



Northgate High School

Inspiring excellence, fulfilling potential

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Heads of School: Mrs Z Galley and Dr D Hone

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Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance at school and legal intervention

Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. In the Unity Education Trust our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers that the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

In the DfE policy document entitled, 'School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' it states, 'Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion'. If the school does not receive a request for leave, the head teacher will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There will be no obligation on the head teacher to reconsider authorising the leave if an application has not been made in advance.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention through the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice where they have:

1. 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time (for absences from 1 September 2017); or
2. 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday.

Any pupil in the Unity Education Trust, who meets either of the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If a Notice is unpaid within 21 days, the fine will double to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If a fixed penalty notice fine is not paid in full within the timescale set out above, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent(s) in the local Magistrates' Court for the offence of failing to ensure their child has attended school regularly.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Z Galley
Head of School

Dr D Hone
Head of School

