

Queen Elizabeth High School

Update for Parents / Carers and Learners

3rd May 2022



Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome back to the Summer Term. Included in this update is important information on how our school will operate in this final term, information about exams and some additional information as regards places where parents and carers can seek advice and support.

This is an important term for a number of our learners, both in terms of saying their goodbyes to us, and because we are entering exam season for the first time in two years. Can I start by wishing each and every learner who has exams this summer a very big 'Good Luck' from us all, and our very best wishes for any future plans they might have.

The Spring Term and this term has been about, and will be about, supporting and helping our community to settle back in to routines as well as providing support ahead of exams. There have been some really positive success stories and though the last two terms certainly presented some challenges, we do feel that we are, at last, returning to normal.

REMINDER:

- **Friday 6th May: Year 13 Leavers Event**
- **Monday May 16th GCSE, AS and A Level EXAMS BEGIN**
- **Monday 16th May- Friday 20th May – National Tests for Years 7, 8 and 9.**
- **Thursday 26th May Year 11 Leavers Event**
- **Mon 30th May – Fri 3rd June: Half Term**

Important Welsh Government Update re COVID Mitigations



As you are aware, Wales completed the move to Alert Level Zero on 28 January 2022 as case rates of Covid-19 declined. We then moved to a local framework model. The rate of community and school cases in Carmarthenshire is falling and appears low. As a result, we have been advised as a school to move to the **LOW** level from **Tuesday May 3rd** onwards. **However, this excludes Canolfan Elfed, where existing mitigations remain in place.**

LOW LEVEL mitigations include:

Continuing to discourage close interactions – In school this will mean maintaining our one way systems and encouraging staff to maintain a 2m distance from learners where possible. Though we recognise that this may not be possible with learners that require one to one support.

Face coverings will not routinely be recommended, but may be worn by secondary aged learners anywhere on the school site should they wish to do so. Face covering are also not routinely recommended for staff and visitors anywhere on the school site, though should they wish to wear them, they may do so. However, ***face coverings continue to be recommended on school transport.***

However, all staff, students, parents and carers are still urged to follow these core measures:

- All staff and learners should follow the Welsh Government guidance for self-isolation.
- Staff and learners should not attend school if they have any COVID-19 symptoms. If a staff member or learner becomes symptomatic they should get a test as soon as possible, and should self-isolate until the outcome of the test.
- Regular handwashing, and respiratory etiquette (Catch it, Bin it, Kill it) are key interventions to prevent spread and manage cases, incidents & outbreaks.
- Adequate ventilation by opening windows or adjusting ventilation systems is still important. Carbon dioxide monitors are in place in most classrooms.

Welsh Government Announcement 3rd May 2022

Today the Welsh government made further announcements regarding Covid in Wales. Included in that announcement was the following information:



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

“...COVID-19 has not gone away and will remain with us globally. For this reason, it remains important for schools and settings to consider what they can do to reduce the spread of the virus, and protect their learners and staff, including any additional protections for those who are more vulnerable, including the immunosuppressed or those who live with someone who is vulnerable. By continuing to implement public health control measures, Local Authorities, schools and settings will help keep the spread of the virus low, improve public and staff confidence and minimise the potential of further disruption.

With increasing numbers of people vaccinated and everyone’s continued efforts, coronavirus specific legal requirements no longer apply. The risks from coronavirus should now be considered in the same context as other communicable diseases risks (for example flu and norovirus).

With this in mind, we have been consulting with key stakeholders and delivery partners on revised public health advice for schools and settings..... I hope to be in a position to publish and share this guidance with you by the end of this week with a view to it replacing the Local COVID-19 infection control decision framework for schools from 09 May 2022 onwards. The key principle however, will continue to be on a robust assessment of risks and commiserate mitigation measures in tune with local circumstances and needs, whilst considering the balance of harms of any measures.”

Pupil Behaviour, Well-being and Support for Parents & Carers

A letter was sent out to all parents before Easter outlining some of the significant challenges that have been posed for all schools in Carmarthenshire, and indeed nationally, since our return from lockdown. The letter was also picked up by the BBC and local news outlets.

This has indeed been a challenging time, but I would also like to reiterate that the majority of our pupils and students are fantastic and make a very positive contribution to our school. We continue to value the support of

all our parents and carers and recognise that the challenges we sometimes face in school can also, on occasions, be faced at home. In this context we have created a series of links to helpful sites that parents can access. They are listed below, but can also be found on the school website. As always, if parents are in need of advice or help then please contact us.

Useful links:

How to deal with challenging behaviour in children

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/caring-for-children-and-young-people/how-to-deal-with-challenging-behaviour-in-children/>

NSPCC Home or Out Alone Guide

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/leaflets/home-or-out-alone-guide>

NSPCC Support for Parents

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/>

Positive Parenting

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/leaflets/positive-parenting>

NSPCC – Parents’ Leaflets

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/leaflets/parent-leaflets>

School Beat – Report & Support

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/leaflets/parent-leaflets>

School Beat – Report & Support Directory

https://schoolbeat.cymru/uploads/media/2801-20_Support_and_Report_Directory.pdf

Exams – Study Skills, Revision Resources and Relaxation Techniques

The exam season is fast approaching. This can be a challenging time for parents/carers and pupils and students. Please find below a series of links to resources, techniques and strategies that parents and carers might find useful in supporting in supporting your child. Even more information can be found on our website, including some very useful videos:

A Level and A/S Level - <http://www.qehs.carms.sch.uk/sixth-form/vespa/>

KS3 and KS4 - <http://www.qehs.carms.sch.uk/student-information/revision-guidance/>

Study Skills & Revision Resources

Successatschool – Revision and Study Tips

<https://successatschool.org/advisedetails/552/The-Best-Revision-Tips-and-Techniques-for-Exams>

WJEC

<https://www.wjec.co.uk/>

WJEC Past Papers & Mark Schemes

<https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/past-papers/>

Blended Learning Modules, Knowledge Organisers, and Exam Walk Throughs

<https://educationalresources.wjec.co.uk/en/>

WJEC Digital Educational Resources

<https://resources.wjec.co.uk/>

BBC Bitesize – KS3 & KS4

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

Mathskitchen

<https://www.mathskitchen.com/home>

Coping with Exams – Managing Stress & Relaxation Techniques

Exams & Revision – Managing Stress & Relaxation Techniques

<https://www.bhasvic.ac.uk/media/pdf/stress-revision-pack-251.pdf>

Young Minds – Coping with Exam Stress

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/exam-stress/>

Other Important information

School Trips

We are now in a position to be running school trips once again. The current trips on offer have been included in a brochure, Details of which can be found on our school website:

<http://www.qehs.carms.sch.uk/media/vbrljs02/trip-brochure-2022-23website-copy.pdf>

Places will be allocated on a first come, first serve basis. However, we hope to in a position to be running such trips on an annual basis in future.

School Uniform

As we start to look forward to improved weather and the relaxations in mitigations around Covid restrictions we have the opportunity as a school to return to some of our usual practices. This means a move back to full school uniforms. Moving forwards pupils will be expected to remove all outer wear clothing on entry to the school building and in classrooms. PE kit can be worn on days that pupils have PE up until Half Term, when changing rooms will re-open.

As our **changing rooms re-open after Half Term** there is an expectation that pupils will change for PE in school, therefore arriving in school in full school uniform.

I remind parents that the school PE kit is a school PE top, school shorts. All shorts must be loose fitting and at least mid-thigh in length. Athletic shorts/lycra/skin tight shorts are not suitable wear around the school building. Leggings and jogging bottoms should be plain black. Suitable and appropriate trainers should be worn; leisurewear shoes such as Converse, Nike air forces etc... are not acceptable.

Attendance

All pupils should be aiming for at least 95% attendance. Good attendance, studies have proven, has a significant positive impact on pupil attainment, wellbeing and the ability to form strong and lasting friendships with peers. As we return to normal we would urge all parents/carers to encourage their child to come to school each and every day. Should there be a genuine reason for absence e.g. illness the please let us know by contacting the school on 01267 245300 or via the Xpressions App.

Exams – Expectations about Conduct and Behaviour

A letter will go out to all candidates shortly from the JCQ outlining the rules around exams. I would ask for parents support in reading the advice around exams and ensuring candidates are well prepared, arrive in plenty of time and follow all the rules set out by the JCQ and the exam boards while in the exams.

Success stories - Pupil Achievement Stories

There continue to have been a huge number of real success stories during this term. Please visit our website to keep up to date on the successes of our community. If you have any information about any successes for our pupils individually, or as part of any teams outside school, then please do not hesitate to let us know.

<http://www.gehs.carms.sch.uk/about/pupil-achievement-stories/>

The opportunity to write this update seems to have been a long time coming. At last, it appears we are returning to some sense of the old normal. I thank you all for your support during these last challenging two years, and know that I can rely on that same support and commitment to our community as we move forward.

Thank you and kind regards,

Dave Williams
Headteacher