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27 June 2025

Dear parents and carers,

It always seems as if the last few weeks of the school year are the busiest and this year is proving no different. We have three international trips going out, along with four sets of geography fieldwork trips, university visits, and taking over 150 Year 7s to the Three Counties Show. I have to confess this last one was my favourite, if only because I could see how excited the Year 7s were upon their return to school and what a good time they'd had. The staff were at least as delighted with the experience, particularly the close encounters with various animals.

Back at school we hosted the Ledbury Schools Concert, enjoyed an excellent open mic night, and we are now preparing for our sports day, summer concert and arts exhibition on the last week of term. In between this, we'll be hosting Year 5 students, and next year's Year 7 cohort on their transition day. I know our children will lead the way in making them feel incredibly welcome, as they did for me on my first visits about a year ago.

With so much going on, I will write to you a few more times before the end of the year to make sure you have all of the 2025/2026 information in manageable doses!

Travelling to and from school

Thank you to those of you who have helped us keep our children as safe as possible this year by making efforts to avoid picking up and dropping off on site between 8.25am and 8.40am, and 3.00pm and 3.30pm. With an increase in the number of coaches and minibuses across the year, and hundreds of children walking along narrow pavements, your support has been invaluable.

This has meant some of you making use of the roads around school, and I therefore wanted to pass on a request from our neighbours on Mabel's Furlong, Bray Avenue and Warren Drive, that you please avoid blocking access to their drives and leaving your engines running whilst outside their house. Thank you for your understanding and support: I know space is tight on the roads around the school. I also know that you will want to join me in being as considerate of our neighbours as possible.

In the meantime, Mrs French, School Business Manager, and I have recently met with some local councillors and we are working with them to try to improve access to our site for pedestrians and those on bikes, which we hope will help reduce the need for cars coming to and from school in the fullness of time.

Curriculum changes for next year

Year 8 and Year 9 drama

I wanted to let you know about a curriculum change affecting students currently in Years 7 and 8. At the moment, those children would have gone on to study drama for one hour per fortnight next year – when they were in Years 8 and 9 respectively – for a total of 20 hours of lessons across the year. Next year, there will be no drama on their timetable, and students will instead have an extra hour of English a fortnight. This will give students a chance to read and discuss their English texts more deeply and to spend more time on developing their spoken language skills.

I am pleased to say that, for those children who want to keep working on drama, the performing arts department will be putting on a Key Stage 3 performance, with auditions in the autumn. Children who want to be involved in this will still get 20 hours of time working on drama, leading to a performance in our theatre. We will continue to offer drama at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 through the options process as we do now, and these Key Stage 3 productions will be excellent preparation for students interested in those subjects. We will also continue to have one drama lesson per week in Year 7.

You will have seen from my previous newsletters how passionate I am about the performing arts: these are an important part of our school culture. However, one hour a fortnight of drama made it difficult for students to gather momentum and build towards a performance. I am confident that the Key Stage 3 performance will give a better drama experience and education to students who participate, whilst the additional time in English will prove invaluable to all students.

Year 7 – 9 textiles

The Faculty of Art and Design is delighted to let you know that from September 2025 all students in Key Stage 3 will study textiles as part of the Design Technology carousel along with Resistant Materials and Food Technology. We will then be introducing this higher up the school in subsequent years.

A key message across all projects will be the importance of sustainability and the impact of fast fashion and products on our environment. In order to set up our textiles room we would like to upcycle and recycle as many textiles as possible, if you have any fabric scraps, buttons, ribbons, threads or anything else you feel would enable us to set up our recycling aspect of our projects we would be very grateful to receive these.

Please drop any donations at Reception. If you are unsure what you have would be suitable, please email Mrs Woolley, Faculty Leader for Art & Design, at bethan.woolley@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk.

GCSE Photography and BTEC Sport

Next year will see the introduction - or re-introduction - of new courses at Key Stage 4 and I am looking forward to seeing our current Year 9 students start their GCSE Photography and BTEC Sport courses. We will be working thoughtfully with students currently in Year 8 and in Year 10 to make sure we have a curriculum offer that meets their needs, and I am looking forward to seeing the outcomes of this process.

Uniform changes for next year

In response to student voice and feedback regarding uniform, the school has revised its uniform policy. The updated policy promotes greater flexibility, choice, and affordability, while maintaining high standards. Students may now wear formal charcoal grey or black trousers or shorts, instead of being limited to specific style codes. These must be smart in appearance and not made from denim or casual materials—skinny-fit trousers and jeans are not permitted. To further support clarity and consistency, we have also streamlined our overall uniform guidelines; please see the full updated [JMHS School Uniform List](#). Please also note that the contact details for our uniform suppliers have been updated.

We kindly remind families that any new piercings should be done at the start of the summer holidays, to allow sufficient healing time before the new term. All piercings must be removable for PE lessons, and nose piercings must be changed to clear plastic studs upon return in September.

If you are uncertain about any aspect of the uniform, please contact the school before making a purchase.

Courses for parents available through Herefordshire Council

Herefordshire Council will be putting on a positive parenting program of courses in September and October. There is a different focus for each of the five courses, some are in person and some are virtual and all are free to take part in. The linked poster gives further details and if you are interested email parentinggroups@herefordshire.gov.uk.

Positive Parenting Program

Art & Design exhibition and Summer concert

The end of the academic year is always heralded by our annual [Art & Design Exhibition](#) and [Summer concert](#) which will take place on the evening of Thursday 17 July 2025. The Art & Design exhibition showcases the creative talents and technical skills of our talented and dedicated students with the galleries in the Art and DT blocks open from 5:00pm to 6:30pm. We are delighted that our food technology students will not be missing out as they will be preparing delightful canapes that will be served throughout the exhibition.

From 7pm, the [Performing Arts' Summer concert](#) will begin, celebrating the wonderful performance and musical talents of our students across the school. We have been so lucky in recent years that the weather has allowed us to hold the concert in the open air; we're really hopeful this will be the case again this year. Tickets are now available and can be booked at <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/masefieldarts>.

Yours sincerely,



John Holmes
Headteacher