



23 October 2020

Dear students, parents, and carers

Government Advice: COVID-19

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- **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

If your child is sent home from school or displays any one of these symptoms at home, they must self-isolate for at least ten days. Anyone else in their household must self-isolate for 14 days from when your child started having the symptoms. The only exception to this is if the child has a negative test and are feeling well.

We do appreciate that the impact of a family having to isolate is significant but it is vital that we adhere to the government guidelines.

After completing a successful first half term, I would like to thank students, staff and parents for their support in helping the school to run so smoothly. Students are concentrating well in class and the vast majority are also being conscientious with completing their homework to a high standard. We are particularly pleased that school attendance this term up to and including 20 October is averaging 94%, compared to a national average of 89% for all state schools and 87% for secondary schools. Clearly, we have been fortunate not to have had a confirmed case in school yet. However, I would like to thank all of those families who have followed instructions by self-isolating when a family member or close contact has had a positive test and those who have immediately self-isolated and arranged a test when symptoms have occurred. Your prompt and considerate actions have helped to protect the entire school community.

We have been pleased that students and staff have worked together well to keep themselves and others safe in the following ways:

- Sanitising hands each time they arrive at or leave a classroom
- Keeping to their year group bubbles before school, at break and at lunch
- Ensuring doors and windows are kept open
- Listening to advice and instructions on how to keep safe

I would also like to thank parents and carers for helping us by sending students to school wearing warm clothes and coats. We have been given very clear advice by the NHS that keeping classroom doors and as many windows open as possible during lessons increases airflow thereby reducing the potential for students and staff to be infected and reducing the amount of virus a student or staff member breathes in. Both of these are crucial and the expert advice we have received indicates that having all windows and doors open is much more effective than having some windows open.

I would also like to thank parents who have been most helpful in not attempting to drive onto school premises after 8.30am or before 3.30pm. This has helped make the bus park a safer and calmer place and your help is much appreciated.

The School Curriculum

During the summer term we placed an overview of the whole school curriculum and of subjects taught at JMHS on our website, as we felt it would be helpful for both parents and students to be able to view this if they wished to do so. Please note that due to recommendations from the government and professional subject-based associations about how to teach practical subjects during the Coronavirus pandemic, we have had to vary the curriculum in some year groups from the published curriculum. There will also be some changes this academic year for Year 11 and Year 13 as exam syllabi have been amended by the exam boards due to time lost during lockdown. Senior staff have been supporting curriculum leaders with the difficult task of adjusting their short-term curriculum plans to ensure all requirements of our risk assessments are met and adjustments are made due to exam syllabus changes, whilst still maintaining effective teaching and enabling students to learn effectively.

Over the past 12 months, we have, with the help of our School Improvement Partner (SIP), been reviewing the quality of the curriculum across all subject areas. We are particularly concentrating on making sure that teaching is sequenced in a way to ensure mastery, and that students revisit key knowledge so that it is securely stored in longer term memory and can be applied in different contexts. We are also striving to ensure that all students have a rich cultural experience. Last academic year we reviewed English, mathematics and languages. This half term science and physical education were reviewed. Feedback from our SIP (an experienced lead OFSTED inspector) indicates strong progress is being made in improving the curriculum in all subjects considered so far. Next half term, we are reviewing history and geography, with all other subjects being considered in the spring term.

Progress Checks

From the end of October onwards will be sending home the first progress check of this academic year in which subject teachers give ratings for students for:

- Care and concentration
- Contribution
- Cooperation
- Quality of Homework

We are encouraging all students to aim for an average rating of 'very good' across all subjects with no grade below 'good' which is one of the requirements for being appointed a prefect in Year 10. Year Leaders will be posting your son or daughter's progress check home with a letter which explains the progress check in greater detail.

Forgotten items

Due to the Coronavirus and Health and Safety advice we have received, we can no longer accept forgotten items at Reception. We can assure you that if a student leaves an item at home occasionally they will not receive a sanction and will be allowed to work on paper or given the relevant equipment. If a student forgets their packed lunch, we will allow them to have food from the Dining Room and pay for it later. They only need to speak to a member of staff in the Dining Room if this occurs.

School tours for families of Year 5 and Year 6 students

As we have been unable to run our Open Mornings and Open Evening, senior staff and myself have taken 70 families of Year 6 students on tours of JMHS. Many of the parents we have shown around have commented on the excellent ethos in lessons which is a great credit to our students and staff.

Later this academic year, we will offer an opportunity for families with a Year 5 student and any families with a Year 6 student who missed out this half term to tour the school.

Self-isolating students

We would like to thank all students, parents and families for co-operating with keeping students at home or collecting them from school when they or a family household member are displaying coronavirus symptoms and arranging tests promptly. We have not yet had a positive test result for a member of JMHS, but are aware that this is likely to change in the near future. If we do have a positive test result, we will be required to contact the Department for Education and the Local Area Outbreak Team and then ask close contacts to self-isolate and remain at home for two weeks. We realise that this will be very disappointing for the students and families involved and would like to thank parents and families in advance for your help and co-operation with this.

We are currently asking all teachers to set work via Epraise for students self-isolating, so that they do not miss out on work covered in class. If you have questions about this or are concerned that your child is self-isolating but has not been set work, please could you contact your child's Year Leader at the email address listed below:

Year 7 Mrs Fox: donna.fox@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk Year 10 Mr Bees: anthony.bees@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk

Year 8 Mr Wyatt: dean.wyatt@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk Year 11 Miss Limbrick: chloe.limbrick@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk

Year 9 Miss Newnes: hayley.newnes@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk

Governor vacancies

The Governors of the school have done an excellent job steering the school through the difficult period of Covid-19 restrictions and lockdown. They also continue to support school leaders in planning for the future.

We have some vacancies for Parent Governors and our Clerk to the Governors will be writing to you about these shortly. Being a governor is a fascinating opportunity to plan how the school moves forward and make a positive contribution to our community. The formal requirement is to attend 4 meetings a term with each meeting lasting between 1½ and 2 hours, as well as preparing through reading and relevant training provided by the school.

Key dates next half term

- Friday 23 October: Year 11 Progress Checks posted home
- Monday 2 November – Friday 6 November: Year 11 Mock Exams
- Wednesday 4 November: Year 7 Flu vaccinations
- Monday 9 November: Year 8 Progress Checks posted home
- Thursday 12 November: Staff training afternoon – students leave 12.20-12.25pm
- Monday 16 November: Year 12 and 13 Progress Checks posted home
- Friday 20 November: Sixth form taster day for Year 11 at JM6
- Monday 23 November: Year 7 Progress Checks posted home
- Monday 30 November: Year 9 Progress Checks posted home
- Monday 7 December: Year 10 Progress Checks posted home
- Monday 7 December: Staff training afternoon – students leave 12.20-12.25pm
- Friday 18 December: Last day of term – students leave 12.20-12.25pm

Parental survey

I am keen to receive feedback from students and parents on the quality of education and support we have provided this half term. We will be sending a link to a survey in the first week back in November to give an opportunity for feedback.

...And finally

We would like to thank all students and staff for the excellent efforts this half term and for supporting each other. Everyone definitely deserves some well-earned rest and relaxation over half term.

With my very best wishes



Andrew Evans
Headteacher