

	John Mason School Attendance Policy			
	Applicable to:	Responsible Officer	Date Adopted:	Date to be Reviewed:
	All Staff	RJT	Feb 2021	Feb 2023

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Purpose

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents are legally required to ensure their child attends school regularly. At John Mason School we recognise the importance of attendance on safeguarding our students. The purpose of the Attendance policy is to provide a framework for best practice relating to the following principles and to ensure the school meets its statutory requirements:

- 1.0 John Mason School seeks to ensure that all students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student to reach his or her full potential.
- 1.1 This policy applies to all students of statutory school age, with an appendix for Post-16 students.
- 1.2 As part of the ethos of the school, the staff and governors are committed to:
 - working pro-actively with students, their families/carers and outside agencies to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually, and has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
 - offering praise and recognition to acknowledge the efforts of students to improve their attendance and punctuality, as well as to those who maintain a consistently high level throughout the year.
 - challenging parents, carers and students who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
 - providing a safe, positive and inclusive learning environment that is welcoming to young people as learners; the school embraces the concept of equal opportunities to all
 - ensuring a robust recording procedures for attendance and punctuality
 - to use robust and accurate attendance information to check student safety in the event of an emergency.

- offering an environment in which students feel valued and welcomed so that students feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.

1.3 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 require that school attendance is measured in 1/2 day sessions (am/pm).

Consultation Process

20 This policy was developed in consultation with relevant staff and a representative of the governing body; personnel from the Oxfordshire Attendance and Engagement Team were also consulted and the Oxfordshire County Council Model Policy (2013) was considered alongside examples of policies volunteered by other schools demonstrating good practice.

21 School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the DFE.

Relationship to other School Policies

3.0 The Attendance Policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies:

- Child Protection & Safeguarding.
- Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Special Educational Needs [*& Disabilities*]

Implementation – General procedures for promoting outstanding attendance:

4.0

- Parents/carers should note that registration takes place at 8.30am and 1.45pm. Students who arrive after registers have closed (30 minutes later) will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session, unless there is an acceptable explanation e.g. the school transport was late.
- Students arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close. They will be required to sit a detention for the amount of minutes late either with their Year team or SLT depending on the length. Students who are late three times in one week during AM registration will sit an hour SLT detention.
- **Absence Notes** – Absence notes received from parents explaining absences will be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns for the student, then the notes will be kept for a longer period.

- In order to engage students with their learning, a broad and flexible curriculum will be offered to all students; every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to students' needs. In exceptional circumstances, the school may establish a differentiated curriculum package for an individual.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice.
- The school, with governors, will set an annual Attendance target.
- The attendance of vulnerable cohorts will be carefully monitored, most particularly: Children in Care, Children of Service Personnel, SEND and Pupil Premium students; the school will work with appropriate agencies to support the attendance of these students.
- The attendance of students on a Child Protection Plan or designated as a Child in Need will be monitored daily, being flagged with the school's safeguarding team on a first day of absence, and with Social Services being notified on the second day.
- If a student is absent and we are unable make contact with parents to confirm the reason for absence, this will be raised as a safeguarding concern via CPOMS to the relevant Student Manager.
- Students whose attendance is a cause of concern will be monitored by the school's graduated response to attendance and Absence Supportive Action Process (ASAP).
- We will implement the 'Safeguarding students experiencing long-term absence from school procedure' when students are absent for more than one week.
- Students who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when deemed appropriate by the Assistant Headteacher) have work sent home to them by arrangement, be referred to the 'Attendance & Engagement' service and will be supported with reintegration back into school upon their return; the school will liaise with other agencies such as the Hospital Education Service, in order to best support a student. At the discretion of the Assistant Headteacher, Student Manager or Head of Year, the school will support a reintegration programme for students who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period of time. The school may also implement personalised reintegration where appropriate for students who have sporadic, but regular absence.
- The school will work in partnership with other agencies such as the Education Psychology Service, School Health Nurse, Social Services, Police, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, when this may serve to support and assist students who are experiencing attendance difficulties. In some circumstances, the school may request parental permission to write to a student's GP for evidence of medical absences. The school will take a proactive approach to using the CAF

process where appropriate if there are additional areas of need other than attendance.

- **10 day Absence** – any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire City Council, Attendance & Engagement Team as a Child Missing Education (CME).

- Regular visits will be made to partner primary schools in order to ensure the smoothest possible secondary transfer; discussions with primary school teachers will seek to identify those students who may require extra support during this process, with a particular sharing of information for students who have a history of poor attendance in Key Stage 2.
- The school will keep copies of attendance registers for a minimum of 3 years; these will be printed and securely stored.

4.1 **Penalty Notices and Legal Action.** The Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to: a) his age, ability and aptitude, and b) to any special needs he may have.

- 4.2 For educational purposes, the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those who have day to day care of the child.
- 4.3 The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act; Part VI, Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.
- 4.4 In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the Attendance & Engagement Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine, or further legal action through the courts. A Penalty Notice is a fine that the Local Authority may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.
- 4.5 A parent / carer may be issued with a penalty notice if:
- They fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period.
 - They allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation.
 - Their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.
- 4.6. A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. The school will hold School Attendance Meetings (Parent Contracts) in partnership with parents/carers, where action plans are agreed and reviewed.
- 4.7. All students are tracked and monitored carefully and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent/carers, student and school to try to resolve any issues hindering outstanding attendance. Concerning PA cases will be referred to the Attendance & Engagement Team if appropriate and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and

prosecutions. If convicted of an offence, a parent/carer could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent/carer, and and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Communication with parents/carers

- 5.0 The school undertakes to provide clear and coherent guidance for parents/carers about the times of the school day, the procedures for the notification of absence and the circumstances in which this may be agreed.
- 5.1 The school will dedicate a telephone 'Absence Line' to aid parental communication.
- 5.2 The school's annual target for attendance will be published on the attendance area of the website.
- 5.3 This information will be communicated via a number of media, including:
- The school website
 - A range of standard letters.
 - The Home/School Agreement
 - The school's Attendance Leaflet
 - *Parentmail* Texting service.
- 5.4 On a daily basis, the school will endeavour to operate a 'First Day Calling' service to notify parents and carers on the first day of a student's absence and request an explanation for the absence; most commonly this will be via the Parent Mail text messaging service.
- Parents/carers will be informed of their child's attendance at every reasonable opportunity, for example via Progress Checks, or Parents' Evening.
 - Parents/carers will be regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance via the school's website, *Parentmail* service and via an Attendance Information booklet
- 5.5 Each students will be issued with their attendance Monthly. This will be colour coded in the form of a sticker that relates to their attendance. These will be stuck in planners so that their attendance can be tracked. Full explanation can be found in student planners.

Responsibilities

- 6.0 The John Mason School's Attendance Protocol and Absence Supportive Action Process (ASAP) offer a more detailed explanation of actions & responsibilities for attendance monitoring, however a summary is outlined below:
- 6.1 **Tutors** – are responsible for registering students via the SIMS lesson monitor module; it is he or she who becomes the most important person in encouraging high levels of attendance and punctuality. The tutor also informally supports attendance monitoring on a daily basis by detecting patterns of absence and initiating effective follow-up conversations. The Tutor is also responsible for

encouraging those students whose attendance is markedly improving. Tutors may be directed to implement interventions for students at the direction of the Director of Key Stage.

- 62 **Subject teachers** - are responsible for registering students via the SIMS lesson monitor module; this must be done in silence within the first 10 minutes

of each lesson. Teachers are responsible for alerting the Student Services Assistant (Attendance) with any concerns regarding suspected internal truancy or unexplained absences. Subject teachers have a responsibility to support students returning to their lesson following a short or long term absence and to ensure they are able to catch up on any gaps in their learning; in some cases this may be in accordance to an agreed support plan with the Inclusion team. Teachers may be asked to set up intervention measures for students by the Director of Faculty.

- 63 **Directors of Key Stage (DOKS)** - are responsible for ensuring that their tutor team follows correct procedures and provide support whenever necessary; they should also monitor attendance patterns for their Year group, particularly following the progress of vulnerable groups. The DOKS will meet regularly with the Student Manager to monitor attendance of students <96%. DOKS will support Student Managers with engaging, or meeting, parents/carers of students for whom attendance is causing a concern. Design and implement intervention strategies for groups or individual students.
- 64 **Student Managers** - will primarily monitor students with attendance <96% and organise Parent Contract Meetings with parents, working in partnership with the Attendance & Engagement Team as appropriate. They will work closely with the Assistant Headteacher, Student Services Assistant (Attendance), SENCO and the Heads of Year planning individual and group interventions and support. They will produce tracking sheets and reports from Sims.
- 65 **The Associate Senior Leader** with responsibility for Attendance will work closely with the Student Managers, Student Services Assistant (Attendance) and DOKS to plan interventions for those students whose attendance continues to cause concern. They will meet regularly with all these internal members of staff as well as outside agencies. The Associate Senior Leader will provide the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Governors with attendance information as required. The Associate Senior Leader must ensure they stay up to date with national guidance and changes of legislation.
- 66 **Headteacher** - supported by the Associate Senior Leader, will make reports to the school's governing body on attendance and will report termly on the school's attendance in the Headteacher's Report to Governors.
- 67 **The Student Services Assistant (Attendance)** - The school registers students every lesson using SIMS lesson monitor and this facilitates the production of attendance reports for individual students, tutor groups, year groups and other vulnerable groups; this is managed by the Student Services Assistant (Attendance) who has an important role in following up unexplained absences and communicating with parents on attendance issues. They will send out standard letters to parents/carers whose children continue to cause concern with attendance, and will also manage the 'First Day Calling' system and the school's 'Absence Line'.
- 68 **Parents / Carers** have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. They can encourage excellent progress and achievement by placing a strong emphasis on full attendance and working closely with the school to resolve any problems which hinder their children from attending every day. The school has a 24-hour absence

line answer phone and parents/carers are asked to phone daily when their child is absent from school so that the school knows the reasons for absence; if there are any problems which affect a student's attendance (e.g. family circumstances or friendship difficulties) we ask parents/carers to communicate these so that the information can be passed to the most appropriate member of staff who can then provide support and understanding. When making medical/dental appointments, every effort should be made to ensure these appointments are outside of school hours; medical or dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

69 **Every student** has a responsibility to ensure that he/she attends all lessons and should make sure that they are on time for registration and all lessons.

610 **Governors** must take a close and regular interest in attendance issues and should ensure that responsible staff are taking appropriate and timely action to tackle poor attendance.

In order to monitor the Policy's implementation and evaluate its impact on student outcomes, Governors will:

- appoint a Named Link Governor
- set an annual attendance target in discussion with the ASL with responsibility for Attendance.
- receive attendance data at least three times a year so progress on meeting the attendance target is being monitored
- receive a summary reports, which analyse attendance for vulnerable groups of students and persistent absentees and provides information on holidays taken by students during term time
- understand how the school's performance compares with national data and LA averages
- review the Policy every two years, or sooner if legislative changes dictate.

Holidays / Leave of absence

7.0 Research strongly indicates that absence from school has a detrimental effect on a student's attainment and therefore the school will not authorise leave of absence for family holidays during term time unless in **exceptional circumstances**; parents / carers should seek permission from the Headteacher by written request prior to the leave of absence in question. Any other leave during term time may be authorised for certain exceptional circumstances, such as for competitive sporting activity, at the discretion of the Headteacher. Parents/Carers who remove their child from school without authorisation or do not return their child on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine / prosecution. *See section 4 (Penalty Notices and Legal Action)*

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

8.0 The regular internal procedures for monitoring attendance are contained in the schools Attendance Protocols which centres around the consistent and

accurate use of SIMS, the data generated from its reports and actions taken to address poor attendance or punctuality; additionally, the following procedures are in place:

- Regular visits from the LA's Attendance & Engagement Officer.
- The setting of an annual attendance target.
- The school's internal Attendance Protocol.
- The analysis of annual DFE attendance figures against the school target and previous years' patterns.
- The appointment of a Governor or group of Governors who take special responsibility for attendance with a regular review of attendance figures by this group and the review of this Policy on a two-yearly cycle.

8.1 Day to day procedures that ensure the smooth operational practice may be changed at the discretion of the Headteacher and reported to Governors retrospectively.

