

# UTC PLYMOUTH

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

### Policy links to UTC mission, aims and values

UTC Plymouth promotes care and respect, and expects high standards in all aspects of UTC life.

UTC Plymouth aims to build a community clearly based on integrity and the unique value of each individual. We aim to build self-esteem, model conflict resolution, protect the weak and are committed to justice and compassion. Mutual respect and trust are central within the UTC.

This policy, and its associated procedures and protocols, is based on these key principles.

UTC Plymouth seeks to encourage staff and students to aspire to achieve their potential. The UTC attendance and punctuality policy plays a central role in this by:

- Empowering students to become independent and responsible students
- Encouraging high standards of leadership, behaviour and attainment
- Instilling respect among students for themselves and others

We place very high value on all aspects of student attendance and punctuality and therefore locate all aspects of policy and practice related to promoting and sustaining positive attitudes to attendance and punctuality, at the heart of teaching and learning.

The implementation of our Attendance Policy aims means that we inform parents what actions the UTC will take in respect of any absence from College and who will be involved.

The development and implementation of this Attendance Policy is intended to ensure that all teaching and support staff employed by the UTC are carrying out appropriate measures that will safeguard young people and promote their welfare. Ensuring that students are where they are supposed to be and that they are in the care of responsible adults provides the knowledge that raises awareness of any needs or risks or signs of disaffection.

Having an Attendance Policy and system in place enables us to be clear with parents/carers about the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality. It also enables us to challenge students and parents/carers who may condone absence from College for trivial reasons. The reasons our parents/carers give for absence are systematically explored and the effect on their child's achievement recorded. In this way we are building an evidence base that improves our knowledge and understanding about which students are vulnerable and enables us to take positive swift interventionist action.

### Statutory Framework

UTC Plymouth is committed to ensuring that all students registered with us will have access to high quality full-time education.

- The Government's goal of "raising educational standards for all young people" requires that students attend College as a pre-requisite to engaging with the curriculum and learning.
- It is Plymouth City Council, Devon County Council and Cornwall County Council's responsibility in law to enforce the regular College attendance of registered students of statutory College age.
- The Education Welfare Services (EWSs) must serve attendance orders on parents and may institute proceedings against parents of a child who is in breach of a College attendance order or who are failing to secure the regular attendance of their child at College, having first considered whether to apply for an **Educational Supervision Order with respect to the child (Sections 437, 443 and 444 of the Education Act 1996)**
- UTC Plymouth has a legal duty to maintain Admissions and Attendance Registers and to record student attendance or absence from College.
- The UTC also has a duty to have effective systems in place to track and manage student attendance by developing clear whole College policies and procedures and by engaging with parents, other agencies and the wider community.
- Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their child/ young people receive a full -time education and that young people registered at a College attend regularly and punctually.

Details of legislative powers and responsibilities are contained in Appendix A of this policy statement.

## **Purposes and Intentions of the Attendance Policy**

### **Promoting attendance and avoiding absence from College**

The purposes underpinning our attendance policy are to

- encourage 100% attendance and punctuality.
- ensure all those associated with the UTC understand our expectations in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- produce regular information about class and individual attendance and punctuality which will enable us to monitor trends and patterns so that appropriate measures can be taken to improve attendance and punctuality and thus academic performance

Absence from College, whether **authorised** (valid reason) or **unauthorised** (no valid reason) affects an individual's ability to form positive peer and adult relationships and develop social skills. The habits of regular and punctual attendance are important in their own right: they enable individuals to participate in social organisations and shared arrangements, to take on commitments, and to contribute at work as well as at College. These habits do not develop spontaneously: they need to be requested, encouraged, shaped and rewarded.

Truancy is another way of describing **unauthorised** absence from College. Truants are more likely to do badly at UTC. The outcomes for them are far worse than for students who attend regularly. Truants are also more likely to be involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour, and it is harder for them to find and keep work.

For these reasons UTC Plymouth is committed to making explicit the need for regular attendance and punctuality and will take swift action to prevent long-term truancy developing.

## **Expectations for Students**

Irregular attendance means that students will miss out on aspects of the educational experience on offer at the UTC.

- Students need to understand that if they are absent or late they will not get access to their entitlement of learning for success.
- They also need to understand that the development of their social skills and key learning skills and their ability to achieve academically will be severely compromised.
- Students need to recognise and reflect on the many different reasons why some students fail to attend College regularly.
- They have a part to play in identifying and supporting positive attendance among the student community. Absence from College can be a symptom of a student's vulnerability and show that they are unable to deal with whatever is worrying them.
- Students need to understand that someone's poor attendance may be the result of parental influence, peer pressure or bullying, boredom at College, unidentified learning needs, illness, family problems, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, or poor relationships with staff.

## **Expectations for Staff**

As staff we are committed to gaining understanding of the factors that influence patterns of attendance among our students. In order to build an evidence base to inform our practice we are

- Building on our systems and routines for registration in every session
- Maintaining and consolidating our successful systems for monitoring, tracking and reporting attendance and punctuality
- Rewarding good attendance and reducing poor attendance
- Establishing a whole attendance profile that enables staff to target resources more effectively.
- Embedding an ethos to show incoming staff, parents and students that we care about attendance and will be proactive in maintaining high levels of attendance and achievement.
- Investigating the attendance records of individuals and groups of students that will make it easier to allow links to be made between attendance and attainment
- Making it easier to access data so that staff can measure attendance and spot changes and act on any deterioration.
- Sharing data with students and parents/carers so that they can see and understand trends of attendance among individuals and groups and be proactive in any plans for improvement.

## **Expectations for parents/carers**

We are committed to establishing partnerships with our parents/carers that best support our shared ambition to address the unique needs, talents and potential of their young people. All parents of students registered at the UTC:

- Undertake to uphold the Home-UTC Agreement to ensure regular attendance

- Agree to provide an explanation for all absences
- Are made aware that if their child fails to attend regularly and is absent without authorisation legal action may be taken against them

## **Implementation**

The UTC has devised clear systems and structures with leadership and management accountabilities to ensure that this policy is implemented in full and that the UTC goes beyond its legal requirements in promoting positive attendance.

- Colleges information management system contains details of the student from the date they were first admitted to the College. This will include details of their parents.
- The Attendance Register, shows whether a student is present, engaged in an approved off-site activity, or is absent. In addition, where a student of compulsory College age is absent, the register will also show whether the absence was authorised by the College **or** remains unauthorised **or** whether the student was unable to attend due to one of the exceptional circumstances named in the code.

Our strategies for implementation are as follows

### **With students**

- A system of rewards for individuals and groups of students with 100% attendance is in place across each year group. This is done three times a year.
- Teaching and learning about the merits of good attendance and the consequences of poor attendance takes place throughout a student's career at the UTC
- All students receive feedback and percentage scores about their attendance record which forms part of the assessment and reporting system

### **With carers/parents**

- Parents receive details about the expectations the UTC has of them in the Home-UTC Agreement and through our website under Key Information.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to avoid any absence from College and they are made aware that they should not arrange holiday or routine medical check-ups during term time.
- Parents are made aware through the Home-UTC Agreement of the issues that impact on attendance such as the result of parental influence, peer pressure or bullying, boredom at College, unidentified learning needs, illness, family problems, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, or poor relationships with staff. They need to be aware that the UTC's systems are in place to try to identify these factors and that swift action will be taken to intervene if any student is found to be vulnerable.

### **With Staff**

At UTC Plymouth we place the highest value on attendance and punctuality and believe that it is an entitlement for all students to achieve the optimum attendance of 100%. To support this aspiration, we have established systems and structures that guarantee consistent approaches to positively supporting student attendance and punctuality at the start of and throughout every day.

### **Attendance Administrator should:-**

- Ensure absence notes are received from parents/carers for all absences and recorded. If absence notes have not been received within 3 days, the matter should be referred to the Attendance Officer.
- Refer absence matters and concerns to the relevant Pastoral Lead

### **Mentors and Tutors should:-**

- Arrive early for registration and take their register.
- Ensure absence notes are passed to Reception.
- Initiate counselling and build good relationships with their mentees or class so that potential attendance or punctuality problems can be identified early.

### **School Procedures**

All schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and then for at the start of every lesson. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site education activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (see appendix 1 for DfE attendance codes).

Under new DGPR regulations, every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 10.00am, any late arrivals after this time will be entered as a U. If arriving after 8.45 but before 10.00am, the late attendance will be recorded as an L.

### **Unplanned Absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.am or as soon as practically possible.

The school may ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence before authorising absences of this nature. If this evidence is not provided, or is insufficient to explain the period of absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

### **Medical or dental Appointments**

We expect medical appointments to be arranged for after school, or if necessary, as close to the end of the school day as possible. Should this not be possible, we will authorise only half -day's

absence for the appointment. The DfE requires that students bring a printed appointment card to show their tutor (usually available from the Practice's Reception) and to book out at School Reception when they leave. Students failing to produce a printed appointment card will have their absence recorded as unauthorised.

### **Holidays during term time**

Principals no longer have the authority to authorise holiday absence during term-time. Any holiday requests for term-time will be declined unless for exceptional circumstances and any resultant absence will be unauthorised. We are required to inform the local authority of any holiday absence of 8 or more sessions. Absence Request Forms are obtainable from Reception.

### **Religious Observance**

Please apply for absence using the absence request form should your child need to be absent for reasons of religious observance.

### **Other Absence**

Principals may now only authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances, any requests should be made in writing to the Principal, however please note – we will not authorise absence from school for moving house/birthdays/obtaining or not having appropriate uniform or caring for relatives.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Students are reminded regularly of the importance of punctuality to school and being prepared for learning. Three late to registration marks will result in

## UTC ABSENCE RETURN SYSTEM:

1. **Level 1** - First absence will initiate a return to college interview with the Attendance Officer.
2. **Level 2** – Second unauthorised absence will initiate a meeting to set targets for improvement with Mentor and Attendance Officer.

### Subject Teachers and Class Teachers should:-

- Lead by example by being punctual and by planning interesting and stimulating sessions which motivate all their students using Quality First Teaching Strategies and Growth Mindsets.
- Mark their class register at the start of every session.

### Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored through the monitoring schedule published in the staff handbook.

### Links to other UTC policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related policies:-

UTC Home-School Agreement

Safeguarding and Child Protection

### VERSION CONTROL SHEET

#### POLICY NAME: Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Policy Prepared by: Julie Rae

Document date	Filename	Mtg submitted	Summary of changes required
Apr 13		Curriculum	New Policy
Jun 16		Curriculum	Version 2
Jun 19		Curriculum	Updated

## **ACTIONS FOR ATTENDANCE REPORTING**

- UTC Plymouth expects a target of 100% attendance.
- All schools and colleges have a target of 95% attendance or above, set by the Government. Should attendance dip below 95% parents/carers will receive a letter informing them.
- All students who then fall under 90% will trigger a referral to the Plymouth City Council Education Welfare Officer.
- Persistent absentees will require a meeting with the EWO and completion of an attendance plan which will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- Once a student receives 10 or more unauthorised absences from school over a six month period, a penalty notice can and will be issued.