

ATTENDANCE

A guide for parents and carers

John Mason School 2025/26



Supporting Students' Attendance

At John Mason School, success is achieved by **'being in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing'**. Excellent behaviour and attendance underpin this principle, allowing students to access the full benefits of a broad and balanced curriculum.

With around 175 non-school days a year available for holidays, trips or non-urgent appointments, the aspiration for all students must be 100% attendance each term. This will develop desirable habits and integrity. Prompt, full attendance will be a basic expectation for all students in their future careers, and excellent attendance will offer the best opportunity to ensure academic success.

We encourage good attendance through our termly achievement assemblies in which we recognise students who achieve high attendance rates, as well as students with the most improved attendance.

John Mason School has high aspirations for all students, and we know that the key to attainment is ensuring they maintain excellent levels of attendance.

Ensuring Attendance

As a statutory requirement, parents/carers are required by law to ensure students attend school regularly.

From Oxfordshire County Council's Attendance [webpage](#): "The law states that parent/carer(s) must ensure that their child regularly attends the school where they are registered. Should your child fail to attend school regularly legal action may be taken against you. Once a child is registered in school, attendance is compulsory until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which the child turns 16 (Year 11). It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their child, when of statutory school age, accesses education appropriate to age, needs and ability."

At John Mason School, we do all we can to support students and their families as soon as any barriers to attendance are identified; aiming to minimise the likelihood of serious interventions. To enable this, we have an absence monitoring process, designed to address any concerns early on. This attentive approach means students and their families are supported right from the start of any difficulties. It enables students to get back to school as swiftly as possible, ready to engage in, and take advantage of, every learning opportunity.

Our Absence Monitoring Process

Absence is monitored by recording student's attendance at 2 'sessions' per day: AM and PM registration.

These records are used to identify students who may be at risk of 'Persistent Absence'.

A student is considered 'persistently absent' when their attendance is 90% or less across a school year. Persistent Absence equates to 19+ days absence per year.

To protect our students from becoming at risk of Persistent Absence, our monitoring process covers all types of absence; however, we understand that every case is different so each student's circumstances will be carefully reviewed before action is considered. This process will flag students with 4 days absence as an Attendance Concern, which will escalate as student absence increases, as set out in our Absence Monitoring Process Map, unless there are exceptional circumstances.



Absence Support Process Map

Our Absence Monitoring map illustrates all the steps that we may put in place to support students' attendance, ensuring they can return to school as swiftly as possible to achieve and develop academically, personally, and socially. It refers to the number of days absent across the academic year.

4
DAYS
ABSENCE

CONCERNING LEVELS OF STUDENT ABSENCE

- **Internal Monitoring begins.**
- **Stage 1 information letter is sent to parents/carers.**
- Tutor Support Discussion with student.
- Consideration for EBSA (Emotional Based School Avoidance) support.



7
DAYS
ABSENCE

SERIOUS CONCERNS REGARDING ATTENDANCE

- **Stage 2 information letter is sent to parents/carers.**
- Progress leader/manager contact to discuss appropriate next steps.
- Explore barriers to attendance and implement a programme to remove these.
- Early support reviewed or offered.



10
DAYS
ABSENCE

STUDENT IS AT RISK OF PERSISTENT ABSENCE

- **Stage 3 information letter is sent to parents/carers.**
- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) contact/meeting with parents/carers.
- Involvement of attendance officer.
- Review of early help and intervention programme.
- Consider the support of external services.



13
DAYS
ABSENCE

STUDENT IS AT SERIOUS RISK OF PERSISTENT ABSENCE

- **Formal warning notice sent to parents/carers.**
- Continued internal and external programmes of support.
- Parenting contract considered at this stage.
- A multi-disciplinary approach to be considered and offered.



16
DAYS
ABSENCE

SCHOOL WORKS CLOSELY WITH THE LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY (LEA)

- **County Attendance Team (CAT) referral.**
- If all avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, the school may now enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.
- All support, and offers of support, to be reviewed.
- Continued support of the child and family.



19+
DAYS
ABSENCE

STUDENT IS CONSIDERED 'PERSISTENTLY ABSENT' FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR (UNDER 90% ATTENDANCE)

- Persistent Absence' is when a pupil's overall absence equates to 10% or more of their possible sessions. Over an academic year, this equates to 19 days.
- At this stage, the child will be recorded as Persistently Absent for the remainder of the school year.
- **Safeguarding referrals may be made.**
- The child and family will continue to be supported.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Any student absences are designated as either authorised or unauthorised by the Headteacher. An unauthorised absence is when the school is unable to approve the reason the student is absent. An authorised absence is when the school has agreed to approve the reason the student is absent. If an absence is authorised, further action is only taken if other concerns have been identified.

Authorised Absences:

- Being too ill to attend school. Please note: the school may ask for a medical note from your doctor if this is a frequent occurrence or your child is absent for more than three days.
- Medical and dental appointments. Please note usually only ½ day can be authorised in this circumstance.
- Taking part in licensed performances or sporting activities approved by the school.
- Official appointments not under your control. Examples could include external exam days or legal appointments.
- An exceptional circumstance, such as a family bereavement, family funeral.
- A planned, authorised absence in exceptional circumstances where permission has been sought from the Headteacher at least 2 weeks in advance.

Unauthorised Absences:

- Holidays.
- Attending a party, concert, or sporting event.
- Being tired after an event or not sleeping well the night before.
- Moving house.
- Having to look after siblings or pets.
- Truanting.
- Pupils leaving school during the day without authorisation, or independently arranging to be collected from school. Please note it is of the utmost importance that any arrangements made for students to leave school during the school day are liaised through the school office, to confirm the pupil is always in the care of a responsible adult and to ensure safeguarding.
- If the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for absence and there is no supporting evidence.
- When there has been no contact from parents/carers following the school trying to make contact regarding unexplained absences.

Illness

At John Mason School we hold our duty of care to students of utmost importance. Whilst attendance is always very strongly encouraged to support your child's progress, children should not attend school if they are clearly too unwell, have a temperature, or have experienced vomiting or diarrhoea in the last 48 hours. Children attending school are expected to take part in all activities. If your child has an injury which affects their participation in P.E. or similar activity, please send them in to school with a note.

Please contact Student Services via the school's main contact details if you're unsure about return dates following infectious illness.

Pastoral Support

If there has been an incident that may affect your child's attendance, behaviour, or concentration, please contact the school so we can alert your child's teachers and the pastoral team to ensure they offer the right support. Please be assured the details can remain confidential.

Reporting Absence

Student Absence Line: [01235 524664](tel:01235524664) or absence@johnmason.school

We do understand that on rare occasions, absence will be unavoidable.

If your child is unwell or cannot attend school due to an urgent appointment or other exceptional circumstance, please contact us on the student absence line above and leave a message.

Please leave us a message on the number above as soon as possible and before 10 am if your child is absent for any reason.

Please give a **brief outline** of any illness, rather than just saying they are unwell.

In the case of prolonged absence, please also contact your child's tutor.

If you've already informed your child's Tutor/Progress leader etc, please also call the Absence line to ensure the reason for absence is communicated to our Attendance officer.

If there are unexplained student absences, school will contact parents/carers by call, text or email. If we do not hear back from you this may be raised as a safeguarding concern.

Planned absences should be requested at least 2 weeks in advance.

Absence Emergency Contact Details

Please ensure that your contact details and child's medical details are always kept up to date so that we can easily contact parents/carers in an emergency. You can register updates with our Student Services office.

Absence Attendance FAQs

Will any type of absence trigger the monitoring process?

Yes, any type of absence will be monitored including general illness. We will, of course, take into consideration any specific circumstances that we are made aware of, such as underlying health conditions, hospital stays etc. before taking further action. The monitoring process allows us to maintain a dialogue with parents/carers. Good communication will help us to help you in maximising your child's attendance to improve their experience and outcomes at John Mason School.

What happens if my child has a medical appointment?

We urge parents and carers to plan all non—urgent medical/dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is unavoidable, please ensure your child comes into school for the time before and/or after the appointment, so the impact on their attendance and learning is reduced.

Please note usually only a half-day's absence (or one 'session') can be authorised for medical appointments.

What if my child feels unwell at school?

If a child feels unwell during the school day, they should tell a member of staff, who will send them to a first aider to be assessed. If it is decided that the child is too unwell to be in school, parents will be contacted.

Students should not circumvent the process by phoning home themselves to ask a parent to collect them because they feel unwell; this could create a safeguarding concern. The school needs to speak directly with parents/carers to ensure students are released to an adult with parental responsibility. We politely request parents do not contact students via their mobile phones during school hours, but instead always use the main school office to make contact, so that staff are kept informed.

In the case of accidental injury, parents or carers will be notified as soon as possible.

What if there is an important event or holiday planned during term time?

In 2013, the Department for Education changed the regulations about term time holidays. In compliance with these regulations, requests for holidays during term time will no longer be authorised, and if a child is absent during term time for a holiday, the school may have to refer the case to Oxfordshire County Council who will consider issuing a fixed penalty notice.

A student may be authorised for absence only in exceptional circumstances, for example an approved sporting event or performance, or an exam. This must be authorised by the Headteacher in advance.

If my child arrives late at school, is it recorded as an absence?

The majority of our students take pride in good timekeeping, and they are encouraged towards this as a quality valued by future employers, with consequences for lateness as outlined below.

Students should arrive at school in time before the first bell at 08:25 and be present in class at the start of AM registration, which runs from 08:35 – 08:45.

Late arrival time	Procedure	Response
08:35 – 08:45 (AM registration)	Student will be issued a late card by a member of staff on the gate which they should give to their form tutor.	Student may automatically receive a lunchtime detention unless there is a reasonable explanation for lateness.
08:45 – 09:05 (First 15 minutes of period 1)	Student must sign in at Reception to register before heading to class. Reception will issue the student with a Late Registration card to present to their teacher.	Student may automatically receive a lunchtime detention unless there is a reasonable explanation for lateness.
09:05 onwards (Registers close at 09:05)	Student must sign in at Reception to register before heading to class. Reception will issue the student with a Late Registration card to present to their teacher.	Any student arriving after 9:00 will be issued with a lunchtime detention and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised for the AM session unless their parent/carer has provided a reasonable explanation for lateness
Any student arriving to school after 9:00 am who does not sign in at Reception will automatically receive a detention.		

Will I get fined if my child has poor attendance?

We want to work with parents/carers to help encourage children in to school where they will have the best chance of achieving their full potential. Therefore, it will only be after we have exhausted all possible means of support that we may have to involve the County Attendance Team (CAT) or consider issuing penalty notices for poor attendance, as per our statutory requirement.

DfE guidance states that a fixed penalty notice should be considered by the school if a child is absent from 10 sessions in 10 weeks of school. This equates to 5 school days. We will take into account individual circumstances before taking this route.

For further information on attendance referrals, please read the Attendance policy on our school website, which can be found here: <https://www.johnmason.oxon.sch.uk/our-school/policies/>

Who oversees attendance at John Mason School?

When a student is identified as an Absence Concern, John Mason School's Attendance Officer, will contact parents/carers to gauge if any support is needed to get them back into school. They will liaise with key staff including form tutors (your first point of contact for any issues), our pastoral team, and the Assistant Headteacher: Pastoral Development, to ensure all is being done to support the student and their families. We appreciate your efforts, and we are always here to listen to any concerns you may have.



John Mason School
Excellence Through Creativity



JOHN MASON SCHOOL

Student absence line: absence@johnmason.school

John Mason School

Wootton Road

Abingdon

OX14 1JB

Phone: 01235 524664

Email: office@johnmason.school

Website: <https://www.johnmason.oxon.sch.uk/>