

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

The Green Road, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 1EP

Tel: 01335 343 685 Email: enquiries@qegs.email Twitter: @qegs_ashbourne

Web: www.queenelizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr S Garrity Chair of Governors: Mr C Smith



25th September 2020

Dear Parents, Carers, Students and Staff

Weekly Bulletin #3

The third week of the school term completed and our first experience of responding to positive Covid test cases.

Thankfully, our students and their families who have had returned positive tests are safe and well and only have mild symptoms. We wish them well in their recovery. These students plus any others deemed to be close contacts, are learning remotely from home and in regular contact with their teachers. These are unusual times. However, our remote learning provision is now well developed and whilst we would much prefer to have the students onsite, we know this is the next best and safest option.

Thank you for your positive messages of support. We also know it is difficult for you as parents and in your own employment capacity to react and respond to these changing circumstances. We are doing our best to keep students and staff safe, but we also want to support you as a parent too. Our regular communications are aimed at keeping you well informed, so you can plan ahead and so together, we can support your child's education and wellbeing.

Our weeks and months of pre-planning, plus our collective staff team effort has enabled us to implement our well-rehearsed drills when we have had positive test outcomes within our school community. Our risk assessments and processes have been in place to minimise risks. This has ensured we have been able to keep the school open for the vast majority, whilst also adopting a proportionate and cautious approach to protect others. Of course, drills and pre-planning are never the same as the real thing and we have refined and improved some aspects such as making a designated telephone number (07890319042) available for out of hours contact for any positive tests. This has enabled easier and quicker contact for parents and ensured that the school can plan and respond accordingly.

Updates:

Face-coverings: Some students are forgetting their face-coverings and this is raising concerns with other members of our school community. Face-coverings should be worn in all communal areas such as canteen, corridors and on all public transport. Please ensure that your child has a face-covering before they set off for school.

Uniform: A reminder about school uniform and in particular the current trend for sweatshirts, designer jumpers and hoodies. Only 3 types of jumper/hoodie are allowed during the school day and/or when representing the school:

- A black V-neck school jumper
- A QEGS PE hoodie (now retro or a collector item - not on sale any more!)
- New QEGS PE mid-layer jacket

No other jumper or mid-layer is allowed unless in sixth form (see website for sixth form dress code details). This includes coming up the drive and back down at the end of the day, at lunch and for PE lessons. Full uniform details can be found here:

<https://www.queenelizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk/key-information/school-uniform/>

Year 11 lunchtime: We have listened to feedback from Year 11 students and their new lunchtime will be 12.00pm to 12.25pm from Monday 28th September.

Free School Meals whilst self-isolating: We will be purchasing weekly food hampers which will be available for those students' eligible for free school meals who are self-isolating - further detail is available from Mr Bembridge bembridge@qegs.email

Free School Meals Application: Attached to this bulletin is a letter, which details the eligibility and application for Free School Meals. If you are eligible, this results in so much more than just the meals themselves. Please read the letter and contact Mr Bembridge if you have any questions or would like support in completing the application form.

Free School Meal ICT Support: We also have some IT resources available for families eligible for free school meals. Laptops and 4G data dongles. Please contact Mr Bembridge for further details.

Sixth Form Bursary: The free school meals scheme only runs for Years 7-11. However, financial support is available for students who are in Years 12 and 13. Please contact Mrs Allen allen@qegs.email for further information. If eligible, the bursary can help students to purchase equipment, books, uniform and other costs associated with their courses.

Open Evening: Despite the challenges we currently face, we will still be having our annual Open Evening. Slightly different of course. It will be a virtual event on **Tuesday 6th October 2020**. Virtual school tour, subject introductions, live Q and A at 5pm and 6pm and much more. More information is available via www.qegs.link/open

New responsibilities and staffing changes: Hannah Caton is now the full time Progress Leader for Year 8. Miss Ewart has moved on from QEGS and we wish her well in her new challenge. Luke Walker has been appointed as Deputy Head of Sixth Form, congratulations to Mr Walker!

Thank you: Thank you to Mick Gallimore from the Rotary Club who has met with Mr Bawden to offer a range of support to the students at the school.

Congratulations: Mrs Atkinson has given birth to a baby girl. Ms Bains and Mr Bowbanks are to be married over the weekend. Congratulations to all!

Community messages of support: We have received so many messages of support this week. They have really kept us going and sometimes just been the boost that we have needed when we have been mentally and physically drained. Thank you!

Tutor Calls: Last week, tutors of Years 10 and 12 students conducted phone calls to parents. This was invaluable in terms of supporting students at school and helping to improve current school practices. Parents of students in Years 7 and 8 will receive an invitation letter next week to book a phone call with their child's form tutor in the week beginning 5th October.

Remote Learning: We have been working on improvements to the provision of remote learning for students who are self-isolating and will be making changes from Monday, using Microsoft Teams for most subjects and year groups. GO 4 Schools will now only be used for setting regular homework. Details are on a dedicated area of our website: www.qegs.link/rl, which can also be found under the COVID-19 menu, including expectations of provision and where to go for resources and help. Many students have already been using Teams over the last few months, but from Monday, there will be additional support and training in form-time and lessons, and students will need to check Teams regularly via the website or app. The guides for students (step-by-step guide and video) that we are using in school are included on the new remote learning section of the school website for you to use at home.

At the time of writing, we are unable to confirm the arrangements for Year 10, however, we will be able to do so over the weekend.

Wellbeing support for students' home learning:

- It may be tempting to stay in bed and have a lie in but try to stick to your morning routine, be dressed and ready for home learning to begin at 9am as you would if you were in school.
- Stick to your timetable - this will help with your organisation and give you structure throughout the day.
- If you are stuck on something then ask for help! We are still here to support you albeit virtually. Email your teacher and they will guide you through.
- Make sure you have a break - eat and drink to help you stay focused...just don't trash the kitchen!
- Sunlight is proven to help improve your mood - if you need a boost go for a walk around your garden or try sitting next to a window to do your work.
- Continuing to communicate with your friends is really important! Make time to catch up with friends at the end of the day...try meeting virtually to chat about school work if you are stuck but try not to have your mobile phone next to you all day - this will be a constant distraction for you.

Your mental health and wellbeing is important to us in and outside of school. If you need help then talk to us and we will be able to support you. Remember ...'At QEGS we've got this'.

Clarification on advice and guidance on self-isolation and remote learning:

- If you have a positive test confirmed within your household – household must self-isolate.
- If your child has been identified as a close contact but your child is not displaying symptoms – child must self-isolate, other household members can go about their business as normal.
- If remote learning (as in the case of Year 10) yet not advice has been given on self-isolation due to further information required – during the hours of the school day students must remain at home and complete their remote learning.
- Out of school hours, all students should be respectful of the local community and not congregate in groups, they should be cautious and considerate of the risks and follow government advice.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-parents-and-guardians-when-you-should-book-a-coronavirus-test-for-your-child/letter-to-parents-and-guardians-when-you-should-book-a-coronavirus-test-for-your-child>



[Letter to parents and guardians: when you should book a coronavirus test for your child - GOV.UK](#)

Date: 23 September 2020. Dear parents and guardians, This is an important letter to share some information on how we can work together to make sure we can continue to give children and young ...

www.gov.uk

Please stay safe and remember, hands, face and space.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Garrity'.

Mr S Garrity
Headteacher

