



19 November 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.

Following the government's announcement of a national lockdown and increases in infection rates over recent weeks locally and nationally, we initiated a concerted campaign after the half term break to help students understand the serious situation we are all in and what they can do to keep themselves, their family, their friends and school staff safe. Progress on the plan is summarised below:

1. Importance of staying at home & arranging a test if there are symptoms

Students have been constantly reminded of the government advice at the start of this newsletter and to talk to their parents before they come into school if they are feeling unwell to protect their friends, their fellow students and staff. We greatly appreciate the way that students and parents have supported us with this to help keep everyone safe.

2. Maximising ventilation by keeping doors and windows open, increased heating and wearing many layers

By increasing heating and students wearing coats and additional layers to school we have been able to maintain high levels of ventilation with doors and windows open in classrooms. We would like to thank parents and students for your help with this.

3. All on site, except those medically exempt, to wear face coverings in communal indoor areas including corridors

Following the imposition of national lockdown and advice from Public Health in Herefordshire with effect from Monday 9 November, all those at JMHS, both students and staff, have been required to wear face coverings in corridors and communal indoor areas and when moving between lessons. Face coverings are not be required in offices, classrooms or in an eating area when sat down and eating. All students have been bringing masks to schools and students and staff have been consistently wearing masks in communal indoor areas and when moving between lessons.

4. No physical contact rule

Since September we have reminded students of our no physical contact rule which is designed to help students respect each other's personal space and ensure social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are constantly reminding students of the rule and the vast majority are complying.

5. Reducing the number of visitors to school

Due to higher infection rates in Herefordshire and the national lockdown we will be minimising the numbers of visitors to school. We will be phoning parents and carers rather than meeting you face to face. Please only come onto school premises if it is absolutely essential and you have a pre-arranged appointment. If you have a pre-arranged appointment, please wear a face covering unless you are exempt. We will of course be very happy to speak to parents and carers on the phone and will respond to enquiries promptly.

6. Students responsibilities in the wider community

All staff are promoting considerate and compliant behaviour from students in the local community. This includes making students aware of the rules in the current lockdown and helping them to respond positively to the 'hands, space, face' campaign. Herefordshire Council have asked us to share a link to their COVID Myth Busting document: <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-3/stay-home-stay-safe/>

Parental Survey - November 2020

We would like to thank the 296 parents who responded to the parental survey published on 11 November. Receiving your feedback is invaluable and will help us see how and where we need to improve.

The table below summarises responses to the survey.

Question	Percentage who agree or strongly agree
Do you feel that the arrangements to fully open JMHS and make it as safe as we can have worked well so far this term?	95%
Does your child feel he/she is making good progress this academic year?	91%
Do you and your child feel the quality of pastoral care has been good so far this year?	95%
Do you feel the quality of communication from the school has been good this academic year?	93%
My child is happy at JMHS.	92%
My child feels safe at school.	94%
JMHS makes sure its pupils are well behaved.	83%
JMHS makes me aware of what my child will learn during the year.	62%
When I have raised concerns with JMHS they have been dealt with properly.	88%
My child has SEND, and the school gives them the support they need to succeed	75%
My child has not been bullied	82%
My child has been bullied and the school dealt with the bullying quickly and effectively	70%
The school has high expectations for my child	91%
My child does well at JMHS.	91%
JMHS lets me know how my child is doing.	79%
There is a good range of subjects available to my child at JMHS	93%
JMHS supports my child's wider personal development	80%
I would recommend JMHS to another parent	94%

We are pleased that approximately 90% of parents who responded agreed or strongly agreed with the majority of the statements above, although it goes without saying that we would like to increase this to 100%. In response to some of the questions where fewer parents agreed or strongly agreed we would comment as follows.

JMHS makes me aware of what my child will learn during the year

We have a summary of our curriculum for the whole school and for individual subjects on the school website which we hope parents and students will find useful. However, this does not list the topics students will be studying each term. Therefore, we will be asking our Curriculum Leaders to compile a short summary of topics and key learning each term which we will publish to parents at the beginning of each term, starting in January.

My child has been bullied and the school dealt with the bullying quickly and effectively

82% of parents said they felt their son or daughter had not been bullied. Of the 50 parents who felt bullying had taken place, 35 agreed that it had been dealt with quickly and effectively, whilst 15 disagreed. We are working very hard to try to prevent bullying, unkindness and students falling out with each other. However, it is important to be realistic and acknowledge that some bullying will always take place. Therefore, we are determined to always resolve situations that do occur. We would encourage parents to contact the Year Leader as soon as possible and to give as much detail as possible when bullying does occur.

JMHS considers bullying to be: Deliberately hurtful; repeated, often over a period of time*; difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

* A singular event is covered in the JMHS Behaviour for Learning Policy which has a wide range of sanctions which would be employed based on the individual circumstances.

JMHS supports my child's wider personal development

We have a number of significant initiatives and activities that we believe support students wider personal development. These include the following:

- A teaching programme that includes citizenship and personal, social & health education
- Curricular and extra-curricular opportunities in sport, including school and house teams and sports leadership opportunities
- Curricular and extra-curricular opportunities in the arts including the whole school production, the school orchestra, musical ensembles and dance shows
- Leadership opportunities including language leaders, sports leaders and the prefect scheme
- Educational visits to the theatre, galleries, concerts and museums plus six overseas visits per year to France and Germany
- Participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
- Participation in local projects such as Strong Young Minds, Ledbury Youth Council etc

During lockdown it has been impossible for many of these activities to take place. We fully intend to reinstate these broader opportunities as soon as we are able to do so.

JMHS lets me know how my child is doing

I would agree that since lockdown we have not prioritised feeding back to parents about how well their child is doing. We aim to improve this over the next term, particularly by scheduling virtual Parents' Evenings, where parents can have face to face conversations online. Mr Hammond, Assistant Headteacher, will provide further details about this in a future newsletter.

A number of parents have rightly pointed out that the termly progress checks give clear and regular information on students' attitudes in class and with homework, they do not give a precise summary of attainment. It is also true that J-Levels which we use to measure attainment over the last few years for Year 7- Year 10 give a generalised grade for attainment overall rather than precise information about an individual student's learning. Over the past 18 months all subject areas have been improving their curricula by precisely identifying end points, small components of knowledge and improved sequencing of learning so that students learn more and remember more. Subject teams are now developing their teaching and assessment to deliver their new curricula effectively. A key challenge for us as a school is to find a better way in which we can communicate to parents about students' attainment and learning, that is more useful than current means including J-Levels. We will be working on this over the next few months and hope to have improved mechanisms in place by the summer term.

Next steps in following up the parental survey

I have now read all the individual comments made in response to questions identifying positives and areas for improvement. All comments will be considered in planning improvements and passed on to relevant staff. I

would like to thank all parents who completed the survey, your answers and comments are both insightful and useful.

Specific questions for Year Leaders have been forwarded, along with the parental email addresses submitted, to Year Leaders who will respond within the next two weeks.

In addition to the questions referred to above where fewer respondents agreed or strongly agreed there were two further questions which are:

- JMHS makes sure its pupils are well behaved.
- My child has SEND, and the school gives them the support they need to succeed

The next newsletter will summarise action we are taking in these two areas.

It is my intention to publish one parental survey per term to gain feedback and use this to improve the quality of education and support at JMHS. Whilst the questions in this survey have been general and wide ranging, future surveys are likely to be more specific and focussed around particular issues.

Y11 Practice Exams

We have been most impressed with how hard Year 11 students have worked preparing for their practice exams and how they have conducted themselves in the exams. They have been a credit to themselves, their families and our school. Teachers will be giving feedback over the next few weeks. Year 11 students will have a further, full set of Mock Exams in late January and early February.

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 are displaying Coronavirus symptoms and arranging tests promptly. Where we do have a positive test result, we are 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 for your help and co-operation with this. Parents who I phoned after the first positive case were most helpful and ensured that students isolated promptly and for the correct period of time.

Where there are positive cases Year Leaders will co-ordinate the setting of work and any feedback to Year Leaders on this will be appreciated.

Sixth Form news

After a successful and informative virtual Sixth Form Open Evening in October the Sixth Form Team have visited all the Year 11 tutor groups to inform students about their next steps and also spoken to many students individually about subjects they could study. This week on Friday 20 November over 140 of our Year 11 students will be involved in our Sixth Form Taster Day when they will be able to experience being a sixth form student for the day and sample up to five different A level type lessons. The day is another crucial part of our support in ensuring that students make informed decisions about the subjects they wish to study after GCSEs and gives our Year 11 students an insight into the demands of A level study. As well as being able to continue to A Level the vast amount of subjects they presently study at GCSE, students will have the opportunity to sample new subjects such as Accounting, Health & Social Care, Psychology and Photography. Over the four weeks following the Sixth Form Taster Day, all students will have a 'Futures' discussion with one of the Senior Leadership Team to chat over their thoughts and plans for next year.

Enrichment and House Competitions

The house system allows every student and member of staff to feel a sense of belonging by becoming a member of Beacon, Holywell, Midsummer or Jubilee. The house system aims to reflect the ethos of the school - to be conscientious, co-operative, and considerate. This is supported by fostering a sense of community, awareness of each other and a sense of being part of a team.

Students are encouraged to show team spirit and participate in the exciting inter-house events, as these events help develop an array of key skills which will benefit their development and future. Also, it encourages friendly competition and allows students to form positive relationship, through interesting and exciting opportunities. Please find below a list of events for the rest of the half-term.

House sport

Year Group	Date and Time	Sports
7	Monday 14 December – P1 Thursday 17 December – P2	Hockey, volleyball and football
8	Friday 16 December – P1 Wednesday 16 December – P2	Hockey, volleyball and football
9	Friday 11 December – P2 Friday 11 December – P4	Hockey, volleyball and football
10	Thursday 17 December – P3 Thursday 17 December – P5	Hockey, volleyball and football

Shin pads will be required for both hockey and football. Boots will be required for football and trainers for hockey and volleyball. All sports are for boys and girls, and information for those who would like to take part will be published soon.

House competitions and events

Year Group	Date and Time	Events and Competitions
7 and 8	Monday 30 November 2020 - Friday 11 December 2020	Christmas Card Competition
9, 10, 11 and 12	Monday 14 December 2020 – Friday 18 December 2020	The BIG Christmas Quiz

Tutors will provide students with more information regarding the house competitions and events listed above nearer to the time.

In addition, we will be looking for our next House Captains who will represent their house and be responsible to promote and encourage engagement in the House System. This is an incredible opportunity and students in year 11 will be informed soon regarding the application process.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE)

We would like to let you know about the new PSHE curriculum and delivery methods, as there have been a significant number of changes as a result of the statutory status of the subject (since September 2020). We have made a substantial investment in resources to ensure JMHS students receive the best package of PSHE education that they ever have done. We would appreciate it if parents and carers could do two things. Firstly, review the overall PSHE curriculum on the school website, <https://www.jmhs.hereford.sch.uk/curriculum/pshe/>. Please send any feedback to Mr Bees at anthony.bees@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk. Secondly, please look closely at the links at the bottom of that page of the website for the specific year groups. Year Leaders are delivering a series of workshops to the whole year group which cover some very sensitive topics (the numbered workshops listed in the column on the left side of each year-group plan). If parents and carers are concerned about the subject matter of any of those workshops in relation to their child, please contact Mr Bees or the Year Leader concerned.

In science lessons, students will continue to learn about reproduction and health as part of the science curriculum. However, alongside this, there will be a new focus on PSHE as part of the new statutory guidance for relationships, sex education and health education. This content will be delivered by subject specialist science teachers, as part of normal science lessons, who can combine accurate scientific knowledge with high quality PSHE understanding. You can find out more about what will be covered by viewing this link to our website, <https://www.jmhs.hereford.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/PSHE-Teaching-in-Science-Lessons-JMHS.pdf>. If you would like any further information, please contact Adem Osbourn (Assistant Faculty Leader for Science) at adem.osbourn@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk.

Medical appointments

When a student has a medical appointment during the school day please could parents and carers ensure they let us know in advance by phone or email us at studentabsence@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk . As students currently have to be escorted to Reception you should allow 10 minutes for your child to be collected and brought to you in Reception.

Support for parents

Herefordshire Council, through Triple P – positive parenting program for every parent, has set up a new parenting course called ‘Taking the guesswork out of parenting’, starting in January 2021. The focus is on encouraging behaviour you like, dealing with problem behaviour, becoming confident as a parent, being realistic about parenting and taking care of yourself. Further details are on our website, <https://www.jmhs.hereford.sch.uk/parents-information/keeping-children-safe/>

The Early Help Hub has recently been set up by Herefordshire Council and is for any stakeholder including parents. Where a family wants and needs extra support in terms of a family worker, parenting sessions or specialist support in terms of Young Carers, housing, or a range of other needs, parents can now call for advice on 01432 260261.

Safer Schools

The Safer Schools App, which is designed for parents/carers, school staff and pupils, helps support and protect young people through education and empowering them both at school and at home. Adult users receive tailored content specific to their role and pupils receive different content depending on their year group, in line with our PSHE course. The App provides information and guidance on a range of topics to help keep the young people in your care safer online. Therefore, if you are yet to download the app and would like to, then please follow the instructions below.

Step One

Download the App ‘Safer Schools’.

Step Two

Open the App and select ‘John Masefield High School’ from the drop down menu and click continue.

Step Three

Enter the four digit entry code **7675** for parental access and **1544** for pupil access.

Step Four

Explore the App and the content on it.

For more information visit: <https://oursaferschools.co.uk/> . On the Safer Schools website you will also find links to download the App, how to register and how to reset your password.

...And finally

Many thanks for reading this rather long newsletter, for contributing to our parental survey and your continued support

With my very best wishes



Andrew Evans
Headteacher