



22 October 2022

Dear students, parents, and carers,

As I write this newsletter, I have been enjoying the beautiful sunshine whilst supervising Year 7 students at lunchtime which is always a huge pleasure. Our most recent recruits have excellent manners, cooperate and play well together, and are thoughtful and kind. They have also made a strong start in lessons, listening well to teachers, presenting and organising their work well, and are enjoying their learning.

Other highlights this term have included:

- Much increased attendance at extra-curricular clubs with students enjoying activities varying from cookery, gardening, sports, art club, musical ensembles, dance to creative writing.
- The pumpkin cooking bonanza which saw students make delicious pumpkin seed bread rolls, spicy soup and cakes and sell these to raise money for charity.
- Open Evening where we had over 350 guests shown around JMHS led by our prefects and tour guides along with students contributing to exciting activities in subject areas.
- Our Sixth Form Open Evening where our current sixth formers gave excellent support to current Year 11 students who are choosing their subjects.
- A great start by students who have joined us from other schools, and in several cases from other countries including our excellent new students from Ukraine and Afghanistan.
- The excellent work of our Sixth Form Student Leadership Team who are leading a variety of projects designed to make JMHS the best place to be and the best place to learn.

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1. JMHS Curriculum

We have been pleased with how students have been learning this term. Students are focussing well in lessons, commencing tasks set immediately and producing well presented, well organised work in their books. This helps greatly with revision and learning. The early indications are that many students in Year 7 - 10 have done well in the end of half term tests improving upon marks achieved last year. Their marks and the average mark achieved by students in each subject will be published in progress checks and reports.

A summary of each subject curriculum which includes an overview of courses taught and details what students in each year group will be learning this academic year can be viewed through the curriculum page of our website or by clicking the link below.

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

2. Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance at JMHS for the first half term was 95.0%, below the level achieved in 2019 and the years before that but 1% higher than the last academic year and well above the national average for September which was 93.4%. High attendance at school is essential for students to make good progress so we are aiming to further improve attendance levels.

Please can I remind all parents and carers that we need to be contacted as early as possible on every day of absence. This can be done by phone, 01531 631012 Option 1, or email studentabsence@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk. We will only authorise absence for illness where sufficient detail and explanation is provided. Students can attend school feeling 'under the weather' and should be encouraged to do so. Medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside of school time wherever possible. Planned absences are only authorised in exceptional circumstances and requests should be made as early as possible.

Punctuality is also vital and it is rare for students to be late to school. There are a small number of students in Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 who are sometimes late to lessons without good reason and who have received an after-school detention for being late to three lessons without a valid reason. If these students do not improve their punctuality after half term, I will be writing to parents to ask them to come into school to meet with their Year Leader and me.

3. Language Trips 2022/23

As Covid-19 travel restrictions have eased our Languages Faculty are looking forward to a very busy year organising the following Language trips for our students.

French Trips

- Year 8 Normandy trip from Sunday 25 June to Thursday 29 June 2023, cost £550 (*Trip letters were sent to all parents/carers of Year 8 students last week*)
- Year 10 Normandy trip from Sunday 9 July to Thursday 13 July 2023, cost £550 (*For Year 10 students studying French; trip letters are being sent out today*)

German Trips

- Year 9 Mosel trip from Friday 7 July to Tuesday 11 July 2023, cost tbc (*For Year 9 students studying German; trip letters will be sent out as soon as all trip details have been finalised*)
- Year 10/Year 11 Cologne from Thursday 1 December to Sunday 4 December 2022, cost £320 (*For Year 10 and 11 students studying German; trip fully booked and parent information evening at 6pm on Wednesday 6 November*)
- Year 12/Year 13 Berlin from Thursday 30 March to Tuesday 4 April 2023, cost tbc (*For Year 12 and 13 students studying German and History; trip letters will be sent out as soon as all trip details have been finalised*)

4. Parental Survey

It is always useful for us to have feedback from students and parents as it helps us evaluate the quality of education and support we have provided so far this term, as well as identify areas for improvement. Please could I ask you to complete a survey by clicking the link below and completing the online survey by Friday 4 November – it should take approximately 10 minutes.

[Parental Survey Link](#)

The survey is anonymous but if you would like a specific response for question 9, we ask you to add your child's name and your email address. If you have two or more children at JMHS you may complete the survey for each child.

5. Election of Parent Governors

The Chair of Governors and I wrote to you on Monday 17 October to let you know that we currently have two vacancies for parent governors. The governing body has an extremely important role in the school. Becoming a governor is a rewarding and worthwhile experience. Effective governors do not need to have educational experience but do need to be committed to the school, willing to ask questions and able offer appropriate support and challenge. Governors have a strategic rather than an operational role and have access to a number of training and development opportunities to improve and enhance their knowledge and skills.

Full details and the nomination form can be viewed through the link below and is also on the Governor section of the website.

[Parent Governor Nomination Letter – October 2022](#)

6. School Uniform and Coats

As winter approaches we would like to take this opportunity to stress that although coats are of course acceptable to wear on top of school uniform; hoodies and non-uniform sweatshirts should not be worn to school. If the temperature drops in classrooms, teachers will have the authority to allow students to keep coats on in class. We would also like to remind any families that are struggling to buy school uniform or a suitable coat to let us know; we are always happy to help in these challenging times.

Even though we will of course aim to minimise energy costs, we are in a most fortunate position that our electricity and gas prices are frozen until 2027, so I do not anticipate increased costs when compared to last year.

7. Careers Fair

The John Masefield Careers Fair returns this year and will be taking place on Thursday 17 November from 17:00 until 19:00. We have a wide range of training providers, employers, further education and higher education institutions coming to speak with our students about their future prospects, as well as inspire them to think about careers they might never have considered before. This event is open to all students from Year 7 to Year 13, as well as parents and carers, with something for everyone.

Full details of employers, training and education providers attending will be given to students in their weekly Careers lessons after half term.

8. Key dates

Monday 24 October – Friday 28 October: October Half Term

Monday 31 October to Friday 11 November: Year 11 Mock Exams

Thursday 17 November: Careers Fair 17:00 to 19:00

Friday 18 November: JM6 Taster Day

Thursday 24 November: Year 12/13 Parents' Evening

Friday 2 December: Faculty training afternoon – students leave at 12:15pm approx.

Thursday 8 December: Year 11 Parents' Evening

Thursday 15 December: Christmas Concert

Friday 16 December: Last day of term, students depart at 12:15pm approx.

Tuesday 3 January: INSET

Wednesday 4 January: First day of term

Thursday 12 January: Year 8 Choices Evening

Monday 23 January: Progress Checks sent to parents and carers of Year 10 and 11 students

Thursday 26 January: Year 8 Parents' Evening

Monday 13 February: Progress Checks sent to parents and carers of Year 7, 8 and 9 students

Wednesday 15 February: Faculty training afternoon – students leave at 12:15pm approx.

Monday 20 February – Friday 24 February: Half Term

... And finally

Some of you will know I had to go into hospital approximately a fortnight ago. Many students have asked me how I am doing since I have returned and I would like to thank them for their kindness and support. I would also like to say that after working from home for a few days after my procedure, I have tremendously enjoyed being back in school, seeing some exciting lessons and enrichment activities and being with students and staff

With my very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Evans". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Andrew Evans
Headteacher