

## UTC South Durham Attendance Policy



<b>Date of adoption</b>	January 2019
<b>Approved by</b>	Governing Body
<b>Signed:</b> (Principal) 	<b>Date:</b> January 2019
<b>Signed:</b> (Chair of Governors)	<b>Date:</b>

<b>Date to be reviewed by</b>	January 2021
<b>Review History</b>	Reviewed – Leanne Tippey Nov 18 Reviewed – Julie Bushby Dec 18 Reviewed – Tom Dower Dec 18
<b>Responsibility</b>	Principal

## **1. Introduction**

Promoting positive behaviour and outstanding attendance is the responsibility of the whole UTC South Durham community, in preparing students for future employment.

The UTC will promote positive behaviour and outstanding attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Outstanding attendance will be recognised appropriately. All students should be at the UTC, on time, every day the UTC is open, unless the reason for the absence is authorised. We understand, however, that travel to the UTC is complex for some students and is not always in their control.

Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the UTC, the parents/carers and the student. Permitting absence from the UTC without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

The UTC has a duty in law to refer any absence of three days or more where we have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to other agencies.

We are also required by law to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. Only the UTC can authorise an absence, not parents. This is why information about the reason of each absence is always required on a daily basis.

## **2. Guiding principles**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that students attend the UTC (including employer partners when on placement) unless prevented by illness or another authorised reason
- Reduce the impact on teaching and learning and therefore student progression due to absence from lessons
- Ensure that staff, parents and students are aware of their legal responsibilities with regard to attendance

This attendance policy is based upon the following principles:

- Students attend the UTC every day, except when there is authorised illness or other abnormal circumstances
- Being late is unacceptable except in genuine, unavoidable circumstances
- Staff and parents encourage and support students to achieve and maintain outstanding attendance at UTC South Durham

The electronic registration system follows the Education (Pupil Registration/England) Regulations 2006 – amended 2010, 2011 and 2013

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

### **3.1 Governing Body**

The Governors of the UTC will:

- Ensure the UTC has a robust attendance policy
- Ensure that the policy is available to parents
- Ensure that policies and procedures are reviewed regularly

### **3.2 Principal**

The Principal will:

- Ensure the policy adopted by the Governors of the UTC is fully implemented and followed by the whole UTC community
- Ensure effective implementation of policy
- Organise appropriate staff training and awareness as required
- Monitor, review and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy according to the timescale for the review
- Report to Trustees (Governors) on request

### **3.3 Director of Student Wellbeing**

The Director of Student Wellbeing will:

- Coordinate the procedures for dealing with attendance issues
- Oversee the SSOs in dealing with attendance issues
- Ensure all new staff are inducted in the implementation of the attendance policy
- Ensure that all students are fully aware of the contents of the attendance policy

### **3.4 Student Support Attendance Officer**

The Attendance Officer will:

- Liaise with teachers/ mentors regarding student absence both from the UTC and from individual lessons
- Oversee the administration of lesson monitoring
- Liaise with parents when no explanation for absence has been received
- Inform the mentor about students reported as missing from lessons
- Liaise with the mentor over attendance patterns and follow up where necessary.
- Run regular attendance checks as requested by the Senior Leadership Team
- Report weekly to the Deputy Principal regarding attendance / punctuality
- Provide attendance data for the Principal and Trustees on a half-termly basis

### **3.5 Reception staff**

The administrative staff based at the main reception will:

- Report and inform late arrivals to Attendance Officer
- Confirm medical appointments and forward evidence to Attendance Officer
- Advise of students leaving due to illness/medical

### **3.6 All Teachers / mentors**

Teachers / mentors at the UTC will:

- Ensure they are fully conversant with the attendance policy and appendices
- Ensure that all registers are completed as required by the appendix relating to procedures
- Ensure that all concerns relating to attendance are brought to the attention of the Attendance Officer

### **3.7 Parents/Carers**

Parents/Carers of students at the UTC:

- Have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends and stays at the UTC, and that they arrive on time
- Provide medical evidence in advance to support an absence i.e. appointment card, hospital letter
- Should inform the UTC on the first day of absence, by telephone, stating the reason for absence. If the absence continues the UTC must be notified every day

#### **4. Absences**

Only absences authorised by the UTC can be accepted. These are occasions when:

- The student is ill and absence is supported by medical evidence
- The student is absent with leave of absence granted by the Principal
- The student belongs to a religious body which sets aside days for religious observance;
- The student has been excluded for a fixed period;
- The student has been permanently excluded, but an appeal is in progress

The UTC will not accept a note from parents if the explanation given is not a valid reason for absence. The decision to authorise an absence rests with the Principal.

#### **5. Leave of Absence**

Leave of absence can only be authorised as such by the UTC and not the parent. Leave will not be granted except in genuine, unavoidable circumstances. It may be granted for the following:

- Family bereavement
- To attend an interview for employment or for a place at an institute of further / higher education
- Authorised holidays

#### **6. Unauthorised Absence**

Any absence which has not been authorised by the UTC is recorded as unauthorised. Unauthorised absence will be viewed seriously, and steps will be taken to discover the reasons. These will include:

- Home contact including telephone calls, emails and letters
- Attendance Officer home visits
- Parental meetings

Should these steps fail to secure a student's full attendance, it may be necessary for the Local Authority to start the non-attendance legal process, which could result in legal action in the Magistrates Court.

There is no automatic entitlement to leave for family holidays and we actively discourage parents from taking holidays during term time and as such it will be treated as unauthorised absence. Parents should be aware that students who miss external examinations through unauthorised family holiday will be charged the examination entry fees.

Students and parents must also consider the importance that future employers or educational organisations eg universities, place on students having first-class attendance and punctuality when offering positions / places. They will always ask a student's departing school / UTC for their attendance and punctuality record.

## **6.1 Penalty Notices**

Penalty notices are fines of £60 / £120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

Penalty notices are issued by the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

## **7. Punctuality**

Punctuality is a requirement of attendance at the UTC and is an expectation of all future employers. Lateness will not be tolerated and will be monitored by the SLT, teachers and mentors. Lateness will be dealt with through the UTC Behaviour Management System:

- The registers are taken by 8.45am
- If a student arrives after 8.45am but before 9:45am it is recorded as an “L” – Late
- If a student arrives after 9.45am the session is recorded as a “U” – late after registration has closed
- If a student arrives late to any subsequent lessons by 5 minutes or more they will be recorded as L – late

We recognise that some students will be late because of transport arrangements and we will endeavour to support them in ensuring that they are on time when possible. If a student expects they will be late travelling on public transport they will be asked to call or text the UTC Student Support Team.

## **8. Truancy**

Truancy is absence from the UTC or individual lessons without permission from the UTC. Parents / carers will be informed about any instance of truancy.

Students who truant will be dealt with through the UTC Behaviour Management System. Students will be expected to catch-up missed work and time-owed through payback at break and lunchtimes.

Any truancy will be recorded on the UTC attendance system.

## **9. Procedures**

The procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality are detailed in the following appendices:

- Appendix 1            Guidance for staff on monitoring attendance at the UTC
- Appendix 2            Attendance Protocol
- Appendix 3            Guidance for Parents
- Appendix 4            Durham County Council Factsheet: Penalty Notices to address poor attendance at school.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Guidance for Staff: Procedures for Managing Attendance**

#### **Registration**

Registers must be taken using the MIS Lesson Monitor program within the first 10 minutes of every lesson. If MIS is not available for any reason, staff should send a reliable student to Reception to collect a class list. The register should be completed on the list and returned to the Attendance Officer. Students should not be marked present unless they have been present in the lesson. Registers are legal documents and it is essential that staff use the headcount facility to check numbers for legal and health and safety reasons. Concerns regarding student attendance should be raised with the Attendance Officer the internal MIS email system as soon as possible.

#### **Lateness**

Lateness is unacceptable without a genuine reason. Students who arrive after morning Mentoring session has finished, should report to Reception where they will be signed in. The UTC receptionist will then inform the Attendance Officer of lates, who will the update the MIS system accordingly. Persistent lateness will be dealt with.

#### **Monitoring**

Mentors should ensure that they monitor the attendance and punctuality of their cohort of students through MIS at least once every week. The Attendance Officer will run a weekly attendance report and present it to the Senior Leadership Team and Mentors.

## Appendix 2

### Attendance Protocol

Attendance	Key Person	Strategies	Tracking and evidence
<b>Above 95% Good</b>	<b>Attendance Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage attendance and display RAG for students</li> <li>• Ensure absence notes are brought in</li> <li>• Reward Trips (first priority)</li> <li>• Attendance certificates &amp; half-termly letter home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance tracking sheet</li> <li>• Attendance and attainment analysis</li> <li>• Displays</li> </ul>
<b>Below 95% Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Attendance Officer Mentor SLT</b>	<u>Below 95%</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness Attendance Letter 1 generated by Attendance Officer</li> <li>• SLT made aware of those students who have fallen below 95%, during weekly meeting</li> <li>• Attendance Officer to arrange a meeting with student and to contact parents</li> <li>• Attendance Officer to complete individual attendance action plan with students</li> <li>• Form Mentor and Attendance Officer to monitor absence patterns for each student</li> <li>• Remind students of the importance of attendance</li> <li>• Possible access to rewards trips if improvements are made</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance tracking sheet</li> <li>• Log of first day phone call</li> <li>• Attendance and attainment analysis</li> <li>• Mentor record files, log of calls, completed individual attendance action plan</li> <li>• Actions from parental meetings &amp; attendance panels</li> </ul>
		<u>93-90%</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern Attendance Letter 2 generated by Attendance Officer</li> <li>• Attendance Officer to arrange meeting with Mentor and parents/carers</li> <li>• Attendance target set with review deadline</li> </ul>	
<b>Below 90% Persistent Absence  Serious concern</b>	<b>Attendance Officer Mentor SLT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Action Attendance Letter 3 generated by Attendance Officer advising no further authorised absences without medical evidence</li> <li>• New attendance target set</li> <li>• External Action – Referral Made to AIT</li> <li>• Home visit</li> <li>• Requirement for medical note for absence</li> <li>• Attendance target reviewed</li> <li>• Regular phone calls home</li> <li>• Weekly catch up (mentoring sessions)</li> <li>• Penalty Notice</li> <li>• Prosecution</li> <li>• Attendance Panel</li> <li>• Early Help Assessment (EHA)</li> <li>• Multi-agency plans considered</li> <li>• Review curriculum and alternative provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance tracking sheet</li> <li>• Mentor record files, log of calls, completed individual attendance action plan</li> <li>• Minutes of parental meetings &amp; attendance panels</li> <li>• Home Visit Intervention Log</li> <li>• EWS records of legal procedures</li> </ul>

**Any unauthorised absence will receive a call by the Attendance Officer.**

\*KS5 (Years 12 /13) these procedures should be applied with appropriate discretion and students / parents must realise that poor attendance could result in a student KS5 place at the UTC being withdrawn.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Guidance for Parents / Carers**

Hopefully, this information will help you to understand the requirements.

Parents, have a legal duty to ensure that your son or daughter attends and stays at the UTC, and that he or she arrives on time. You should ensure that students are appropriately dressed in their UTC uniform and bring the relevant equipment. If you are not sure about the uniform or equipment, please look at the relevant section of the prospectus or website. There will be times when your child cannot attend the UTC: for example, if they are ill. But taking time off for holidays, shopping or days out is not acceptable. If your child refuses to come to the UTC and you are struggling to deal with him or her, please let the UTC know and they will be able to help and advise you.

#### **When is it all right for your child to stay away from the UTC?**

If a student is ill: parents/carers should inform the UTC every day of absence, by telephone.

If a student has a hospital appointment: please aim to arrange appointments during holidays or out of UTC hours. Naturally, there may be times when this is not possible, but please let the Attendance Officer know in advance of the appointment.

If the Principal has approved another activity in advance e.g. sporting activity or apprenticeship / university interview.

If there is a close family bereavement, please inform the Attendance Officer immediately. At the UTC we want to make sure that we treat young people sensitively when they are experiencing difficulties.

#### **When is it not alright for your child to stay away from the UTC?**

It is not alright to keep your child off from the UTC if it is not one of the reasons identified in the previous section; if this happens then the absence will be unauthorised – only the UTC can authorise absence NOT parents. Parents can request leave of absence in other circumstances but the Principal will not grant leave simply on request to do so. Leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

#### **Family Holidays**

There is no automatic entitlement to leave for family holidays and we actively discourage parents from taking holidays in term time and as such it will be treated as unauthorised absence. Parents should be aware that students who miss external examinations, through unauthorised family holiday will be charged the examination entry fees.

#### **Unauthorised Absence**

Any absence which has not been authorised by the UTC is recorded as unauthorised. You will be contacted by phone or email on the first day of absence, if there has been no communication from you; The Attendance Officer will make a home visit after 3 days of absence without adequate explanation, or earlier in the case of a persistent absentee; Parents of persistently absent students will be expected to attend a meeting to resolve problems of attendance according to the protocol matrix. Legal action will be taken if persistent problems cannot be resolved. Days away from the UTC for birthdays, days out, shopping, preparing for holidays etc. are not permissible.

#### **Truancy**

For safeguarding reasons, it is vital to know where our students are. Truancy is often linked with other serious problems. If your child makes excuses to not attend UTC, please contact the Attendance Officer or the Student Support Team for advice and help in resolving the situation.

# Factsheet



## Penalty notices to address poor attendance at school

### The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 Advice for Parents / Carers 2016 / 2017

#### Parental Responsibility

Parents have a **legal duty** to ensure that their child receives full time education. You must ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time.

You will be **committing an offence** if your child fails to attend their place of education regularly and punctually, and if your child's school has not been given authorisation for the absences or late arrival. **You can be prosecuted for this offence.**

The High Court has confirmed that schools, not parents authorise absence from school. The final decision lies with the Head Teacher.

A parent is:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who has parental responsibility for a child / young person
- Any person who has care of a child / young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child

#### The Anti-Social Behaviour Act

The Act gives powers to Local Authorities and other designated bodies to **issue penalty notices** to parents or carers for their child's non-attendance at school.

Penalty Notices were introduced under the Act because reducing absence from school is extremely important.

Missing school can:

- Damage children's achievements.
- Disrupt the school's routines.
- Affect other children's learning.
- Leave children at risk of anti-social behaviour, youth crime and child sexual exploitation.

Above all, missing school can seriously affect children's life chances and opportunities.

A Penalty Notice is an **alternative to prosecution**. Receiving a notice means you have to pay a fixed amount of money (fine) for your child's non-attendance at school, and avoids court action so long as it is paid in full.

## Fixed Penalty Notice Triggers

If your child has accrued **7 days or more** of unauthorised absence in a minimum 12 rolling school week period, you could receive:

- **A warning** - requiring you to ensure no further unauthorised absences occur in a 15 school day monitoring period, otherwise you would receive a fine.
- **A fine** - the warning period does not apply to notices issued due to leave of absence in term time taken without permission, or other parentally condoned absence.

## Leave of absence in term time

The law states Head Teachers should not grant any leave of absence in term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. If you take a leave of absence without the school's permission, and this absence amounts to 7 days or more, you could receive a fine.

The Local Authority never takes enforcement action lightly, we would much rather work with parents/carers to improve attendance. However, the Authority will use these powers to ensure that your child attends school regularly. Should you require advice and support about attendance issues contact either your school / academy or the ONE Point Service on 03000 261111.

## Fixed Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice is sent by first class post to your home and can be issued where unauthorised absences occur due to:

- Leave of absence in term time
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed
- To assist Year 11 pupils to engage in education
- Overt truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps)
- Inappropriate, parentally condoned absence.

A fine applies to **each parent** for **each child** who fails to attend school regularly. Where two parents /carers are issued with a fine for a child, **both fines must be paid**.

**Payment within 21 days is £60.**

**Payment doubles to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.**

If the penalty notice is not paid **in full** by the end of the 28 day payment period, the Local Authority will bring a prosecution against you for failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school during the period. We are unable to accept part payments.

## Other Information

There is no right of appeal once a fine has been issued. We can only withdraw a fine where:

- It should not have been issued
- It has been issued to the wrong person
- If it appears to the Local Authority that it contains material errors

If you believe that one of the above circumstances applies, you should contact the Local Authority immediately with evidence to support your view, or if you wish to make general representations.

Should you require further advice and support about attendance issues contact either your school / academy or the ONE Point Service on **03000 261111**.

Please ask us if you would like  
this document summarised in  
another language or format.

03000 261 381

**CAS16358** Children and  
Young People's Services,  
CMI Team 2016