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UNIVERSITY  
TECHNICAL COLLEGE BOLTON

# **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

**2018-2020**

**Approved: Chair IMC**

**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

**Date for Review: July 2020**

**Revision History:**

<b>Revision History</b>			
<b>Revision</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Summary of Changes</b>
0	April 2017	LM	New
1	January 2018	LM	Amended re: unauthorised holiday in response to external Safeguarding audit (January 2018)
2	July 2018	LM	Amended to reflect changes to penalty notices issued for irregular attendance (Bolton Council July 2018)  Update from Governing Body to Interim Management Committee  Reference made to GDPR
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Every student at UTC Bolton matters. The most important factor contributing to a student's success at UTC Bolton is attendance. The link between attendance and attainment is firmly established. Those students who attend more, achieve greater qualifications and are more able to access higher education, employment or training.

UTC Bolton encourages 100% attendance for all our students as part of our commitment to the University of Bolton as sponsor and to employers with whom we work and who help us to deliver our promise of an apprenticeship, training or a university place.

The UTC expects students to attend regularly and arrive at sessions on time in order to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them at the College. We expect that parents/carers will ensure their child arrives on time and supports the UTC's policy on attendance and punctuality.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **THE UTC WILL ENSURE:**

- All staff understand their role in ensuring good attendance and punctuality;
- No students are deprived of their educational opportunities by either their own non-attendance or lateness, or that of other students;
- Regular attendance monitoring by the Attendance Officer, in liaison with Academic Mentors and the Director of Inclusion and Student Services;
- Students with poor attendance and/or punctuality are challenged and students with good attendance and/or punctuality are rewarded through a transparent Rewards system;
- Students and parents/carers are made aware of the procedures the UTC will follow if attendance and/or punctuality becomes a concern;
- Students who are absent are expected to catch up with any missed work, including homework;
- Further provision of work will be negotiated dependent upon the nature of the illness and likely period of absence;
- Weekly meetings of the Synergy team are scheduled to discuss students whose attendance is causing concern and to assess if the intervention strategies in place need to be revised.

- The Attendance Officer produces weekly Attendance Reports for all UTC students;
- The Attendance Officer produces weekly Attendance Reports for SEND students and students in receipt of Pupil Premium funding;
- The Director of Inclusion and Student Services produces attendance and punctuality data for meetings of the Interim Management Committee (IMC);
- Staff, students and their parents/carers are informed of any changes to this policy via the UTC website.

#### **PARENTS/CARERS SHOULD ENSURE:**

- They fulfil their legal responsibility to send their child to the UTC regularly;
- They are aware that they risk prosecution if they fail in this duty. Only the UTC, within the context of the law, can approve absence. Parents/carers cannot approve absence;
- They are aware of the procedures the UTC will follow if attendance and/or punctuality becomes a concern;
- They notify the UTC before 8.30 on the first day of absence, leaving their child's name, the reason for the absence, tutor group and expected date of return;
- They contact the UTC each day of their child's absence;
- Provide medical evidence if the absence persists for more than 3 days;
- They arrange medical appointments outside of UTC hours whenever possible;
- For KS4 students they:
  - Understand that they cannot authorise their child's non-attendance for a medical appointment. Evidence of a medical appointment ahead of the appointment date must be provided;
  - Collect their child from the UTC and sign him/her out and back in after the appointment;
- For KS5 students they:
  - Provide evidence of a medical appointment. The UTC may ring home to confirm the appointment;
- Their child returns to the UTC before and/or after the appointment;
- They do not arrange family holidays during term time.

If holidays are taken without permission the holiday will not be authorised, an 'Unauthorised' mark (G code) will be recorded and the parent/carer may receive a fine from Bolton Council if their child misses 5 consecutive days of attendance.

The UTC will notify the Local Authority Assistant Manager Pupil Services if this holiday absence is during the GCSE examination period. The LA may issue a fine or parents/carers may face prosecution.

### **THE STUDENT SHOULD ENSURE:**

- They take responsibility to arrive at the UTC for 8.55 for registration in Activate at 9.00 for the morning session;
- They will receive a **U** - Unauthorised Absence mark if they arrive at the UTC after 9.30 am;
- They are fully prepared for their work by bringing the correct equipment;
- They attend all timetabled sessions promptly;
- They ensure they are registered for all Enrichment and PBL activities;
- They are aware that absences without appropriate medical documentation will be classed as Unauthorised;
- They provide evidence of:
  - A Dr's note after an absence;
  - A medical appointment prior to the date of the appointment;
- They understand that those with poor attendance and/or punctuality will be challenged and students with good attendance and/or punctuality will be rewarded;
- They are aware of the procedures the UTC will follow if attendance and/or punctuality becomes a concern.
- **They sign in and out at UTC Bolton before leaving the building; this is an important Health and Safety and Safeguarding requirement.** In order to leave the UTC site before lunch break, Sixth form students are required to produce an official letter or appointment card which will be checked and signed by the Director of Sixth Form. If this is agreed, the student can sign out at Reception. **Students will only be permitted to leave if this procedure has been followed in full.**

Parents/carers are reminded that their daughter/son's attendance at the UTC should be at or above the whole College target. Sixth form tutors and the Sixth form team monitor attendance regularly, and any student whose attendance falls below

the UTC target will receive a warning letter and an expected attendance target.  
Parents/carers may be called to a meeting to discuss any concerns.

## **ILLNESS**

If a student becomes unwell during the day, he/she will be sent to Reception by the member of staff in charge. Students are not permitted to contact their parents/carers directly before they report to Reception.

Trained staff will assess the illness and make decisions through the Director of Inclusion and Student Services or SLT about whether parents/carers need to be informed and whether a student will be sent home or collected by parents/carers.

## **COURT ACTION**

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement under Section 444 of the Education Act (1996). Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) introduced new powers for designated Local Education Officers, Headteachers (and Deputy or Assistant Headteachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school.

**From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018, the criteria for issuing a penalty notice will be reduced and a fine will be considered where a student has had 10 sessions (equivalent of five days- consecutive or otherwise) of unauthorised absence over the period of two consecutive half terms.**

See Bolton Council website- <http://www.bolton.gov.uk/website/pages/Truancy.aspx>;  
[www.gov.uk/school-attendance/overview](http://www.gov.uk/school-attendance/overview)

## **HOLIDAYS TAKEN IN TERM TIME**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2013) state that Headteachers/Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. This also applies to family holidays.

Under the legislation the following absence requests will not meet the criteria for approval:

- Family holidays due to convenience (for example because of parental work commitments, holidays taken at cheaper times of the year etc.);

- Visiting relatives;
- Family Day Trips (to exhibitions, concerts etc.);
- Visiting family/friends who have different holidays.

The decision as to 'exceptional circumstance' is at the discretion of the Principal but would include, for example, bereavement and legal matters.

## **AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence'. *School Attendance* DfE (2016).

## **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

Unless parents/carers have been notified by the UTC that an absence is authorised, any absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised.'

## **ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

**All communication with parents/carers will be recorded on SIMS. Data will be stored in accordance with the UTC Data Protection Policy (2018) which incorporates the General Data Protection Regulations (May 2018)**

### **FIRST – THIRD DAY OF ABSENCE**

- If a telephone call has not been received by 8.55 to explain a student's absence, the Attendance Officer will telephone and text the parent(s)/carer(s) and all other contact numbers.
- If the Attendance Officer is informed the student is ill she/he will attempt to ascertain from the parent/carer the likely duration of the illness.
- If contact is not made, the Attendance Officer will send an email.

### **FOURTH DAY OF ABSENCE**

- If the student has not returned to the UTC and communication has not been established with the parent/carer, the Attendance Officer will discuss the absence with the Academic Mentor and the Director of Inclusion and Student Services and a home visit will be undertaken.

## **PERSISTENT ABSENTEES (PA)**

- The Attendance Officer will escalate the procedures outlined above for students with a record of persistent absence to ensure the safety of the student.

## **ATTENDANCE PANEL**

- A parent/carer will be invited to attend an Attendance Panel should their child's attendance fall below 90%. This will consist of the Director of Inclusion and Student Services, the Attendance Officer, an external colleague with relevant experience and expertise and a member of the IMC may also be present.
- Where there are significant concerns, the panel will include the LA internal agencies and the IMC governor with Safeguarding responsibility if required.
- The minutes of the Attendance Panel will be formally recorded.
- Where a student has been a PA in the previous academic year, an Attendance Panel meeting will be held as soon as their attendance drops below 96%.

## **ATTENDANCE PANEL DUE TO UNAUTHORISED HOLIDAY**

- If a student has an unauthorised holiday of 5 days or more, the parents/carers will be required to attend an Attendance Panel meeting on the student's return to the UTC.

## **A STUDENT'S RETURN TO THE UTC**

- On a student's return to the UTC, parents/carers must provide him/her with a signed letter, including a Dr's note to explain the absence.
- If an acceptable reason for the absence is provided and accepted by the UTC, the absence may be marked as authorised.
- The UTC is under no obligation to accept the reason for the absence if there is doubt as to its validity.
- Where appropriate, parents/carers regularly identifying poor health as a reason for their child's absence, will be asked to provide a medical certificate from their GP.

## **PUNCTUALITY PROCEDURES**

- Students should arrive at the UTC by 8.55 am ready for registration at 9.00 am. If a student is going to be late the parent/carer has a responsibility to inform the College by telephone of the student's expected time of arrival.
- All students who arrive late must report to Reception and give the reason for their late arrival.

- If a student arrives after 9.30 am they will be marked as **U** - Unauthorised Absence.
- If a student is late for either morning or afternoon registration more than twice in one week, this will result in a Recall.
- If this pattern is repeated over a three-week period, parents/carers will be notified and invited to a meeting at the UTC with the Academic Mentor or Director of Inclusion and Student Services.