



25 February 2021

Dear students, parents, and carers,

We write to follow up Tuesday's newsletter with initial details of COVID-19 testing and when students will return to school.

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COVID-19 testing and return to school

The DFE confirmed yesterday afternoon that schools can commence lateral flow tests for students from Thursday 4 March. Therefore, we have decided that we will test all students on Thursday 4 March and Friday 5 March. All students, except any who have tested positive, will return to school for face-to-face learning and follow the full school timetable on Monday 8 March.

We will send out tomorrow full details of testing arrangements including how to give consent and booking a test.

Students living in Ledbury should walk into school to attend their appointment, they do not need to be accompanied by a parent. Parents living outside Ledbury may drive their children in for their test appointment. Our system will allow siblings to be tested at the same time. Parents should remain in their vehicles while their children have their test. We anticipate that the students will usually return to be driven home approximately 20 minutes later.

All staff have been having regular lateral flow tests since the start of January and almost every student attending skeleton school has had at least two tests. 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. Students will be supported in taking the tests in school, but will have their privacy protected through using booths that we are setting up in the Theatre.

I would 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. It would be an excellent contribution to keeping everyone safe if all members of our school gave consent to having the tests and took their first test before all students return to lessons.

We appreciate that it may be difficult for parents living outside Ledbury to get students to school for a test on either Thursday 4 March or Friday 5 March, but if you could do this it will be a huge help for us. By organising the first test for these dates it enables us to open for all students on Monday 8 March rather than as previously planned from Thursday 11 March. On Thursday 4 March and Friday 5 March lessons will be set on epraise rather than live Teams lessons.

In order to ensure that all students can have a test before they return to lessons and have three tests in school, we have put in place the following schedule:

Thursday 4 March: Students in Y7-Y13 will have COVID-19 test 1

Friday 5 March: Students in Y7-Y13 will have COVID-19 test 1

Monday 8 March: Students in Y11, Y12 and Y13 will have COVID-19 test 2

Tuesday 9 March: Students in Y9 and Y10 will have COVID-19 test 2

Wednesday 10 March: Students in Y7 and Y8 will have COVID-19 test 2

Thursday 11 March: Students in Y11, Y12 and Y13 will have COVID-19 test 3

Friday 12 March: Students in Y9 and Y10 will have COVID-19 test 3

Monday 15 March: Students in Y7 and Y8 will have COVID-19 test 3

Staff Training Afternoon: Wednesday 3 March

This is a change of date from Friday 5 March to Wednesday 3 March

On this afternoon, all staff will be involved in preparing the school for a safe and successful return of all students to attend and learn in school from Monday 8 March and for the first two testing days on Thursday 4 March and Friday 5 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.

Skeleton School

Skeleton School will continue for all year groups until Friday 5 March. 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

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.

Please note that on the first morning Monday 8 March students should go to their form rooms for tutor time where their form tutors will reissue timetables and the students will have an online assembly about how we will work and how we will keep each other safe.

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 Uniform
- A large water bottle filled with fresh water

Safety measures

The following safety measures are in place and 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 on Monday 8 March onwards. 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 is 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 for break 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.

Grades for Year 11 and Year 13

As I write this newsletter the BBC have reported the following:

After last year's chaos, the exams watchdog Ofqual and the Department for Education say there will be no algorithm calculating results. Instead, the grading system will be built around teachers' judgements - with schools allowed to decide on the evidence to be used, such as mock exams, coursework and essays.

If students are unhappy at the outcome of what their school and teachers have decided, they can appeal, with no financial charge expected. For those still wanting to take written papers, there will be an option of exams in the autumn. A-level results day will be 10 August, with GCSEs results given out on 12 August. They are earlier this year to create a "buffer" for appeals, ahead of decisions over university places in the autumn. Students awaiting the result of an appeal before being granted a university place will be prioritised under this year's system, Mr Gibb said on Thursday. Before the end of the school year, teachers can tell pupils how they got on in the test papers set by exam boards - but not their final grades.

Will students still have to sit exams?

There will be test papers set by exam boards for each subject, which are intended to inform the judgement of teachers, but will not decide the final grades. These have been labelled "mini-exams", but Ofqual says the tests, which will be optional for schools to use, should not be seen as exams.

Question papers, which could be from previous exams, will be sent to schools before the Easter holidays and can be taken before 18 June, when schools have to submit grades to exam boards. The intention is that regardless of how much time pupils might have missed out of school, they will have questions on a topic they will have studied. These tests will be taken in class rather than exam halls, there is no fixed time limit for their duration and they will be marked by teachers.

A JMHS we will be working to implement this system in as fair a way as possible, with each set of subject teachers working with senior staff to determine the best approach for their subject. We will use some time on the Staff Training Afternoon of Wednesday 3 March to consider how best to approach the difficult problem of ensuring grades are accurate and being fair to all students. We will then communicate this to information to students and parents.

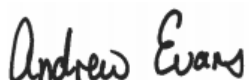
Events and key dates for the Spring Term

- Thursday 25 February 2021: Year 10 Parents' Evening - Virtual
- Wednesday 3 March 2021: Staff Training Afternoon – students depart from 12.10 to 12.25
- Thursday 4 March & Friday 5 March: Students will have COVID-19 test 1
- Thursday 4 March 2021: Year 9 Parents' Evening – Virtual
- Monday 8 March 2021: All students return to JMHS
- Monday 8 March – Monday 15 March 2021: Students will have COVID-19 test 2 and test 3
- Thursday 11 March 2020: Year 11 Parents' Evening – Virtual
- Thursday 1 April 2020: Term ends at 3.15pm

... And finally

We are aware that some students and parents may be feeling anxious about returning to school. We would like to assure you that the safety measures we are putting in place are very thorough and that the testing regime we have had in place since January has worked smoothly and successfully. If you do have any questions, please could we ask that you email your child's Year Leader or contact us at admin@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk.

With my very best wishes



Andrew Evans
Headteacher