



FELIXSTOWE
INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
FRIENDSHIP THROUGH EDUCATION

Attendance Policy

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Signed:	Principal
Signed:	Chair of Governors
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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regard to school attendance through a whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils, day and boarding
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance, and reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families – including families overseas and educational guardians – to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also support parents/carers 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

As an independent school, Felixstowe International College is required by paragraph 15 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 to maintain an admission register and an attendance register in accordance with the pupil registration regulations. This policy is based on the following legislation and guidance, so far as it applies to independent schools:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996 (including section 434 on registration and section 444 on parents' duty to secure regular attendance)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, which replaced the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and its amendments from August 2024, and which govern the keeping of the admission and attendance registers, the national attendance codes, leave of absence, register retention and returns to the local authority
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, paragraph 15
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Equality Act 2010
- The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (May 2026), in particular Standards 11.2 (arrangements for boarders' collection and transport), 20.5 (staff knowing boarders' whereabouts) and 20.6 (boarders going missing)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025) and the DfE guidance 'Children Missing Education'
- DfE guidance 'Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools'

The DfE's statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' (statutory for state-funded schools from August 2024) and its penalty notice framework do not bind independent schools; however, the College has regard to that guidance as good practice and this policy adopts its approach where relevant. The College is inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) against the Independent School Standards and the NMS, rather than under Ofsted's state-school framework.

As a licensed Student sponsor, the College also complies with Home Office (UKVI) sponsor duties in respect of pupils who hold Child Student or Student visas, including duties to monitor attendance and report to UKVI where a sponsored pupil fails to enrol, is withdrawn, or is significantly absent without authorisation, within the timescales set out in the sponsor guidance.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Advisory Board

The Advisory Board, on behalf of the proprietor, is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis, setting high expectations of leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers, regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data, and holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy. It also ensures that staff receive training on attendance, including the school's legal requirements for keeping registers and the understanding that absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues.

3.2 The Principal

The Principal (the headteacher for the purposes of DfE guidance) is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Advisory Board
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Deciding requests for leave of absence during term time (section 5)
- Ensuring the local authority is sent the returns required by the 2024 registration regulations (section 7.2) and that UKVI sponsor reporting duties are met
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance

Note: the power to issue penalty notices for unauthorised absence rests with state-funded school leaders, local authorities and the police; it does not apply to independent schools, and the Principal does not issue penalty notices (see section 5.3).

3.3 Senior Attendance Champion (Deputy Principal)

The Deputy Principal acts as the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and is responsible for:

- Setting a clear vision and strategy to improve and maintain high attendance
- Implementing and monitoring systems to identify and address absenteeism, and ensuring their consistent application across all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data, conducting regular analysis, and supporting pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence
- Building close and productive relationships with pupils, families, educational guardians and external agencies to address barriers, including creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Evaluating the effectiveness of attendance improvement strategies and adapting them as necessary

3.4 Boarding staff

House staff (including the house mother/houseparents on duty) are responsible for knowing the whereabouts of boarders in their charge at all times (NMS 20.5), recording boarders who are unwell and liaising with the Deputy Principal about permission to miss lessons, operating the signing in/out system for boarders leaving the site, and implementing the school's missing pupil procedures without delay if a boarder's whereabouts cannot be established (NMS 20.6). Boarding staff share attendance-relevant information with academic staff so that concerns arising in the house or in lessons are known in both settings.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance at every registration session on a daily basis, using the correct national codes (Appendix 1), on the school's electronic registration system, and for communicating attendance concerns to the Senior Attendance Champion promptly to facilitate early intervention for pupils showing patterns of absence.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff take calls and absence notifications from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis, record them on the school system, and pass safeguarding-relevant information to the DSL.

3.7 Parents/carers and educational guardians

Where this policy refers to a parent, it includes all those with parental responsibility and those with day-to-day care of the child. Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, on time
- Notify the school of the reason for any absence by 9.00am on the first day of absence, and each subsequent day, using the 'absence notification' form on My School App or by telephoning the school office
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number, and keep contact details (including overseas contact details and guardian details) up to date
- Make medical and dental appointments outside the school day where possible
- Apply for any term-time leave of absence in advance (section 5.1) and keep to any attendance agreements made with the school

For international boarders, the appointed educational guardian acts as the UK point of contact, and the school will liaise with guardians about absence, travel and collection arrangements in line with the guardianship agreement. Arrangements for the collection and transport of boarders at the start and end of term, and for any temporary absence, are agreed with parents/carers so that it is clear who is responsible (NMS 11.2).

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend every timetabled session, on time. Boarders must inform the house mother on duty or the Deputy Principal of any illness and obtain permission before missing lessons; day pupils must ensure their parent/carer has notified the school. If lessons are missed without a member of staff having been notified, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We keep an electronic attendance register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, and place all pupils on this register. We take the register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. Using the national attendance codes (Appendix 1), it records whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending a place other than the school for approved educational activity
- Absent (and, for pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised)
- Unable to attend because of unavoidable causes

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; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

In line with the 2024 regulations, we keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made (previously 3 years under the 2006 regulations), and thereafter in accordance with our records retention schedule.

Day pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day. The register for the first session is taken at 8.50am and kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session is taken at 12.40pm and kept open until 12.50pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am, or as soon as practically possible, by completing the 'absence notification' form on My School App (see also section 7), and on each subsequent day of absence.

Boarders must inform the house mother on duty or the Deputy Principal of any illness and obtain permission to miss lessons; the house staff will record this and inform the school office so the register is coded correctly.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental ill health 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. Parents may find the NHS guidance 'Is my child too ill for school?' helpful when deciding whether to keep their child at home.

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. For boarders, routine medical, dental and optometric appointments are arranged through the house staff in line with the boarders' health and wellbeing arrangements.

The pupil's parent/carer must apply for any other term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Section 5 explains which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late before the register has closed will be marked as late, using code L, and dealt with according to the school disciplinary system. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked with code U (unauthorised) unless an unavoidable cause applies. Ongoing punctuality issues will be dealt with according to the school disciplinary system.

If a boarder does not come to registration, staff responsible for registration will arrange an immediate search of the buildings and liaise with house staff; if the boarder has simply forgotten, they will be marked as late. If the boarder refuses to go to a lesson or is unwell without having informed a member of staff, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. If a boarder's whereabouts cannot be established, the missing pupil procedure is followed without delay (NMS 20.6). For day pupils, staff responsible for registration will call the parent/carer to establish whether the pupil is absent or running late.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the pupil's parent/carer (and, for boarders, check with house staff) on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason – a member of the Senior Leadership Team will endeavour to make contact by telephone if the school has not been informed by 9.00am. This procedure is in place for safeguarding reasons: to ensure that every child's whereabouts are known and that they are safe and accounted for
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not, and identify the correct attendance code, entering it no later than 5 working days after the session
- Continue to contact the parent/carer each day the absence continues without explanation
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their family to improve attendance, and make referrals to wider services where needed
- Deal with unauthorised absence on a daily basis and discuss any concern at leadership meetings to determine the next course of action

4.6 Reporting to parents

A report on each child's attendance record will be sent to parents/carers termly as part of the written end-of-term report, and the school will contact parents/carers between reports where attendance becomes a concern. Where possible we frame absence in days and learning missed, rather than percentages alone.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Leave of absence during term time

Under the 2024 registration regulations, a leave of absence may only be granted where an application has been made in advance, and either the request falls within the specific circumstances listed in the regulations or the Principal considers there to be exceptional circumstances. The regulations' specific circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad (code C1)
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution, including universities (code J1)
- Study leave for public examinations (code S)

- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable agreed as part of a support plan (code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (code C)

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion, including its length. Reflecting our international community, the College treats the following as capable of amounting to 'exceptional circumstances', considered case by case on their specific facts:

- Significant cultural or family obligations requiring a return to a pupil's home country, such as the wedding or funeral of an immediate family member
- A medical condition that can only be treated in the pupil's home country (with supporting evidence)
- Family or medical emergencies
- Visa, immigration or consular appointments that cannot be scheduled outside school time

The following are not deemed exceptional: the cost of flights or holidays being lower in term time; prolonged holidays; or extending school holidays at either end of term. It is unlikely that leave will be granted for a family holiday. Requests should be submitted as far in advance as possible, and the Principal may require evidence in support.

5.2 Other authorised absence

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness, including mental ill health, and medical/dental appointments (sections 4.2 and 4.3)
- 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
- A pupil who is a 'mobile child' whose parent is travelling for occupational purposes (code T) – this covers families with no fixed abode whose trade or business requires travel from place to place, including Traveller and Showman families
- Suspension or exclusion where no alternative provision has been made (code E)

Approved educational activity away from the school site – such as school trips and visits (V), supervised sporting activity (P), work experience (W), other approved educational activity (B) or attendance at another school where the pupil is dual registered (D) – is recorded as attending a place other than the school, not as absence. A pupil unable to attend because of unavoidable causes (such as widespread travel disruption or unexpected school closure) is recorded using the appropriate Y code (Appendix 1).

5.3 Legal sanctions and the school's own measures

In state-funded schools, the local authority, the police or the school can issue penalty notices to parents for unauthorised absence of a child of compulsory school age. Under the national framework in force since August 2024, the threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks, and a first penalty notice is £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 28 days; a second notice within 3 years is £160 with no discount, and no third notice may be issued within 3 years.

These penalty notice arrangements do not apply to Felixstowe International College as an independent school, and the College does not issue penalty notices. The information above is included so that parents understand the importance placed nationally on regular attendance and parents' legal responsibility under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which applies to the parents of every child of compulsory school age, however educated.

The College's own measures are as follows: the College reserves the right to withdraw scholarships if a pupil's unauthorised absence exceeds 10%, and may, following the warnings and meetings described in this policy and in accordance with the parent contract, withdraw a place for persistent unauthorised absence above that threshold. For pupils sponsored under a Child Student or Student visa, the College is also obliged to report significant unauthorised absence to UKVI, which may affect the pupil's immigration permission; parents will always be warned before this stage is reached.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school monitors pupils' attendance and discusses any concerns at an early stage during leadership and staff meetings, and acknowledges positive improvements at the achievement assembly at the end of every term. The school works closely with parents/carers and educational guardians, informing them of any issues and supporting those children identified as being in need of intervention and support. Good attendance is promoted through the school's ethos of 'friendship through education', tutor time, assemblies and rewards, so that pupils are recognised for high attendance and not just sanctioned for poor attendance.

6.1 Collaborative family support

Working closely with families is central to attendance improvement. Staff engage families early to identify and address attendance barriers, facilitating voluntary attendance agreements where helpful. We maintain consistent collaboration with families – including overseas parents, through the guardian where appropriate – to support attendance as a shared responsibility and to minimise the need for formal action. While the DfE's attendance support hubs and national attendance framework are aimed at state schools, the College follows developments in national best practice and liaises with local services to support pupils facing attendance challenges.

6.2 Support for pupils with health conditions or SEND

For pupils with long-term physical or mental health conditions or SEND, the College works in partnership with families to remove barriers to regular attendance. This may include tailored adjustments, such as phased returns, timetable flexibility (including a temporary part-time timetable under code C2, always time-limited and kept under review), or additional support services. Any adjustments will be regularly reviewed to meet evolving needs and ensure equitable access to full-time education. Where a pupil's absence relates to mental ill health, the school has regard to the DfE guidance on mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance.

6.3 Pupils returning after a lengthy absence

Pupils returning after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence are supported back into school through a return conversation with their tutor or houseparent, help to catch up on missed work, and, where needed, a reintegration plan agreed with the pupil and their parents/carers.

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 9.00am if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (section 4.2), and to complete the same form each day their child is ill.

7.1 Daily absence protocol and data analysis

If the school has not been informed of a pupil's absence by 9.00am, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will endeavour to contact a parent or carer by telephone to confirm the reason for absence. This procedure is in place for safeguarding reasons – to ensure that every child's

whereabouts are known and that they are safe and accounted for. For boarders, this check is made immediately with house staff.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer to discuss the reasons. 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. Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school; any pupil approaching this level is treated as a safeguarding priority.

Pupil-level absence data is collected and stored securely on the school's system and used for internal purposes to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether 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. Weekly data analysis identifies both individual attendance trends and school-wide patterns; analysis extends beyond simple attendance rates to examine trends by year group, day of week, boarding/day status and other relevant factors, and insights guide targeted intervention and support planning.

7.2 Returns to the local authority and UKVI

In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and 'Children Missing Education' guidance, the school (as an independent school) will:

- Notify the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the admission register outside standard transition times, and provide the required information, including the grounds for any deletion – particularly important in our context, where international pupils may join or leave mid-year
- Provide the local authority with details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been absent without authorisation for a continuous period of 10 school days
- Refer to the local authority pupils who are, or will be, absent for more than 15 school days (consecutively or cumulatively) due to sickness, so that suitable arrangements for their education can be considered
- Report to UKVI, within the timescales in the sponsor guidance, sponsored pupils who fail to enrol or whose attendance triggers the reporting duties of a licensed Student sponsor

Independent schools are not required to submit daily attendance data to the DfE under the 2024 arrangements for state schools; the College nevertheless maintains comprehensive attendance records, of equivalent quality, to track trends and support pupils at risk of persistent absence.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE or the local authority is updated, and as a minimum every year, by the Deputy Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Principal and the Advisory Board. To ensure transparency, the College distributes and reviews this attendance policy at the start of each academic year and whenever updates occur. The policy is published on the school website and is discussed with pupils 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 (including missing pupil procedures)
- Behaviour policy

- Admissions policy (admission register)
- Boarders' health and wellbeing policy / supporting pupils with medical conditions
- SEND policy and Accessibility Plan
- Statement of boarding principles and practice
- Exeat and leave arrangements for boarders

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following national codes are set by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the DfE's attendance guidance. They replaced the previous code set (which included codes H, J, and a single Y code) from August 2024.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Present		
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late, before the register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending provision arranged by the local authority, at a place other than a school at which they are registered
V	Educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit or trip organised or approved by the school
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence granted by the school		
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Regulated performance or employment abroad	Pupil is taking part in a regulated performance, or undertaking regulated employment abroad, approved by the school
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil of compulsory school age is on a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable agreed by the school
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer or educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
Absent – other authorised reasons		
I	Illness	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (physical or mental health); not medical or dental appointments
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day exclusively set apart for religious observance

T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' travelling with a parent whose trade or business requires travel from place to place
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil is suspended or excluded and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend because of unavoidable causes		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil cannot attend because the local authority has failed to make the access arrangements it normally provides
Y1	Transport not available	School is not within walking distance and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil is absent because the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is in police detention, remanded, or detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at school is prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Other unavoidable cause	An unavoidable cause not covered by the other Y codes
Absent – unauthorised		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for a holiday that the school did not approve
N	Reason not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established by the time the register closes; the code is amended once the reason emerges, or replaced with O if no reason is provided within a reasonable time
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason has been established, or the school is not satisfied the reason justifies an authorised code
U	Arrived after registration closed	Pupil arrived late, after the register closed but before the end of the session
Not required to attend / administrative		
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Register set up, but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole or partial school closure known and planned in advance, including half-term, bank holidays and INSET days