



**University Technical
College Norfolk**

September 6, 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Attendance at school and legal intervention

This letter explains the legal position on attendance at school and we are legally required to send you this letter every year. Since September 2020, the Government made some changes to the threshold for legal intervention in cases of poor attendance, so it is especially important to read.

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. At UTCN our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our students receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers regarding 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, '*Headteachers 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 student can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion*'.

Hence, we are only able to grant absence in '**exceptional circumstances**.' This are very few, as the examples below show:

- The funeral of a parent, grandparent or sibling
- The death or terminal illness of a parent, grandparent or sibling
- Sudden loss of housing
- Out-of-school programmes such as music, arts or sports e.g. attending a musical examination or representing Norfolk in a national sports competition
- Weddings of parents and siblings only
- A family holiday where a parent/carers on military service is departing to, or returning from, a war zone

Headteacher Alex Hayes

University Technical College Norfolk, Old Hall Road, Norwich, NR4 6FF

T 01603 580280 E office@utc.org.uk www.utc.org.uk

Company registration number 07911472

If we do not receive a request for leave, we will not be able to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There will be no obligation on the headteacher to reconsider authorising the leave if an application has not been made in advance.

The Local Authority operate a system where any student will meet the criteria for legal intervention where they have:

- **At least 9 sessions (4.5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the student during the last 6 school weeks.**

The intervention could be in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). Any student at UTCN who meets the criteria will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a FPN is issued, the arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the penalty notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the receipt of the notice. The FPN is per parent per child. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken

Thank your taking the time to read this letter, I hope we can count on your support in this matter, but please do not hesitate to contact our Attendance Officer, Alan Tetley, if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully



Alex Hayes
Headteacher