

Queen Elizabeth High School

Update for Parents / Carers and Learners

16th February 2022



Dear Parent/Carer,

As we draw to the close of this busy half term I would like you to join me in thanking our staff for the support and help that has continued to be offered to our pupils and students as we catch up from Covid. We continue to make progress towards the new normal and there is information included here on the measures that will be taken to keep everyone safe in the remainder of the spring term. I would also like to thank you once again for your continued help and support that has been invaluable on this shared journey.

REMINDER:

Thursday 17th February: Year 7 Online Parents' Evening

- **Friday 18th February INSET day**
- **Mon 21st – Fri 25th February: Half Term**
- **Monday 28th February: Staff and pupils return to school - Week 2**

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 have reduced from the levels seen around the Christmas and New Year period.

After half-term, schools have been informed that there will be a return to the Local Control Decision Framework (table below). However, cases in the Carmarthenshire region are presently higher than the Welsh average. Therefore, Carmarthenshire Local Authority have advised schools to maintain current operational procedures (High Level mitigations) until review on 4th March. This cautious approach will allow us to monitor how the number of cases might change during and after half term to ensure the safe return of learners. It is hoped that case numbers will allow us to shift to a lower level from 7th March. One important change that we have made to our existing procedures is that **Canolfan Elfed pupils and students will return to a 9am start from Monday 28th February**

Therefore, there will be no change to our current mitigations when we return after half term. High level mitigations include the following:

- **Face coverings continue to be worn in communal areas and in lessons where a distance of two metres cannot be maintained**
- **LFT testing continues three times per week and will continue over half term**

This is in addition to the core interventions below:

- all staff and learners continue to follow self-isolation guidance
- staff and learners are not to not attend school if they have any COVID-19 symptoms
- regular handwashing and respiratory etiquette to prevent spread
- ensuring adequate ventilation
- maintaining appropriate levels of cleaning
- wearing face coverings on school transport.

| | Low | Moderate | High | Very high |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Reducing close interactions | Implement arrangements aimed at reducing close interactions between staff and learners where possible. | Implement arrangements aimed at reducing close interactions between staff and learners. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not holding large group gatherings such as assemblies • the use of one way systems • consistent seating plans (recognising this may not be possible for younger learners) • using outdoor spaces where possible. | Implement arrangements aimed at reducing close interactions between staff and learners. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not holding large group gatherings such as assemblies • the use of one way systems • consistent seating plans (recognising this may not be possible for younger learners) • using outdoor spaces where possible • floor signage. | Reduce close interactions between learners to the lowest practical level. This may include the measures set out at the High level as well as introduction of contact groups and potentially pausing after school/breakfast provision, or team sports where necessary. Welsh Government may determine that for limited periods of time flexibility is given to enable schools to consider the introduction of staggered school session times as part of their overall package of measures. Schools will be notified of this flexibility and the period of time that it is in place. |

| | Low | Moderate | High | Very high |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| Physical distancing | Encourage physical distancing in indoor communal areas outside of the classroom, such as corridors, recognising that this may not be possible with younger children or with learners that require one to one support. | Physical distancing in place in classrooms depending on room capacity and risk assessment, recognising that this may not be possible with younger children or with learners that require one to one support. | Physical distancing and seating plans in place in classrooms. This may include forward facing desks depending on room capacity and risk assessment, recognising that this may not be possible with younger children or with learners that require one to one support. | Physical distancing and seating plans in place in classrooms. This may include forward facing desks depending on room capacity and risk assessment, recognising that this may not be possible with younger children or with learners that require one to one support. |
| LFD testing for staff and secondary aged learners | Little or no regular LFD testing. Testing available for contacts of confirmed positive cases. | Targeted/focused testing used where there are local risks identified by IMT. Testing available for contacts of confirmed positive cases. | LFD testing three times a week available for staff and secondary aged learners to help identify and isolate asymptomatic cases as soon as possible. | LFD testing three times a week available and strongly encouraged for staff and secondary aged learners to help identify and isolate asymptomatic cases as soon as possible. |

For all the latest up-to-date information on the operation of schools during the pandemic including guidance on testing and contact tracing, face coverings and vaccinations please visit the Welsh Government website: <https://gov.wales/schools-coronavirus-guidance>

Furthermore, you will find information from Carmarthenshire Local Authority including the latest updates on the link below: <https://newsroom.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/2020/10/kcscovid19/keep-carmarthenshire-safe/#.YfbuSerP2Uk>

You will also find a list of Frequently Asked Questions in relation to school meals and school transport on the Local Authority's website below. You are invited to get in touch directly via the "Ask a question" tab if you would like any further information.

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-services/education-schools/covid-19-schoolfaqs/#>

ALN Transformation – An important Update for all Learners, Parents and Carers

Please find a link below to some very important information regarding the way that pupils with Additional Learning Needs will be supported in schools in Wales. As a school we are determined to deliver a fully inclusive education system for learners. A system where needs are identified early and addressed quickly, and where all learners are supported to reach their potential.

Under the new system, planning will be flexible and responsive, our professionals will be skilled and confident in identifying needs and deploying strategies to help learners overcome their barriers to learning, and the learner will be at the centre of everything we do. Please read the information contained in the link below and the FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) section that will help answer your queries.

<https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-transformation-programme>



Additional learning
needs transformation
programme -
GOV.WALES

Key Dates this Term

There have been some changes to arrangements and our calendar as a result of disruption at the end of last term and new guidance. Below is a list of key events coming up in the Spring Term.

| | |
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| 17 th February | Year 7 Parents'/Carers' evening |
| 18 th February | INSET day (no school for pupils) |
| 10 th March | Year 10 Virtual Parents'/Carers' evening (rescheduled) |
| 21 st March – 1 st April | Key Stage 5 (Year 12 and 13) Assessment week |
| 24 th March | Year 8 Virtual Parents'/Carers' evening |

Year 7 Virtual Parents' Evening Thursday 17th February

Year 7 Parents' evening will take place this week Thursday 17th February 3:45pm – 6:30 pm. The event will take place online and will allow parents a five-minute conversation with teachers.

We are delighted with the popularity of these events and those parents who joined the waiting list have now been accommodated.

Booking for this event has now closed, however if you were unable to make an appointment or if you would like to speak to a member of staff, please contact us in the usual way on 01267 245300 or at office@gehs.carms.sch.uk

Safer Internet Day Free Workshop 16th February 5.30 – 6.30pm

We have been invited to offer a free workshop for parents and families from WISE KIDS and Barnados Cymru regarding online safety and how best to support our children to stay safe online. Please see below for more information:

Trust, relationships, wellbeing and vulnerability! – A free online workshop for professionals, parents and foster carers

Date: 16th of February 5.30pm -6.45pm, online on Microsoft Teams
As part of our Safer Internet Day activity, WISE KIDS is delighted to be hosting a free workshop with Barnados Cymru, which will be aimed at professionals, parents and foster carers.

The workshop will explore what makes young people vulnerable to online exploitation, and how we can best support them to thrive online and offline. It will feature brief presentations from Sangeet Bhullar from WISE KIDS and Sharron Wareham from Barnados Cymru.

This will be followed by a discussion based on questions and answers which participants are invited to submit below OR at the time of registration. Please follow the link below:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdINcYUEuup_vqnn4drEWXKYpufUiZ05iq4aN1zOKmtpTAgg/closed-form

Protecting Pupils from Sexual Exploitation Online

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation is the only UK-wide charity dedicated solely to tackling child sexual abuse. As part of their strategy to protect young people is support for parents and carers on keeping their child safe online. Please follow the link below to some important information and guidance:

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

In Health and Wellbeing lessons after Half Term, year 9 pupils are going to be doing a module on managing risk looking at relationships, attitudes and behaviour as the start of a wider whole school strategy on protecting our community from online abuse and sexual exploitation.

LFD Testing

We have been asked to remind parents it is vital that the results of every LFT test are recorded with school and the NHS.

After Half Term, pupils should test **three times per week** (Sunday night, Tuesday evening and Thursday night). A positive test result please should be reported to the school at **Office @gehs.carms.sch.uk**. Following this parents/carers should make arrangements to book a PCR test.

Current Information Regarding Self-Isolation and Testing

From Friday 28th January, anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 can end self-isolation after five full days. The first full day of isolation is the day after the onset of symptoms or the day after a positive test.

- Before exiting self-isolation, a person should take two lateral flow device (LFD) tests 24 hours apart to check they are not still infectious.
- The first lateral flow test should be taken on DAY FIVE of isolation.
- They should remain in isolation until they have had two consecutive negative LFT results 24 hours apart.
- The earliest a person will be able to leave isolation would be on DAY SIX.

Close Contacts

If you are a fully vaccinated adult or aged between 5 and 17 you do not need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact but you are strongly advised to:

- take a LFT every day for 7 days (this replaces the day 2 and day 8 PCR)

Upload all tests results on GOV.UK even if negative or void.

- If you are 18 and over, and not fully vaccinated, you must self-isolate from the day you were last in contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19 and for the next 10 days. You must also take a PCR test on day 2 and day 8.

All of us at QEH remain proud of the way our community continues to work together. The way in which we all support one another, in what is an unprecedented set of changing circumstances.

In the meantime, we sincerely wish pupils, staff and parents a happy and healthy half term break. Hopefully we will be treated to some gentler weather and the opportunity to relax and “refresh the batteries” before returning for the second half of the busy Spring Term.

Kind regards,

Dave Williams
Headteacher