

Queen Elizabeth High School



Good afternoon parents/carers,

Happy New Year! I would like to commence by wishing you all a healthy and happy 2021. As yesterday's events demonstrated, this will, at least for the first half of this year, continue to be a period of time where we will find ourselves reacting to events, and changes in circumstances, often at short notice. Here at QEH we will continue to ensure that you are provided with information as it is made available to us and that you are kept up to date with these changes as they happen.

In the interim, as always, I am sure we will meet any forthcoming changes and challenges as a strong school community. I am confident, that when Covid does eventually disappear, what will remain is an exceptionally strong QEH at the very heart of our community.

Written Statement: Return to school and college arrangements

The following statement was made by Kirsty Williams, Minister for Education in Wales yesterday, 4th January 2021.

"The situation in Wales and across the UK remains very serious. Today, the four UK Chief Medical Officers have agreed that the UK is now at the highest level of risk, Joint Biosecurity Council level 5.

In the light of that decision the Welsh Government, in consultation with the WLGA and Colegau Cymru, has agreed that all schools, colleges and independent schools should **move to online learning until January 18th**.

As a government we will use the next two weeks to continue to work with local authorities, schools and colleges to plan for the rest of term.

This is the best way to ensure that parents, staff and learners can be confident in the return to face to face learning, based on the latest evidence and information.

Schools and colleges will remain open for children of critical workers and vulnerable learners, as well as for learners who need to complete essential exams or assessments. On this basis Special Schools and PRU's should remain open if possible.

We had initially given schools flexibility in the first two weeks of term to decide when to reopen based on local circumstances.

But it is now clear that a national approach of online learning for the first fortnight of term is the best way forward.

We know that schools and colleges have been safe and secure environments throughout the pandemic.

However, we also know that education settings being open can contribute to wider social mixing outside the school and college environment.

We are confident that schools and colleges have online learning provision in place for this immediate period,

Universities in Wales have already agreed a staggered start to term. Students should not return to universities for face to face learning until they are notified that they can do so.

Wales remains in the highest level of restrictions. Everyone must stay at home.

****In addition to this statement please find attached a statement from the Director of Education as regards the arrangements in Carmarthenshire.**

Canolfan Elfed

Canolfan Elfed is shut until the 18th January as in line with the current directive however, we will be providing childcare for key workers children. Parents should not apply for childcare if they are not scheduled to work and have exhausted all other possible childcare options.

Mainstream lessons for Elfed pupils who access mainstream will resume on Thursday 7th Jan and staff will be supporting through Google Classroom. As from Monday 11th January work will be posted for all Elfed pupils on Google Classroom.

Please can parents check Canolfan Elfed's Facebook for updates.

Provision of Online Learning

As we return to online learning for all pupils and students we would ask that pupils/students structure their on line learning around their existing timetables. We will deliver a mixture of Google Classroom set tasks, blended learning and “live” streamed provision. We have learned from previous experience that 5 hours in front of a screen is not beneficial to a pupils’ wellbeing. With this in mind, staff will ensure there is flexibility in both the work and deadlines set, this will enable students to take breaks from screen time, as well as giving the flexibility for students to access their work around family and home circumstances.

January BTEC External Exams

Just a reminder that BTEC Exams **will go ahead** and will be based in QEH School. Additional precautions have been taken to ensure that arrangements are “Covid Safe”. Exams will be starting 9.00 am. Pupils/ students/Parents/Carers have been contacted directly.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>QUALIFICATION</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>
6 th Wednesday January	9.00am	Hospitality	Year 10
6 th Wednesday January	9.00am	Business	Year 12
8 th Friday January	9.00am	Public Services	Year 10 and 11
11 th Monday January	9.00am	Health and Social	Year 13
12 th Tuesday January	9.00am	Business	Year 13
12 th Tuesday January	1.00pm	Biology	Year 12
13 th Wednesday January	9.00am	Chemistry	Year 12
13 th Wednesday January	1.00pm	ICT	Year 12
13 th Wednesday January	1.00pm	Physics	Year 12
14 th Thursday January	9.00am	ICT	Year 12
15 th Friday January	9.00am	Business	Year 11 and 10
15 th Friday January	9.00am	Perf arts	Year 12
18 th Monday January	9.00am	ICT	Year 13
18 th Monday January	9.00am	BTEC Science	Year 13

Free School Meal Arrangements

This following statement was issued by CCC today:

You will be aware that Welsh Government have instructed pupils to stay at home for on-line learning until Monday January 18th 2021.

Pupils eligible for Free School Meals will again receive payments for those 2 weeks after the Christmas holidays (Monday 04/01/21 to Friday 15/01/21). Staff will prioritize these payments, but processing will take time. We hope to have funds released during next week (Monday 11/01/21 onwards) but please be patient and don't contact us to enquire when you can expect payment as this will take up staff resources to respond to your enquiry, when they could be processing your payment.

We are continuing to process Free School Meal payments to eligible families for the various circumstances previously notified, and we are resolving outstanding queries as quickly as possible. Payments for those pupils instructed to self-isolate during last term will start imminently but will not take priority over the payments to all pupils as per the latest announcement.

Please be assured that staff are working as quickly as possible whilst following the regulations in place to release all payments to all eligible families and wish to thank you for your patience and understanding.

If you have any issues regarding this or would like to apply for free school meals, please contact;
freeschoolmeals@cararthenshire.gov.uk

or telephone 01267 246526

Test Trace Protect

If your child has any of the symptoms of covid then please book a test via the contact number below.

If your child receives a positive test result for Covid 19 then please email the school.

Parents in Carmarthenshire are asked to inform both the school and Delta Wellbeing should your child receive a positive result for COVID-19. If your child receives a positive test result for Covid 19 then please email the school using the email address Office@qehs.carms.sch.uk and inform Delta be email on:

TTP@deltawellbeing.org.uk or by telephone on 0300 333 2222

If your child is identified as a contact of someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, they will need to self-isolate at home for 10 days. This means they can't leave the house; they can't go the shops or exercise anywhere outside your home/garden, and they can't have any visitors to your home/garden. Everyone else in the household can continue as normal in line with the fire-break regulations - however if your child becomes symptomatic, the whole household would then need to self-isolate.

Find out more, visit the Carmarthenshire County Council website:

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-services/education-schools/re-opening-schools/?type=45926>

If in doubt about what advice to follow then please contact the school.

QEH School	01267 245300 Office@qehs.carms.sch.uk
Delta Wellbeing (if your child has COVID symptoms)	0300 333 2222

**To book a test call or
Use the booking portal**

Call 119

Booking Portal: <https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-test>

Communications

We will continue to keep in touch with parents/carers via newsletters, information on our website <https://www.qehs.carms.sch.uk/> , via Xpressions App, Parentpay and on social media feeds i.e. Facebook. We may also need to contact parents/carers by text/email, therefore it is important that if you change your contact details that you let the school know as soon as possible.

If you need to contact us please continue to ring the School on 01267 245300 or email on office@qehs.carms.sch.uk

I would like to use this opportunity to thank you all, once again, for your ongoing support which is hugely appreciated. We know that this remains a difficult and anxious time for families. Together we will support our community through these challenges.

Kind regards,

Dave Williams

Headteacher

Queen Elizabeth High School