

Joining Year 7: Frequently Asked Questions

Transition

What will happen when my child has been offered a place at JMHS?

The transition team will write to you outlining all the transition events that will take place during Year 6, we are hoping to run a full schedule but this may be affected by Covid-19 restrictions. In this case we will arrange alternative transition events.

I would like my child to be with their friends in tutor groups

We work closely with your child's primary school to find out as much information as possible to help aid a smooth transition. We aim to put students with others they know though we can't guarantee they will be with all of their friends. Tutor time is a small part of the day and your child will find that their classes comprise of different groups of students.

General Questions

Can my son/daughter call home in the school day?

Students are not allowed to use their mobile phone in the school day. If your child needs to contact you they must go to the Student Support office.

How do I communicate if my son/daughter or myself has any worries?

We have a well established pastoral system lead by year leaders and supported by the student support staff. If you or your child have any concerns we encourage you to contact us.

What is the anti-bullying policy?

We have a clear and robust policy on bullying. If you have any concerns speak to your child's year leader who will address the matter.

How does the school deal with poor behaviour?

We have a clear sanction system in the school. The vast majority of students make the right choice and do not need to use this system, for those who do an escalating system of sanctions is in place. We always have a member of senior staff available through all lessons who will check on classes.

How do you reward students who do well?

It is vitally important for students to be rewarded and recognised for their efforts and contributions. Students are awarded housepoints from staff and will be awarded milestones for each 50 points they accumulate. There are also a range of other rewards ranging from praise postcards, sports and performing art colours and prefect roles in Year 11. In the Sixth Form students have the opportunity to apply for a head student position.

How much support is there in lessons?

By ensuring we speak with your child's primary school prior to them starting at JMHS we will identify those who require additional support. We will also do additional testing as part of the transition to ensure we have an accurate reading age for every student. If it is felt your child requires additional support then this will be organised by our SEND department.

How much homework will be set each week in Year 7?

At the start of Year 7 students are set 30 minutes of homework each week in their core subjects, this will then gradually increase to include other subjects as the year progresses. Homework is set on our learning platform called e-praise, here students and parents can monitor the homework set as well as view achievement and demerit points.

Transport

How do you ensure Year 7 are supported for getting on/off buses?

Our buses are carefully monitored by staff before and after school with the child's safety being paramount, children can approach any member of staff for help if they cannot locate their bus.

How do I know if my child will be able to travel to and from school on a bus?

We have a section on the school website: parents/school transport. If you have further questions please contact Wendy Bradbeer our School Business Manager – contact details at end of document.

Dining

How much money on average does a meal cost in the dining room?

A full meal with a drink and dessert will cost no more than £2.50.

What do I do if I have forgotten to put money on the ParentPay account and it is lunchtime?

We will always ensure your child is fed if your child speaks to a member of dining staff.

Subject Questions

Art

What will students do in Year 7 Art?

Students start with the basics of drawing and will have the opportunities to experiment with tone and light. Students then focus on the basics of colour theory and the application of paint.

Will I need to provide my own equipment?

Students will be provided with paper and paints and materials specific to art. It is always useful for a student to have a drawing pencil and coloured pencils in their pencil case.

Design Technology

What do students study in Design Technology?

Years 7 & 8 have termly rotations between Product Design, Woodwork and Food Technology. In Product Design students will design and manufacture a Memphis inspired clock. In Woodwork students will manufacture a Lego inspired box.

In Food Technology students will be cooking a variety of sweet and savoury dishes learning cookings skills and techniques.

Drama

Can my child be involved in the school production?

Year 7s are welcome to audition for the school production and play an active part in all areas on and off stage.

English

Do you set in English?

No, we follow a mixed ability policy; this is to encourage all students to achieve their full potential, in this way there is no ceiling on any student's performance. It also encourages collaboration which is proven to improve progress.

How big are your groups?

They tend to have between 24 and 28 students.

My child struggles with spelling - how do you support this?

We set spellings linked to spelling patterns each week as part of homework. We also screen on arrival and so identify those with spelling weaknesses straight away; intervention is then put in place.

How do you encourage reading?

We have an excellent librarian and well-stocked library. We encourage students to take out books and monitor their reading. We also read a large variety of whole texts as part of our curriculum. We also have a reading programme during tutor time and students are encouraged to always have a reading book in their bag.

What extra-curricular activities do you undertake?

We have strong links to the Ledbury Poetry festival and often have visiting poets to undertake readings and workshops. Students also take part in the Carnegie Shadowing process. The library runs books clubs and writing clubs. In addition, we run visits such as to the theatre; a Sixth form trip to London and the Black Country Museum in Year 7 as a link to 19th Century reading.

Humanities

How many lessons per week do students have in History and Geography?

Students will have one hour each of History and Geography in Year 7 and 8, students can then opt for either or both of these subjects as a GCSE in Year 9.

History

How far back do we study?

1066 and the Norman Conquest.

Is History always taught by subject specialists?

Mostly, sometimes in Year 7 we have non-specialists but they are supported closely by members of the department.

Are there any History trips?

In Year 10 we take the GCSE students to Ludlow Castle, and the Sixth Form have the opportunity to go to Berlin. Every year we offer a small number of A Level students to visit Auschwitz with the Holocaust Educational Trust.

When do we study the First/Second World War?

WW1 in Year 8 and WW2 in Year9; WW2 is covered from a British and German perspective at A Level.

Maths

How will my child be set in Maths?

We run one access group to support our weakest attainers (approximately 14 students) then 5 parallel mixed attainment groups for the first term. Students are tested at half term and Christmas. We then move to two parallel group 1's, two parallel group 2's, a group 3 and an access group.

MFL

What languages are studied at JMHS?

All students will study French in Year 7 but then approximately 60 students will have the opportunity to study German as well in Year 8 as double linguists depending upon their performance in Year 7 language lessons and assessments. This gives them the opportunity to choose to study either language or both at GCSE.

Which language trips do you run at JMHS?

Normally we run trips from Year 8 upwards to France and Germany however they are not taking place this school year, but will resume as soon as it is safe to do so.

Music

Can my child have music lessons?

We have a suite of peripatetic teachers whom parents directly make contact with to organise lessons. Music teachers or the Head of Performing Arts are the first point of contact. We offer a range of instruments so please do ask. Usually we will provide tasters for Year 7 but not this year due to current circumstances.

PE

What do you do in PE lessons?

All sorts! Within PE we passionately believe in preparing students to take part in sport for the rest of their lives. So, at JMHS we provide a broad curriculum in which students have the opportunity to develop their physical literacy through many different sports. These include the traditional sports for

boys and girls (as these are the sports we tend to compete in against other schools), but also include volleyball, tennis, badminton, tennis, weights and fitness, gymnastics, basketball, squash and lots more. I would hate for a student to leave JMHS and say: "I am a boy, all I did was rugby, football and cricket, or I am a girl and all I did was netball hockey and rounders".

Do I have to pay for after school clubs?

No! These are free. Students can join in with the clubs as and when they like/can. You might miss the first three weeks of a club for various reasons, but you are more than welcome to join in on the fourth week.

What after school clubs do you have?

Currently we are restricted to just football and hockey clubs, but we normally offer a whole raft of sporting clubs. During the course of a normal week, there are 10-13 clubs on offer for students to get involved with.

How many PE lessons a week do they have?

Every student has two hours of core PE a week. This is mandatory. These lessons involve practical activity, develop physical literacy and various other outcomes depending on the year group. We also offer GCSE PE too. This starts in Year 9 and involves an additional three hours of PE a week in some cases. Therefore some students in Year 9-11 have 2 hours of core PE a week, plus 2/3 hours of GCSE a week. They therefore have a total of 4/5 hours of PE related lessons a week.

Science

Do you offer the opportunity to study Triple Science and if so, what are the criteria?

Yes we do. Students are offered the opportunity to apply in Year 9. We take into account behaviour and attitude marks from progress checks, as well as any issues with homework. We will also take into account academic progression as the course is more academically challenging.

What is the difference between Triple Science and Combined Science?

There is roughly 25% more content in Triple Science. All students will sit six exams in science, but for Triple Science the exams are 1h 45m compared to 1h 10m in Combined Science. Also, Triple Science students are expected to attend an extra lesson every week after school on a Tuesday to fit in the extra teaching time.

Do students have to take Triple Science if they are planning to study Science subjects at A Level?

No, not at all. We currently have a number of students who excelled at Combined Science, achieving grades 7 and above, studying A Level Sciences. We feel that Triple Science can be a more effective preparation for A Level study for some students, but understand some students progress at different rates and may have extracurricular commitments that mean they are not able to attend the extra lesson on Tuesdays.

Are students put in sets according to ability in Science?

Science sets throughout Year 7 to Year 11 are currently mixed ability. Colleagues are skilled in the differentiation of work in science lessons to ensure all ability levels are catered for. We also ensure through our seating plans that students are sat in suitable configurations to facilitate optimum

collaboration. We do still maintain a small access group in Year 7 that is complementary to our 'Fresh Start' group to ensure the best start in Science for students with specific SEND.

Do students do lots of practical work?

Each Science lesson is timetabled in a dedicated Science lab. As part of our schemes of work we ensure that there are as many opportunities for practical work as possible. For some topics this may be as often as every week, and where practical is not possible, we would aim to give as many opportunities as we can for demonstration, debate and discussion rather than a didactic teaching style.

Useful Contacts at JMHS

For Year 6 and Transition Enquiries:

Mr Dean Wyatt, Transition Lead: dean.wyatt@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk

Mrs Bethan Woolley, Primary Liaison and Admissions: bethan.woolley@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk

For Transport Enquiries:

Mrs Wendy Bradbeer, Business Manager: wendy.bradbeer@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk

For SEND Enquiries:

Mrs Karen Barker, SENDCo: karen.barker@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk

If you have subject specific enquiries please contact Bethan Woolley who will forward your enquiries to Subject Heads.