



18 December 2020

Dear students, parents, and carers

I would like to thank all parents, students and staff for your support and commitment to our values during an unusual and challenging term. We challenge our students to be conscientious, considerate and co-operative at all times. When visiting classrooms, I have seen students concentrating on excellent written work, contributing thoughtfully to discussions, performing complex science experiments with care and thought. Around the school students have always worn their masks in corridors, sanitised their hands when entering any classroom and held doors open for others. Students have joined in house sports enthusiastically, contributed to form events and supported each other in these difficult times.

It was lovely to see so many students and staff coming into school today wearing their Christmas jumpers with the donations made supporting Hope, an excellent local charity who work closely with school and I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this.

Arrangements for the start of the Spring Term in January

After such a successful Autumn Term, I was surprised and disappointed when the government announced last night that not all students are able to return from the first day of term in January. We will of course comply with the government announcement and the revised arrangements for the start of term are detailed below.

Monday 4 January will be an INSET Day as originally planned

Tuesday 5 January will be the first day of term for all students as planned. Year 11 and Year 13 students will attend lessons in person during the first week and will follow their normal timetable. The majority of students in other year groups will work from home. Students from these year groups will follow their normal timetable for the week with times of lessons given below:

Lesson One:	08:55-09:55
Lesson Two:	10:00-10:55
Lesson Three:	11:15-12:15
Lesson Four:	13:15-14:15
Lesson Five:	14:15-15:15

Teachers will deliver live lessons using Microsoft Teams from their usual classrooms. These lessons will not be as effective as face to face teaching, but were judged to be more helpful by a clear majority of parents in the Summer Term than just setting online work. For most lessons the teacher will deliver a twenty minute presentation or interactive session and then set a task for students to complete via epraise for the remainder of the lesson. In most cases the teacher will remain online to answer any questions students have whilst working on the task.

Mr Hammond, our Assistant Headteacher, has prepared a guide for students and parents on using Microsoft Teams which is attached to this message. It would be very helpful if you and your child read the guidance which explains how to access Microsoft Teams and then 'attend' online lessons. Although we

may not be able to resolve technical issues with your computer equipment at home, our IT Support team might be able to assist you. If you have any general questions about online teaching, please contact Mr Hammond (Assistant Headteacher). The email addresses, respectively, are itsupport@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk and peter.hammond@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk. There is also guidance under the Student heading on the school website.

Vulnerable children and children of key workers in Years 7-10 and Year 12 will be able to book a place to attend school during the first week of term by emailing Mr Collard, Deputy Headteacher, at the email address andy.collard@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk by 9am on Monday 4 January. Vulnerable students and children of key workers will complete the same online lessons as students at home supported by teaching assistants with regular visits by their Year Leaders.

All students from all Year Groups will return to school for face to face lessons from Monday 11 January.

All of the current arrangements to make the school COVID-19 secure including those listed below will continue for the Spring Term:

- Staff and students wearing masks in communal indoor areas and when moving between lessons
- Staff and students sanitising their hands whenever they arrive at or leave a classroom
- Separate year group zones and enhanced cleaning
- Increased ventilation and encouraging students to wear many layers

Please could we remind all parents to send students into school with a clean reusable mask each day. A small number of students have forgotten to bring these and we have had to give out disposable masks which is less than ideal.

The good news is that at the moment we believe that we will be able to restart after school clubs including those in sport and the arts within year group bubbles from Monday 11 January.

Asymptomatic Testing Programme

The government recently announced a programme to enable 'rapid testing to keep schools open'. If you follow the link below you will be able to see some details of the proposed programme:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-asymptomatic-testing-in-schools-and-colleges>

My view is that if implemented well, the programme could have important benefits for staff and pupils:

1. Through asymptomatic staff having rapid testing on a weekly basis, it would prevent a member of staff accidentally infecting others.
2. By daily testing of asymptomatic contacts of Year 11 and Sixth Formers who have had a positive test, we would prevent students unnecessarily missing school in a vital term before their exams.
3. It could prevent students from other year groups from missing a large amount of school.

We have assembled a team of support staff, who between them are suitably qualified to start to plan how we might implement a testing programme next term. I would stress, however, the following:

1. The testing is voluntary and would only take place with parental permission and the consent of the student.
2. We will not rush to implement this until we know that we can put safe procedures into place to carry out the testing.

Christmas Concert

Sadly it was not possible to hold our usual Christmas Concert this year due to current coronavirus restrictions. However, our Performing Arts faculty wanted to bring some festive cheer to our school community whilst adhering to all the required restrictions. Our Year 11 Arts Prefects and Ms Davies have organised the recording of a Christmas Concert which features performers in every year group across the school. It showcases Christmas songs and also some other work which the students have prepared themselves. Mrs Goodall and her Year 9 Dance class have choreographed and performed a Christmas themed dance. It was lovely to see students watching the recordings in the last lesson of the day before the Christmas break. You can access the performances via the following YouTube links:

Christmas Concert: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEERiQsgdc8>

Jazz Dance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ZsbEA_-prU


Events and key dates for the Spring Term

- Monday 4 January 2021: INSET day – no school for students
- Tuesday 5 January 2021: Students return to school: Y11 and Y13 students attend in person and Y7-Y10 and Y12 learning from home
- Monday 11 January 2021: All students attend school in person
- Thursday 14 January 2021: Year 7 Parents' Evening – Virtual
- Thursday 21 January 2021: Year 8 Choices Evening – Virtual
- Thursday 28 January 2021: Year 12 & Year 13 Parents' Evening – Virtual
- Monday 1 February 2021: Staff Training Afternoon – students depart at 12.10/12.25pm
- Thursday 11 February 2021: Year 8 Parents' Evening - Virtual
- Monday 15 February 2021 – Friday 19 February 2021: Half Term
- Thursday 25 February 2021: Year 10 Parents' Evening - Virtual
- Thursday 4 March 2021: Year 9 Parent' Evening – Virtual
- Tuesday 9 March 2020: Staff Training Afternoon – students depart at 12.10/12.25pm
- Thursday 11 March 2020: Year 11 Parents' Evening – Virtual
- Thursday 1 April 2020: Term ends at 3.15pm

...And finally

I would like to wish all students and parents a very Happy Christmas and a safe and successful 2021.

With my very best wishes



Andrew Evans
Headteacher