# Head teacher arrested after violent altercation with deputy head



Dr John Felton, the head teacher of St Joseph’s Catholic School and Sixth Form Centre in Port Talbot, made headlines following his attack on deputy head Richard Pyke on March 5. The incident unfolded in a stark contrast to the school’s reputation for discipline, where Felton had previously enforced strict measures, including monitoring student movements during lessons.

At the time of the fracas, around 900 pupils were present on site. Felton, 54, struck Pyke, aged 51, multiple times with a heavy adjustable spanner, reportedly during a heated argument concerning an alleged love triangle involving a female staff member. The violence occurred shortly after Felton had sent an email to school staff apologising for the troubling events of the day ahead. In court, he admitted to a single charge of attempted wounding with intent, with the presiding judge noting the seriousness of the case and indicating that a custodial sentence was likely.

Details surrounding the clash have sparked concern among parents and the community regarding the conduct of school staff tasked with upholding moral standards. Kim Isherwood, chair of Public Child Protection Wales, described the attack as "astonishing" and called for increased scrutiny over such incidents. Many parents expressed their disillusionment with the school’s environment, particularly as it pertains to the teachings of the Catholic faith that forms the school’s foundation.

The contentious backdrop to Felton's actions included accusations against Pyke, described in Felton's email as involving sexual affairs with at least two members of the senior leadership team, including the teacher at the centre of the allegations. While the teacher, who is in her 30s and a former student of St Joseph's, had not publicly disputed the claims, she has reportedly taken a leave of absence following the incident.

Felton’s professional history at St Joseph’s spans over two decades, having started as head of maths in 2001, progressing to deputy head in 2017, and assuming the role of head teacher in 2023. His approach to leadership was perceived as heavy-handed and micromanaging by some parents, which may have contributed to the pressures he faced. His ties to controversial decisions in school governance, such as harsh disciplinary measures resulting in legal scrutiny at a tribunal, have illuminated potential systemic issues within the institution’s leadership.

Social conditions surrounding the school have ignited further discussion regarding the appropriateness of adult relationships and professional boundaries in an academic environment. One parent expressed outrage, questioning the lessons being imparted to students amidst such troubling allegations involving staff members. Isherwood reiterated the necessity for exemplary conduct from educators as role models in a faith-based setting.

CCTV footage from the incident shows Pyke being attacked in his office, after which he fell to the floor in an effort to defend himself. Classmates in a nearby classroom overheard the commotion and the cries for help from Pyke. Following the assault, he was treated for non-life-threatening injuries in hospital, while Felton was arrested and has remained in custody since.

The court proceedings and their revelations have raised myriad questions within the community about the ethical standards expected of educators. Neath Port Talbot Council has refrained from commenting on the ongoing judicial process but emphasised their commitment to maintaining a safe environment for pupils and staff.

With sentencing scheduled for April 25, the future for Dr Felton, a once highly regarded educator, remains uncertain amid a storm of controversy and public scrutiny surrounding his actions and the internal dynamics at St Joseph’s Catholic School.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/headteacher-attack-deputy-court-case-felton-b2728693.html> - This article corroborates the attack by Dr. John Felton on his deputy and the charges he faces. It details his admission to attempted grievous bodily harm with intent and the expectation of a prison sentence.
2. <https://news.sky.com/story/bluesky-13343746> - This article also supports the details of the incident involving Dr. John Felton and the legal consequences he faces for attacking his deputy, indicating a likely jail sentence.
3. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Port_Talbot> - Although not directly related to the incident, this Wikipedia page provides context about Port Talbot, where St Joseph's Catholic School is located, helping understand the geographical setting of the events.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/c0v16pp2k3nt/port-talbot> - This page from the BBC offers general information about Port Talbot and can provide context about the community and location where the incident took place.
5. <https://www.swanseabay.co.uk/news/port-talbot/st-josephs-catholic-school-8217953> - This link, while not directly related, can help contextualize the environment and reputation of St Joseph's Catholic School in Port Talbot.
6. <https://www.courts.michigan.gov/492eca/siteassets/publications/benchbooks/evidence/evidbb.pdf> - While not directly related to the specific incident at St Joseph's, this document provides general insights into legal procedures and evidence handling, which can be relevant to understanding the context of the case.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14600317/Jaw-dropping-Catholic-school-love-triangle-head-beating-deputy-spanner.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data