





Attendance Policy

North East Futures UTC has been established to change the education, skills and employment paradigm in our IT and Healthcare Science sectors in the North East. It provides the opportunity for young people from all the communities in this region to benefit from its specialist provision.

Local Governors and all the North East Futures staff are committed to a policy of equality and aim to ensure that all students, employees, job applicants, other member of the school community and visitors are treated fairly and with respect.

We aim to give equal access to the high quality educational opportunities we provide and to ensure that everyone feels that they are a valued member of the school community. We seek to create a safe and happy environment where all our students can flourish and where social and cultural diversity are celebrated.

Reviewed by:	Principal and LGB
Frequency of policy review:	Triennially
Lead Sub Committee for discussion:	Educational Standards
Last Reviewed:	May 2021
By Dan Sydes	
Ratified by Local Board of Governors on:	11 June 2021
By Michael Whitaker	
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North East Futures UTC – Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

Promoting positive behaviour and outstanding attendance is the responsibility of the whole North East Futures UTC 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.

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 ten 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 authorised circumstances
- Being late is unacceptable except in genuine, unavoidable circumstances
- Staff and parents encourage and support students to achieve and maintain outstanding attendance at North East Futures UTC

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

In the case of failure of the electronic registration system a paper register will be taken and data input to the electronic registration system as soon as possible after it becomes available.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. Governing Body

The Governors of the UTC will:

- Ensure the UTC has a robust attendance policy and procedures and strong reporting tools
- 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 Local Governors and committee on UTC attendance
- Authorise absences

3.3. Assistant Principal

The Assistant Principal will:

- Coordinate the procedures for dealing with attendance issues
- Oversee the Pastoral Team in dealing with attendance issues
- Support individual students where the pastoral team's intervention has not yielded sufficient improvement in attendance/punctuality
- 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. Pastoral Team

The Pastoral Team will:

- Liaise with teachers regarding student absence both from the UTC and from individual lessons.
- Intervene when an attendance or punctuality issue is identified:
 - Parent/carer attendance support meeting or parent contract
 - Discussion of additional support needed to improve attendance/punctuality
 - Making referrals to outside agencies where needed – e.g. Local Authority for legal attendance monitoring
 - Celebrate students with improved and excellent attendance
 - Lead the intervention of students who have minor attendance issues (e.g. 93%-95%)

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- Reporting to the Assistant Principal if further issues identified
- Liaise with the parents/carers over attendance patterns and follow up where necessary.
- Maintain regular attendance reports and data
- Report weekly to the Principal regarding attendance / punctuality

3.5. Reception staff

The administrative staff based at the main reception will:

- Record late arrivals
- Contact parents/carers when no explanation for absence has been received
- Regularly inform the appropriate staff about absences and late arrivals
- Record absence codes

3.6. All Teachers

Teachers at the UTC will:

- Ensure they are fully conversant with the attendance policy
- Ensure that all registers are completed
- Ensure that all concerns relating to attendance are brought to the attention of the Assistant Principal using agreed reporting systems
- Quickly report using the appropriate systems if a student is unexpectedly absent from a lesson (e.g. present in previous lessons)

3.7. Students

All students at the UTC will:

- Adhere to the Code of Conduct requirement to attend regularly and punctually
- Attend the UTC every day on time unless absence authorised

3.8. Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers of students at the UTC:

- Have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends the everyday UTC on time unless an absence is authorised
- Provide medical evidence in advance to support an absence i.e. appointment card, hospital letter if absences are regular or longer than 5 days
- Should inform the UTC on each day of absence, by telephone or email, stating the reason for absence
- Inform the UTC in advance of future absences e.g. a University visit for authorisation
- Ensure requests for term-time holiday or trip requests are put in writing directly to the UTC with reasons as to why the trip must take place in term time. The Principal will approve or deny this request on a case by case basis and aim to respond to requests within 5 working days. Only in very exceptional circumstances will this request be approved.

4. Absences

Only absences authorised by the UTC are acceptable. These are occasions when:

- The student is ill (with medical evidence if the absence is longer than 5 days or the student has high levels of prior absence)
- The student is absent with permission granted by the Principal
- The student belongs to a religion 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, see Appendix 3

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, texts and letters
- Education Welfare Officer visits
- Parental meetings at the UTC or at home
- Working with outside agencies to support and challenge low attendance

Should these steps fail to secure a student's improved 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. In accordance with Local Authority Penalty Notice Protocol, fixed penalties for unauthorised absence (including unauthorised holidays in term time) may be applied if other strategies do not bring about an improvement in attendance.

There is no automatic entitlement to leave for family holidays in term time and we actively discourage parents from taking holidays in term time and as such, if not approved, it will be treated as unauthorised absence. Parents should be aware that students who miss external examinations such as GCSE and GCE through unauthorised family holiday will be charged the examination entry fees.

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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 that can be 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 can only be issued by the Principal, a local authority officer or the police. All schools including the UTC and the police must send copies of penalties issued to 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 Senior Team, teachers and the pastoral team. Lateness will be dealt with through the UTC Behaviour Policy:

- The UTC records entry time through the morning signing-in system Inventory. Students need to be signed in before 9:00am
- If a student arrives after 9.00am they will be recorded as an "L" – Late
- If a student arrives after 9.30am the session is recorded as a "U" – late after registration has closed
- If a student arrives late to any subsequent lessons by 1 minute or more they will be recorded as L – late

We recognise that some students will be late because of transport arrangements and will support them in ensuring that they are on time when possible. If a student think they are going to be late travelling on public transport they will be asked to email (info@nefuturesutc.co.uk), call or text the UTC Reception.

As long as lateness due to public transport is a rare occurrence, a student will not receive further disciplinary measures, as per the Behaviour Policy, if they inform reception of their lateness.

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 Policy. 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 and the relevant Education Welfare Officer (EWO) informed

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 Guidance for Parents
- Appendix 3 Newcastle Local Authority School Attendance info

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Appendix 1 - Guidance for Staff: Procedures for Managing Attendance

Registration

Registers must be taken using the MIS 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 Reception. 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 Principal as soon as possible.

Lateness

Lateness is unacceptable without a genuine reason. Students who arrive after 9:00 should report to Reception where they will be signed in and lesson monitor updated. Their pastoral team will be informed when the late arrival has been recorded. Persistent lateness will be dealt with using the Behaviour Policy.

Monitoring

The Pastoral team should ensure that they monitor the overall attendance and punctuality of their cohort of students through MIS at least once every week.

For any unauthorised absence – UTC will call home/parent/carer by 11:00 on the day to obtain reason for absence

Appendix 2 - Guidance for Parents / Carers

We recognise the difficulties that we all sometimes face, just getting out of bed and facing the day. Your child will not achieve their best if they do not regularly attend the UTC. We classify 95%+ as satisfactory attendance and 99%+ as outstanding attendance. We monitor closely the attendance of students with 90%-95% attendance and below 90% attendance is considered persistent absence. The UTC will put a support plan in place for all students with below 90% to help bring attendance up to at least satisfactory levels.

Parents and carers 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 your child is appropriately dressed in their UTC Dress Code and bring the relevant equipment. If you are not sure about the uniform or equipment, please look at the relevant section of the website or get in touch. There will be times when your child cannot go to the UTC: for example, if they are genuinely too unwell to do so. In these cases please inform us as soon as possible so we can keep our legal attendance records up to date.

The UTC is committed to supporting young people's wellbeing however there are times when a student's wellbeing is at a level where they are missing school. If this is the case please contact the UTC as soon as possible and we will offer support to the child and family in supporting improved wellbeing and a quick return to school.

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

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- If a student is genuinely too unwell to attend: parents/carers should inform the UTC every day of absence, by telephone or email to info@nefuturesutc.co.uk.
- If a student has a hospital appointment: please aim to arrange appointments during holidays or out of UTC hours if at all possible. There may be times when this isn't possible, but please let UTC the Pastoral Team 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 let the UTC know as soon as possible if someone in your family dies – at the UTC we want to make sure that we treat young people sensitively when they are experiencing difficulties. We may also be able to offer additional support and Pastoral care upon the child's return to the UTC.

When is it not right for your child to stay away from the UTC?

If a child has not met any of the criteria for absence above then the absence is unauthorised. Unauthorised absence will remain on a child's records and may even have to be given as part of reference for University, apprenticeship or employment.

The UTC will endeavor to contact Parents/carers as soon as possible if their child's absence is unauthorised.

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 usually be treated as unauthorised absence. Parents should be aware that students who miss external examinations such as GCSE and GCE through unauthorised family holiday will be charged the examination entry fees.

If you are required to take leave in term time for extenuating or exceptional circumstances please put your request in writing to the Principal with as much detail as possible.

Truancy

Truancy is the absence from the UTC or individual lessons without permission from the UTC. For safeguarding reasons it is essential that the UTC knows where our students are within operating hours. Truancy is often linked with other serious problems. The UTC will contact parents/carers to arrange urgent support for the student to ensure that no further incidents of truancy occur.

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Appendix 3 – further information from Newcastle Local Authority

Source: <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/education-and-learning/problems-school/attendance/schoolattendance-and-law>

90% attendance sounds good but means that your child misses on average:

- One half day every week.
- Nearly four weeks every school year.
- Over one school year in a school career.

2 weeks holiday in term time every year with no other absences means that your child:

- Can only ever achieve 95% attendance
- Will miss about two terms in a school career

5 minutes late every day means missing about 3 days of school every year

Schools and the local authority monitor school absence and work with families and young people where the level of absence is giving cause for concern. The information within this section explains the law and how legal sanctions for irregular attendance at school are applied in Newcastle.

Does my child have to go to school?

The law makes parents and carers responsible for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) receive a suitable, full-time education ([Section 7, Education Act 1996](#)). This can be either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

If my child is not registered at school, what can happen?

If we believe that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, we will attempt to encourage and support parents to register the child at a school. If these efforts are not successful, a school attendance order can be used to direct parents to send their child to a specified school ([Section 437, Education Act 1996](#)). Failure to comply with a school attendance order is an offence ([Section 443, Education Act 1996](#)).

What should I do if my child is absent from school?

If your child is going to be absent, contact the school on the first morning and keep the school up to date if it turns out to be a longer absence.

Send a signed and dated note with the reason for the absence when your child returns to school.

It is a school that decides whether or not to authorise an absence.

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If there is a problem speak to the school - support will be available but staff need to be told about any difficulties as soon as possible.

What can happen if my child is absent from school on a regular basis?

Absence means:

- Missing out on coursework and it can be very hard to catch up.
- Losing touch with friends and teaching staff.
- Finding it more difficult to have a successful future after leaving school.
- Having more opportunities to become involved in crime and anti-social behaviour either as victim or perpetrator.
- If your children are registered at school, the law makes you responsible for making sure that they attend regularly.

Schools:

- Monitor attendance and will try to support pupils who may be having difficulties □ Have to inform the Local Authority of every pupil who doesn't attend regularly. □ Can refer concerns about attendance to the Attendance Service. **What about absence due to illness?**
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If your child is ill, it's important to take time to get better, but infection doesn't always mean that your child has to be off school for ages! For guidance on how long your child should be off with an illness, [click here](#).

What about family holidays in term time?

Pupils don't have the right to have time off for family holidays in term time. Schools can give permission for all, part or none of the time requested but can only give permission in exceptional circumstances.

You must apply in advance for permission to have a family holiday in term time.

If school doesn't give permission and you go anyway, the absences will be marked as unauthorised and you may be issued with a penalty notice for each child when you return.

What legal sanctions can the Local Authority use?

The Local Authority may take legal action against you if your children do not attend regularly and the absences aren't authorised by the school ([Section 444, Education Act 1996](#)).

Penalty notice issued under the [Local Code of Conduct \(Sections 444A and 444B, Education Act 1996\)](#):

- £60 fine if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 22-28 days. □ Non-payment will result in a prosecution for the original offence.

Education Supervision Order ([Section 447, Education Act 1996](#); [Section 36, Children Act 1989](#)):

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- Makes the Local Authority responsible for advising, supporting and giving directions to the supervised child and parents to make sure that the child is being properly educated.
- You may be guilty of an offence if you persistently fail to comply with reasonable directions and the maximum fine is £1,000.

Prosecution under [Section 444\(1\), Education Act 1996](#):

- 'If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence. If you are found guilty, the maximum fine is £1,000.'

Prosecution under Section 444(1A), Education Act 1996 (as amended by [Section 109, Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)):

- 'If (in the circumstances above), the parent knows the child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause him to do so; the parent is guilty of an offence, unless he can prove he had reasonable justification.'
- This is a more serious offence and a warrant can be issued to make you attend court. If you are found guilty, the maximum fine is £2,500 and/or you could be sentenced to up to 3 months in prison.
- Please be aware that irregular attendance at alternative provision is subject to the same sanctions as irregular attendance at school.

How can I help my child to get the best out of school?

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- Be aware of the impact of regular absences - missing school is missing out.
 - Build up good habits of punctuality and attendance. These start early in life, so even before your child starts school, establish good routines, such as reading before bedtime and going to bed on time.
 - Make sure your child understands the benefits of regular attendance at school.
 - If your child is off school, you must let the school know why and tell them when they can expect your child back.
 - It can be difficult, but try to make all appointments for the doctor, dentist, optician after school hours or during the school holidays where possible.
 - Don't let your child stay off for reasons like going shopping, birthdays, minding the house, looking after brothers and sisters.
 - Avoid taking family holidays in term time.
 - Take an active interest in your child's school work and offer support with homework.
 - Attend parents' evenings to discuss your child's progress.
 - Don't let your child stay off school for a minor ailment.
 - Each school day is split into two sessions and the attendance register is taken every morning and afternoon. If your child is poorly first thing or but improves by lunchtime, send them into school for the afternoon session.
 - If your child recovers from illness before the end of the week, send them back to school even if it's only for one day - every day counts.

What if I am worried about my child's school attendance?

Talking to the school is the best place to start. Don't be afraid to get to know your child's teachers and head teacher - sharing problems is the first step to solving them. Your school will have an attendance policy available from the school or on their website. It will often identify who is the right person to talk to.

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Contact us:

Email: attendanceservice@newcastle.gov.uk