

## John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre

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2 April 2020

Dear parents and carers

I would like to start this end of term letter by thanking all parents, carers and students for your support and help at this sad and challenging time. I am aware that a number of families have lost loved ones and would like to offer our sincere condolences to everyone who has lost a loved one in such tragic circumstances. We would also like to send our very best wishes to those who have family members who are unwell. Do let us know if there is anything we can do to support you in any way. Our pastoral team are very happy to talk to students and parents on the telephone who are worried, anxious or distressed.

It is important for all of us to acknowledge the wonderful work being done by key workers and volunteers at this time. The wonderful commitment shown by NHS staff in Ledbury, Herefordshire and surrounding areas is undoubtedly saving lives. The contribution of many key workers and volunteers including caring for others, social work, the food industry and many other areas is also making a considerable difference. I would like to say a huge thank you on behalf of all of us at JMHS to all of our key workers and volunteers. At JMHS we are trying to help where we can, for instance we donated our goggles from the Science Faculty to local medical teams so that they have more protective equipment. If you know of other ways we can help, please let us know.

When I and our staff have been driving to and from Ledbury to open up our skeleton school, we have noticed how quiet and deserted Ledbury has been over the last two weeks. I personally have not seen any JMHS students except for those attending skeleton school when driving through the town. This is an indication of how well students and parents are doing with self-isolation and social distancing. There is no doubt from the modelling of COVID 19 that I have studied, that staying at home wherever possible will save many thousands of lives. I would like to thank and congratulate JMHS families for doing so well with this.

### **Skeleton School**

We are continuing to open school on a daily basis for children of key workers and for vulnerable children. If you would like to book a place for your child over the Easter Holiday and you are a key worker, please could we ask you to e-mail [admin@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk](mailto:admin@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk). We plan to be open on all weekdays except Good Friday and Easter Monday. We understand that Key Workers may sometimes be asked to change shifts at the last moment, but if you could let us know two days in advance it would help us plan the staffing required. We are no longer in a position to provide food in our dining room, so if you are planning on your child being in school, please could you send him or her in with a packed lunch.

## **Students working from home**

We would like to thank all parents for helping and encouraging their children who are working at home and also congratulate students for being conscientious and completing the work set. It is not easy to work from home and we are delighted that students are responding in such an impressive way. Here are few reminders for students and parents:

- Every student has different strengths and aptitudes and every household has different circumstances. We will continue to set 5 lessons per day with approximately 40- 45 minutes work per lesson during term time and no extra homework, but fully understand that not every student will be able to complete all the work set. We would ask that once a student has made a good attempt at the work that they tick it off on e-praise to show that they have completed it.
- We understand that some students are completing the work rapidly and need additional challenge. We have therefore asked teachers to be as explicit as possible with expectations and also to set optional extension tasks.
- Teachers of Y12 students are aiming to deliver some live lessons on Microsoft Teams, our expectations of work from Y12 students is higher than in other years due to the complexity involved and demands of Advanced level subjects.
- Students and parents wishing to have feedback or advice on work completed are encouraged to e-mail the class teacher. If there is a problem across several subjects we would encourage parents to contact their Year Leader or Mrs Barker, our SENDCO.
- We are starting to place an overview of learning for the summer term for curriculum subjects on the curriculum area of our website. We are aiming to complete this by Wednesday 29 April. We feel these overviews will be useful for students and parents interested in seeing the longer term study plan for the term.
- We are intending to send a link to a brief online survey to all parents, so that we can gain feedback on what is going well with the lessons we are setting and how these might be improved.

## **Year 11 and Year 13 students**

I would like to particularly congratulate Y11 and Y13 students who have continued to study, complete coursework with many Y11 students working hard to meet the Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April deadline and develop their knowledge and understanding over the last fortnight. It has been particularly challenging for you, but your efforts will help with further study or employment next year. We will continue to set work for Y11 and Y13 until Friday 22 May on school days. In several subjects our Y11 teachers are setting up preparation for A-Level courses to commence after Easter to help prepare students for A-level learning in September. We would strongly encourage students to join these classes for subjects they will be studying.

At the time of writing, the exam boards have not let us know the exact mechanism for awarding GCSE and A-Level grades. However our Y11 and Y13 teachers have been working extremely hard to make sure they have all the evidence needed to predict the final grade which would have been achieved as accurately as possible. Teachers have been discussing individual cases with their Faculty Leader and are taking into account work produced throughout the course and not just mock exam grades. We will update you further on the award of examination grades when we have heard from exam boards.


## **And finally**

At the end of the most unusual term in my 36 year teaching career so far, it is important to acknowledge the achievements of our students and staff earlier on this term. These include:

- Excellent sporting achievement in many areas, especially by our basketball players who have won county championships in all age groups.
- Many Y10 students being appointed as prefects and achieving the very high standards required.
- Students helping others in so many ways including being reading buddies, mentors, maths tutors, sports and languages leaders etc.
- Excellent mock exam results achieved by many Y11 and Y13 students and superb coursework completed in practical subjects.
- The brilliant teamwork and wonderfully entertaining production of The Addams Family.
- Students conducting themselves with maturity and excellent consideration for others especially in the final few days before school finished.

I hope that you and your loved ones stay well and enjoy the Easter break.

With my very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Evans". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Andrew Evans**  
**Headteacher**