



28 January 2022

Dear students, parents, and carers,

It has been a successful start to 2022. I have visited hundreds of lessons this term and in these classes I have enjoyed hearing teachers explain complex concepts with clarity, enthusiasm and skill. The students have responded splendidly with strong concentration, producing high quality work, and active participation.

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1. Curriculum Update

Our teachers continue to dedicate much time to improving the quality of the curriculum. They are meeting once per week after school, for 3 hours on each Faculty Training Afternoon and on INSET days to work in subject teams designing the curriculum, planning assessment and improving teaching methodologies.

Subject Curriculum Summaries and Key Vocabulary for the Spring Term can be viewed on the school website or by clicking the link below. We hope that these summaries provide useful information so that parents can support students with their learning. We try to keep these summaries concise by only listing the key learning points and assessment methods for each subject.

<https://www.jmhs.hereford.sch.uk/curriculum/spring-2022-curriculum/>

2. JMHS Curriculum Leaders

In this newsletter I have asked two of our Curriculum Leaders to briefly outline their philosophy for developing their subject at JMHS and telling us a little bit about themselves.

Mrs Haynes - Faculty Leader for English

Having worked in schools in Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, and Monmouthshire, leading the English Faculty at JMHS is the most rewarding teaching job I have had, especially working with such an insightful, dedicated, and forward-thinking team. We are excited by our English curriculum which begins with the core knowledge of setting, character, and the importance of context. Subsequently, this knowledge builds in complexity with increasingly challenging texts; so, we move from looking at Professor Umbridge in 'Harry Potter' in Year 7, to

'Scout' in 'To Kill a Mockingbird' in Year 9, to Offred in 'A Handmaid's Tale' in Year 12. As advocates of the importance of reading, we have also chosen exciting new texts to teach; thus Year 8 study 'The Bone Sparrow' and Year 9 'The Grace Year'. We are so lucky to have close ties with the Ledbury Poetry Festival and look forward to poet visits each year; this gives not only the students time to brush up on their poetry writing skills, but also time for me to indulge in my hobby!

Dr Jennings - Faculty Leader for Science

Unlike many of my colleagues, I haven't always been a teacher. After studying Biochemistry and then Toxicology (the science of poisons) I worked for 9 years at the University of Birmingham first looking at how our liver regenerates in response to damage, and then working to develop a better understanding of how a virus called Hepatitis C infects liver cells. I love talking to people about all aspects of science and moved from research into teaching so I could do more of that rather than spending lots of time in the lab on my own! I've never looked back and now spend my time working with colleagues in the Science Faculty to design increasingly effective ways to encourage students to see science not just as 'something we have to do to get a GCSE' but as an essential part of understanding the world around us and our place in it. We think everyone should be able to think like a scientist and use these skills in whatever job or role they choose in life.

3. Challenge Days July 2022

During the final week of the Summer 2022 Term, we are planning two Challenge Activity days for each year group, which will give students an opportunity to participate in what we hope will be enriching and enjoyable educational experiences. Sports day will be on Friday 15 July and the last day of term is Thursday 21 July.

Tuesday 19 July 2022

Year 7: Team building skills in school - *led by Miss Dix, Assistant Faculty Leader for PE (free of charge)*

Year 8: Humanities trip to Worcester – *led by Mr Ward, Head of History (approximate cost £17)*

Year 9: Oakerwood outdoor activities trip - *led by Mrs Laidler, Assistant Head Teacher (approximate cost £40) or Maths problem solving day in school (free of charge)*

Year 10: Watersports Trip to Croft Farm – *led by Mr Kontarines, Head of PE (approximate cost £40), or, Enterprise day in school (free of charge) – led by Mrs Males, Head of Vocational studies*

Year 12: Aztec Watersports Adventures, Upton Warren (approximate cost £40) – *led by Mr Hawksworth, Head of Sixth Form*

Wednesday 20 July 2022

Year 7: Black Country Museum trip – *led by Mrs Haynes, Faculty Leader for English (approximate cost £26)*

Year 8: Performing arts day in school – *led by Mrs Kyle, Faculty Leader for Performing Arts (free of charge)*

Year 9: Science activities day in school – *led by Dr Jennings, Faculty Leader for Science (free of charge)*

Year 10: Careers activities – *led by Mr Elliott, Assistant Faculty Leader for English and Careers Lead (approximate cost tbc) or, DT/Art practical day in school – led by Mr Stevenson, Subject Leader for Art/Mrs Fox, Subject Leader for DT (free of charge)*

Year 12: CV writing/UCAS workshops – *led by Mr Hawksworth, Head of Sixth Form (free of charge)*

Our intention is that every student will be able to participate in both their year group challenge day trip and an in-school activity. Students who currently receive Free School Meals, or who have done so within the last six years, receive a 50% concession. If the cost of the trip might prevent your son or daughter participating, please let me or the teacher organising the activity know and we will see what we can do to help with the costs. If any students do not go on their year group trips they will join in with another year group working in school.

This half term teachers organising the out of school challenge day trips will write to you with further details of the trips, payment and a proforma to give your permission for your child to go. In order to secure a place on a challenge day trip, a non-refundable deposit of £10 needs to be paid by Wednesday 6 April and then full

payment before the May half term holiday. For any student where payment has not been made and no request for help with payment has been received, we will allocate the student to an in-school activity.

4. Sixth Form News by Mr Hawksworth, Head of Sixth Form

It has been a busy Autumn Term and start to the Spring Term with Year 13 students planning for life after their A levels. With the fantastic support of the Sixth Form tutor team our students have been able to produce first class personal statements to support their university applications. Furthermore because we start the preparation process in the Summer of Year 12 many of our students are able to send in their applications early in the Autumn Term of Year 13 resulting in over 90% of our students having already received offers. These include English at Birmingham, Physics at Exeter, Geography at Leeds, Nursing at Bristol and Criminology at Loughborough. A special congratulation must go to Tom Hill who, after a rigorous interview and application process, has received an offer from St Peter's College, Oxford to read Earth Sciences. Similarly, a huge congratulation to Sam Palmer who is holding an offer to study Natural Science from Homerton College, Cambridge. Both boys were particularly grateful for the support they received in preparation of their application and with practice interviews which they felt equipped them well for their Oxbridge grilling!

5. Medical Appointments: Notifying School

Where a medical appointment has to be booked during the school day, please could parents and carers ensure they inform us in advance by emailing studentabsence@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk or telephoning the student absence line (Option 1 on the main school number 01531 631012). This helps us ensure we can keep all students safe. If students arrive into school late and we have not been notified in advance of the appointment, we will need to contact parents and carers for confirmation of the appointment. Late marks will be issued where confirmation of the appointment can not be obtained.

Please also note that absences for medical appointments will only be authorised for up to half a day unless they involve a journey out of Herefordshire or Worcestershire.

6. Year 11 Mock Exams

The main Year 11 Spring Term Practice Exams are scheduled to take place between Monday 28 February and Wednesday 9 March. It is possible that a small number of exams will take place in the two days immediately following 9 March; these will be Modern Foreign Language exams. Unlike the practice exams taken by students in the Autumn Term, it is intended that the forthcoming exams will be taken in a large setting in line with normal summer exams. The exams are intended to prepare students for their final exams and will be the start of the period of revision leading up to those final exams. The students prepared for, and conducted themselves, very well during the Autumn Term exams and we expect them to do the same over the coming weeks. Mr Hammond will be speaking to all Year 11 students about the exams and will provide them with general guidance on revision. Curriculum subject leaders, working with Mr Peggs (Examinations Officer) will also ensure that students for whom Access Arrangements have been approved, will receive their entitlement.

7. Prefect appointments for Year 10

In December all Year 10 Tutors were invited to nominate students from their tutor group for the position of Prefect. All nominations are currently being assessed against the challenging prefect criteria which all students must meet; the criteria is as follows:

- Demonstrate being conscientious by striving to achieve their personal best; considerate by being thoughtful about others' feelings and learning; and cooperative by working together as a team to achieve success
- Excellent attendance – when able to attend and catches up with any work missed (medical absences are discounted for students with ongoing medical issues)

- Excellent punctuality and behaviour record (less than 5 behaviour points and no more than one late mark since the start of Year 10)
- No grades on Progress Check or Report less than Good (minimum of one 'Improvement Needed')
- Average grade on Progress Check or Report is Very Good
- Willingness to contribute to at least one prefect team
- Students must consistently adhere to uniform standards

Next week I will be inviting all nominated students that meet the criteria to submit an application to become a JMHS Prefect. In their application students are expected to demonstrate how they have been conscientious, considerate and Co-operative at JMHS and how they wish to contribute to building our school community so that we all support each other.

There will be a further opportunity for Year 10 students who did not meet the criteria this time to apply in March after their next progress check.

8. COVID Update

Following the government announcement last week students and staff are no longer required to wear face coverings whilst at school. Although may continue to do so if they prefer. I would like to thank students for wearing face covering so consistently over recent weeks. We are continuing with the COVID measures listed below:

- All students and staff taking lateral flow tests twice per week
- Ensuring all doors and windows are kept open at all times to maximise ventilation
- Asking all parents and carers to ensure that students with symptoms self-isolate and take a PCR test
- Asking students to sanitise their hands on entering or leaving a classroom
- No physical contact rule
- Increased cleaning of touch points around the school

As we are expecting cold weather to continue, please could students attend school wearing base layers and warm coats. We will continue to allow students to wear coats in lessons.

We are pleased to inform you that Vaccination UK will be at JMHS to administer Covid-19 vaccinations on Wednesday 9 and Thursday 10 February. They are offering the second dose of vaccine to those who have already received their first dose. In addition, if your child has not already been vaccinated, they are able to offer a first dose of the vaccine. An invitation letter from Vaccination UK was sent out via ParentPay on Tuesday 25 January and is also attached to this letter. We were most impressed that a very high proportion of students elected to have their first vaccine and believe that this contributed to lower case numbers than many schools have experienced. We would again encourage you to read the letter and then indicate whether or not you give your consent by clicking on the link to e-consent. **Consent is required for your child to receive the vaccine even if you completed the form for the November vaccinations held in school.** Please note that the cut-off for indicating consent is 2 days before the scheduled sessions (Monday 7 February).

9. Faculty Training Afternoon - Wednesday 2 February

The fourth of our seven Faculty Training Afternoons this academic year will take place on Wednesday 2 February. On this afternoon teachers work together in their faculty teams (eg English, languages, arts) to plan the curriculum and improve the consistency and quality of teaching. Students will finish the school day between 12.10pm and 12.20pm and be escorted to the bus park by their teachers at the times listed below:

Year 7 & Year 8: 12.10pm

Year 9 & Year 10: 12.15pm

Year 11 & Sixth Form 12.20pm

Students will then walk home or await their bus whilst being supervised by staff. Parents picking students up by car should arrive after the buses depart at or after 12.35pm.

10. Key dates this term

Thursday 27 January: Year 12/13 Parents' Evening

Wednesday 2 February: Faculty training afternoon, students depart 12.15pm approx.

Wednesday 9 & Thursday 10 February: Covid vaccinations in school by UK Vaccinations

Thursday 10 February: Year 8 Parents' Evening

Monday 14 February to Friday 18 February: Year 12 Assessment week

Monday 21 February – Friday 25 February: Half Term

Monday 28 February – Wednesday 9 March: Year 11 and Year 13 Mocks exams

Thursday 3 March: Year 10 Parents' Evening

Thursday 10 March: Faculty training afternoon, students depart 12.15pm approx.

Thursday 17 March: Year 9 Parents' Evening

Friday 8 April: Term ends at 3.15pm

... And finally

I would like to thank all students and parents for your support during a challenging time with COVID once again this term. Students by wearing their face masks when required, and through regular testing have helped protect others. Parent and carers have been prompt and diligent informing us whenever a case has occurred. We hope that the second set of vaccines for 12-15 years old will reduce the number of cases after half term and would encourage students to have their vaccines as this provide the best protection against catching COVID.

With my very best wishes



Andrew Evans
Headteacher