



22 March 2024

Dear students, parents, and carers,

This has been one of the shortest school terms in my forty years of teaching at only 10 weeks. However, there have been many exciting events. Our school production of Joseph was amazing with so many great songs beautifully performed, and with all of the performers and stage crew contributing to a great show. There have been more sports fixtures than in recent years with some excellent performances by our football, netball, basketball and hockey teams. Practical examinations for Year 11 and Year 13 have started well with strong achievement in drama and beautifully cooked, well presented meals in food and nutrition.

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1. Arrangements for the end of term and the start of the Summer Term

The Spring Term finishes on Friday 22 March at 3:20pm. Students will continue to follow the curriculum and have end of term tests on the final day of term so all need to attend school as usual.

Year 11 and Year 13 students have been invited by some of their subject teachers to attend revision seminars over the Easter holiday in school. We strongly encourage students to attend these seminars as we feel they will be extremely useful.

The Summer Term starts on Monday 8 April. Please note that there is not an INSET day at the start of the Summer Term and that all students are attending from Monday 8 April.

2. Attendance at school

High attendance is essential. Students with high attendance learn more effectively, achieve better qualifications and are likely to be more reliable employees with better paid and more rewarding jobs and careers.

Since the pandemic all schools have seen a significant decline in attendance. This is true at JMHS where before the pandemic the average absence rate was between 4% and 5% with an attendance rate averaging between 95% and 96%. Since the pandemic the average absence rate has approximately doubled and too many students have low attendance.

Any student with attendance below 90% is classed by the Department for Education as a 'persistent absentee'. A student with attendance below 90% will miss at least 20 school days in an academic year of 190 days and at least 100 lessons. After Easter, Year Leaders will write to all students who at the end of the Spring Term had attendance below 90% and give the parent an opportunity to discuss the attendance rate with them or a senior member of staff.

3. Feedback from Spring Progress Checks

We would like to thank parents for acknowledging receipt of the Spring Term Progress Checks. As these are accessed electronically it is essential for us to know that they have been received by parents. I have carefully read all the comments made in the Feedback MS Forms we asked parents to complete and have also passed copies to our Deputy Headteachers and Dr Holmes (our new headteacher from 1 September 2024). Parental feedback is informative and helps us improve the school. Where parents gave us individual specific questions, a teacher, Year Leader or a member of our SEND Team will contact you directly.

One of the comments which was made several times is that it can be difficult for students when their subject teacher changes during the school year. We can see that this is difficult and we have worked extremely hard to make sure that every class is taught by a suitably qualified subject specialist. This year, two teachers have moved to jobs in other schools during the year, and five have had periods of maternity leave. This means there have needed to be some changes.

4. Prefect Appointments

I have just reviewed prefect nominations from Year 10 form tutors for the role of prefect. It is clear that the 42 students who have met the prefect criteria and been invited to apply to be prefects are conscientious, considerate and co-operative on a daily basis and thoroughly deserve the opportunity.

I met with these students today to outline the role of a prefect and the prefect application process. The deadline for applications is Tuesday 9 April. We will invite parents and families to a presentation ceremony for successful applicants at the beginning of May.

5. Year 11 and GCSE Examinations

Year 11 GCSE food and drama students undertook their practical exam this month and all Year 11 students will have commenced their GCSE exams from close to the start of the Summer Term with French and German Speaking exams and Art/DT practical exams commencing before the main written exams.

Once written exams commence, we will amend the Year 11 timetable to maximise effective preparation for exams. For safety and safeguarding reasons, all Year 11 students are required to attend school as normal until at least the May half term holiday. Lessons will take place, with subject teachers focusing on revision for their subject. Once a subject's examinations have been completed, students will be supervised with revision for their other subjects. Options for allowing students to study from home after May half term when they do not have an exam will be provided to parents and carers in May.

We have been delighted that the majority of Year 11 students are regularly attending after-school revision classes in at least one subject and have been working hard and focussing well. I have particularly enjoyed teaching my 'maths masterclasses' every Friday after school where students have been tackling increasingly complex problems with skill and determination.

We have asked all Year 11 teachers to set a substantial amount of revision over the Easter holiday so that students can revise and prepare for their exams effectively. We recommend all students prepare a revision timetable for the Easter holidays specifying which subjects and topics they will be revising on each day.

6. Year 11 Futures Interviews by Mrs Laidler (Head of Sixth Form)

Year 11 students who are looking at A level and BTEC pathways have had individual interviews with one of the Sixth Form Leaders to look at their recent mock results and their plans for moving forward next year. It is fascinating to see the wide variety of careers being considered.

We at JM6 believe that our sixth form is an excellent next step for Year 11 students as we provide:

- High quality teaching by well qualified subject specialists (known to students)
- Supportive environment so that every individual can achieve
- Excellent pastoral support including tutors, mentoring sessions, support from external agencies, dedicated sixth form sessions with the school nurse etc.
- Thorough preparation and support for next steps including university, apprenticeships and employment
- Work experience to support future decisions and develop employability skills
- Enrichment opportunities and trips to develop wider skills
- Engaging talks from visitors such as GCHQ, Raytheon, Barclays bank, Cisco, politicians

Applications for JM6 are open and can be accessed online through our website. Students have been sent individual log in details to access the form. Please email ana.laidler@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk if you have any questions.

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

I would like to congratulate Year 13 on their hard work and dedication in preparing for their recent mock exams. They are now reflecting on their results and revision strategies during tutor time in order to build a strong individual revision program for the upcoming formal exams in May and June. With strong study skills and plenty of independent study I know they will do themselves proud.

Our students have been busy outside the classroom too. We have hosted two charity days this term, one to raise money for Cancer Research and the other for Comic Relief. We also held a bring-and-buy book sale to celebrate World Book Day with proceeds going to charity. Our football, netball and mixed hockey teams have enjoyed playing fixtures against other schools and twelve students have completed their First Aid certificates through our enrichment program. We also had a visiting speaker from the Green Party, Ellie Chowns, who was highly challenged about their environmental policies on water courses from one of our Year 12 students.

Careers and future pathways

Year 13 are continuing to attend interviews for apprenticeships, bursaries and universities. Some now have the difficult decision as to which ones to accept and which to decline.

At the end of February, Year 12 undertook 3 days of work experience mainly in the local area of Ledbury, Malvern and Hereford. The students were given responsibility for securing their placements which ranged from hospital departments, accountancy firms, software design and manufacturing, charities, business consultancy, sports therapy and coaching, schools and much more. All have produced follow up reports with many commenting that the placements provided a clear insight as to whether they would aim to pursue a similar path following university, college or apprenticeships on leaving school.

On Thursday 14 March, Year 12 attended the UCAS discovery exhibition at the University of Worcester. The students had the opportunity to speak with a whole range of universities and some apprenticeship providers in order to gain information about their pathways ahead. The students are now starting to consider whether university is an option they would like to pursue and which venues offer the best courses suited to their subject choices. Universities are starting to advertise their summer open days so look at booking these in your diaries.

We have also had a talk on apprenticeships from CISCO which was a joint presentation from one of our current Year 13, who is a student ambassador for the company, and a representative from the company. Year 11 attended for this session too as the company offer great work experience options.

CERN

Geneva is amongst other things, home to CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, and this is one of the most esteemed centres for scientific development and research in the world. Our group of 28 Sixth Form students were led around the centre by an expert where they were able to get up close and personal to some incredible scientific equipment and view a set of permanent exhibitions to learn about particles and the experiments conducted by the Large Hadron Collider. One student said 'we were like little excited electrons in that place. Seeing the control room was amazing!' Another said it had really helped bring the Particles Topic on their A Level course to life.

While in Geneva we also visited the Geneva Observatory and the History of Science Museum, where students enjoyed some hands-on practical activities. Another highlight was time spent near the lake, including a night walk with an incredible light show.

8. Key Dates

Key dates for the Summer Half Term 1

- Mon 8 April: Start of term for all students (Note: No INSET day)
- Tue 9 April: Year 11 Assembly – Managing Exam stress
- Tue 9 April: JMHS is hosting on behalf of Ledbury Town Council: Ledbury's Got Talent auditions – see attached poster for full details
- Thu 11 April – Fri 12 April: GCSE German Speaking exams
- Sat 13 April: Sixth Form Variety Night from 7pm
- Mon 15 April - Tue 16 April: GCSE Art exam (group A) & 3D Design exam (group A)
- Tue 16 April: Year 13 Assembly – Managing Exam stress
- Tue 16 April: Year 9 House Sport – Lesson 5
- Wed 17 April: GCSE Art exam (group B) & 3D Design exam (group B)
- Wed 17 April: Year 9 House Sport – Lesson 5
- Thur 18 April: Staff training afternoon – students depart 12:45 approx
- Fri 19 April: GCSE Art exam (group B) & 3D Design exam (group B)
- Fri 19 April: House Sport – Year 7 (Lesson 2 & 5), Year 8 (Lesson 1 & 3)
- Mon 22 April – Fri 26 April: Year 11 GCSE French speaking exams
- Wed 24 April – Fri 26 April: A level Photography exam
- Wed 24 April: Robotics Club trip to Aston University
- Thur 25 April: House Drama and Dance evening showcase
- Mon 29 April – Wed 1 May: A level Art exam
- Tue 30 April: GCSE PE moderation
- Tue 30 April: Year 8 HPV vaccinations
- Wed 1st May: A level German speaking exam
- Fri 3 May: Travel & Tourism exam
- Fri 3 May: Ledbury's Got Talent Evening
- Mon 6 May: Bank Holiday – School closed
- Wed 8 May: A level French speaking exam
- Thu 9 May: Year 13 BTEC Business & Year 11 GCSE Drama exams
- Thu 9 May: Year 5 Evening
- Fri 10 May: Year 13 BTEC Business & Year 11 GCSE Biology/Combined Science exam
- Fri 10th May: Year 11 GCSE German exam
- Week commencing Mon 13 May: Year 11 and Year 13 Formal Summer Exam period commences

- Wed 15 May: Year 8 Normandy trip – Information Evening at 18:00
- Wed 15 May: Year 12 Reports released
- Fri 24 May: Last day of half term

2023/24 Term Dates

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

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

2024/2025 Term Dates

Autumn Term: Wed 4 Sept 2024 – Fri 20 Dec 2024

Half Term: Mon 28 Oct 2024 - Fri 1 Nov 2024

Spring Term: Tue 7 Jan 2025 – Fri 11 Apr 2025

Half Term: Mon 17 Feb 2024 – Fri 21 Feb 2024

Summer Term: Mon 28 Apr 2025 – Fri 18 July 2025

And finally

I would like to wish all members of the school a very happy Easter holiday and particularly Mrs Kyle who leaves us to take up a new post. Mrs Kyle has been Faculty Leader for Performing Arts and an excellent teacher at JMHS for the past 15 years. She has directed and produced so many wonderful school productions and inspired hundreds of JMHS students to love the arts and many to pursue careers in the theatre and performing arts professions. We would all like to wish Mrs Kyle all the very best for the future.

With my very best wishes



Andrew Evans
Headteacher