

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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18th December 2020

QEGS Information Update on Start of Term and Mass Testing

Dear Students, Parents, Carers and Staff,

I am sure you will be aware that in the last 24 hrs, the government have announced some decisions and expectations for schools to implement from January 4th 2021. In finishing the term only yesterday and with students and staff now taking their well earned break. This news has come as a surprise and we will do our best to help you plan ahead, starting 2021 as we ended 2020, with safe and secure systems and procedures in place.

We will follow the government guidance on how to phase the start of term, which is intended to ensure effective education can continue but also reduce the spread of the virus as students and staff return after Christmas. This means the following:

Phased return to term

- Students in Years 11 and 13 will return to school on Monday 4th January as planned.
- Students in Years 7,8,9,10 and 12 will learn remotely from home between Jan 4th - 8th and return to onsite learning at school from Monday 11th January.
- External vocational exams scheduled for WC 4th January will go ahead as planned. This mainly involves Yr13 students but also some Yr12 students on Wednesday 6th January. Yr12 BTEC Business Studies students will be able to attend school on this day and for some prior revision (details TBC).
- Internal Yr12 and 13 Mock exams will take place as per the schedule.
- Onsite learning provision will also be available from 4th-8th January for our most vulnerable students and children of Key Workers. We will be sending out a survey to gauge uptake for this provision on Jan 1st/2nd.

Mass testing programme

We are positive about the potential for the mass testing of students and staff in schools, as a way of reducing the spread of the virus and enabling fewer students and staff to have to self-isolate.

Setting up this programme in schools is an incredibly complex operation. We have been sent some information about how it should work already, but more detailed guidance is expected to be produced by the government over the Christmas holiday period.

We will not, therefore, be in position to have this programme up and running as soon as the spring term starts. At the start of term, we will review what the expectations are, what support is available from the government or other agencies, and what we can realistically deliver.

To help plan ahead, we are seeking support from any volunteers in our community who may be able to help with aiding our onsite testing once we get up and running. If you are interested and able to volunteer your time we would love to hear from you. Online video training will be provided for all involved and no specialist skills/experience are required. Please email enquiries@qegs.email with your name and contact details and we will be in touch.

We will let you know more about our plans as soon as we can in January. In the meantime, from the start of next term, we will continue to implement the safety measures we have been using in the autumn term.

Please accept our apologies for having to send this letter after term has already ended. We are having to respond to a vast quantity of extremely last minute and complex government guidance. You may have questions, indeed we have some too! I hope that I will be able to confirm more details at the start of term.

In the meantime, thank you for your support and patience during these ever-changing times. Have a super Christmas and take care of yourselves and others.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Garrity', written in a cursive style.

Mr S Garrity
Headteacher