

1st September 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: Start of the 2023/24 academic year

I hope that this letter finds you well and that you and your family have had a great summer break. I'm writing with some key information about the start of the new term.

Over the summer at JOG, a lot of work has been going on behind the scenes to prepare the school for the new academic year, including work on the buildings, internal decoration, IT systems and the new 3G pitch, which remains on schedule to open by the end of October. We are expecting more than 110 new Year 7s to join the school and join their brilliant colleagues in Years 8 to 11!

Our outgoing Year 11 cohort collected their examination results last week and some of the individual results were incredible and shows what JOG students can achieve if they work with us and are willing to put in hard work and dedication. We're really proud of all our former Year 11 students and wish them all the best in the future.

First Day for students – Tuesday 5th September

Staff are gathering for two Inset days today and Monday 4th September. We will be using this time to share important updates and best practice as well as undertake training and development work as we continue to grow and develop as a school.

The first day for students, is Tuesday 5th September. All students should report for school for an 8.45am start. Staff will be on hand to greet students and they will be directed to a muster point in the first instance. During the morning, students will spend time with their tutor group, receiving some important information, such as their timetable, before heading to their usual timetabled lessons for the remainder of the day. School finishes at the normal time of 3.10pm.

All students should arrive in full, correct school uniform and be fully equipped for learning. This will be checked during the tutor period. We are assured that supplies of our school uniform have been available throughout the summer. We do supply some items of stationery and should your child need this, please ask them to speak to our student reception team.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone on Tuesday; in the meantime, if you have any queries then please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely,



Mr R Hawthorne
Principal

Key information

Attendance and punctuality

Every minute of education is important, especially given the disruption students have endured over recent years. Whilst of course illness and other unforeseen circumstances do occur and mean that a child may have to be absent, these should be the exception and not the norm.

There is extensive research that shows the impact that missing just a few days of school can have on outcomes for young people. Dropping attendance by just 3% over an academic year means that 25 lessons, or a whole week of learning is lost. Put another way, DfE research has shown that missing more than 3% of lessons can reduce the chances of achieving 5 good passes at GCSE by a **quarter**, a figure that drops to almost **half** if a student misses more than 7% of school.

Similarly, punctuality is vitally important too, both at the start of the school day and to lessons during the day. If a student is just a few minutes late to just one lesson a day, it would equate to 9.5 hours of lost learning each year, that's one and a half school days! Attendance at school is compulsory for all children. Our expectation is that they are punctual throughout the school day. We celebrate and reward good attendance and there are sanctions and measures available should attendance drop below acceptable levels. Please work with the school to ensure your child attends well and is punctual.

JOG Values

Following an extensive piece of work with the Student Leadership Group last academic year, we are proud to be able to reveal our new school values.

There are many skills, attributes and values that students will need to demonstrate, if they are to build a strong character and be successful in the future. However, we felt the values of 'Ambition', 'Care' and 'Courage' were particularly important for JOG students and epitomise what we want to be as a school community. We will be discussing these further with students throughout the school year but a basic introduction is shown below:

Ambition - We have high expectations of ourselves and those around us. We work hard and show our desire and determination to succeed at whatever we do. We never settle for less than our very best.

Care - We are kind, courteous and respectful and are never afraid to show the caring side of our personality. We care for each other, our families, our community and beyond. We celebrate and embrace uniqueness and diversity.

Courage - We are resilient and go the extra mile and do our best, especially when things are tough, or we face adversity. We participate and contribute and recognise that failure is an integral part of succeeding. We have the courage to stand up for others, no matter their background or differences to us.



Conduct, rewards, and sanctions

We have a duty to ensure that our students come to school and enjoy a safe, calm and orderly environment, where they can focus fully on learning without fear of disruption. Therefore, we take behaviour and conduct very seriously and, whilst we recognise that children do make mistakes, can and will not tolerate conduct that falls below our expectations. We continue to work to a staged system for conduct and use Class Charts to record and monitor both positive (green) and negative (red) behaviour points for each child.

Our conduct and sanctions systems, including detentions, are set out in the 'Behaviour for Learning Policy', which can be found on our website [here](#).

Of course, we would much rather focus on the positives and celebrate the many great things that we see every day at JOG. Our students are brilliant, and Class Charts analysis regularly shows us that green points overwhelmingly outnumber the red ones. We have a range of measures in place to celebrate our students including green points, celebration assemblies and reward parties, reward trips and Prom Points for Year 11s.

We will be discussing expectations, rewards and sanctions with students during assemblies in the forthcoming weeks.

Uniform

JOG is a uniform school. Uniform is an important part of your child's education at JOG. It enables young people to feel a sense of belonging and equity with their fellow students and helps create the professional environment needed in a place of education. Occasionally of course, there is a need to be flexible in the short term, where uniform may have been damaged or forgotten. Therefore, we continue to use a pass system for these occasions and where, with our permission, students can deviate from the dress-code. Yellow (one-day) passes are issued by tutors/teachers. Red (short-term) passes must be agreed with a Progress Leader or senior member of staff. A note from home is required in every case.

Items of clothing (such as a hoodie) that are worn and do not adhere to our policy will be confiscated. For a first occasion the item will be returned to the child at the end of the school day via Main Reception. If it happens on more than twice, we will ask a parent/carer to collect the item from school.

We have set out our expectations very clearly in our uniform policy, including a visual guide to what is and is not acceptable, and this can be found on our website or by clicking [here](#).

Mobile phones

We take a pragmatic view regarding mobile phones and other devices (e.g. headphones or a tablet). We currently allow students to bring their mobile to school, but they **must** be switched off and placed in a school bag for the entirety of the school day, including at break and lunch time. There are no exceptions for this unless a member of staff gives permission. This includes using them for checking the time or a timetable and it is our policy that they are not usually used in lessons. Whilst we do allow students to carry headphones with them and these are sometimes used in lessons with the permission of a teacher, they must be placed in a school bag at all other times. There is no reason for a portable speaker to be carried by a student.

For the new academic year, we are moving to a 'See it, Hear it, Lose it' approach to mobile devices and headphones/speakers. Should one of these devices be seen or heard outside of permitted circumstances, they will be confiscated. For the first and second instances, students will be allowed to collect their items at the end of the school day. Should a third instance occur, the device will only be returned to a parent/carer. This is reset every long term.

Lesson Routines

At JOG we have a standard approach to the way that lessons should start and finish. We call these our 'Core Routines' and they are well known to students in Years 8 to 11. Students in Year 7 will be told what they are and how they work. We believe that this approach helps to ensure that all students know what to expect and how to conduct themselves. It also ensures a smooth and quick start to every lesson.

Toilets and access to drinking water

Student toilets are available throughout the day. We have only three blocks of toilets in school, therefore year groups assigned to a specific block within the school. Students should not usually need to visit the facilities during lesson times and should try to go before school or during break/lunch time. Therefore, the main toilet blocks are locked during lessons and access is restricted to two toilets; one near the Welfare Office and the other a single toilet in the centre of the school site. Of course, there are circumstances when a child may need to visit a toilet during a lesson and any student in this situation should seek permission from their teacher. Those with medical needs known to us, will be permitted to leave without exception but should still inform the teacher.

Drinking water is available via 2 dispensers throughout the day and in the canteen during break and lunchtime. To ensure sustainability, we try to limit the use of disposable cups and ask that students instead come to school with a refillable water bottle. Refilling water is not a valid reason for students to be late to lessons.

Communications, Class Charts and Weduc

We will continue to use Class Charts as our main way to set homework and monitor green and red behaviour points for students. However, Weduc is our main vehicle for communication between school and home so please ensure that you have downloaded the App.

In any engagement that you have with staff at JOG, we ask that you are respectful and courteous at all times. Unfortunately, in recent years, we have seen an increase in unacceptable communication with and behaviour towards staff from some members of our community. We want to work positively with every member of our community, but JOG staff are people too and no-one deserves to be treated disrespectfully and there are actions the school can and will take if this happens, including withdrawing forms of communication or even access to the school site entirely. We have rarely had to use this approach but we are willing to do so should the need arise. JOG staff are people too!

Get involved

JOG is extremely lucky to be in a community where people are willing to help and support the school. Part of this means that we have an active and successful Parent School Association (PSA). However, whilst they have achieved a great deal for the benefit of students at JOG, the PSA is run by a very small number of volunteers and it would be great to see more parents get involved. If you would like to find out more about how to do this, or about what the PSA do, please visit their page on our website [here](#).