

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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



8th January 2021

Dear Parents, Carers, Students and Staff

Weekly Bulletin #15

What a week! A bumper bulletin edition I am afraid.

Thank you for responding to changes and updates just as quickly as we are having to. Whilst we in the secondary sector at least had the Christmas break to prepare for a staggered start to the term, our Primary colleagues returned and then were closed 24hrs later. All schools then switched to remote learning, exams were cancelled and testing regimes established for those staff and students on the school site. We have faced multiple challenges in less than a week. However, we remain positive and go forward with a 'can do' approach to it all. The news of another national lockdown will be a huge challenge for all families and all employment sectors and we wish you all the very best of luck for getting through this.

Remote Learning Update

As we have all experienced first-hand this week, the education landscape is ever changing and we would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for the part you have played in our remote learning this week.

For the week commencing 4th January 2021, schools were advised to 'prioritise live and interactive' learning for Years 11 and 13. We rose to this challenge and lots of staff were also able to provide live and interactive learning to Years 7-10 and 12 despite also being involved in setting up a testing centre, planning a remote learning scheme with little notice and managing their own personal situations. As we write this, we have just completed further staff training about some fantastic resources on TEAMS and how to enhance live lessons even further - QEGS staff are so committed to doing this well and a special thank you goes to them for trying to learn, adapt and practise very swiftly!

On the topic of thank you messages, we have received so much supportive feedback so a 'thank you' to parents and carers who have sent in messages of support. We can't tell you how much it motivates and encourages us to keep going and keep improving. Positive feedback and constructive feedback is always welcome. You are encouraged to contact your child's class teachers or form tutors if you need support or to raise an issue - we will always do our best to help. Alternatively, you can contact enquiries@queenelizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk and it will be forwarded to the relevant person. As you know with your own children and yourselves more than likely, kind words of encouragement do go a long way.

We are always looking to improve our practise and so as of Monday 11th January 2021, in line with recently published guidance from the DfE, we will be adopting the following approach:

How Remote Learning Will Look:

Teachers will conduct live and/or interactive lessons for every student in all year groups for every lesson. As in an ordinary classroom situation, the way a lesson is delivered will suit the content/objectives of the lesson. Teachers will be 'present' on TEAMS for every lesson and may conduct a totally live lesson; they may set a pre-recorded LOOM and then be available to answer questions during the lesson; or they may ask students to do an independent activity but again be present on TEAMS to support students. There will be times where a teacher will turn their video off and 'mute' themselves whilst students complete their learning.

Timings of the Day:

We appreciate that our on-site timings of the day may not suit remote learning, so we have adapted them to ensure that the wellbeing of staff and students is our highest priority. At the end of each lesson there will be short interval to move to the next virtual lesson. We would like to stress at each interval that STAND and STRECTH takes place very much like in school. Hydrate with a drink and take a short comfort break. Students on site in Critical Worker Groups will follow the same timings.

- 08.55- 09.05 - Form Time on TEAMS for Years 7-11 for 10 minutes for tutors to welcome tutees and register them for the day. Years 12 and 13 will have form time twice a week and form tutors will contact tutees with more details of times and days
- 09.05-09.55 - Lesson 1 on TEAMS
- 10.05-10.55 - Lesson 2 on TEAMS
- 10.55-11.15 - Morning Break
- 11.15-12.05 - Lesson 3 on TEAMS
- 12.15-13.05 - Lesson 4 on TEAMS
- 13.05-13.40 - Lunch Break
- 13.40-14.30 - Lesson 5 on TEAMS
- 14.30-16.00 - Students can take part in our Co-Curricular Activities outlined below or complete Literacy and Numeracy tasks in KS3 or regular homework in KS4 and KS5 outlined below. Staff will make Safe and Well Calls during this time. Most students will receive a call once a fortnight. In some circumstances students will receive a weekly call.

Attendance During Remote Learning:

Attendance to lessons and form time will be monitored by staff and parents will be contacted to offer support. We understand many of you, like us, are balancing our own personal arrangements but it is important students access all lessons. Please contact your child's form tutor if you need to discuss this further.

Co-Curricular Offer:

We are delighted that many of our staff have volunteered to run virtual Co-Curricular clubs whilst we are not in school. These range from Cooking to Dance to Film Club to a club for animal lovers. We will send out more information early next week alongside the PE Department's Virtual Sports Clubs too.

Additional Homework:

As you may agree even from this recent week, remote learning can feel more exhausting than a 'normal' day in school due to prolonged screen time and often working alone. We want to balance student wellbeing with providing high quality provision. Additional homework will take the following format:

- Years 7-9 - Optional Numeracy and Literacy tasks will be set weekly in a separate TEAM. Students can challenge themselves by accessing these. These will be self-assessed and largely independent pieces.
- Years 10-13 - Regular homework will be set by each subject to support remote learning logged on Go 4 Schools.

Remote Learning Expectations for:

Staff:

- Plan and deliver high quality lessons in line with timetable
- Be present and accessible for the lesson
- Will register students
- Will differentiate learning and resources
- Will provide feedback during lesson
- Will provide extended learning (homework/independent study) once a week in KS4 and KS5
- Will follow up concerns and praise via telephone
- Will use breaks to stretch and stand, eat and hydrate

Students:

- Will attend and be present in line with timetable
- Will engage with lesson and learning
- Will ask teacher for clarification/support as required
- Will respond to feedback during lesson, and next steps
- Will complete extended learning (homework/independent study) as required
- Will use breaks to stretch and stand, eat and hydrate

Safe and Well Checks:

You will have received a call from your child's form tutor this week to have a Safe and Well chat and to discuss any remote learning issues and how we can offer support. As of next week, most students will receive a call fortnightly. In some circumstances students will receive a weekly call.

Year 9 Parents Evening

Gurj Bains (Careers Coordinator) is available to book appointments with during the Year 9 parents evening should any students and parents wish to discuss their future career paths to assist them with their option choices.

Year 12 and 13 Mock exams

These are on hold until we know more from the DfE and Ofqual on the expectations for teacher assessment. Regular assessment will continue to be used in remote lessons and from homework.

Sixth Form Applications

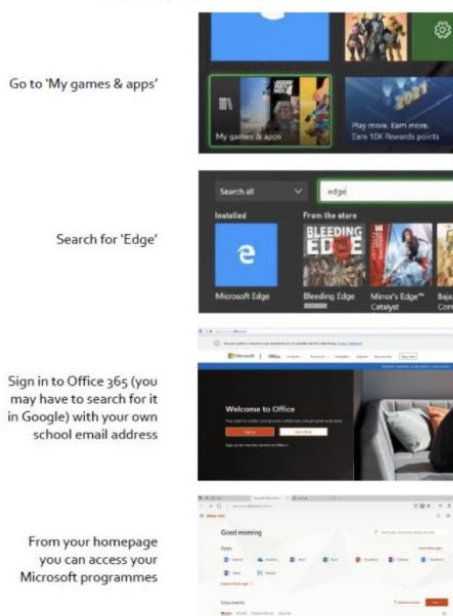
The Sixth Form application form is still live on the school intranet for Year 11 to apply. They can contact Louise Allen or Luke Walker should they have any queries and we will be holding some virtual information and support sessions for applying to Sixth Form from next week onwards. More information on this will be shared with Year 11 via email over the next few days. The final deadline to apply is Friday 12th February.

IT Equipment

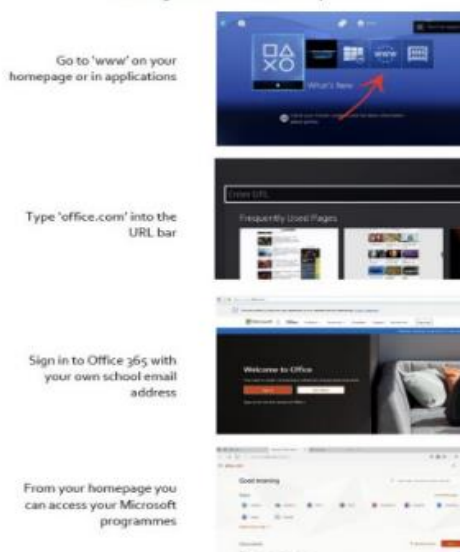
We had a very generous donation of six second-hand laptops this week, thank you. These will be set up ready to distribute to our students, along with the devices we have received from the DfE so far. If you have an old laptop/computer or android phone at home that you would like to donate we can always make good use of these. Please email enquiries@qegs.email and we will be in touch.

We know that there is probably a high demand for any devices you may have at home, and have been made aware that you can access Microsoft Teams via an Xbox or PlayStation.

Accessing Microsoft Teams on Xbox



Accessing Microsoft Teams on PlayStation



Mobile data 'top-up'

We have also had a communication from the Department for Education to say that we are able to apply for free mobile data increases for families who don't have broadband at home and who may be struggling to afford extra data. If you would like us to apply for this for you, please email enquiries@qegs.email and use 'mobile data' in the email title.

Lots to digest. Please read through the new information on Remote Learning with your child and make them aware of the 'Student Expectations'. We expect for some this may be a shock to their morning wake-up!

Finally, apologies to students and parents who have been using our onsite provision this week and were informed we would close today due to the weather forecast of 'heavy snow'. It was a decision taken early and in advance to remove any pressure or panic, ensuring students would not be trapped or delayed in an unsafe school site. We will continue to act in a safe and managed way and sometimes this may be over-cautious. Apologies for raising the hopes of building snowmen too!

Take care and stay safe.

Yours faithfully



Mr S Garrity
Headteacher