

North East Futures UTC





UTC Closure 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:	n/a
Last Reviewed:	November 2021
By Dan Sydes	
Ratified by Local Board of Governors on:	12 November 2021
By Michael Whitaker	
Next Review Date:	November 2024

Introduction

It may be necessary to close the UTC for a variety of reasons including:

- Severe weather; heavy snow, flooding or storms
- Severe disruption to transport
- Accommodation and utility problems, for example loss of power supply, heating failures or fire damage.
- Pandemic related

The UTC will always endeavour to remain open wherever possible.

Aims

The aims of this Policy are to:

- Provide a learning environment that is safe during adverse conditions and to take appropriate actions when it is not
- Ensure that the decision to close NE Futures UTC is understood by and communicated to students, staff, parents/carers and Governors
- Keep to a minimum the amount of time the UTC is closed during adverse conditions.

Closure before the start of the UTC day

The decision to close the UTC will normally rest with the Principal. The decision shall be made where possible before 6.15 am on the day of closure and on the basis of information received from:

- The Media about the weather, condition of the roads and paths and public transport;
- The local travel providers
- On the spot observation, either personally or from staff members better placed to make such observations
- Through appropriate external agencies such as the Met Office
- Factors involved in reaching the decision to close the UTC are likely to be:
 - Unsafe access to the UTC, i.e. road conditions (obstructions, snow, ice, flooding etc.)
 - Breakdown of UTC essential services (heating, electrical services, water, storm damage etc.)
 - Specific advice received from the Local Authority, Police etc.
 - Pandemic related

The Principal will advise staff of the closure through social media, email, SMS, mobile phone by following the closure protocol in Appendix 1.

Parents/carers will be advised via social media, the UTC website, email, local radio and SMS where available

Staff Attendance

Although it is recognised that severe weather conditions make it difficult for some staff to get to and from work, the expectation is that staff will be present at work wherever possible. Staff are expected to inform the UTC if they are forced to be absent due to adverse weather.

Exams

Any students who are unable to attend an exam session due to adverse weather conditions must contact the UTC at the earliest opportunity to inform them of the absence (see also the UTC's Exam Policy).

Closure during the UTC school day

The decision to close the UTC will normally rest with the Principal. The decision shall be made on the basis of information received from:

- The Media about the weather, condition of the roads and paths and public transport;
- Local travel providers;
- On the spot observation, either personally or from staff members better placed to make such observations;
- Through appropriate external agencies such as the Met Office;
- Factors involved in reaching the decision to close the UTC are likely to be:
 - Access to the UTC, i.e. road conditions (obstructions, snow, ice, flooding etc.);
 - Breakdown of UTC essential services (heating, electrical services, water, storm damage etc.);
 - Specific advice received from the Local Authority, Police etc.;
 - Pandemic Related
 - Critical incident (see separate Critical Incident Plan)

The Principal will advise staff on-site and recall staff who are off-site and initiate the closure procedure see appendix 1.

Parents/carers will be advised via social media, the UTC website, email, local radio and SMS where available

The UTC will support and ensure the safe return home of all students.

In the Event of NE Futures UTC being Closed

If the UTC is closed it is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the following happen:

- The decision is ratified with the Chair or Vice Chair of the Local Governing Board
- The UTC Website is updated
- The Closure Procedure appendix 1 is followed
- The information is passed to relevant media agencies as soon as possible

Appendix 1 – School Closure Procedure – Before the Start of Day

Stage 1 – Decision to Close

- The Principal usually makes the decision¹ to close the school
- A decision to close before the start of the day should be made as early as possible
- The Principal should usually seek the approval of the Chair or Vice Chair of the local governing body²

Stage 2 – Communication to Staff before start of the UTC day

- The Principal should email all staff (including contracted staff from other organisations)
- The Principal should then phone all staff whom they line manage
- All staff should then phone all staff they line manage and confirm by email with the Principal who they have successfully contacted.
- Any staff that the Principal is unable to confirm has been contacted by phone should be phoned again directly from the Principal
- The Principal should report to the chair of the local governing body when all staff are informed

Stage 3 – Communication to Students and Parents/Carers

- The Principal should put the school closure on the UTC website front page and on all available social media channels
- Messages should encourage parents/carers and students to share the news amongst their friends and contacts at the UTC
- The Principal should inform local media including radio stations of the school closure

¹ If the Principal is not available to make decision, the responsibility fall to the next senior leader in line as per the line management structure of the UTC starting with the Assistant Principal ² Where the Chair or Vice Chair is not available, the Principal should contact the CEO of the Multi Academy Trust. If no suitable approval can be granted then the Principal must act alone. ³ Including students with an EHCP, medical needs or LAC

- The Principal should write an email to all parents and students directly to inform of the closure of the UTC and further emails where necessary to update parents on the situation
- The Principal should ensure that all high-risk students³ parents/carers are contacted by phone directly
- The Principal should report to the chair of the local governing body when all students and parents/carers are informed

Stage 4 – post closure

- The Principal should be readily available by telephone to deal with any problems
The Principal should make a decision as soon as possible regarding the school closure for the following day and follow the necessary steps again if the decision is made to close for a second or further day
- The Principal should coordinate the communication from UTC staff to provide suitable work to be completed at home

Appendix 2 – School Closure Procedure – During the UTC Day

Stage 1 – Decision to Close

- The Principal usually makes the decision⁴ to close the school
- A decision to close during a UTC day should be made as early as possible
- The Principal should usually seek the approval of the Chair or Vice Chair of the local governing body⁵

Stage 2 – Communication to Staff before start of the UTC day

- The Principal should inform all staff (including contracted staff from other organisations) using appropriate internal communication e.g. an emergency meeting

Stage 3 – Communication to Students and Parents/Carers

- The Principal should put the school closure on the UTC website front page and on all available social media channels
- Messages should encourage parents/carers and students to share the news amongst their friends and contacts at the UTC
- The Principal should inform local media including radio stations of the school closure

⁴ IF the Principal is not available to make decision, the responsibility fall to the next senior leader in line as per the line management structure of the UTC starting with the Assistant Principal ⁵ Where the Chair or Vice Chair is not available, the Principal should contact the CEO of the Multi Academy Trust. If no suitable approval can be granted then the Principal must act alone. ⁶ Including students with an EHCP, medical needs or LAC

- The Principal should write an email to all parents and students directly to inform of the closure of the UTC and further emails where necessary to update parents on the situation
- The Principal should ensure that all high-risk students⁶ parents/carers are contacted by phone directly
- The Principal should report to the chair of the local governing body when all students and parents/carers are informed
- Students should be released from school as soon as possible after the Principal has confirmed it is safe for them to leave
- The Principal should remain on site until all students have left the site safely

Stage 4 – post closure

- The Principal should be readily available by telephone to deal with any problems
The Principal should make a decision as soon as possible regarding the school closure for the following day and follow the necessary steps again if the decision is made to close for a second or further day
- The Principal should coordinate the communication for UTC staff to provide suitable work to be completed at home