



FELIXSTOWE
INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
FRIENDSHIP THROUGH EDUCATION

Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 Senior Attendance Champion (Deputy Principal)

The school attendance officer:

- Setting a clear vision and strategy to improve and maintain high attendance.
- Implementing and monitoring systems to identify and address absenteeism.
- Ensuring consistent application of attendance systems across all staff.
- Conducting regular attendance data analysis to support pupils at risk of persistent or severe absenteeism.
- Working in partnership with families, school staff, and external agencies to address barriers and provide targeted support.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of attendance improvement strategies and adapting them as necessary.

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for daily attendance recording using the correct codes on Google Drive. Teachers are expected to communicate attendance concerns to the Attendance Officer promptly, to facilitate early intervention for pupils showing patterns of absence.

3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

3.6 Collaborative Family Support

Working closely with families is central to attendance improvement. Felixstowe staff engage families early to identify and address attendance barriers, facilitating attendance contracts where necessary. We maintain consistent collaboration with families to support attendance as a shared responsibility and to minimise the need for formal attendance actions.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent - authorised
- Absent - unauthorised

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Day pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken between 8.30 am and 9am. The register for the second session will be taken between 12.40pm and 12.50pm.

4.1.1 Daily Attendance Data Sharing

As per the DfE's 2024 guidance, state schools are required to submit daily attendance data to the DfE and local authorities. Although this policy does not apply to independent schools, Felixstowe International College recognises the importance of attendance data for student welfare and academic progress. Therefore, we maintain comprehensive attendance records to track attendance trends and support students at risk of persistent absence.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7), by completing the 'absence notification' form on My School App. Boarders need to inform the house mother on duty/Deputy Principal of any illness and get a permission to miss lessons.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Pupils must notify the school of any ill health as soon as practically possible. If lessons are missed without notifying a member of staff, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment by completing the 'absence notification' form on My School App.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code and dealt with according to the school disciplinary system.

Staff responsible for registration is to search the building to look for any boarding pupil who does not come to register. If the pupil has simply forgotten, he/she will be marked as late. If he/she wither refuses to go to a lesson for any reason or is unwell without having informed a member of staff, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence, using the appropriate code.

For day pupils, staff responsible for registration is to call the parent to find out whether it is an unauthorized absent or running late.

Ongoing punctuality issues will be dealt with according to the school disciplinary system.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. Unauthorised absence will be dealt with on a daily basis and any concern will be discussed at the leadership meetings to determine the next course of action.

4.6 Reporting to parents

Report to parents on their child's attendance record will be sent out termly as part of the written end-of-term report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as

- Cultural issues for families returning to their homeland.
- Wedding/Funeral of immediate family member
- Interviews for university applications in home country
- Medical condition that can only be treated in home country
- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational

boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- Study leave
- Flexi-schooling request

Considerations that are not deemed 'exceptional'

- Cost of the flight/holiday is less in term time
- Prolonged holiday

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Unauthorised absence will be monitored carefully and be dealt with as early as possible through letter to the pupils' parents/carers and/or meeting with the pupil's parents/carers.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The legal sanctions do not apply to this school as Felixstowe International College is an Independent school. However, the above information is left on this policy to inform the parents the importance of good attendance and the parents' responsibility.

The school has the right to withdraw scholarships if unauthorised absence level goes up above 10% and/or withdraw a pupil for persistent unauthorised absences above 10%.

Although legal penalties do not apply to Felixstowe International College, the importance of attendance and parental responsibility remains critical.

For awareness, the updated fine structure for state schools now sets penalties at £80 if paid within 21 days and £160 if paid within 28 days. The College reserves the right to withdraw scholarships if unauthorised absence exceeds 10% and may consider withdrawing enrolment for persistent unauthorised absences above this threshold.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school will monitor pupils' attendance and discuss any concerns at an early stage during the leadership and staff meetings, acknowledge positive improvements at the achievement assembly at the end of every term. The school will work closely with the parents in informing any issues and also supporting those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

6.1 Attendance Support Hubs

To address attendance challenges, the DfE has introduced attendance support hubs for state schools. While independent schools like Felixstowe International College are not mandated to join, we remain committed to best practices for attendance and liaise with local services to support students facing attendance challenges.

In alignment with national standards, Felixstowe International College observes developments from the National Attendance Ambassador to continuously enhance attendance strategies and improve student engagement.

6.2 Support for Pupils with Health Conditions or SEND

For students with long-term health conditions or SEND, Felixstowe works in partnership with families to remove barriers to regular attendance. This may include tailored adjustments, such as phased returns, timetable flexibility, or additional support services. Any adjustments will be regularly reviewed to meet evolving needs and ensure equitable access to full-time education.

7. Attendance monitoring

The deputy principal monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to complete the 'absence notification' form on My School App by 9am if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2). The pupil's parent/carer is expected to complete the same form each day their child is ill.

Daily Absence Protocol:

If the school has not been informed of a pupil's absence by 9:00am, a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will endeavour to contact a parent or carer by telephone to confirm the reason for absence. This procedure is in place for safeguarding reasons - that is, to ensure that every child's whereabouts are known and that they are safe and accounted for.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this. Students who are absent for more than 15 days due to illness must be referred to the local authority.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected and stored on the school Google drive and used for internal purposes to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7.1 Enhanced Data Analysis and Monitoring

Weekly data analysis is conducted to identify both individual attendance trends and school-wide patterns. Data insights guide targeted interventions and support planning to address specific cohorts and individual students at risk of persistent or severe absenteeism. Analysis extends beyond simple attendance rates to examine trends by year group, day, or other relevant factors.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum one year by the Deputy Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8.1 Communication of Attendance Policy

To ensure transparency, Felixstowe International College will distribute and review this attendance policy at the start of each academic year and whenever updates occur. This policy will be available on the school website and is discussed with students and families to reinforce shared expectations on attendance.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Present	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
Present	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
Late	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of

		time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
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