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Dear Parents and Carers,

Changes to School Attendance

We want to let you know about some important changes to the rules about school attendance. The government has put out new guidance called "Working Together to Improve School Attendance," which will become statutory on 19th August 2024. Until then, the current guidance still applies.

Here are the key points you need to know about:

Leave of Absence:

Schools can only allow time off for specific reasons listed in the new attendance rules. These are:

Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad,

Attending an interview,

Study leave,

A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable

Exceptional circumstances (the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance).

Schools can also allow absences for education outside of school.

Any leave of absence must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with.

Reporting Unexplained Absences:

If appropriate, schools must report unexplained absences to the pupil's youth offending team worker.

New Rules for Fines:

There will be one set of rules for the whole country about giving out fines for absences.

Fines for unauthorised absences will go up to:

£80 if paid within 21 days.

£160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

Senior Attendance Champion:

Each school will have a senior staff member in charge of improving and keeping up good attendance.

Support for Pupils with Physical or Mental Health Issues:

The new guidance explains how schools should support pupils with physical or mental health problems.

It gives information about doctor's notes, support for pupils with special needs, and part-time timetables.

Attendance and School Culture:

Schools will focus more on working with families to find ways to improve attendance.

Attendance Contracts:

These used to be called 'parenting contracts,' but now they will be called 'attendance contracts' to better describe the agreement between parents, schools, and/or local authorities.

Your child's school will soon put the updated **ULT School Attendance policy** on their website and inform you of any new procedures and key school information they need to share with you. This will include a link to the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' framework. We know these changes may bring up questions, and we are here to help you through this transition. We want to make sure every student can do well by coming to school regularly, on time, and getting the right support.

If you have any questions or need more information, please don't hesitate to contact your School's Attendance Champion.

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation and support.

Best wishes

Kerry Rochester

CEO

