

Queen Elizabeth High School

Update for Parents / Carers and Learners

3rd September 2021



Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome back!

It has been fantastic to welcome back all our learners to school this week. We extend a special welcome to those joining us for the first time, especially our Year 7, but also extend a warm welcome to all those new pupils and students joining our school in all other year groups as well.

I hope that the summer was an opportunity for you all to take advantage of the good weather and some of the additional freedoms available this summer to catch up with relatives and friends and engage in some of the activities that had been 'off limits' during lock down.

We are looking forward to this academic year and are confident that we are able to keep our learners safe whilst being well prepared to support them academically, whatever this year may bring.

Covid Update

Keeping safe remains our priority. We will keep rooms well ventilated, encourage pupils to sanitise/wash hands regularly and continue to use face coverings where 2m distances cannot be maintained. **Anyone who tests positive for Covid-19, whether from a lateral flow or a PCR test must continue to self-isolate and not attend school.**

We are in the process of updating our risk assessments for this term and have received new Operational Guidance from Welsh Government for the start of term. This includes the following Changes:

- **Identified contacts of a proven case of Covid-19 who are under the age of 18 or those who are fully vaccinated will no longer have to self-isolate unless they themselves start to show symptoms of Covid-19.** TTP contact tracers will contact the proxy (positive case) and get in touch with identified close contacts and offer them PCR testing on day 2 (or as soon as possible once identified as a contact) and day 8.
- **There is no requirement for anyone awaiting a PCR test result as a contact to self-isolate. They can continue to attend school as normal unless advised otherwise by TTP, unless they are experiencing any symptoms, or they have tested positive from a LFT, in which case they have a duty to self-isolate.**

- **Face coverings are no longer recommended or required to be used routinely in classrooms by staff or learners. All individuals will be expected to wear face coverings elsewhere in the building, including corridors and internal communal areas where larger numbers of pupils are gathered or social distance is difficult to maintain.** This is important in helping us to maintain consistent education and school attendance as well as to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Face coverings should continue to be worn by secondary learners on dedicated school transport. Visitors to the school should continue to use a face covering, including parents/carers when dropping off and picking up learners.

We anticipate that there is likely to be a spike in cases as pupils return to school from holidays and festivals etc... The Lateral Flow testing is particularly helpful in keeping Covid out of school and limiting contact. I would encourage all parents/carers to support LFT and to continue to test pupils and students twice weekly.

It is essential that **all results** are logged into the NHS portal immediately, as well as positive results being notified to the school, without waiting for the confirmatory PCR result. Can I remind parents/carers that the tests provided by the school are coded to the school and should only be used for pupils and students attending QEH. If any family members require a lateral flow test, then these can be obtained via the NHS directly or picked up from test centres around Carmarthenshire e.g. Carmarthen Show Ground a useful link has been provided in the Additional Information section below.

We have already received information of a number of positive tests results for pupils who will be unable to return to school at the start of term and will have to self-isolate for 10 days. As previously, arrangements will be made to share resources and tasks with isolating pupils via Google classroom; this will allow pupils to access resources from home and not fall too far behind at the start of term.

The information above reflects the current guidelines set out by Welsh Government and the Local Authority Risk assessment published in August 2021 and the most recent WG Operational Guidance, a link to which is provided below:

<https://gov.wales/operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-html>

We are aware that procedures may be amended as the new term progresses and would like to reassure you that any updates and changes that impact on our school procedures from the Welsh Government and Carmarthenshire LA will be communicated fully through our website/newsletters, Xpressions App, and via social media pages.

Lateral Flow Testing

Lateral Flow Testing Lateral flow testing remains a key part of the Welsh Government and local authority strategy in tackling the spread of COVID-19. This will recommence from the start of the new term and pupils will continue to be provided with testing kits.

Processes will remain the same as they were in July, therefore:

- Testing remains voluntary
- Tests should be conducted every Sunday and Wednesday

- A text reminder will be sent every Wednesday and Sunday with the appropriate links to record results

New pupils will be offered the opportunity to collect tests from school and take part in the school testing routine from Sunday 5th September onwards.

Uniform

A letter has gone out to all parents outlining the requirements for uniform for the start of this term. School uniform is compulsory, as we believe that a neat and tidy appearance is a source of pride and identification and encourages sensible behaviour. Specific information regarding uniform is included in the letter, however the basic principles and standards remain:

- All garments should be clearly marked with the owner's name.
- Denim jackets or jeans are not allowed under any circumstances.
- No jewellery may be worn in School, except for one pair of stud earrings in the lower lobe of the ear.
- External coats other than QEH tops must be removed in the building.
- All hair styles must be reasonable and acceptable. Hair dyes and colours must be natural. Extreme hair styles are not allowed.
- Make up should be discrete and nail varnish unobtrusive.

The school reserves the right to decide what acceptable uniform is and pupils are expected to be presentable at all times. Pupils who do not follow the school rules regarding uniform will be allowed to continue with their education but can expect to be isolated from their peers and the wider school community until they conform to the school rules.

Important Safety Notice

Pupils should refrain from climbing on or attempting to climb over fences in school. If a ball is kicked over a fence then pupils should approach the caretaking staff to ask for help recovering it. **Under no circumstances should a pupil attempt to climb a fence.** There have been several serious accidents across Carmarthenshire schools in the past months as a result of accidents while climbing fences. We would ask parents to remind pupils to be sensible and reinforce the messages here.

School Improvements

New flooring has been laid in the main corridor alongside the installation of new lighting. This has had a significant impact on the corridor area, which is now much brighter and welcoming space and an area that pupils can enjoy sitting in during breaks and lunches.





In addition, we have completed the first phase of our cleaning of the external areas of the school. This included clearing drainage and gutters on the roof and discovering a significant number of balls of all description that had found their way on to the roof over several years as well as some Science experiments that had gone awry! These are further steps in providing a first class learning environment for our learners.



Congratulations

Congratulations to Imogen Yarnton –Clyde a member Welsh Gymnastics Squad who represents Wales and GB. The rhythmic gymnastics Welsh Championships 2021 took place over August 29th and 30th. Imogen placed 3rd in Wales in the Junior Intermediate Category and gained three silver medals and one bronze. This is a phenomenal achievement for someone of 12 years old and her club. Imogen works so, so hard sacrificing so much for her passion in gymnastics - training six days a week in Cardiff and Llanelli for 25 hours - we couldn't be more proud of her!

Reminders of Further Important Information

Additional Information

The school has undergone a rigorous risk assessment with the Local Authority. An abundance of hand washing and sanitising stations are available throughout the school and we recommend pupils use these on entry to school and throughout the day. Pupils will receive a full briefing to familiarise themselves with the new arrangements as part of their induction on their first day. Enhanced housekeeping arrangements are in place with frequently touched areas sanitised regularly throughout the day.

Test, Trace and Protect

The Local Authority have updated their guidance on what parents should do if their child is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or needs to self-isolate.

If your child becomes unwell or needs to self-isolate, please let the school and report to the Local Authority by calling 0300 333 2222 or by emailing TTP@deltawellbeing.org.uk

For information on how to apply for a test for yourself or someone in your household with symptoms including children under 5s please visit the Welsh Government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

The information on isolation has changed. Please see the Welsh Government website for updated information below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolateand-what-to-do/>

Thank you for your continued support, of our school and our community. We are looking forward to a positive and successful 2020-21 academic year. If you have any specific questions please contact us on office@qehs.carms.sch.uk

Kind Regards,

Dave Williams
Headteacher