

Students under the age of eighteen: guidance for parents, guardians and staff

Introduction

The University of Northampton occasionally admits students who are under the age of 18 years. These students will be identified before enrolment and all relevant staff will be informed.

The University treats all its students as independent, mature individuals. The University is unable to act in *loco parentis* (i.e. does not assume parental responsibility and duty of a child) and students who are under the age of 18 years will be treated as independent, mature individuals. Students are expected to assume adult level of responsibility and behaviour.

Data Sharing

Notice in writing must be given to the University by students under the age of 18 who are willing to allow their parents to access their personal data.

Parental Responsibility

The University is not able to take on the usual rights, responsibilities and authority that parents have in relation to a child.

UK Guardian's Responsibility

Where a student is from overseas and the parents remain abroad, the University requires contact details of a guardian for the child who is in the UK, who preferably lives in or near Northampton, and who will be accessible to the child and to the University should the need arise. The University requires a copy of the guardian's agreement with the parents, in which the guardian asserts that they will act on the parents' behalf until the child's 18th birthday.

Being a guardian involves carrying out the tasks and responsibilities of the parent as delegated by the child's parent(s). As such it is a private agreement between the parent and the guardian.

Emergency Contact

It is particularly important that emergency contact details are provided for students under the age of 18 years and such students and/or their parents are required to supply this information prior to their arrival at the University.

Consent Form

A consent form must be completed and signed by all parents, guardians and/or UK guardians of the student before the start of the course. A copy of all parents, guardians and/or UK guardian's passports must be provided as well as a copy of the student's birth certificate and passport.

Health

In rare instances, consent for emergency medical treatment may be required before parents or guardians can be contacted. The University therefore requires parents to give their consent that, in the case of such an emergency, a senior member of the University has parental permission to act on medical advice and do what is in the best interests of the child.

Parents or guardians are responsible for ensuring that the University has been informed of any special needs or requirements.

Parental Involvement

It is the University's usual policy to deal with students and not with parents; this approach will also apply to students who are under the age of 18 years.

Although those under 18 are regarded as children under UK law, they still have the legal right under the Data Protection Act 2018 for information about them not to be disclosed without their explicit consent. This means that the University is not able to give information to parents regarding the student's progress, results or any other personal circumstance unless the student has given specific consent. The University will therefore correspond with students, not parents.

Notification of Age of Student

The staff below will be notified, after enrolment, of any student who is under 18:

- Lead Safeguarding Officer
- Deputy Safeguarding Officer
- Director of Estates and Campus Services
- Deans and Deputy Deans of the Faculties
- Academic Registrar
- Relevant Module Leaders and Programme Leaders
- Relevant Personal Tutors
- Student Support and Advice Team
- Library, Learning and Student Services Staff
- Accommodation staff
- Head of Student Administration
- Head of Student Services
- The Senior Management Team of the Students' Union
- Student Records Teams

Contracts

As a general rule, those under the age of 18 are unable to enter into legal contracts. If contracts are required, e.g. for tuition fees or accommodation, the University requires a parent or guardian to act as guarantors and to honour all obligations under any contracts with the University that the student enters into prior to his or her 18th birthday.

Alcohol and Tobacco

It is illegal for alcohol or tobacco to be sold to or bought by individuals who are under the age of 18 years. It is also illegal to buy alcohol or tobacco on behalf of someone under the age of 18.

The University will take reasonable steps to seek to ensure that the law is not broken in relation to licensed premises under the University's control but cannot undertake to supervise any individual student. Individuals are subject to random checks in relation to their age when using any licensed premises in the UK. The Students' Union is responsible for ensuring that student identification is routinely checked.