



23 February 2021

Dear students, parents, and carers,

We hope that you and your families are well and that you enjoyed the half-term break.

Last night the prime minister announced that all students will return to school during the week commencing Monday 8 March. He said that where social distancing is not possible, students will be required to wear face coverings in communal indoor areas and in secondary school classrooms. He also stated that all secondary pupils will be asked to have three voluntary COVID-19 tests in school upon their return followed two home COVID-19 tests per week.

As social distancing cannot be maintained within our classrooms with an average of 25-30 students in each class, students and staff will need to wear face covering in classrooms and in communal indoor areas. They will not be required to wear masks at break or lunch when they are outside or when they are sat down in the dining room and eating their food.

The logistics of all students having a COVID-19 test as they return to school is extremely complex, we cannot test all 900 students on Monday 8 March before they start their lessons. We will spend the next few days planning how this will work. We will write to parents by Monday 1 March with details of an exact date and time for each year group or tutor group return to school during the week commencing Monday 8 March. We will prioritise older year groups from Year 10 upwards to return first as advised by the government.

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Staff Training Afternoons: Revised Dates

We have moved the next Staff Training Afternoon from Tuesday 9 March to Wednesday 24 February and added a further Staff Training Afternoon on Friday 5 March. On these afternoons, all staff will be involved in preparing the school for a safe and successful phased return of all students to attend and learn in school from Monday 8 March.

Teachers will teach live lessons during the morning for periods one to three, but there will not be any lessons after 12.15pm. Students can choose whether to enjoy an afternoon off or to use the time to revise topics covered so far this term.

Students attending Skeleton School will finish between 12.10pm and 12.20pm. Year 7 will finish at 12.10pm, Year 8 and Year 9 at 12.15pm and Year 10 and Year 11 at 12.20pm. As the number of students attending Skeleton School are small, parents wishing to come in by car are welcome to drive into the car park at this time. If any students need to travel by school transport on this date, please could you let us know by emailing admin@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk.

Plans for this half term

Live Teams lessons and online learning

We will continue to teach the majority of lessons as live lessons following the school timetable until all students return to school on a phased basis from Monday 8 March. If a teacher is unwell or unable to teach a live lesson, they will set work on epraise for students to complete. In order to get the most out of the next fortnight, we encourage students to participate actively, ask relevant questions and submit work when requested to do so.

We would like to remind students and parents who are experiencing problems with live lessons to report these immediately to Mr Henderson, our ICT manager, so we can diagnose the problem and rectify this when possible.

We are investigating whether it will be possible to sell snacks in the social zones at break.

COVID-19 testing

All staff have been having regular lateral flow tests since the start of January and almost every student attending skeleton school has had a least two tests. I will write with further details of testing including how to give consent in the near future. However, I would like to emphasise that the self-administered swab for the test is a simple procedure, the testing has gone smoothly and is extremely well organised by our testing team which includes staff and volunteers with relevant professional qualifications.

I would also like to stress that although the tests are voluntary, students having the tests will be making a great contribution to keeping themselves, their families and the whole school community safe and protected from COVID-19.

We will give more details about how testing will work and the day of return for students in our next newsletter.

Routines and procedures once students recommence attending school full time

Arrival at school

Students who come to school by bus should go to their year group zones, where they will be supervised until 8.50am when they will move into their classroom for their first lesson of the day. All students travelling on school transport are required to wear a face covering and to sit with students from their year group. Please note that on their first day back students will have their first lesson with their form tutor who will reissue timetables and detail how we will operate in a safe and effective way.

Students who walk to school are asked to arrive at the times below and then report to their year group zone:

- Year 7: 8.35-8.40am
- Year 8 and Year 9: 8.40-8.45am
- Year 10 and Year 11: 8.45-8.50am
- Sixth Form: 8.35-8.40am

In order to ensure student safety, no parental cars will be permitted to enter the school car park after 8.30am. If parents drop off before 8.30am, students should go directly to their year group zone.

What to bring to school

In order to keep everyone safe, it is essential that all students come to school with a clean, close-fitting face covering each day. As all doors and windows will be kept open to provide ventilation, we recommend that students wear base layers under their uniform and bring a warm coat every day which they will be allowed to wear over their uniform in lessons if necessary.

To minimise the amount of shared equipment between students we are asking that all students come to school each day with the following equipment:

- **A close-fitting face covering must be worn in all classrooms and indoor communal areas**
- At least two good quality blue or black pens
- At least two sharp pencils
- An eraser
- A 30cm ruler
- A scientific calculator
- A green pen for marking their work
- A glue stick for sticking work into their books
- Exercise books and text books for the day
- A large pencil case to put their equipment in
- On days with PE lessons, students should attend school wearing their PE Kit
- A large water bottle filled with fresh water

Safety measures

The following safety measures in place will apply to all students and all staff:

- All members of the school wear face coverings in indoor communal areas and classrooms during lessons
- After the initial three COVID-19 tests in school for students, students and staff will have twice weekly voluntary COVID-19 home tests.
- Arrival and departure are staggered to avoid crowding whilst walking to and from school
- Classroom doors and windows are kept open throughout the day to maximise ventilation
- Desks in classrooms are arranged in rows facing the front of the classroom
- Lessons take place in year group zones and students will spend lunch and break in their social zone in order to keep year group bubbles separate
- Practical lessons take place in suitable spaces which are thoroughly cleaned between lessons
- Students and staff sanitise their hands when entering or leaving a classroom

Expectations of students

We are delighted to be welcoming all students back to school in the week commencing Monday 8 March. In order to do so safely it is vital that all students comply with the safety protocols detailed below:

- If your child or a member of your household shows symptoms of COVID-19 you must not send your children to school. A test should be arranged for the person showing any of the following symptoms:
 - **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
 - **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
 - **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Follow this link for advice on the next steps: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

- Students must wear a face covering on school transport, in communal indoor areas and in classrooms
- Students must sanitise their hands when entering a classroom, go straight to their allocated seat, face the front of the classroom at all times and obey any instructions the teacher gives to keep the class safe
- Students should do all they can to maintain social distancing in school, remain within their year group bubble at all times and obey the 'no physical contact rule' at all times

We are determined that our teachers will be able to teach consistently excellent lessons and students can learn effectively at all times when we return and feel that given the length of lockdown that this absolutely vital.

Therefore, we will stress to students that they need to:

- Be conscientious, considerate and co-operative at all times
- Arrive promptly to class, immediately get their books and materials out and be ready to learn from the start of the lesson
- Listen attentively and ask questions when they do not understand
- Put 100% effort into all tasks and take pride in their work
- Help other students focus by working quietly on written tasks
- Do all they can to help the teacher, so that the quality of learning and teaching are excellent

We will go through these expectations with students when they return to school, but we would ask that parents support us by talking to students about how important it will be to be conscientious, considerate and co-operative at all times.

Break and Lunch

As before Christmas, students will be escorted to their outdoor social area at 10.55am. They will remain there until 11.15am when they are escorted to lesson three.

We will continue with our staggered lunch in order to keep all year groups separate and to reduce crowding in our two dining rooms. Students will be able to choose to purchase our meal deal for £2.30 consisting of a choice of three hot meals or a sandwich, a desert and a drink. Students are also able to eat their packed lunch in the dining rooms. After they have eaten, students can choose whether to remain in the dining room to talk with their friends or to go to their outside social area. Students in all year groups have the opportunity to play sport on the tennis courts or astroturf pitch during their lunch break. We are investigating whether it will be possible to sell snacks in the social zones at break.

Staggered finish to the school day

In order to prevent crowding when students leave the school site, we will continue to have a staggered finish to the school day with lessons finishing at the times listed below:

Y7: 3.05pm

Y8 and Y9: 3.10pm

Y10: 3.15pm

Y11 and Sixth Form: 3.20pm

Students will be escorted by their teacher to the bus bay and then released. Those that walk home should leave immediately whilst those catching a bus will be supervised in the bus park until their bus arrives.

As in the Autumn Term no parents will be permitted to drive into the school car park until after 3.30pm.

Homework

Once students return to school we will set homework as follows for the rest of this term:

- Sixth Form will be set homework following each lesson as normal and may be set longer weekly assignments including exam questions
- Year 11 will be set one piece of homework per subject each week, we are expecting students to spend 40-60 minutes on each piece
- Years 9 and Year 10 will be set one piece of homework per subject each week, we are expecting students to spend 30-45 minutes on each piece
- Years 7 and Year 8 will be set one piece of homework in English, maths, science and languages only each week, we are expecting students to spend 30-40 minutes on each piece

Our intention is to get students back into the habit of completing homework without setting excessive amounts.

Communications with parents and visitors to school

In order to keep our school and the wider community safe, we will continue to minimise the number of visitors to JMHS and encourage parental meetings to be via phone or Teams. Please do not come onto school site unless you have an appointment booked. If you do have an appointment, please ensure you wear a face covering at all times and remain two metres distant from students and staff.

Extra- Curricular activities and after school clubs

After school lessons including those in science and languages will continue to take place as scheduled on the school timetable. Homework club will also continue within year group hubs. We will start to offer after school outdoor

sports clubs within year group bubbles once we return to school. Miss Newnes, our enrichment coordinator, will write to parents with further details about extra-curricular activities in the near future.

Curriculum Plans for the Spring Term

The topics we are covering this term and the key learning points are summarised on the JMHS website in the Curriculum section, they can be viewed here:

<https://www.jmhs.hereford.sch.uk/curriculum/spring-2021-curriculum/>

Please note that the topics covered may change later this term for some subjects.

Skeleton School

We now have approximately 60 students attending each day. Students who are attending, are concentrating well and are maintaining social distancing. They complete the same lessons via Teams as children at home, whilst being supervised by teaching assistants with regular visits from Year Leaders.

The definition of students who can attend skeleton school can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

If your child meets the criteria and you need to book a place, please email Mr Collard at the andy.collard@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk and try to give us several days' notice. If you need to cancel a Skeleton School booking, please could you contact Mr Collard to do so.

Skeleton School will continue until 12.15pm on Wednesday 24 February and Friday 5 March. Students will finish early on these days for the Staff Training Afternoons to give teachers sufficient time to plan for the phased return of all students the following week.

Materials to support home learning

GCSE and Key Stage Three Art Packs

Our Art Department have prepared approximately 200 home study packs for GCSE Art students and students in Y7 & Y8. The packs include a sketchbook, watercolour and graphite pencils, water colour and acrylic paints, paint brushes, fine liner pens and other equipment supplied in a storage box which can be collected from Reception on Tuesday and Thursday mornings by a student or parent between 0930 and 1200.

Exercise books

We know that some students need exercise books to support their online learning at home. Although writing within exercise books is not mandatory and students, if they have access and wish to do so, can continue to use paper at home. For students requiring blank exercise books, these are available for collection from Reception on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 0930 until 1200.

Collecting materials to support home learning

The protocol for picking up your art box or exercise books is given below:

1. Do not come to JMHS if you are displaying any COVID-19 symptoms, are self-isolating or shielding.
2. Remain in the carpark outside and telephone Reception (01531 631012 option 5) stating your requirements.
3. **Do not come into Reception.** A Receptionist will then bring the books outside to you.
4. If your initial **telephone call is not answered, please leave a message and your request will be actioned as soon as possible. Do not come into Reception.**

Grades for Year 11 and Year 13

We are still awaiting information from the DFE and OFQUAL on how GCSE, A-Level or vocational grades are to be awarded in 2021. As we do not know how the grades will be awarded and whether students will be required to take

assessments set by the exam boards, we have decided not to set dates for mock examinations until we have this information.

In order to help Year 11 and Year 13 students achieve as well as they can we will:

- Ensure early completion of all topics in the syllabus to allow sufficient time for revision.
- Prioritise high quality teaching and regular feedback for Year 11 and Year 13.
- Ensure students are thoroughly prepared for tests or assessments.
- Make sure grades awarded are a true reflection of a student's knowledge, skills and understanding in a subject.
- Ensure teachers receive high quality professional support and advice in making difficult judgements about exam grades.

Our advice to Year 11 and Year 13 students to maximise their chances of success is:

- Attend every lesson, focus fully and complete every task set to a high standard.
- Spend sufficient time on assessed pieces of work and always give it your best shot.
- Act on feedback given by your teachers and ask for help when you need it.
- Learn the work as you cover it in class and do not leave it to last minute revision.

Prefect Application Process

We received 64 applications for prefect by our deadline of Friday 12 February. I have now reviewed all applications and the quality of applications has been consistently high, particularly with contributions students have detailed about how they wish to contribute to building our school community so that we all support each other. I will write in the next week to let prefect applicants know whether they have been successful. There will be a further opportunity for Year 10 students who did not meet the criteria this time to apply at the end of the Summer Term. This year due to COVID-19 and lockdowns the process for appointing prefect this year was later than we wished. For next year's prefects currently in Year 9, we intend to start the process much earlier before the end of the summer term in late June or July.

Year 8 Subject Choice Interviews

All Year 8 choices interviews have now been completed and Mrs Laidler (our Timetabler and Assistant Headteacher) has used the results of these interviews to construct option blocks and will inform parents and students the subjects they will be studying before the Easter holiday. If parents have any questions please could they email Y8choices@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk.

Events and key dates for the Spring Term

- Wednesday 24 February 2021: Staff Training Afternoon – students depart from 12.10 to 12.25
- Thursday 25 February 2021: Year 10 Parents' Evening - Virtual
- Thursday 4 March 2021: Year 9 Parent' Evening – Virtual
- Friday 5 March 2021: Staff Training Afternoon – students depart from 12.10 to 12.25
- Week commencing Monday 8 March 2021: Phased return of all students to JMHS
- Thursday 11 March 2020: Year 11 Parents' Evening – Virtual
- Thursday 1 April 2020: Term ends at 3.15pm

... And finally

We are very much looking forward to welcoming all students back to JMHS for face to face learning and I look forward to seeing you all again soon

With my very best wishes



Andrew Evans
Headteacher