

RCMJD ABSENCE POLICY 2024

We recognise the significant commitment that all members of the RCMJD community make to come together on Saturdays to make music, and we are keen to ensure that all students at the RCMJD flourish and reach their full musical potential.

Students at the RCMJD commit to attending 30 weeks of timetabled musical activity per year. In addition, they may be required to attend additional individual lessons, rehearsals and concerts on our three make-up days (week 11 of each term) and occasional concerts on Sundays/weekdays. We expect all RCMJD students to attend the JD **every term-time Saturday**, and to follow their **full programme** of musical activities.

All absences must be authorised by a member of JD staff. It is imperative that JD staff know of all student absences in advance for safeguarding purposes. **Attendance registers** are kept for all activities.

We realise that there might be the odd occasion when students cannot attend, eg owing to an *essential* school commitment or significant family event.

- **If a student needs to be absent for anything other than illness**, their parent/guardian must submit an absence request, stating the reason for the absence, to the JD office in writing (by emailing jd@rcm.ac.uk) **at least 4 weeks in advance** of the absence. If the absence is authorised by the JD team, we will notify teachers, though as a courtesy students/parents should remind them a few days beforehand too. Please note that teachers/tutors cannot provide authorisation for absence.
- **If a student is ill and cannot get here** (including on make-up days) their parent/guardian must inform the JD office by email (jd@rcm.ac.uk) or phone (020 7591 4334). They should leave a voicemail message explaining the situation if they are unable to speak directly to a member of RCMJD admin staff).

PARTIAL ABSENCE ON SATURDAYS

We are keen to ensure that all students reach their musical potential, so **frequent full/partial absences** cannot be authorised. If a student regularly misses lessons or ensemble rehearsals their musical progress may be compromised, and a reassessment may be required in accordance with RCMJD Regulations. Regular absence from musical ensemble rehearsals or concerts inhibits the musical progress and quality of learning of all students within that ensemble.

- **If a student is feeling unwell** on Saturday morning, they should stay at home for the rest of the day to enable a full and speedy recovery. If parents/guardians would like to request a partial absence due to minor illness (eg. to come into JD once headache/period pain has dissipated), parents/guardians must **request a telephone conversation with a member of JD staff** to discuss their child's wellbeing/needs before a late arrival can be authorised and before the child can return.
- **If a student is running late** due to travel problems, parent/guardians should notify the JD team as soon as possible so we can inform teachers. Regular lateness, without good cause, constitutes unauthorised absence.

If students need to miss part of their JD day for an important/significant external commitment, parent/guardians should submit an absence request in advance as outlined above. Occasional partial absences for important/essential external commitments may be accommodated when an absence request is made in advance, provided the musical experiences of other JD students are not significantly affected, and provided partial absences have not been/are not requested on a regular basis. Decisions to approve absences will be made by members of the RCMJD team on an individual case-by-case basis, and we reserve the right not to provide authorisation for absence.

- If a student is unable to attend the relevant final rehearsal on the day of a JD concert, for whatever reason, they will not be allowed to perform. This rule is applied throughout the music industry. We will not be able to let a student perform in a concert if they miss three or more rehearsals in any one term.

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH REPEATED ABSENCE

A student will normally be offered **two** opportunities to improve attendance. Where there has been significant authorised/unauthorised absence (more than two partial/full absences) an initial informal request to improve attendance will be made to the student and parents/guardians will be informed in writing. Parents/guardians will be notified when a final (ie second) request to improve attendance is made and they will have the opportunity to present mitigating circumstances. If attendance does not subsequently improve, then termination of enrolment from the end of the academic year will normally follow.

Please note that whilst we appreciate that the Summer Term can be particularly busy for those students taking school exams, we **do not offer study leave** and therefore expect all students to be at JD throughout the exam period (unless absence has been approved in advance for another reason). However, if a student is worried about balancing their academic/musical commitments in the Summer term, they are very welcome to discuss their concerns with the Head of Junior Programmes at the end of the Spring term to see if any accommodation can be made.

Whilst teachers will **make up lessons** (or send in deputies) for any lessons for which they are absent please note that they are not obliged to make up lessons for which a student is absent.

If you have questions about this policy, or queries regarding an absence please speak with a member of the RCMJD team on Saturday or contact them at jd@rcm.ac.uk.

Miranda Francis
Head of Junior Programmes

Last updated: September 2024
Next review: August 2028