

05/09/2017

Dear Parent/Carer

Attendance at school and legal intervention for academic year 2017/2018 – updated due to criteria change

Ormiston Venture Academy prides itself on providing a world class educational experience for all students, to enable them to fulfil their academic potential. In order to maximise your child's potential, excellent attendance is crucial. We are governed by both the national government's guidelines and by those of the Local Authority, Norfolk County Council, both of which I have outlined below.

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 Ormiston Venture Academy our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

You will be aware that the law requires all parents to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Research has shown that children often do not catch up on work missed, which can have serious consequences for their learning and their progress. 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.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention 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 weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday.

Any pupil in Ormiston Venture Academy who meets either criteria, is 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 in 21 days, if unpaid a further invoice for £60 per parent per child is issued, both individual invoices would then have to be paid making a total payment of £120 in 28 days per parent.

Failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken.

Further to this due to government changes from September 2015 regarding attendance, we are now in a position where we require absence to be supported by one of the four statutory defences.

1. That the absences are with leave (ie that they have been agreed by the principal)
2. That they are because of sickness or unavoidable cause. You must provide evidence to support absences due to ill-health if your child falls below 95%, this can be through a copy of a medical appointment card that has been signed by the surgery, prescription or information from a medical practitioner
3. That the absences fall on days of religious observance for the religion to which parents belong
4. That the child is entitled to free transport to school and the LA have failed to provide this

If absences do not fall into any of these four categories or the school have not been informed of reason for absence, absences will be marked as unauthorised. As a parent you have responsibility in law to ensure your child's regular attendance at school.

It is also important to highlight to you that Section 7 of the education Act 1998 places a duty on all parents to ensure that their child receives an efficient, full time education. Parents who are seen to fail in their duty can be brought before the magistrates Court where a maximum £2,500 fine and/or up to a three month prison sentence can be imposed.

Our aim is to ensure that our pupils receive the most from their education and I know we can count on your support in this matter.

Yours Sincerely



Mrs Nicole Rossage

Vice-Principal