



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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| Responsible: | The Principal |
| Reviewed: | May 2022 |
| Date Approved by Full Governing Body: | Summer Term 2022 |
| Next Review: | July 2023 |

At the Watford UTC we are committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, enabling our students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Good attendance helps the students in our community to maximise their learning.

This policy aims to support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality. The Watford UTC aims to encourage and assist all students to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality and reduce Persistent Absence in order that all students are assisted in reaching their potential.

1. Responsibilities and Expectations

- The Watford UTC will provide a safe learning environment and maintain records of attendance according to legislation and guidance on a daily basis.
- Only the Principal can authorise absence.
- The Watford UTC will provide attendance details on the child's annual report.
- The Watford UTC will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality.
- Parents/carers have a legal obligation to ensure their child attends school.
- Parents/carers are expected to ensure their child attends school regularly, on time, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents/carers must inform The Watford UTC on the **1st day** of absence and give a reason for their child's absence. Parents/carers will also maintain **daily** contact with us until child returns to school.
- Parents/carers are required to inform the school by email to admin@watfordutc.org where possible or by telephone 01923 905240, giving a reason for their child's absence.
- Where no email/telephone call has been received from a parent/carer a text message will be generated notifying parents/carers of their child's absence.
- Absence will not be authorised where a parent has not provided any reason for absence.
- All students are expected to attend school regularly and punctually.
- All students must remember to hand any note to school providing reasons for absence.
- All students will be expected to be ready to learn.

2. If Your Child is absent

The Watford UTC will:

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- Record notification of absence.
- If notification is not received, send a text message to parents/carers on the first day of absence requesting the reason for absence.
- Maintain regular contact with parents/carers throughout the student's absence.
- Keep all written notification from parents/carers on file or electronically.
- Inform parents/carers in writing if a child's attendance falls below 95%.
- Record any absences as authorised or unauthorised according to current DfE guidelines.

3. e-Registration

- The Watford UTC uses Arbor to register the students as present, absent or late.
- Lessons begin at 09.05 every day following Tutor Registration at 09.00-09.05.

4. Lateness to Lesson

- Lateness to lessons is monitored by senior staff on a weekly basis. Students who are recorded as arriving late to lessons will be required to make up for lesson time missed on Fridays at 2.00pm.
- Students arriving to school after 9am are required to sign in late at Reception. Their name, tutor group and reason for lateness is recorded.
- Students who are not in morning registration will be marked on the register as "absent" by their tutor, and this absence will remain unauthorised until the UTC has confirmed the reason, usually in the form of a subsequent communication with parent/carers.

5. Punctuality Concerns

- A student with a poor punctuality record may remain after 2pm on a Friday in the first instance. If the student continues to show poor punctuality, an email/letter of concern is sent to the parents/carers and the student will be monitored. If punctuality does not improve, then a second email/letter is sent home inviting the parents to a meeting to discuss how to help improve the situation. It is important that students are safe and therefore accounted for at all times during the day. Because of this, any unexplained absence is monitored very carefully.

6. Absence due to illness

Notification must be provided for all absences.

- Absences are authorised by the Principal and Senior Assistant Director only.
- Parents/carers must give detailed and specific reasons for absence
- Parents/carers may be asked to provide evidence that their child is too ill to attend school.
- Unless parents/carers have been given a particular time scale of absence through illness by a doctor they are expected to contact the school each day to let us know what is happening. The details of emails/telephone calls are recorded and monitored.

7. Absence due to Medical Appointments

- We would request that all medical appointments, if possible, are made outside of school hours. If a medical appointment is known in advance parents/carers must notify Watford UTC by email/in writing. If an emergency appointment is made please email/telephone before 9am. Notification must be given if a student needs to leave school during the day. Students must sign out at Reception and sign back in again on their return.

8. Exceptional Leave

There have been amendments to The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which come into force from 1st September 2013. These remove all reference to family holiday and extended leave therefore:-

- Whenever a parent/carer requests to take a student out of school for leave during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances, the absence will be unauthorised by the Principal, and the parent/carer is reminded that the request contravenes the Home-School Agreement signed upon application to the school.
- **NO** leave of absence will be granted.
- Parents/carers may make an application for leave of absence for an exceptional circumstances.
- The Principal will decide whether this application will be granted.
- The Principal will decide the number of days granted for any leave of absence.
- Leave of absence taken without permission will be unauthorised.
- The Watford UTC will decide what is deemed as exceptional circumstances.

9. Truancy

- If a student truants a lesson they may be asked to remain after 2pm on a Friday to complete the work missed.

10. Truancy off Site

- Any student found to have left the school site at any time of the day, including break and lunch without permission from a member of school staff will receive an internal exclusion.

11. Promoting Good Attendance

- In order to promote good attendance, the Watford UTC provides encouragement to students and parents/carers in several ways.
- Exceptional attendance will be recognised on the Principal's noticeboard which is displayed on screens and is also emailed to parents/carers.
- By promoting good attendance, the Watford UTC believes that we are encouraging students to develop key life skills and this can only be achieved through good attendance at school.

12. Attendance Monitoring

- The target for attendance is 95%. Within an academic year, this is the equivalent of one half day of absence per fortnight.
- If a student's attendance is of concern, an initial letter is sent to parents/carers.

- If the situation does not improve, or the student's attendance falls further, then a second letter of concern is sent home, inviting the parents/carers to a meeting to discuss how to help improve the situation.
- Parents/carers will usually be requested to provide medical evidence, in the form of appointment cards or we may request permission to contact any medical practitioner in order to authorise any further absences or provide appropriate support if required.
- If there is no improvement, then a referral may be made to the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) at the Local Authority.
- An Individual Attendance Plan may be used to monitor and record a student's attendance and punctuality.
- A "RAG" tracking grid is used to monitor patterns of absence and attendance rates of various defined groups of students

13. The Role of the Tutor

- Tutors will monitor levels of student absence in their group and will discuss any concerns with individual students.
- Tutors are required to ask students to provide an email/letter from a parent/carer stating a reason for the absence so the reason for the absence may be recorded and the student record adjusted on Arbor.

14. Senior Assistant Director

- The Senior Assistant Director will arrange meetings with students where there are persistent attendance concerns. Home visits may also be arranged where necessary.

15. Post-16 Students

- Whilst the same monitoring procedures are used for monitoring non-compulsory age students, the AIO will not be involved. The Student Relationship Manager will work with Year 12 and 13 students to improve their attendance and will use the same strategies as used for compulsory age students.

16. Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)

- The Watford UTC works in partnership with the Local Authority Attendance Team to improve attendance for individual students and the whole school.
- The Student Relationship Manager will meet with the AIO to discuss and review attendance.
- The Watford UTC and the AIO will meet with identified individual students and their parents/carers to improve poor attendance.
- Where attendance does not improve sufficiently and after discussion with the AIO, the Watford UTC will proceed along three possible routes: application to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued; an invitation to attend a meeting to offer support; a formal referral to the Local Authority.

17. Fixed Penalty Notices

A penalty notice will be issued with regard to unauthorised absence if a student fails to attend school as required without a genuine explanation. A student's absence must have

been unauthorised for at least 15 sessions (one session is half day either am or pm) in the previous and/or current term. **Penalty notices will involve a parent paying a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days.** Failure to pay the fine within 28 days will result in either a prosecution for the offence to which the notice applies or withdrawal of the notice (limited circumstances apply). Prosecution will be taken by the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996, section 444. The issuing of penalty notices will comply with the code of conduct and practice as determined by the Local Authority.

18. Staff Responsible for Attendance Matters

Principal

Tutors

Senior Assistant Director

Governing Body

19. Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance; they will request an annual report from the Principal. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that attendance figures are appropriately high. This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every two years or earlier if deemed necessary.

Updates following advice from Herts LA Attendance Team:

Text in Paragraph 17 updated 14th November 2017

Text in Paragraph 12 updated 21st September 2018

Updated 18th May 2022:

Text in paragraph 2

Text in paragraph 6 bullet point 1

Text in paragraph 11 bullet point 2

Added text in paragraph 12 – new bullet point at end of list

Amended Heading and text paragraph 14

Amended text paragraph 17