



17<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Dear parents and carers,

### **Welcome back**

It was wonderful to see our students again after the holidays. They seemed well-rested and energetic, which was just as well given how cold it was last week. I hope they've enjoyed being back: they've certainly settled back into school routines quickly. A senior leader from a local school happened to be visiting us on the first day back and made a point of telling me how impressed they were with the calm start.

It seems a long time ago now, but I did want to tell you how much I enjoyed taking every year group to St Michael and All Angels Church for our Christmas concert on the last day of term. They conducted themselves immaculately on the way to and from the concert and several local residents have written to me to say how much they enjoyed seeing the students. This came hot on the heels of the Newent Over 60s Club writing to me to ask me to thank the many children on the Daffodil Line Bus who gave up their seats to Club members. That, together with the celebration assemblies, left me feeling very proud of our students at the end of last term.

### **School Transport: price rises**

We learned at the start of term that some of the bus companies raised their prices over the holiday. These companies are entirely independent of the school and we have no influence over the decisions they make about pricing, or any prior knowledge of these decisions.

We have asked the companies if, in the future, they can tell us if they are planning fare changes so that we can give you notice of this. We have also asked them if they would like us to pass a message onto you regarding the recent fare increases but have not yet heard back.

I understand that the price change has been difficult for some of our families. I thought it would be helpful to remind you all that children who are eligible for free school meals can receive additional support with their transport costs from the Council: please check if you think you may be eligible and please let us know if we can help you to do so, or help with the application process.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/public-transport-1/school-college-transport>

### **Site Safety: Travelling to and from school**

In spite of the increased prices, we are seeing more and more families using school transport. This is good news, because we are committed to supporting sustainability and reducing carbon emissions to combat climate change and therefore, we encourage as many students as possible to walk or cycle to school or to use school transport and catch the bus.

This means that, as of this term, we have one additional coach and two additional minibuses on the school site, and this has put even more pressure on our site at the beginning and end of the day. Can I please therefore remind you of the arrangements for pick-up and drop off with cars. We are unable to allow cars to enter or exit our carpark between 8.25am and 8.45am in the morning, or between 3.00pm and 3.30pm in the afternoon. If you are arriving early to park and wait for a drop off or pick up please make sure you avoid using the marked bus bays. This is because of the large number of buses coming onto and leaving the school site as well as more than 500 students walking into school and is, ultimately, to help us make sure that the children walking in and out of school are as safe as possible. I appreciate your support with this.

Those of you who drive onto site early for pick-up at the end of the day will have noticed us directing you to spaces further into the school site, and this is to make sure there is enough room in the turning circle for coaches to safely turn around. Many thanks for your support with this.

### **Staff Training Afternoon - Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January**

A reminder that Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January is a staff training afternoon and school will finish at 12:40pm for Years 7-9 and 12:45pm for Years 10-13. Buses will be running at that time for those students who use school transport. The 675 (Colwall/Malvern) and 676 (Wellington Heath) buses will run as one service picking up from school at 12:45pm. For students who take the Daffodil Line, their service will pick up at the Market House in Ledbury at 1:10pm.

If you are picking up your child by car, please could you delay entering the car park until 1:05pm for the safety of students leaving the site on foot.

### **Year 11 Basketball team – County Champions**

Congratulations to our Year 11 basketball team on being crowned County Champions for the second year in a row. After winning their group without losing a game and beating Wigmore High School in the semi-final, they played Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School in the final at Hereford Sixth Form College earlier this week.

In a tightly contested game which saw both teams take the lead and the scored tied at 29-29 going into the final quarter, it was JMHS who came out victorious, winning 40-36. A huge congratulations to the students involved who represented the school brilliantly and now get to represent Herefordshire in the regional phase of the competition. The winning team included: Charlie W, Freddie F-M, James S, Fin J, Daejuan T, Ayeyi A, Ben W, Lewis P and Harley L.

Yours sincerely,



**John Holmes**  
**Headteacher**