



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Status: Advisory

Member of Staff responsible: Principal

Associated Policies and documentation:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection

Implementation Date: September 2016

Review Date: Sept 2020

Next Review Date: Sept 2021

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Aims

The UTC Sheffield Academy Trust is committed to get the most out of educational opportunities and achievement for all students. For students to gain the best from their time at the UTC, it is vital that attendance and punctuality is excellent. We strive for 100% attendance for all students. The UTC will actively promote good attendance and discourage unjustified absence.

The UTC needs to ensure that all its students access a full-time education which meets their needs and allows all to realise their potential.

What we as a UTC will do to encourage good attendance (96% and above)

- We will strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each student can engage in all opportunities offered.
- Engage with students and their families to ensure every student has good attendance and punctuality.
- Challenge the behaviour of those students and parents/carers who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Systematically report attendance to parents through the four progress trackers a year.
- Continue to develop ICT-based attendance recording systems in order to provide accurate information and to use suitable tracking strategies to recognise any trends that can damage good attendance and learning.
- Support all aspects of the Education Act 1996 and the Children's Act 2003: 'Every Child Matters' by implementing this policy in a consistent manner. We will adhere to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and make reasonable adjustments will be made for young people.

What the UTC expects from Students:

To attend regularly and on time. To be punctual to all lessons, to ensure that they register for all timetabled lessons and inform the reception, where appropriate if they are not able to be registered. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that any communication from parents is handed to the tutor or reception.

What the UTC expects from Parents/Carers:

To ensure their child attends the UTC on those days it is open, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn. To ensure their child attends every day the UTC is open unless they are too ill to do so. To avoid keeping their child away from the UTC for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation. To avoid arranging holidays during term time. To immediately inform Learning Manager/ UTC if their child is unable to attend (by 8.30am where possible), including the reason for absence and expected date of return. The UTC should be updated daily with regards to student absence and failure to do so could result in an unauthorised absence, which could be used to take legal action.

Registration

The law requires the register to be taken twice a day – during the morning Tutor period and once in the afternoon session. This is at 8.30am and 11:15am. Students are expected to arrive by 8.25am in order to be ready for the start of Tutor period at 8.30am. We are aware that students travel quite a distance to attend the UTC, which is unique, we will therefore take every individual students circumstances into consideration. Students are registered at the start of every lesson of the day. Registers close at 9.00am in the morning and 12:40pm in the afternoon, after which students will be marked as unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation has been received.

The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes. Guidance on applying the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 can be found in 'Advice on School Attendance' published 2012 by the DfE.

Punctuality

The UTC day starts at 8:30am, any student arriving after this time should sign in at reception, giving their reason for being late. The tutor will take the primary responsibility for punctuality and where three lates have been recorded in the register during a week, the student should expect to receive a C4 curriculum detention. Students arriving to the UTC after 9.00am, without prior consent or without medical evidence, such as a GP appointment card will be coded as a "U" in the register. This means they have arrived after registration has closed. Having U codes in the register could provide grounds for prosecution as it is an unauthorised absence code and affects a students' attendance.

Responding to Absence/Lateness

If a student is absent at morning registration without contact from a parent/carer to explain the absence, the UTC will contact parents/carers. We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will always do our best to contact parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of their child's absence.

Contact will be via automated message which will attempt to call/text landline numbers and mobile numbers for priority 1 contact numbers. Parents/carers are able to respond directly upon receiving this call.

Alternatively, where a message has been left by the automated service, a parent should contact the Learning Manager / Reception to inform us of the reason for their child's absence. We ask that parents/carers ensure that the UTC has the most up to date contact details at all times. If no response is received to the automated service, the UTC will write to parents/carers requesting an explanation. All absence notes will be retained. Where a student's absence is cause for concern, the UTC will write to parents/carers and/or invite the parents/carers into school or visit parents/carers at home. Where no sustained improvement in attendance is demonstrated despite intervention, the Fast Track to Attendance process will be followed. Penalty notices may be issued in line with each relevant Local Authority's Code of Conduct.

Persistent Absence

A student becomes a Persistent Absentee when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. This threshold was changed by the Department for Education from September 2015 and was 15% previously. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any student whose attendance has reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention. Intervention may be via:

- An action plan to improve attendance will be created which may involve a CAF and referrals to other agencies alongside meetings between relevant UTC staff and parents/carers.
- Where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the UTC, further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed.

Persistent Absence data is communicated to the relevant Local Authority via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

As a UTC we provide parents/carers with an update on their child's attendance through the progress tracker reports, which are issued half-termly. The UTC teaching staff and or tutor may request to see parents / carers if there is a problem with regards to attendance. The expectation is that parents make every effort to engage with these appoints to support the UTC in promoting good attendance (96% or above) for every student.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

Any absence interrupts the continuity of student's learning. Government Legislation now states that only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence, please refer to the Department for Education for the latest guidance. Parents/carers are strongly urged not to take students out of school for holidays during term time.

Where the circumstances are considered exceptional, please be aware that:

- Your request will not be authorised during exam periods (these could be throughout the year).
- Your request will not be authorised during the month of September.
- Your request will not be authorised for any student in Year 11.
- Your request will not be authorised if your child's attendance is below the respective UTCs attendance target for the 12 months prior to application.
- Your request will not be authorised if your child has unauthorised absences.
- Your request will not be authorised where a previous holiday has been taken.

Any authorised absence will be at the discretion of the Principal.

It is expected that a Request Form is submitted to the reception at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed absence. All factors that need to be considered must be stated on the request form. The UTC has the right to serve a Penalty Notice on parents/carers who insist on taking their children out of school without authorisation. Penalties require each parent to pay a fine of £60 per child if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days (with effect from September 2013). Failure to pay within the specified timescale could result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure regular school attendance. This legislation also applies to any student taking leave of absence without prior notification to the UTC.

How the UTC will promote good attendance

- It is the belief that all students are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is engaging and personalised to meet their needs. The curriculum is monitored and revised on an annual basis so that it meets the ability needs of all students.
- Students are regularly informed of their attendance levels and, if appropriate, how they can improve. Where appropriate, students whose attendance falls below the appropriate target for the UTC will be set a target for improvement and progress towards these targets will be regularly reviewed by the tutor.
- Good and improved attendance and punctuality will be promoted, acknowledged and rewarded. Students, parents/carers and staff are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the UTC at any time to discuss their child's attendance. Regular meetings will be held with the appropriate members of staff/external agencies to identify and support those students whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Students who have been absent for extended periods of time will be supported as appropriate to re-integrate back into the UTC.

Statutory Requirements, the Law and the Local Authority

Registers are legal documents; regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers are responsible to ensure their child receives a suitable education. Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a parent who fails to ensure their child attends the school at which they are registered, is guilty of an offence.

In relation to any potential child missing from education the UTC will communicate with and notify the local authority in line with the above regulation and DFE policy Children missing education Sept 2016.

The UTC works together with the relevant Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibility. There are a range of legal sanctions that may be imposed for dealing with unauthorised absence: Penalty Notices, Parenting Contracts and Orders, Education Supervision Orders or referral to the Magistrates Court which can recommend fines (up to £2500) or up to 3 months in prison. All sanctions are used to improve attendance and punctuality and reduce absence.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities:

Subject teachers are passionate that students attend all subject lessons to facilitate learning and maximise progress. We will ensure all students are accurately registered and that students know the register is being taken. The subject teacher/ Curriculum Director will identify student absence to lessons and take appropriate action. The subject staff will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.

Tutors will discuss absence and attendance weekly with students. They will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff. They will work with identified students, setting targets to improve attendance and monitoring progress towards those targets. Will ensure that all absence notes or verbal messages are sent to the appropriate Learning Manager.

Learning Managers will monitor absence and attendance regularly, by use of the weekly Cumulative Attendance report. They will discuss absence and attendance concerns with students and set targets for improvement. They will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified. Will support students to improve their attendance. If attendance drops below 92% and then subsequently 90% the Learning Manager will seek advice and support from the appropriate Senior Leader and outside agencies to support an improvement in attendance. Where this fails attendance falls below 90% the UTC reserves the right to consider issuing a penalty notice.

The UTC will promote attendance through assemblies. It will work with other members of staff to share information and support students and their parents/carers to improve attendance

The Principal and Senior Leaders, including the Local Authority will ensure that the UTC attendance policy is implemented and regularly reviewed. They will report to the Local Authority on attendance. The UTC will monitor the curriculum to develop ways of improving the provision of educational experience. Utilise attendance data to inform strategic planning.