



Monday 27 April

Dear students, parents and carers

We hope that you and your family are well. I would like to start this letter by reiterating our thanks to all the key workers and volunteers who are showing great commitment and courage in such difficult circumstances. NHS workers, people working in the caring professions, in food and food distribution, our uniformed services and many many others are all contributing to saving lives, keeping people safe and keeping society working and we are most grateful for all of your efforts.

We would also like to thank all of our students for complying with social distancing, staying at home and keeping others safe. It has been extremely difficult for both young people and their families to stay at home, but we feel you have done extremely well and that you should be proud of your contribution to helping keep others and yourselves safe. It is also important to thank parents for supporting your sons and daughters with their learning at home through giving practical help, encouragement and support. All of your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Students completing lessons from home

Teachers are continuing to set lessons on the day that their class is scheduled. The teachers are aware that home circumstances vary and that some students will work much slower or much quicker than others. Teachers are therefore trying to set lessons, so that for those families who are finding it harder to get students to complete work at home the main content can be completed in 30 minutes, whilst for those who wish to complete more work they can spend a full hour on the lesson. Teachers are also aiming to set extension tasks for students who finish the work rapidly and need some extra challenge. Please note that this extension work is optional. Lessons will continue to be set using epraise on school days until school reopens for all students. Teachers are using Microsoft Teams with Y12 students to teach some online lessons and are also using this resource with Y11 in selected subjects to provide preparation for Advanced Level study. We have also started to use Microsoft Teams to teach some online lessons to Y10, but are only doing this where the teacher is confident that all students in the class can access Microsoft Teams.

Online survey for parents

We would like to thank all parents who have responded to our online survey. The results of the survey are summarised below:

- 100% of parents state that their children have been able to access the work via epraise;
- 80% of parents said their child had been able to use Remote Access;
- Approximately 65% of parents felt that we were setting about the right amount of work, 20% felt we were setting too much, whilst 15% felt we were setting too little;
- 90% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that teachers were trying their best to make work interesting and varied;
- 100% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that the school was communicating effectively;

- 84% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt supported by the school in helping their child work from home.

Parents also made some very helpful comments about what they felt was working well and how improvements could be made. As Headteacher, I have personally read every comment and would like to thank all parents for their helpful and constructive comments which included:

1. Appreciation of the lessons delivered using Microsoft Teams for older students and requests for more of these where possible;
2. The importance of teachers clearly distinguishing between core tasks and optional extension activities;
3. Requests for more opportunities for students to submit work and receive individual feedback;
4. Many specific examples of subjects and teachers where parents felt that lessons were varied, accessible and interesting;
5. Producing a parent guide to helping your child learn at home.

There were many more comments made and I can assure parents that all comments will be passed onto staff and that we are constantly aiming to make improvements.

Week by week subject summaries for the Summer Term

In order to give parents and students an overview of work to be covered during the Summer Term, Curriculum Leaders have compiled week by week plans for Years 7-10 and Year 12. These have been posted in the curriculum section on the school website (Summer 2020 Curriculum). We would encourage all students and parents to have a look at these as having a longer term overview of where you are going with your work is most helpful. If you have any questions about these summaries please could we ask you to contact the Curriculum Leader for the subject?

Awarding of examination grades

The most important task our teachers are currently undertaking is determining recommended grades for each student in Y11 and Y13, and producing a rank order of students for each grade within each subject. This is an extremely difficult task, but we would like to assure you that teachers are approaching this with great diligence and care. There are checking mechanisms now in place with teachers working together to check each other's grading and ranking under the supervision of subject leaders and senior staff. Before any grades or rankings are submitted to exam boards, myself as Headteacher and other senior staff will check that the procedures followed have been as thorough and accurate as possible and that the grades and ranking represent a fair and accurate assessment.

We have been instructed by the exam boards and the government that we must not discuss the grades teachers are recommending or the rank order with any parent or any student, so it is very important that students and parents do not ask teachers questions about the grades they are recommending or the rank order. I can however assure parents that the process being followed in all subjects at JMHS is extremely thorough with all teachers working hard to ensure grades and the rank order are fair and accurate.

We have been informed that students or parents will be able to lodge an appeal if they feel that the school or exam board have not followed processes correctly. We have also been informed that students may retake exams where they are dissatisfied with grades in September.

Skeleton School

Our Skeleton School remains open for children of key workers and vulnerable students. If you would like to book a place, please could you e-mail admin@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk two school days in advance. This will enable us to make sure appropriate levels of staffing are in place.

And finally I would like to say that over the next fortnight we will be aiming to address as many of the points as we can that were raised by parents in the online survey. In particular we are aiming to start to provide some parental guides to helping your child learn at home. The first for modern foreign languages has already been posted on the Summer 2020 Curriculum section of the school website and we will be following this up with a general guide for all subjects and more subject specific guides over the next few weeks.

Once again I would like to thank all parents and families for your support and kindness during these challenging times. We do hope you and your families stay well. Do contact us if we can help in any way.

With my very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Evans". The script is cursive and fluid.

Andrew Evans
Headteacher