



6 October 2023

Dear students, parents, and carers,

Over the summer holiday our site team and contractors were working hard to improve our facilities including:

- Improving the sixth form art and photography studios
- Refurbishing the sixth form common room and study facilities
- Refurbishing four science labs and the science prep room
- Refurbishing languages and English classrooms
- Installation of solar panels

It is great to see these facilities being used so well with the sixth formers making a particularly impressive start in using the study facilities.

Other changes this school year have included moving tutor time and PSHRE to the start of the school day at 8:45am. This has enabled us to check every student is properly equipped for the day and that students are focussing particularly well on their tutor time reading and PSHRE lessons. I have also seen excellent focus from nearly all students in lessons throughout the school day

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1. The importance of high attendance by Mr Wyatt (Head of Y11 & ESLT Member)

The evidence is overwhelming that those students who have high school attendance are more likely to be content, resilient and succeed academically. Learning to cope with the challenges of life is an important characteristic that is developed through facing up to difficulties rather than avoiding them. Whilst we appreciate there are legitimate reasons for absence, we hope that these can be minimised and that every student can reap the benefit of high attendance. The pastoral team are able to support students and families with challenges that may hinder high attendance.

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 where ever possible. Planned absences are only authorised in exceptional circumstances and JMHS should be informed as soon as possible so that consideration of those circumstances can be made.

2. JMHS Curriculum by Mr Osbourn (Deputy Headteacher)

At John Masefield High School, our aim is to provide excellent and enjoyable learning for all of our students through a broad and balanced knowledge-based curriculum. We have employed a 'top-down' approach, thinking about what students need to know to access top universities, high-quality apprenticeships and good careers. We then work backwards to build up to this point, so that the most important facts and key knowledge are taught in Year 7 and are revisited many times gradually building in complexity. Learning is sequenced to enable new knowledge to be linked to previous learning and ensure that topics are taught in an order that helps students to know more, remember more and understand better. In addition, we prepare students for life in modern Britain through developing 'British Values', high quality Personal, Social and Health Education, Relationships and Sex Education (PSHRE), numerous cultural experiences and good quality Careers education.

We are currently in the process of moving to a three-year Key Stage 3 and two-year Key Stage 4, therefore students who joined Year 7 from September 2022, will be following the new three-year Key Stage 3 and will choose their GCSE options in Year 9, before beginning them in Year 10. Students who are currently in Years 9, 10 or 11 will continue to follow the old three-year Key Stage 4 pathway.

Our school website contains further information on how Curriculum Leaders have developed curricula for each individual subject and the key knowledge students in each year group will be learning this term. Please use the following link to the website <https://www.jmhs.hereford.sch.uk/curriculum/curriculum-overviews/>.

3. Half termly tests and progress checks by Mr Hammond (Assistant Headteacher)

Before the end of this half term, all students in Years 7 to 10 will be formally tested in each of their subjects. Formal testing takes place in lessons, normally in the penultimate week of every half term. Tests focus on the key knowledge that students have been taught. As students move through Key Stage 3 and into Key Stage 4, more questions within the tests require students to apply their knowledge. Tests include questions on content covered during the current half term, but also questions on topics covered earlier in the key stage (with the exception of Year 7 students, and Year 9 students in Option subjects which are new to them). Testing allows subject teachers to track each student's current learning, as well as their mastery of previous content. This helps teachers, subject leaders and other key staff to plan the curriculum more effectively. Year 11 students in some subjects are tested at the end of each half term. However, subject teachers often test students at different intervals throughout each term

Students can revise for tests using a range of resources. The notes that they make in lessons, alongside information from subject knowledge checklists, are an excellent starting point. Students receive a knowledge checklist at the start of each module or unit; the checklist summarises the key knowledge required. They are glued into exercise books and enable students to track their own learning. In addition, students are encouraged to use high-quality online resources such as BBC Bitesize, as well as subject-specific resources which teachers in many subjects guide students toward.

4. Sixth Form News by Mrs Laidler (Head of Sixth Form)

Students in Year 13 have returned with a positive attitude towards their studies and are currently working hard in preparation for their upcoming Grade Predictor Exams. It is an exciting time for them as they start to firm up their ideas for their future and begin to apply for university and apprenticeships. Our new Year 12 have settled quickly into life as sixth form students. They have made a great start in their subjects and are learning key study skills to help them develop good independent study habits. All students are enjoying the newly refurbished common room and value the silent study room.

Following on from our Open Evening, we had the pleasure of welcoming Year 11 for a Taster Day this week as they continue their decision making about their futures. They all had a very positive day and enjoyed tasting the various subjects on offer as well as using the sixth form facilities.

5. Faculty Training Afternoon – Tuesday 17 October

For the past seven years at JMHS, we have scheduled seven Faculty Training Afternoons during the year. On these afternoons, students leave at the start of lunch and teachers work together in their faculty teams (eg English, languages, arts) to plan the curriculum and improve the consistency and quality of teaching. Since we have started using this additional training and planning time for teachers, we have made significant progress in improving the quality of the curriculum, sequencing teaching to help students understand better and remember more, and to make teaching more effective.

The dates for this academic year are as follows:

- Tuesday 17 October 2023
- Wednesday 15 November 2023
- Thursday 14 December 2023
- Tuesday 27 February 2024
- Thursday 18 April 2024
- Wednesday 26 June 2024

On the first afternoon, Tuesday 17 October, students will finish the school day between 12.40pm and 12.45pm and be escorted to the bus park by their teachers at the times listed below:

Years 7, 8 & 9: 12.40pm; Years 10, 11 & Sixth Form 12.45pm

Students will then walk home or await their bus whilst being supervised by staff. Parents picking students up in cars should arrive after the buses depart at or after 1:05pm.

6. Enrichment activities for the Autumn Term by Miss Newnes (Enrichment Co-ordinator)

Our extensive, free of charge, Autumn Enrichment programme, has now launched and can be found on our website. Despite there being an academic focus to some of the sessions, our aim for enrichment is to give students an opportunity to enjoy their learning further and to continue to love spending time at our school. For many students, our Enrichment programme supports their emotional and social needs, increases their confidence, and gives them the opportunity to grow as individuals.

This half term, we have Fitness Friday's, Robotics Club and Rock Band Club, to name a few. All of which have been an exciting chance for students to participate in. Although our Enrichment programme is non-compulsory, we encourage students to choose at least one enrichment opportunity per term.

Unfortunately, at the start of this term our school sign up system, SchoolCloud, stopped working for us, as well as many schools over the country. Therefore, we have decided to now use MCAS as a way you can sign your son/daughter to a club or an activity after half term. More information about this, as well as a step by step guide to MCAS, will be sent to you at the start of next half term.

7. Communication and emailing the school

We value communication with our parents and send out regular newsletters containing key information, as well as sharing important information and announcements by email. Our website is regularly updated with information including term dates and school times, the curriculum, policies and procedures, and before and after school activities and provision.

We have put together a summary of key contact emails at JMHS to enable parents to communicate easily. This is included as an additional attachment to this newsletter and will be added to the 'Contact Us' page of our

website. If you have an urgent issue (for example a family emergency, urgent safeguarding or welfare issue) please ring reception on 01531 631012.

8. Key Dates

Key dates for the Autumn Term

- Mon 9 Oct - Fri 17 Nov: Year 11 Futures interviews
- Thur 12 Oct: Year 7 Information Evening - 18:00
- w/c Mon 16 Oct: Year 13 grade predictor exams
- Mon 16 Oct – Wed 18 Oct: Y13 study leave
- Mon 16 Oct: Year 11 House Sport p2, Year 9 House Sport p3
- Tue 17 Oct: Year 11 House Sport p1
- Tue 17 Oct: Faculty training afternoon – students depart 12:45/12:50pm
- Wed 18 Oct: Year 10 House Sport p5
- Thur 19 Oct: Year 13 Oxford Admission Tests
- Thur 19 Oct: Year 9 House Sport p4
- Fri 20 Oct: Year 7 House Sport p2 & P5, Year 8 House Sport p1 & p3, Year 10 House Sport p4
- w/c Mon 23 Oct: Year 12 Test week
- Mon 30 Oct – Fri 3 Nov: Half Term
- Mon 6 Nov – Mon 13 Nov: GCSE English and maths resit exams
- Mon 6 Nov – Wed 8 Nov: Y13 Geography field trip to Dorset
- Thur 9 Nov: Year 7 Parents' Evening
- Wed 15 Nov: Faculty training afternoon – students depart 12:45/12:50pm
- Thur 23 Nov: Y11 Parents' Evening
- Fri 24 Nov: Y7 – Y11 Flu vaccines – nasal spray
- Wed 29 Nov: House Drama competition 17:30 -19:30
- Thur 7 Dec: Year 12 & Year 13 Parents' Evening (in person)
- Thur 14 Dec: Faculty training afternoon – students depart 12:45/12:50pm
- Thur 21 Dec: Christmas Concert 7pm at St Michael & All Angels Church
- Fri 22 Dec: Term ends at 12:45pm

2023/2024 term dates

Spring Term: Tue 9 Jan 2024 – Fri 22 Mar 2024

Half Term: Mon 12 Feb 2024 – Fri 16 Feb 2024

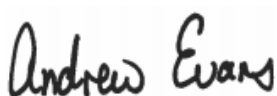
Summer Term: Mon 8 Apr 2024 – Fri 19 Jul 2024

Half Term: Mon 27 May 2024 – Fri 31 May 2024

... And finally

It has been great to see our Year 11 prefects and others making great contributions to school life through supporting Year 7s and key events such as our Open Evening last week. My thanks go to all who are contributing to making JMHS a better place to learn and a better place to be.

With my very best wishes



Andrew Evans
Headteacher