

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Status: Advisory

Member of Staff Responsible: Principal

Related Policies:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection

Implementation date: September 2016

Reviewed date: July 2026

Next review date: July 2027

Aims

The Sheffield UTC 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 and therefore we set out minimum attendance expectation at 97% (equivalent to no more than 6 days of absence in an academic year).

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the UTC.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the UTC's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the UTC's Complaints and Concerns Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Principal is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the UTC.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to lead on attendance.
- Ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the UTC's attendance expectations and procedures through: a clear, visual, representation of the stages of interventions and consequences; information in newsletters and bulletins, messages on class charts and 1-1 meetings and letters where appropriate.
- Ensuring that every student has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring students do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual students to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The Assistant Principal with responsibility for attendance, with support from the Admin and Pastoral Teams, is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in the UTC.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with students and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any student being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the UTC with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the UTC if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at the UTC.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Students are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at the UTC.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at the UTC.

Registration

The law requires the register to be taken twice a day – once during the morning registration period and once in the afternoon registration period. **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 the UTC day at 8.30am. Registers close at 9.00am in the 11.45am in the afternoon,** after which students will be marked as unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation has been received.

We are aware that students travel quite a distance to attend the UTC, which is unique, we will therefore take every individual student's circumstance into consideration.

The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes. Guidance on applying the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 can be found in 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance – Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent school and local authorities' by the DfE, July 2026.

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. Late students will have their name recorded and passed to the relevant Learning Manager who will establish the validity of the reason behind the late mark. Persistent late marks will result in contact home and a sanction. 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 student's attendance.

Responding to Absence/Lateness

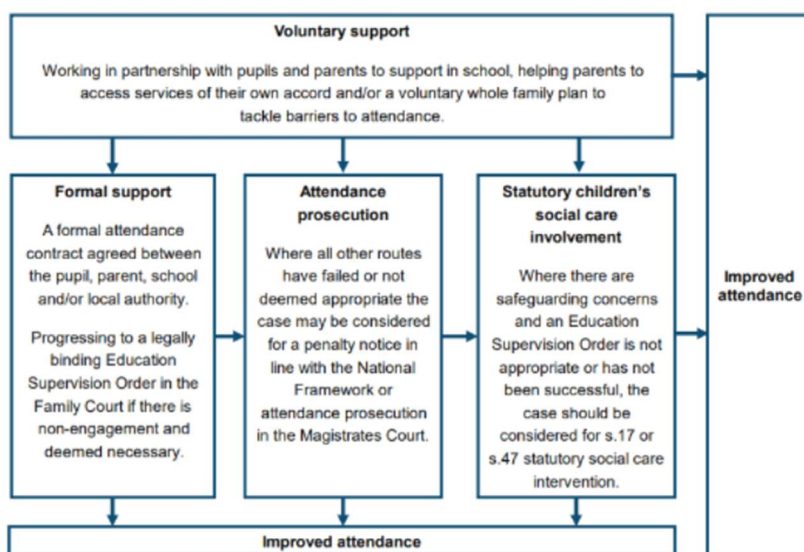
If a student is absent at morning registration without contact from a parent/carer to explain the absence, the UTC will contact parents/carers. We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will always do our best to contact parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of their child's absence.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, the UTC recognises that prolonged or repeated absence can be a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, and child sexual or child criminal exploitation (including county lines). Attendance concerns are therefore considered alongside other safeguarding information known about a student, and any pattern giving cause for concern will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, where appropriate, referred to children's social care. Where a student cannot be located, the UTC will follow its Children Missing Education policy and work jointly with the local authority to make reasonable enquiries.

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

Where a message has been left by the automated service, a parent/carer 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 a cause for concern, the UTC will write to parents/carers and/or invite the parents/carers into the UTC or visit parents/carers at home. Where no sustained improvement in attendance is demonstrated despite intervention, a referral to the relevant local authority attendance support team will be made.

Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



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% (19 days) of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. 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:

- An action plan to improve attendance which may involve Early Help 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 Wonde, working in partnership with the DFE, on a daily basis.

Severe Absence

A student becomes Severely Absent when their attendance falls below 50%, meaning they are missing school more than they are attending. Severely absent students are given the highest priority for support of any attendance group at UTC OLP. The SLT will take responsibility for the provision, support and challenge in place for students whose attendance is below 50%. Where severe absence continues despite full support being offered and engaged with, the UTC will consider whether this constitutes neglect and will follow safeguarding procedures accordingly, including a referral to children's social care where appropriate.

As a UTC we provide parents/carers with an update on their child's attendance through the termly progress tracker reports and also daily through ClassCharts. The UTC teaching staff, tutor or Learning Managers may request to see parents/carers if there is a problem with regards to attendance. The expectation is that parent/carers make every effort to engage with these appointments to support the UTC in promoting good attendance (97% or above / no more than 6 days of absence) 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 is highly unlikely to be approved during exam periods (these could be throughout the year).
- Your request will not be authorised is highly unlikely to be approved during the month of September.
- Your request will not be authorised is highly unlikely to be approved for any student in Year 11.

- Your request will not be authorised is highly unlikely to be approved 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 is highly unlikely to be approved if your child has unauthorised absences.
- Your request will not be authorised is highly unlikely to be approved 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 20 days 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 £160 per child, if paid within 28 days or £60~~£80~~ if paid within 21 days. A second offence results in a £160 fine which must be paid within 28 days. A third offence can result in prosecution through the Magistrates Court (with effect from September 2024). 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

- The UTC recognises that student attendance is the responsibility of all staff and will consistently seek to ensure that each staff member is working proactively to engage students in their learning and the UTC community. We know that students who are engaged in their learning and feel a sense of belonging, attend regularly.
- 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 2016 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. 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/carer 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, Attendance Contracts and Orders, Education Supervision Orders or referral to the Magistrates Court which can recommend fines (up to £2,500) 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 committed to ensuring that all students attend all subject lessons as we know that this will maximise progress and engender feelings of success. This is essential if students are to maintain high levels of attendance. 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. All staff are advised that any absence trends or concerns are routinely reported to appropriate members of staff. Effective communication and sharing of information regarding student absence is essential to maintaining high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Tutors will discuss absence and attendance weekly with students. Absence trends or concerns are routinely monitored at a whole school level and action is taken to address these concerns. Students identified as presenting with concerning absence patterns will be supported. The members of staff involved in the support will be those we feel are best placed to ensure an improvement in attendance.

Learning Managers will monitor absence and attendance regularly, by use of the weekly Attendance Reports. 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. They will support students to improve their attendance. Where attendance continues to decline despite support and intervention being offered, the UTC will seek advice and support from relevant external agencies including that of the appropriate Local Authority

The UTC will promote attendance through the tutorial programme. 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 and utilise attendance data to inform strategic planning.

Appendix 1 – Attendance at UTC OLP

At UTC Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park, we understand the direct correlation between attendance and academic achievement therefore we know that regular attendance at the UTC is essential. It is essential not only to our students' success academically but also in

terms of supporting their well-being and sense of belonging here in the UTC OLP community.

We want all students to strive for 100% attendance and as a minimum, we expect students to achieve our target minimum attendance target of 97% which is the equivalent of having no more than 6 days of absence in an academic year.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some students find it harder than others to maintain high levels of attendance; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at the UTC, as well as strong and trusting relationships with students and parents.

UTC OLP recognises that student attendance is the responsibility of all staff and will consistently seek to ensure that each staff member is working proactively to ensure students attend regularly. We also know that effective practice in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the use of resources such as student premium – can also play a significant part in improving student attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other external agencies such to ensure the health and safety of our students.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and students.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts that require more support.

The member of the senior leadership team with responsibility for attendance is: Mrs Stevenson

Attendance Procedures at UTC OLP

Parents are required to contact UTC OLP via telephone on 0114 308 4000 before 8:30am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a student is absent, and their parent has not contacted UTC OLP by the close of the morning register to report the absence, a member of either the admin team or pastoral team will contact the parent via class charts as soon as is practicable on the first day that the student does not attend the UTC, and usually always by 9:15am.

The UTC will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The UTC will not request medical evidence in most circumstances, where a student is absent due to illness; however, the UTC reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of Persistent Absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the member of SLT in charge of attendance, with support from the Pastoral Team. The UTC will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of students who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a student's attendance drops below **90 percent (19 days of absence)**, the attendance officer will arrange a formal meeting with the student and their parent although the member of SLT in charge of attendance, with support from the Pastoral Team will use regular informal meetings and phone calls to support parents and students with attendance once it has dropped below 95% (10 days of absence).

Where a student has not returned to the UTC for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the UTC without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the UTC will remove the student from the admissions register if the UTC and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the student after making reasonable enquiries.

Attendance Intervention and Support at UTC OLP

To ensure UTC OLP has effective procedures for managing absence, the SLT with responsibility for attendance, supported by our Admin and Pastoral Teams, will:

- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Communicating effectively with parents via phone, text, class charts and letter in relation to attendance procedures and concerns.
 - Sending letters of concern regarding absence to parents.
 - Discussing attendance routinely in the UTC, with staff and students.
 - Creating positive links with parents.
 - Ensuring weekly attendance focus in tutor time.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Creating a rewards system linked to good and improved attendance.
 - Making parents/parents aware of the effects of lost learning time.

The UTC will use attendance data to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-

case basis and will consider the needs of the students for whom the intervention is designed to target.

The UTC will aim to improve attendance overall by acknowledging good attendance in the following ways:

- Regular and effective communication with parents.
- ClassCharts reward schemes.
- Using assemblies and tutor time to celebrate good and improved attendance.
- Working effectively with our employer links in order to demonstrate to students the impact of absence and the need for good attendance in the workplace.

Trips and events will be considered a privilege. Where attendance drops below **90 percent (19 days of absence)**, these privileges may be taken away. UTC OLP will develop strategies for ensuring that students with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences, are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

Monitoring and Analysing Absence at UTC OLP

UTC OLP's Pastoral Team will monitor and analyse attendance data weekly to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

UTC OLP will collect data regarding punctuality, authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The UTC OLP cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Year groups preparing for exams.
- Individual students.
- Demographic groups, e.g. students from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of students, e.g. students with SEND, CLA and students eligible for FSM.
- Students at risk of PA.

The member of SLT responsible for attendance will conduct thorough analysis of the above data on a 3 weekly, half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The member of SLT responsible for attendance will provide regular reports to staff across UTC OLP to enable them to track the attendance of students and to implement attendance procedures. The member of SLT responsible for attendance will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing body will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

UTC OLP will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional, and national level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement.