



Stony Dean School

*Working to Inspire*

## Stony Dean School Link Programme Policy

**To be used in conjunction with the DFE School Attendance Guidance May 2022  
and DFE Improving School Attendance: support for schools and authorities  
updated August 2022**

Approved by	Head Teacher
Last Reviewed	01/09/2024
Next review	01/09/2026



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Stony Dean recognises that there is a growing number of young people who struggle to attend school. We feel it is important that as a school we offer options to help parents ensure that their child's educational needs are being met but for these young people it is difficult to achieve this inside the school environment as it is the school environment that triggers the pupils' anxiety.

The Stony Dean Link Programme is an innovative intervention to provide an alternative approach to access to education. It is an approach that has been used successfully for a number of young people who have had a prolonged history of emotionally based school avoidance, and for pupils who have been highly anxious about transition into a new setting or provision like Stony Dean School.

We work with parents to provide a programme of education that is fully personalised and delivered across a range of alternative settings through joint professional working with CAMHS, Social Care and other agencies to support the child to engage with meaningful pursuits to that child outside the home environment. Access to accredited qualifications is embedded within the delivery of the programme across the range of abilities where possible.

This programme gives opportunities for learning outside the classroom, with the aim of managing the pupils back into the school environment or other learning environments depending upon the pupils and their needs.

This programme may also include a reduced timetable to manage points of high anxiety and is likely to vary over a period of time depending on the circumstances for each young person. Key outcomes are for each young person to identify and manage their anxiety, and develop their independence and life-balance.

The Link Programme is not a legal right. It is undertaken at the discretion of the head teacher and to make it work parents, the Head Teacher, class teachers and all professionals involved need to work together. Experience has shown us that there is a need to be patient, to be respectful of each other's perspective and to keep an open mind to create an individualised, personalised and joined-up programme which puts the ever-changing needs of that child at its core.

We establish a clear rationale on a case by case basis as to why this option is appropriate for each individual pupil and obtain clear evidence that the approach is working for that pupil.

This process is led in our school by a specialist ASC teacher who has experience of multi-disciplinary work and has established especially close support from CAMHS.

The Deputy Head with responsibility for Teaching and Learning takes the lead in tracking and monitoring the use of key classroom strategies and works with the senior leadership team and middle leaders to identify staff training needs. In collaboration with the Head of Therapy and the therapy team, the Head of Teaching and Learning will identify appropriate therapeutic approaches that can be adapted or applied to the classroom setting to further develop communication, interaction and academic skills.



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The Deputy Head with responsibility for Safeguarding and other vulnerable pupils such as those with Pupil Premium Grant, being a child looked after or the child of service personnel takes the lead in tracking and monitoring the progress of those pupils and works closely with the Deputy Head with responsibility for Teaching and Learning and the Head of Therapy to ensure that all the needs of these pupils are met with appropriate provision and they can make good progress. The in-house training programme facilitates staff knowledge and skills in understanding how best to support pupils and to ensure they can achieve to their potential.

Teaching Expertise and Training. The school employs and has access to a range of professionals to support the learning in the classroom. We have numerous qualified classroom teachers, who all have had and continue to have access to an extensive CPD package. We employ ASD Specialists, Speech and Language therapists and counsellors. We also have access to CAMHS, OT, specialist teaching service (including support for children, with visual impairment hearing impairment) educational consultants and educational psychologists. Teachers have a variety of different backgrounds and experiences.