

Attendance Policy

Introduction

At SGS Berkeley Green UTC, we are ambitious for our students. We are committed to enabling them to achieve excellent attendance and punctuality, so that they can flourish personally and professionally. This document sets out how we will we do so.

The Department for Education guidance *Working together to improve school attendance* clearly expresses the importance of excellent attendance and the key areas for consideration. It provides the framework we have used to put together this policy, and we wholeheartedly embrace its socially inclusive approach. It says:

[Excellent attendance] is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

...Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium.

Our Aims

- To set and meet ambitious targets for the attendance of all students.
- To empower all staff to support students in meeting ambitious attendance targets.
- To foster a culture and ethos which make excellent attendance and punctuality a priority for all pupils, and a source of pride.
- To foster strong and trusting relationships with students, parents and carers.
- To provide support, advice and guidance about attendance and punctuality to students, parents and carers.
- To be systematic in our approach to gathering, analysing and using attendance related data in order to improve outcomes.
- To ensure positive and consistent communication about attendance and punctuality between home and school.
- To promote effective partnership working with the local authority and a range of external agencies

- To recognise and respond to the needs of the individual students when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.
- To deal with extenuating circumstances appropriately, showing sensitivity and understanding.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff. We encourage attendance through a range of measures, including:

- Communicating clearly and consistently with students, parents and carers about the importance of attendance and punctuality.
- Clearly setting out our expectations at the start of, and throughout, the academic year.
- Celebrating excellent attendance and punctuality via the VIP and tutor-time curriculum. This will include:
 - Weekly celebration assemblies
 - Termly rewards for students with strong attendance
- Discussing attendance during parents and carers evenings.
- Using a range of promotional visual display materials throughout the building.

Expectations of the UTC and its staff

The UTC and its staff have a duty to promote excellent attendance and to remove the barriers to attendance for all students, but especially for young people who face additional barriers due to their individual needs or circumstances.

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to set and meet ambitious attendance targets, and to direct resources (including staff) to achieving them.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, Gareth Lister (Acting Headteacher at the time of writing), or the designated deputy, to lead the strategic approach to attendance in school. He can be contacted on Gareth.Lister@berkeleygreenutc.org.uk and 0800 470 1516.

It is the responsibility of the Assistant Headteacher to lead the day-to-day implementation of this Attendance and Punctuality policy. At the time of writing, the Assistant Headteacher responsible is Graham Withers. He can be contacted on Graham.Withers@berkeleygreenutc.org.uk and 0800 470 1516.

The UTC uses Arbor to record attendance. Graham Withers has overall management responsibility for the attendance aspect of the system and will use the absence and attendance codes as outlined in the relevant DfE statutory guidance.

A tutor or teacher should not change the attendance code for a student in Arbor unless:

- The student is marked absent but is present in the room.
- The student arrives to the lesson late.

The UTC has a statutory duty to maintain and report accurate and up-to-date attendance data. Attendance is recorded and monitored using Arbor Attendance.

Tutors and class teachers are legally responsible for marking their registers and should ensure that they have done so within the first ten minutes of every timetabled session. They should immediately notify the VIP team of the absence of any student for whom there are known safeguarding concerns.

The UTC has a duty to engage with the local authority, the Education Welfare Officer and other external agencies who can help remove barriers to attendance.

The full DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance can be found at Appendix A.

Types of Absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a legitimate reason that has been authorised by the Headteacher or someone deputising for them. These include:

- Illness
- Bereavement
- Transport failure
- Work experience
- The marriage of a close family member
- Agreed sporting, cultural or other events
- Medical, dental and therapeutic appointments which unavoidably** fall in school time
- Significant dates of religious observance
- External examinations, tests and interviews
- University open days and visits to employers
- Other exceptional* circumstances

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. These include (but are not limited to):

- Term-time holidays and day-trips
- Birthdays and treats
- Visits to relatives and family events
- Looking after siblings

The education (pupil registration) (England) (amendment) regulations 2013 made clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless 'exceptional and/or unavoidable circumstances' exist.

* **"Exceptional"** is defined as rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

** **"Unavoidable"** is an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time ie after school or during holidays. Parent/carers are asked to arrange a time to meet with the Head Teacher to discuss a past or future absence they feel is exceptional and/or unavoidable.

If an event can be scheduled outside of term time (or after the school day) ie special occasion, shopping/routine dental appointment, then it would not be described as an "exceptional, unavoidable circumstance" and can not be an authorised absence.

Expectations of Students

Students should:

- Arrive at the UTC before the start of the published school day 08:55 so that they can attend registration from 09:00 - 09:20.
- Attend all timetabled sessions, arriving on time.
- (Post-16 only) Ensure that they sign in and out for any session where they are unsupervised and wish to leave the UTC premises.

Expectations of Parents and Carers

The DfE guidance *Working together to improve school attendance* sets out the expectations of parents. **Parents of all students** are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Ensure their child arrives at school in good time so they can get to their registration on time (ie no later than 8:55 am).
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (eg sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional or unavoidable circumstances (see definitions above) and do so well in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.

For **students at risk of becoming persistently absent** (ie their attendance is at risk of falling below 90%, parents are expected to:

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

For **students who are persistently absent** (ie attendance is less than 90%), parents are expected to:

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

The fully DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance can be found at Appendix A.

Notifying the UTC of any absence - Parental Responsibility

Every absence from the UTC is classified as authorised or unauthorised. You will find a list of absence that will and will not count as authorised absence earlier in this document.

If a student is ill, there is an emergency or other exceptional*, unavoidable** absence, the parent or carer should telephone the UTC on 0800 470 1516 or email office@berkeleygreenutc.org.uk and leave clear information including the name of the student and the nature of the illness or emergency. They should continue to phone every day that the student is absent.

If a parent/carer of a student wishes to request the absence of a student, an email should be sent to office@berkeleygreenutc.org.uk in good time, so that the request can be considered.

Post-16 students may additionally request absence for a variety of progression-relation opportunities such as university open days, apprenticeship fairs and so on. They should request an *Absence in Advance* form from the office (Reception).

If a parent or carer would like a confidential discussion about the attendance of a young person, or they have concerns that they would like to share with our VIP team (our pastoral support team), they should call the office on 0800 470 1516 or email office@berkeleygreenutc.org.uk and ask to speak with the VIP office.

Recording Attendance

A register is taken during tutor time 09:00 - 09:20 (Mon - Thurs) and 09:00 - 09:10 (Fri). Registers are then taken within the first ten minutes of every timetabled activity. This data is recorded in Arbor.

If the UTC does not receive notification of an absence by 09:20, the student is marked as absent in the register and a pro-forma text message is sent, requesting information. When the reason for absence has been established, the office team will amend the register accordingly.

The Headteacher (or a designated deputy) has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

If we do not receive a notification of absence, the office team will contact parents/carers. If we are unable to contact them, we will contact other emergency contacts until the whereabouts of the child and their wellbeing can be confirmed. If we are unable to make contact with anyone who can confirm that the child is safe and well within 48 hours (or 24 hours for students for whom there is safeguarding concern), then we will contact Gloucestershire County Council for further investigation.

A tutor or teacher should not change the attendance code for a student in Arbor unless:

- The student is marked absent but is present in the room.
- The student arrives to the lesson late.

In the case of a request for absence the Headteacher (or their designated deputy) has the responsibility to determine whether it is authorised or unauthorised.

Monitoring Attendance

Daily	The VIP and office team will record student absence and observe any repeated absences of trends. Form tutors will have daily pastoral discussions with their tutees around individual attendance observations.
Weekly	The VIP will analyse the weekly attendance for each student and identify any trends in the data. They will then begin the process of additional support in line with the flowchart for attendance interventions. Student attendance will be discussed during the fortnightly VIP meetings and students of concern will be highlighted.
Termly	The VIP team will further analyse long term attendance data and discuss concerns with the educational welfare officer. The flow chart will continue to be followed.

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

This must include how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority.

Fixed Penalty Notices

The Department for Education explain the legal action that we can take to enforce school attendance as

Local councils and schools can use various legal powers if your child is missing school without a good reason. They can give you:

- a Parenting Order
- an Education Supervision Order
- a School Attendance Order
- a fine (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice')

Full details can be found via this link - <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>

Engaging with parents and carers

All our tracking point reports which are shared with parents/carers (3 per year) will include a cumulative attendance figure for that academic year.

As part of our attendance monitoring activities, we will make contact with parents to report on absence trends, to celebrate excellent attendance, and to improve the attendance of students who drop below 95%.

Attendance Percentages	Communication	Frequency
100%	Celebration	End of every term
95 - 99%	Celebration	End of every term
90 - 94%	Targeted letter to parents and carers	Termly
Less than 90% (circumstances known)	School Attendance Meeting (SAM)	Termly

	Educational Welfare Officer involvement	
Less than 90% (circumstances unknown)	School Attendance Meeting (SAM) Educational Welfare Officer involvement Involvement with Gloucestershire County Council Early Help team	Termly

Broken Weeks

A broken week is one where there is at least one late or absence mark in the register. The following actions will be taken in response to a disproportionate number of broken week:

These will be reviewed on an individual basis and suitable interventions will be put in place based on our attendance flowchart.

Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances, there may be a need for a part-time timetable to meet an individual pupil's needs. Gloucestershire County Council will be informed of any student on a part-time timetable.

A part-time timetable:

- Is time-limited, with a specified completion date (this may be extended in circumstances dictate).
- Must not be treated as a long-term solution.
- Can only be made with the agreement of parents and carers.
- Must be authorised by the Headteacher.
- Will be reviewed every 2 weeks.
- Will be recorded as authorised absence.