# St Andrew's Primary School

# Attendance Policy 2024/25

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| **Written by:** Dan King in consultation | **Date:** September 2025 |
| **Next reviewed:** | **Date: September 2027**<br><br>**Date:** |

**Attendance Policy – St Andrew's CE Primary School**

**Your school attendance champion is: Mr Dan King**

Attendance at St Andrew's CE Primary School:

**Introduction**

We strive for all our children to feel safe, loved, inspired and ready for the next step of their education. To achieve this, we aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time. This enables our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities we offer. Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all pupils.

It's recognised that some pupils, for a variety of reasons, find it harder than others to attend school regularly. This policy sets out how we will work in partnership with pupils, parents and other professional agencies to remove barriers and support regular attendance.

**Our Aims:**

- To set clear expectations and aspirations that all children attend school regularly and on time.
- To improve children's attainment and progress through good attendance.
- To make sure that everyone understands why attendance is a priority.
- To ensure effective tracking of attendance identifies any concerns or patterns.
- To work effectively with parents, pupils and other agencies to improve attendance.
- To build trusting relationships between home and school, and with other agencies, to address and remove any barriers.

**We are committed to:**

- an inclusive and welcoming learning environment;
- an orderly learning environment where children feel safe;
- building positive relationships with parents, other agencies and wider community;
- an open-door policy where staff are approachable and understand the barriers to attendance;
- training our staff to recognise emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA);
- monitoring attendance and recognising when intervention is required;
- closing the gap in attendance for our most vulnerable pupils;
- Team Around the Family/Early Help meetings to support families where necessary;

- having high expectations for all our school community;
- high quality teaching and learning;
- providing a broad and balanced curriculum, with a range of resources to support and challenge learning;
- encourage our pupils to flourish (as individuals) through providing spiritual, moral and cultural understanding and opportunities;
- inspiring our pupils by sharing celebrations from inside and outside of school.

**Attendance is Key to Success**

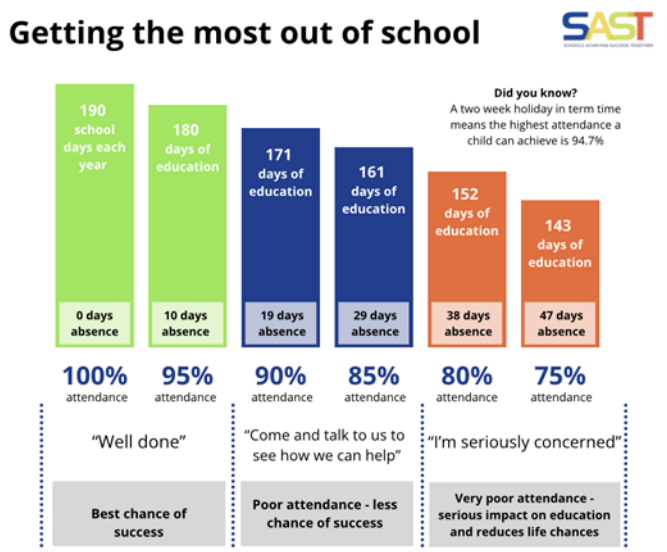
**Learning** at our school is inclusive, interactive and sequential. The knowledge we expect children to retain is cumulative – knowledge and skills built over time. Children who aren't attending school regularly develop gaps in their learning. Being absent or persistently late also disrupts learning for the rest of the class whilst these children are reintegrated.

**Safeguarding** each child is everyone's responsibility. Children can be considered at risk if they don't attend school regularly. To promote welfare and life opportunities for all pupils we promote: attendance, positive relationships (Behaviour Policy), health and safety, and access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

**Children who don't attend school regularly will be considered a safeguarding concern.** Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies. They should consider the guidance issued by the Secretary of State regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and pupils under the age of 18.

**Attending school regularly and on time** positively impacts progress and attainment and thus the best life chances for our children. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that, 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive full –time education suitable to:

(a) age, ability and aptitude;
(b) to any special educational needs, he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.'




## The School Day and Punctuality

School starts at **08:45am**.

School finishes at **3:15pm**.

Children that arrive **after 08:50 but before 9am** will be marked as late (code L).

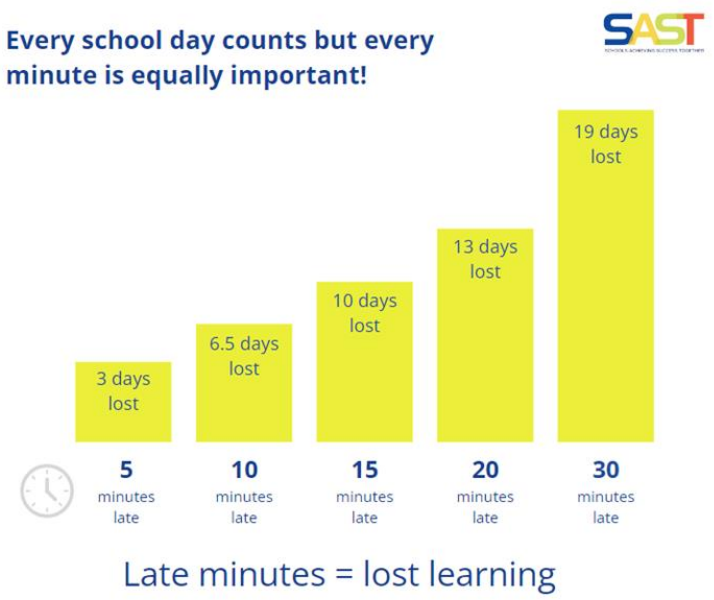
**Registration closes at 9am**. Children arriving after this time must attend the school office, be signed in and provide a reason for the lateness.

In the absence of a satisfactory reason, the register will be marked as an unauthorised late absence (code u). Depending on time of arrival, this constitutes a late mark (u) for the whole morning or afternoon session.

**Note: legal action can be taken for continued 'u code' absences.**

Pupils arriving late will be escorted to class by an available member of staff and supported to settle into their learning.

Being late = lost learning, which has a negative impact on progress and attainment.




**Working in Partnership**

**We expect the following from all our pupils:**

• To attend school regularly

• To arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day, ready to learn.

• To talk to a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school

**Celebration and Expectation**

We believe that celebrating attendance is key; whether our children have met our goals of attending school every day or have made great strides to attend regularly in spite of contributing factors outside of their control.

We will also share whole school attendance information in our fortnightly INSPIRE newsletter to update parents and carers and to keep everyone informed. Teachers will share pupils' individual figures for attendance at Parent Meetings in the Autumn and Spring Term. This will then be published and shared at the end of Year in each child's End of School year Report.

**We expect the following from parents and carers:**

• To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
• To notify the school of your child's absence- on each morning of absence and provide specific reason for the absence.
• To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day
• To talk to a member of school staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school
• Inform the School of up-to-date contact numbers and details.

**Schools are required to hold more than one emergency contact per child (KCSIE 2024). Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.**

- To notify the school of your child's absence- on each morning of absence and provide a specific reason for the absence.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day
- To talk to a member of school staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school

**Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:**

•Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason;
•Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
•To inform parents if a pupil's attendance falls below expected levels
•To listen and understand the barriers to school attendance and offer appropriate support and agree appropriate plans to improve attendance.
•Follow up support if needed.
•When a child is absent and the school cannot contact parents, those leading schools/responsible for attendance matters or safeguarding, will continue to try and make contact. Where necessary (and by the third day of absence at the latest), they will make a welfare visit to the home address to confirm the safety of the child. A record of attempts and contact will be made on the school's system.

**It is the requirement of school to inform the Local Authority when a child has 15 days absence due to illness, cumulative or consecutive - or when it is believed they will be unable to attend (The "section 19" duty)**

**Roles and Responsibilities for Attendance Champion:**

•St Andrew's CE Primary School has an Attendance Champion, a named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues.
•Members of school staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have responsibility for attendance issues in school.
•If you have a concern about your child's attendance your first point of contact is Mr Dan King. You can make contact through the school office on 01747 811500 or alternatively through our email at office@standrewsfontmell.co.uk
•Attendance matters are reviewed by the Head of School, SENCO, Executive Headteacher and Office administrator.
•Attendance issues are reported on a minimum termly basis, to the Academy Committee (Governing body).
•School will liaise with the Local Authority Attendance Support Team at a minimum, termly. We also are well supported by our Academy SAST Directors of Inclusion and Safeguarding.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

| Role | Responsibilities |
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| **Academy Committee** | • Ensure compliance with relevant legislation (e.g. pupil registration, attendance registers)<br>• Reviewing school attendance<br>• Agreeing and Reviewing School Policy |
| **Executive Head Teacher** | • Warm welcome<br>• Compliance with relevant legislation<br>• Data analysis and Strategic Plan for attendance.<br>• Line management<br>• Overview of clear and escalating interventions<br>• Responsibility for links with SAST and the LA Statutory Team.<br>• Attendance at attendance panels |
| **Head of School/ Attendance Champion** | • Warm welcome<br>• Compliance with relevant legislation<br>• Data analysis |

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| | • Implementing school policy and leading on a whole school approach.<br>• Meetings with LA Inclusion Officer to review individuals/families and concerns<br>• Authorising/unauthorising absences<br>• Leave of absence request<br>• Line management<br>• Contact with parents<br>• Overview of clear and escalating interventions<br>• Evaluation of interventions.<br>• Promoting school attendance.<br>• Responsibility for links with Executive Head Teacher and where appropriate SAST and the LA Statutory Team.<br>• Attendance at attendance panels<br>• Designated Safeguarding Lead |
| **Senior Leadership Team** | • Warm welcome<br>• Review attendance matters<br>• Implementing school policy and leading on a whole school approach<br>• In the absence of the Head of School the SENCO will continue Attendance Champion responsibilities |
| **Class Teachers** | • Warm welcome<br>• Marking registers<br>• Promoting importance of regular school's attendance through rewards and parent updates<br>• Providing early warning of attendance concerns<br>• Positive role modelling<br>• Following policy and procedures consistently<br>• Share attendance % at Autumn and Spring Term Parent Evenings. |

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| | • Point of contact for parents to discuss concerns |
| **Office Manager** | • Warm welcome<br>• Part of Attendance Team - implementing whole school approach<br>• Supporting meetings with LA Inclusion Officer to review individuals/families and concerns<br>• Part of Attendance Team - implementing whole school approach<br>• Coordinating School Office Team<br>• Supporting the administration of school attendance letters, leave of absence letters etc. |

**Procedures**

Our school procedures follow the expectations set out by the Department for Education in the guidance School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2024).

Our procedures are based around the principles and stages of:

•Preventing poor attendance

•Early intervention and Early Help to address early patterns of poor attendance and agree ways to improve

•Targeted interventions (including Early Help and Formal interventions) for those children who are persistently absent or severely absent

•Understanding barriers to individuals' attendance and agree individual plans for children with specific needs.

•Formal Statutory Interventions where support has not been effective or engaged with.

Where attendance has deteriorated rapidly, there are concerning patterns of absence, unauthorised absences, or parents have not responded to concerns raised, a referral may be made straight to the Dorset County Council Inclusion Officer for the attendance process for addressing attendance concerns and where appropriate legal action including the issue of penalty notices will be followed.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly - in many

instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issues such as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.

School staff play a critical role in communicating this expectation to parents. We will work alongside families to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible.

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupils, but additional support may need to be provided.

**In developing this support, the usual processes relevant to any attendance case apply:**

• Understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family
• Working in partnership with the pupil and family to put in-school support in place and working with other the local authority and other agencies where external support is needed (and available)
•Regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs.

Penalties and Protocol relating to specific local authorities can be found here:
Dorset - School attendance and absence - Dorset Council
Somerset - School attendance and children missing education (somerset.gov.uk)

| **Absence** | **Procedure** |
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| **Illness** | Contact School Office - Open 8:30am to 4pm<br><br>- Phone and report absence via answer phone service before 8:30am or speak with a member of the office team after 8:30 am |

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| | 01747 811500 or office@Standrewsfontmell.co.uj<br><br>Not all illness requires an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, ear aches we would not expect children to be absent. However, when a parent makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school, they should follow the above absence process.<br><br>If a child is absent from school parents should contact the school on the first day of absence to inform the school of the reason for absence. Parents are expected to maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.<br><br>It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorised11 that absence. In the majority of cases, a parent's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested. |
| **Leave of absence request** | Parents are required to complete a Term Time Leave of Absence Request Form in advance of planned absence taking place.<br><br>We ask that this is at least four weeks before the required absence, where possible, to enable the school to consider and respond to the request.<br><br>Parents must detail and evidence the exceptional circumstance of the request.<br><br>In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and subsequent Amendments, SAST Schools are unable to authorised11 any period of absence unless it is for exceptional circumstances.<br><br>If leave is not 11authorised and the parent proceeds to take their child out of school, the absence will be marked as u11nauthorised. Although such absence may be u11nauthorised, it is better that |

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| | the school knows where the child is, and that they are safe rather than missing.<br><br>Parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority for 10 sessions (1 day =2 session) of unauthorised absence in a 12 week period.12 |
| **Medical Appointments** | Parents should avoid making routine medical appointments and dental appointments during the school day. In the majority of cases, appointments can be made outside of the school day/during the school holidays.<br><br>Where appointments have to be taken during the school day, only the time for the appointment and travel to and from will be classed as an authorised absence.<br><br>Pupils are expected to return to school for the remainder of the day/attend school prior to the appointment.<br><br>Parents are required to provide a copy of an appointment letter or card prior to the day of the appointment. |
| **Other Reasons for Absences:** | Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school on each occasion.<br><br>Notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons.<br><br>The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or childminding.<br><br>If we do not receive notification of your child's absence, it will be assumed that your child is on their way to school and if they do not arrive, the absence will be followed up accordingly.<br><br>We will contact you by telephone if your child fails to arrive at school after the register has closed and no parental contact has been made. If, at the time the attendance register is taken, an absence is recorded in that register using the code N. We will ensure |

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| | that reasonable steps are taken to establish the circumstances of your child's absence and that the register is amended within five school days. |
| **Religious Observance** | We recognise that children of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance and that this may be a reason given for a leave of absence request.<br><br>Where a day of religious observance falls during school time and has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child belongs - the absence from school will be authorised. Parents are requested to give advance notice if they intend their child to be absent.<br><br>Evidence from the religious body may be required. |

**Legislation, statutory guidance, linked SAST policies:**

Our School attendance policy complies with the legal frameworks, statutory requirements and relevant guidance laid out in the following:

- Working together to improve school attendance (2024)
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (2024)
- Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance (2024)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2024)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance (2016)
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2015)
- Home to school travel and transport (2014)
- School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures (2020)
- Responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (2023)
- Alternative provision (2013)
- Common Transfer File (2019)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Children and Families Act 2014 (legislation.gov.uk)

Our School attendance policy reflects and references the following statutory guidance and SAST policies:

• Keeping children safe in education 2023

• Behaviour in Schools Advice for headteachers and school staff (2022)

• SAST Inclusion, Suspension and Exclusion Policy

• SAST Equality and Diversity Policy

• SAST Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy

• SAST Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy

• SAST SEND Policy

• SAST Behaviour Principles

• School safeguarding policies

• SAST Guidance on Reduced Timetables and Flexi-schooling

• Any guidance from a school's own local authority relating to Children Missing in Education (CME), Children Missing out on Education (CMOOE), penalty notices, suspension and exclusion.