

John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre

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Dear parents and carers

We hope you are well and safe in these challenging times. I would like to start by thanking you all for your support and help.

Skeleton School

Parents have been most helpful in keeping students at home and only using the skeleton school provision for front line NHS workers, when it has been impossible to make alternative arrangements for their child. This has enabled us to ensure proper social distancing for students and staff in school and play our part in helping slow the spread of the COVID 19. If you would like to book a place at the skeleton school for next week, please could you email admin@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk stating which days you need to book for your child.

Easter Holiday

We do intend to be open with limited provision for children of front line NHS workers who cannot make alternative arrangements over the Easter holiday from Monday 6 April to Thursday 9 April, from Tuesday 14 April to Friday 17 April and on Monday 20 April. Please could we ask that if you are an NHS worker and have no alternative but to send your child to school over the Easter holiday, to contact us by Wednesday 1 April. This will enable us to put the staffing in place that is necessary to ensure social distancing.

Examinations Update

We have understandably received many enquiries from students and parents on the mechanism that will be used for awarding exam grades. At the time of writing we have not received details of the mechanism to be used from the Department for Education or from examination boards. As soon as we have this information we will communicate it to you.

What we do know so far is that exam boards will ask teachers for their estimates on the final grade the students would have achieved, based on the results of assessments, practice tests and exams taken throughout the course, mock exam results and coursework completed. Exam boards have then said they will moderate these grades based on data such as previous student achievement to award final grades.

It is entirely understandable that parents and students will be anxious about examination grades at this time. We would like to assure you that we will do everything we can to ensure students are fairly rewarded with their final grades.

Year 11 and Year 13 students

We have received many enquiries from Y11 and Y13 students asking whether they should continue to complete work. In response to this, teachers will continue to set work for Y11 and Y13 on school days until Friday 22nd May. We are continuing to set work because:

1. Completed coursework is one factor which will be taken into account in awarding grades.
2. Continuing to study is vital preparation for Advanced Level study, vocational courses, and as preparation for university.
3. Completing work provides structure and routine which is important for us all at this time.

We would advise students to prioritise completion of coursework by Friday 3 April in order to allow teachers sufficient time to assess and grade it. Once all coursework is completed, we would advise students to particularly concentrate on subjects that are most useful for continued study in the sixth form, college, university or for their chosen apprenticeship or employment.

In the next few days Mr Hammond (Y11) and Mr Hawksworth (Y13) will write a more detailed letter to Y11 and Y13 students and parents. If you have any questions about this, please could I ask you to contact Mr Hammond or Mr Hawksworth.

Home Schooling and setting online work

We really appreciate the efforts of parents with helping students complete their lessons at home. This is not easy, especially as so many parents are juggling this with work demands. All of our teachers are developing longer term plans to ensure the work set during the summer term matches the content that would have been taught during the summer term. We are intending to place these brief curriculum overviews on the school website so that parents and students are able to see the longer term picture.

We are asking class teachers to continue to set lessons via e-praise homework on the days where a student would have had the lesson in class. Teachers have been asked to try and plan the work so that it lasts between 40 and 60 minutes. This can be difficult to gauge because some students work faster than others. We would recommend that if your child is spending much longer than you ask them to finish after one hour. If they are finishing in a short space of time, please ask them to check detail and quality and to do extension work. If you have questions or comments about work being set in a particular lesson, please could you in the first case e-mail the class teacher. For students it is important to try and complete the work set on the day it has been set and to mark it as completed on e-praise once finished.

With the resources that they have access to from home our teachers are trying to set lessons that are varied, interesting and can be completed at home. All of us are trying our best, but accept that the lessons may not work for all students. If this is the case for your child, please could we ask that you contact the class teacher. If it is a more general problem across subjects, please could we ask you to contact the Year Leader in the first instance.

Lastly our teachers are prioritising giving feedback to Year 10 - Year 13 students. Many teachers teach over 300 students, so it is difficult to give feedback to every student they teach. However I would stress that if students wish to have feedback on a specific piece of work, please could you e-mail the work or photograph of the work to the class teacher and they will provide feedback. Finally I would like to wish all students, parents and families all the very best in these extremely difficult times

With my very best wishes

Andrew Evans
Headteacher