



Attendance and punctuality policy

Key staff members:	All staff
Responsible body:	Project Steering Group/Local Governing Body
Adopted:	June 2017
Last reviewed:	n/a
Next review:	June 2018

1. Introduction

In order to derive the maximum benefit from their education, it is essential that students attend school punctually and regularly. Any break in a child’s education has serious implications for their achievement. It can also cause disruption to the other students in the class and makes it difficult for the school to maintain the quality of education.

Good attendance promotes reliability and punctuality, both valuable attributes for successful working life after leaving school. Truancy can start at an early age and research has found criminalised behaviour often occurs when children truant.

We will continue to keep attendance high profile. Targets are set for each year’s attendance. Mulberry UTC expects all of its students to attend regularly and punctually to:

- allow students to reach their full potential,
- reduce the level of truancy and unauthorised absence,
- achieve targets set by the school and the Mulberry Schools Trust.

2. Attendance

2.1 Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is when a student has been absent and the school accepts the reason given by the parents/guardians. In certain cases, the school may decide to only authorise absences when the appropriate documentation has been provided e.g. medical notes, letter from GP.

2.2 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is when a student has truanted from school or when the reason for absence is not accepted. Students may also be marked as unauthorised absence when a note is not received. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- translating for family or friends,
- looking after siblings,

- staying at home e.g. helping with household chores, for a delivery, utility company etc
- spending a long weekend away or going on holiday during term time,
- going to the airport to collect relatives,
- caring for parents/other family members.

In line with the Local Authority's guidance on holidays in term time, all requests will be declined. Exceptional circumstances must be made and considered by the Chair of Governors. If a parent decides to take a family on extended leave during term time without permission, the child may be taken off roll. Where permission is granted, and the family fail to return by the agreed date, the school may also take the child's name off roll.

2.3 Registration

Students are expected to be on school site by 8.40am at the latest and expected to be present for registration at 8.45am. If a pupil arrives after 8.45am, they will be marked late by their tutor unless they arrive after 9am, when registration closes. Students arriving after 9am must sign in the late book.

Failure to sign in the late book means the student's absence will be marked as an unauthorised absence. The onus will be placed on students to prove they were in lesson late in order for this mark to be changed from 'unauthorised absence' to 'late'. Each student's time of arrival when late is recorded on the register.

2.4 Parents/carers' responsibilities

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually as defined in the Education Act 1996.

Parents/guardians should:

- Let the school know at the start of the day, by telephone or by sending a note with siblings that a child is ill or any other reason for absence. The school should be informed again if the absence is likely to continue.
- Provide a note or medical certificate to confirm the reasons for absence.
- Apply in advance for any exceptional reasons for absence.
- Wherever possible, make doctor and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Look in their child's planner for daily messages from the school.
- Talk to their son or daughter about attendance and punctuality.

2.5 Students' responsibilities

Students must:

- attend school every day,
- arrive both for school and lessons on time. If a student arrives late after registration, they should sign in the late book,
- attend school wearing the correct uniform or dress code,
- attend lessons while in school,
- take part in lessons,
- bring any difficulties to the attention of the form tutor, Director of Progress or a senior member of staff.

2.6 School responsibilities:

To improve and encourage attendance and punctuality, Mulberry UTC will:

- contact parents/carers to find out the reasons for an unexplained absence,
- provide a high quality curriculum so that students enjoy learning and want to come to school,
- provide for the needs of all students, as far as practicable and reasonable,
- follow up all unexplained or unauthorised absences with parents/guardians,
- provide support for all students experiencing difficulties,
- provide a re-integration procedure or programme for students who return to school following a prolonged absence,
- contact parents/carers if there are causes for concern.

2.7 Rewards and incentives

Mulberry UTC will recognise good and improved attendance and punctuality through:

- verbal and written praise,
- form tutor acknowledging improved attendance/punctuality,
- Public acknowledgement (certificates etc.)
- The Principal may be informed of any students with significantly improved attendance.

2.8 Sanctions

- Withdrawal of privileges e.g. trips
- Detentions for 2 or more lates in a week
- Internal exclusion for truancy.

3. Persistent Absence Monitoring and Tracking Initiative

The emphasis of this initiative is on identifying vulnerable students with high levels of absence (15% - whether authorised or unauthorised) and monitoring them through the year. There are also half-termly thresholds against which the absence of other students should be compared.

Where the thresholds, which are cumulative, are breached the students are added to the list.

Directors of Progress and the Inclusion Panel monitor and track these students. Where appropriate, an Attendance and Welfare Advisor works with those students caseload and contacts the family, provides support and information, refers to the Out of School Panel or pursues court action in order to reduce the number of students in this category.

4. Punctuality

Parents are given information about attendance and punctuality at transition parents' sessions.

Form tutors, Directors of Progress, Heads of Department and all members of teaching and non-teaching staff play an important part in improving punctuality to school and lessons.

Daily reminders about the importance of being on time are given by form tutors and weekly in assemblies by Directors of Progress.

4.1 Sanctions for poor punctuality to school

The following sanctions apply to students in the case of lateness to school:

Initial concern:

- A DoP late detention is set for any pupil who arrives late to registration twice in a week. This process involves a phone call home to parents.
- A Principal's detention is set for any pupil who repeatedly attends DoP detentions or who fails to attend the DoP detention.
- Text messages are sent each day to inform parents of absence or lateness to school.

Continuing concern:

- Attendance and Punctuality Report Cards are issued to students whose attendance and/or punctuality over a period of time gives cause for concern.
- A Director of Progress will meet parents if punctuality continues to persist.
- Panel meetings are held between AWA, DoP and parents if there is a continuing pattern of poor punctuality.
- A referral to AWA is made when a pupil has 15 or more lates within a 5 week period.
- A referral to the school police officer may be made if a pupil continues to arrive late.
- The KS5 bursary is linked to punctuality and detentions and/or supervised study sessions are set for KS5 students whose punctuality is a concern.

Serious concern:

- When a referral to the AWA has been made, she may:
 - refer the pupil to outside agencies,
 - refer to the borough SIP panel for court action
 - pursue court action.

4.2 Sanctions for poor punctuality to lessons

The following sanctions apply to students in the case of lateness to lessons:

- A warning is issued to any pupil who arrives late (without a reasonable explanation) to a lesson.
- A subject and/or Head of Department detention may be set for any pupil who arrives regularly late to a lesson.
- Persistent lateness is reported to the Director of Progress who will contact the parents and decide on the sanction.

4.3 Rewards

Mulberry UTC recognises good and improved punctuality through:

- Form tutor acknowledging improved punctuality through praise.
- Public acknowledgement and Certificates are issued in assembly.
- Names of students with excellent punctuality are entered into a monthly draw and may receive a £5 token.
- Letters are sent home acknowledging excellent and/or improved punctuality.

Appendix 1

STAFF GUIDELINES: Children Missing Education

Children missing from Education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET later in life.

Mulberry UTC complies with the statutory guidance 'Children Missing Education' and further guidance from Tower Hamlets Local Authority.

The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts before notifying the local authority.

Directors of Progress monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register and enquiries are made with parents as to the nature of any absences. Mulberry UTC adheres to the Tower Hamlets Attendance and Welfare Service criteria for referrals. Referrals are made where there has been one of the following:

- 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence
- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a five week period
- 15 late marks in a five week period
- 15 sessions of authorised absences in a five-week period with no medical certificate received
- Failure to return to school following a fixed term exclusion
- Failure to attend alternative provision after the fifth day of an exclusion
- Pupils who parents have notified the school in writing that they are educating the child at home

Mulberry UTC will notify Tower Hamlets Local Authority when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The school will provide:

- a. the full name of the pupil;
- b. the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- c. at least one telephone number of the parent with whom the pupil lives;
- d. the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- e. the name of pupil's destination school and the pupil's expected start date there, if applicable; and
- f. the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register (Annex A of the Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance 2016)