



John Mason School

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

- A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS

Our absence line can be contacted via:

01235 524664

e-mail:

office.4126@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk

**Student Managers: Mrs Louise Griffin, Mrs Tracey Miles and Mrs Sue Hook
Student Services: Mrs Jane Neale and Mrs Kirsty Hutt**

**PLEASE KEEP THIS LEAFLET
FOR REFERENCE**



Attendance is a Home-School Partnership and a Legal Requirement

Under Section 44 of the Education Act 1996, parents and carers are legally required to ensure their child attends school every day. **John Mason School** aims to ensure that students receive a full-time education that maximises opportunities for each student to reach their true potential.

- Parents must send their children to school regularly and they may risk prosecution if they do not.
- It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their children attend punctually and remain in school.
- The school must support attendance and take seriously any problems which may lead to non-attendance.
- By law, the Local Authority (LA) must enforce school attendance. Our Attendance and Engagement Officer acts on behalf of the LA.
- By law, only the **school** can authorise absence, not the parent.
- Parents must ensure that their children arrive at school punctually, in school uniform, properly equipped and ready to learn.

Why is regular attendance important?

- Having a good education will help to give your child the best start in life.
- If your child does not attend school regularly, he or she will have gaps in their learning and will not be able to make good progress
- It helps students maintain good relations with their peers
- Employers want people they recruit to be reliable, so students that have a poor school attendance record have statistically a lesser chance of getting a good job.
- Young people who are absent from school for no good reason are at risk of becoming victims of anti-social and safeguarding concerns.
- The official leaving date for students in year 11 is the last Friday in June in the school year in which the child reaches age 16. This requirement is binding on all children and their parents and guardians.

All educational research would suggest that there is a strong correlation between good attendance and good achievement.

We endeavour to work with students and families to ensure that we provide the best education possible for your child in order for them to achieve their potential and goals in life. **We can only do this if they are in school!**

Our minimum expected attendance is 96%.

90% or 95% sounds good, but table below demonstrates the impact of such an attendance figure.

95% Attendance - 2 weeks off per year - 50 lessons missed (50 hours learning missed)
90% Attendance - 4 weeks off per year - 100 lessons missed (100 hours learning missed)
85% Attendance - 6 weeks off per year - 150 lessons missed (150 hours learning missed)
80% Attendance - 8 weeks off per year - 200 lessons missed (200 hours learning missed)

How do we record attendance?

At JMS, form tutors record students as present or absent on their lap top computers at 8.30 a.m., and 1.45pm as do class teachers at 2pm at the start of Period 5. Any student who arrives during the registration period, but after these times will be recorded as late by their form tutors or class teachers. Students who arrive after 9.00am must sign in at Student Services, but will need a letter from home, as this is counted as absence.

Subject teachers also record attendance at every lesson on their lap top computers, which are fitted with a programme called "Lesson Monitor". **It is a legal requirement to record attendance carefully as records may be used as evidence in a court of law.**

'PMX' (Absence Alert)

This is an automatic communication system that will contact you directly if your child is marked absent from AM registration. Please ensure that you have signed up to PMX alerts; if you are unsure, please contact the school.

Reporting absence

Parents **MUST** inform the school via the dedicated absence line of a reason for absence on the first day of absence; this absence line is available via the school's main switchboard and the telephone number is on the front of this leaflet. Parents **MUST** send a note to cover all dates of absence on the student's return to school.

An absence may be authorised if:

- The school is satisfied that the student is absent because of genuine illness or bereavement and a note has been received to that effect.
- The school is informed in writing of the absence before it happens, e.g. a medical appointment. We ask that where possible, such appointments are not made in school time.
- The absence is on a day which is of religious significance to the family.

An absence is unauthorised if:

- There has been no explanation for an absence.
- The absence is for a reason that is unacceptable to the school, e.g. shopping, birthday treat, care of younger siblings.
- The absence is one which should not have happened but has been supported by parents.
- The student is frequently late for school without good reason.
- The student arrives late and does not register at the school office.
- The student has truanted from school.

Planned Absence [Holidays] during Term Time

In September 2013, the law changed regarding taking holidays in term time. **The school's Governors have decided that student holidays will not be authorised for any students regardless of year group** except in exceptional circumstances. Any requests must be made in writing directly to the Headteacher.

- There are 190 school days each academic year
- There are 175 non-school days each year - PLEASE use these for holidays.

1 week holiday - 2.5% drop in Attendance - 25 lessons missed - 25 hours missed learning
 2 week holiday - 5% drop in Attendance - 50 lessons missed - 50 hours missed learning

NB: *If a child takes unauthorised holiday in term time a penalty notice fine may be issued to each parent.*

Returning after absence

- Students must bring a dated and signed note to explain the absence and this must be handed in to the school office on the day of return.
- The note should include days and dates of absence.
- All notes will be checked and, if necessary, followed up.
- Students should arrange with their teachers, to catch up on any missed work.
- In exceptional circumstances, the school may require a Doctor's note for every absence.

Persistent absence

- The school will contact home in the first instance.
- If necessary, the school will ask for the help of our County Attendance Service, who may arrange a home visit and act as a link between home and school.
- The School has agreed to follow the Oxfordshire County Council's local code of conduct on Fixed Penalty Notices. These will be issued to the parents of students who persistently fail to meet school attendance requirements.

Celebrating good attendance

We aim to recognise students with good or improved attendance, via texts, postcards and letters home, achievement certificates, as well as inter-tutor group competitions

The school monitors your child's attendance in the following ways:

- Students' attendance levels are monitored on an individual basis. If they fall below 96%, parents may be asked to join a Parent Contract Meeting.
- At the Parent Contract meeting, targets will be set and an Action Plan will be agreed by the school, parent(s) or carer(s), student and in some cases, the County Attendance Officer.
- Progress will be monitored and reviewed; if there is not significant improvement the school will refer to County Attendance Team and request an Inter-Agency Planning Meeting .
- Further action plans and targets are put in place, however, if there has not been significant improvement, and there is further unauthorised absence, the Local Authority could prosecute. A prosecution could result in a fine or a court order.

A full copy of the school's attendance policy is available from the school, or on the school website at www.johnmason.oxon.sch.uk, in the 'Our School' section.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT