campus Ladder Approach

(Emotional Based School Dysregulation)

Introduction

At Castlefield Campus, we understand that every pupil's journey into learning is unique. Some children face emotional barriers or mental-health challenges that make attending school difficult. The Pathways Programme and Ladder Approach offers a gentle, structured support to help pupils rebuild confidence, connection, and engagement at a pace that feels safe.

This guide explains the steps involved, what parents can expect, and how you can support your child throughout this process. Our goal is to work collaboratively with families to create a nurturing environment that encourages positive engagement.

Our aim: To work closely with families to create a nurturing, predictable environment where your child can thrive.

What Helps Your Child Feel Safe?

- Trusted adults who build connection without pressure
- Predictable routines and clear structure
- Gradual steps back into school life
- Choice and control over pace and activities
- Celebrating small wins, not just attendance
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Materials and Equipment Needed

-  **Technology items** (either a phone, laptop, headset - for steps involving remote communication)
-  **Calm home environment** (A safe, quiet space at home for communication and engagement activities)
-  **School-related items** (notebook, bag, stationery)
-  **Supportive adult with child**
-  **Contact details** for your child's keyworker, mentor, and/or tutor
-  **Personal items** your child finds comforting (to support well-being during sessions)

The Ladder Approach

A step-by-step framework based on your child's attendance and engagement.

Stage 1

1 session per week with a keyworker

- Low-pressure phone/video call or community meet-up
- Focus on interests and well-being
- No schoolwork unless your child chooses
- Your child can end the session anytime

Stage 2

2 sessions per week with a mentor

- Mentor becomes main contact
- Personalised mentoring programme
- Keyworker continues PSHEC support

Stage 3

3 sessions per week with a tutor

- Tutor introduced
- Gentle re-introduction to Maths, English, and sometimes Science

Stage 4

Increased sessions including onsite or small-group offsite learning **(where appropriate, or a move to stage 6)**

- Visit to a quiet safe space in school
- Supported session in a low-stimulus classroom
- Access to calm room for regulation

Stage 5

More onsite learning and enrichment activities **(where appropriate, or a move to stage 6)**

- Gradual increase in lessons
- Reduced adult support as confidence grows

Stage 6

Access to vocational learning and mentoring provisions

- More structured learning
- Practical Learning Pathway

Parental Engagement

How We Support You and Your Child

- Half-termly review meetings
- Personalised support plans updated five times a year
- Regular communication with keyworker, mentor, or tutor

How You Can Help at Home

- Encourage participation gently and without pressure
- Provide a calm space for calls or sessions
- Share your child's interests with staff
- Celebrate small steps forward
- Inform us of any changes in your child's needs

If Problems Arise

- Reluctance to engage: Remind your child they can end sessions anytime
- Technology issues: Contact school for alternatives
- Attendance not improving: We will review and adapt the plan
- Concerns: Speak to the keyworker or safeguarding lead
- Distress during sessions: Let staff know so support can be adjusted

Our Commitment

We are here to support your child's emotional well-being and learning journey every step of the way. The Ladder Approach ensures that progress is gentle, respectful, and tailored to your child's needs.