



Saint Felix School

S O U T H W O L D

Pupil attendance policy

School Proprietor	Mr A Mehta
Date	Autumn Term 2025
Review Date	Autumn Term 2026
Review Period	Annually
Custodian	Designated Safeguarding Lead

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school, is:

Mrs Alicia Mann – Assistant Head/Designated Safeguarding Lead
amann@stfelix.co.uk
01502 722175

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

senioradmin@stfelix.co.uk – 01502 722175
prepadmin@stfelix.co.uk – 01502 722175
mwest@stfelix.co.uk (Head of Fourth Form - Year 7-9)
mjarrett@stfelix.co.uk (Head of Fifth Form - Year 10-11)
erushmere@stfelix.co.uk (Head of Sixth Form - Year 12-13)
amann@stfelix.co.uk (Assistant Head/DSL)
jwong@stfelix.co.uk (Head of Prep Department/ADSL)

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact for more individual support with attendance (Assistant Head/DSL and Head of Prep or Heads of Year etc):

Alicia Mann (Assistant Head/DSL/Head of Pastoral) amann@stfelix.co.uk
Mark West (Head of Year 7-9) mwest@stfelix.co.uk
Michelle Jarrett (Head of Year 10-11) mjarrett@stfelix.co.uk
Emily Rushmere (Head of Sixth Form) erushmere@stfelix.co.uk
Jade Wong (Head of Prep/ADSL) jwong@stfelix.co.uk

The name of our linked Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is:

Carrie Askew operations@inspiredlearninggroup.co.uk

Ratified by the Governing Body: November 2025

Pupil Attendance Policy

Introduction and Background

Saint Felix School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent/guardian to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called “[Working together to improve school attendance](#)” and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children’s welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school;
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

It has been developed in consultation with school governing body, teachers, the Local Authority and parents and guardians. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE’s statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued;
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the Head, or his designate, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

Promoting Regular Attendance

At Saint Felix School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day-to-day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion (the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school) is:

Alicia Mann – Assistant Head/DSL

amann@stfelix.co.uk

01502 722175

The governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is Carrie Askew

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Provide specific pupil information on request to the Secretary of State;
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- Give parents/guardians details on attendance;
- Promote the benefits of high attendance;
- Accurately complete admission and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law;
- Celebrate excellent attendance
- Reward good or improving attendance;
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress;
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- parents/guardians keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session;
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;
- holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the Head, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- day trips;
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this. All pupils who have attendance levels of 90% or below are considered to be a persistent absentee.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**'. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

Absence Procedures

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day to day basis is:

senioradmin@stfelix.co.uk – 01502 722175

prepadmin@stfelix.co.uk – 01502 722175

mwest@stfelix@stfelix.co.uk (Head of Year 7-9)

mjarrett@stfelix.co.uk (Head of Year 10-11)

erushmere@stfelix.co.uk (Head of Sixth Form)

amann@stfelix.co.uk (Assistant Head/DSL)

jwong@stfelix.co.uk (Head of Prep Department)

We monitor and review all pupils' absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.00am when *register closes*;
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff. Please be aware that, if you leave a voicemail to report your child's absence, you may receive a call from the school so that we may discuss the absence before making a decision as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised;
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8.30am.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence. Medical evidence may be requested where your child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made by the DSL in the interests of safeguarding;

If absence continues we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 90%, and/or where punctuality is a concern;
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Senior Attendance Champion Alicia Mann DSL or Head of Year/Sixth Form or Head of Prep.
- Create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child;
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate;

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Saint Felix School are:

Prep Department:

Registration starts: 8.30am

Registration closes: 9.00am

End of the school day: 4.55pm (Monday-Thursday) 4.00pm (Friday)

Senior Department:

Registration starts: 8.35am

Registration closes: 9.00am

End of school day: 4.55pm (Monday to Thursday) and 4.00pm (Friday)

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at **8.30am (Prep Department) 8.35am (Senior Department)** when children can begin to come into school;
- Registers are taken at **8.30am (Prep Department) 8.35am (Senior Department)**
- Children arriving after **8.35am** are required to come into school via the school reception office. If accompanied by a parent/guardian they must sign them into reception and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded;
- At **9.00am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U', but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence;
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns;
- From time to time a member of school staff or senior duty team will undertake a 'Meet & Greet' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school.

If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with Alicia Mann, Assistant Head/DSL or Heads of Year/Sixth Form or Head of Prep, but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who live with long-term medical conditions, who have special educational needs and disabilities, or have other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils, however we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We will discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support advice from external partners, where appropriate.

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact for more detailed support on attendance:

Alicia Mann Assistant Head/DSL

amann@stfelix.co.uk

01502 722175

Local Authority attendance support services

The Local Authority Attendance Team work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absences and improve overall attendance. At Saint Felix we have termly meetings with the Local Authority with an Education Welfare Officer.

Parents are expected to work with the school to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together.

School Attendance and the Law

In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

At Saint Felix we have taken the decision not to issue Penalty Notices.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that Heads may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances".

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Head, or, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Head or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

At Saint Felix School 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation an exceptional circumstance

(Working Together to improve School attendance s38 P18)

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving Saint Felix School other than at the end of Year 6 or leaving Saint Felix Senior Department other than at the end of Year 11, parents/carers are required to inform the School in order for the school to pass on the relevant information to the Local Authority: child's name, year group, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations, all schools are **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to the Department for Education on a daily basis Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Further information

[Working together to improve school attendance](#)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

[The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/anti-social-behaviour-act-2003-penalty-notice-code-of-conduct.pdf>

[DfE external document template \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)