

Queen Elizabeth High

Update for Parents –

19th October 2020



Dear Parent/ Carer,

Could I start by expressing my gratitude to you as parents for the way in which you have rallied around and supported the school in the last two weeks. We have received messages of support in writing, verbally and via social media and this has meant a lot to our school community. This is a time of unprecedented challenges for all our staff, yet they have worked tirelessly and together to continue to provide a welcome in the classroom and work on line. We are, like all schools in Wales, adapting to meet the challenges of what each day brings during this pandemic and in this context the positive comments and appreciation extended by parents to the team here has meant an awful lot to us. Thank you again.

We have now welcomed back our all year 9 pupils and our Canolfan Elfed team on a phased return. On Wednesday, we will welcome back Year 11. At that stage, we will certainly feel as if we are returning to “normal”. However, there is no guarantee that there will not be disruption in the future as today’s announcement from Welsh Government clearly demonstrates.

The nature of the virus and the pandemic means that despite our robust safety measures there is no absolute certainty that we will be Covid free moving forward. The infection and transmission rates in Wales and Carmarthenshire are rising and I cannot stress enough the need for parents to:

- Please keep your child home if they have symptoms that relate to Covid
- Do not allow your son/daughter to attend school if you are awaiting the outcome of Covid test.
- Please self-isolate and keep your child home if there is a positive test result in your family.
- Inform the school immediately If your child does receive a positive test result. Please do not post on social media this causes upset and uncertainty in the wider community.
- Please be mindful of government and Council advice on social gatherings and maintaining precautions while at home and in the community.

Welsh Government Announcement

National coronavirus fire-break to be introduced in Wales on Friday

A short, sharp “fire-break” will be introduced across Wales at the end of this week to help regain control of coronavirus, First Minister Mark Drakeford announced today;

“It is with a heavy heart that I once again ask everyone to stay at home and businesses to shut.

We are all tired of coronavirus and the many rules and regulations we all have to live with. We all want to see an end to this pandemic and our lives returned to us. Unfortunately, we do not yet have a vaccine, which will allow us to do that.

This fire-break is our best chance of regaining control of the virus and avoiding a much-longer – and damaging – national lockdown. We have a small window of opportunity to act.

To be successful, we need everyone’s help. Wales has shown throughout this pandemic that we can come together and take the actions to keep our families and our communities safe.

We must come together once again to stay ahead of this virus and to save lives.

“Primary and special schools will re-open as normal after half-term

Secondary schools will re-open after the half-term for children in years seven and eight and most vulnerable children. Pupils will be able to come in to take exams but other pupils will continue their learning from home for an extra week.”

Today we received details of the Welsh Government “circuit break” measures. Wales will enter similar restrictions that were imposed during lockdown in March. These will commence at 6pm on Friday 23rd October and will end on Monday 9th November.

The key points as regards our QEH community are summarised for you below:

- Pupils sitting re-sit and other external exams **will be allowed** to school, this includes students in Year 12 re-sitting their Maths and Numeracy exams and students sitting their Cambridge Entry examinations.
- From Monday 2nd November only those pupils in **Year 7 and 8 will return to school.**
- **Pupils in Canlofan Elfed will be in school as their phased return continues.**
- All other pupils will receive their teaching online via streamed lessons, blended learning and google classroom.
- **All pupils will return to school from Monday 9th November.**

The full statement and FAQs can be read below:

<https://gov.wales/national-coronavirus-fire-break-to-be-introduced-in-wales-on-friday>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-circuit-break-frequently-asked-questions>

As we continue to operate, we will of course be working within the clear guidance given by Welsh Government. Please follow the links below provided to read this information for yourselves if you wish:

1. FSM Provision during Circuit Break Lockdown

Free School meal pupils will receive payments over half term in support of families. These payments will be extended for pupils in years 9-13 in their week of home study. Payments for Year 7 and 8 FSM pupils will continue as normal when they return to school.

2. Learning Matters

Learning Online Year 9-13

There will be a combination of lessons available. Teachers will provide a combination of live streamed and blended learning lessons. Pupil will have access to resources and tasks via google classroom. Further details as regards timetabling arrangement will be made available at the end of this week.

ICT Provision

As we approach another phase of teaching online, we want to ensure that our pupils and students have access to the ICT equipment they need. We have already made significant progress in providing pupils with laptops and wi-fi dongles to allow them to access learning from home. If you have not applied before, have recently moved into the area or have not received the support you requested can you please contact the school using the following email address

ithelp@qehs.carms.sch.uk or by phone on 01267 245300.

3. Safety Update and Reminders

We are protected by the robustness of Test, Trace, Protect and our new routine procedures as part of the “new normal”. As a reminder please note the following:

Symptoms:

- If your child or anyone in the household has symptoms they should not come to school and everyone in the household will need to isolate for 14 days
- Pupils sent home with symptoms will not be able to return to school for 10 days unless they have proof of a negative test
- If your child displays symptoms during the school day, they must be collected straight away, and all siblings and other members of the household should immediately go home and self-isolate for 14 days or until a negative test result is received

Test, Trace, Protect:

- If someone in your household is contacted by Test, Trace, Protect and identified as a contact, they will need to isolate for 14 days
- **Self-isolation advice requires anyone with symptoms or identified as a contact to remain at home, not to go outdoors to exercise, visit shops, family or friends, or to go to other public spaces.**
- If they do not have any symptoms, everyone else in the house can continue to go out as normal.

Test Results:

- All test results are confidential. Test results are not disclosed to the school. Similarly, we appreciate the support of pupils and parents in maintaining the anonymity of any positive cases.
- **Proof of a negative test needs to be presented to the Head of Pupil Progress before the start of registration in the morning**
- If your test results are given to you by telephone, make a note of the time and name of the person making the call and give this information to your child’s Head of Pupil Progress

Face Coverings and Transport

- Face coverings are mandatory on school transport and when moving around the school

Hands, Face, Space

Please see below the latest advice from Public Health Wales on ways we can help each other to stay safe.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jr09ByDYuq4>

4. Communication

Email Addresses

It is more important than ever before to ensure the school has up to date contact details and active email addresses for all our parents. If you have not been receiving texts or emails from the school, please contact us on the numbers below to update your details.

Important Numbers and Contact Details

Please see below for some important telephone numbers and contact details:

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

5. Half Term & Christmas Holidays

The last day for pupils this Half Term will be Thursday 22nd October. The Friday will be an INSET day where staff will be focussing on developing blended learning and live streaming techniques and training. **Year 7 and 8 pupils will be returning to school on Monday 2nd November. Pupils and students in Canolfan Elfed will also be returning that Monday on a phased return (parents have been informed regarding which days).**

Year 9 to 13 will receive online learning for the week commencing 2nd November, before returning to school themselves on Monday 9th November.

The last day of this term will be Friday 18th December 2020. Monday 21st and Tuesday 22nd will be designated as INSET days by the Local Authority. Closing the school for two weeks over the Christmas Holiday is viewed as a key “circuit breaker” to help ventilate the building and reduce the potential spread of the Covid virus.

Once again, a very big thank you for your support this week. I am confident that by continuing to work as a community and taking responsibility for ourselves and others around us, we will together be able to meet the challenges.

Please keep safe and look after one another.

Kind regards,

**Dave Williams
Acting Headteacher**

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref

To: Headteachers/FE Principals

19th October 2020

Dear colleague

I am committed to letting you know as soon as possible any decisions on COVID-19 affecting the education sector.

Over the weekend, the Cabinet met to continue our discussions about a time-limited “fire-break” – a short, sharp, shock to turn back the clock, slow down the virus and buy us more time.

We met again this morning and have today reached the difficult decision to introduce a two-week fire-break, starting at 6pm on Friday this week and ending after midnight on 9 November.

As the virus has taken hold, we have said repeatedly that children would be our top priority if further restrictions are needed.

As a result, we have looked to keep disruption to education to a minimum.

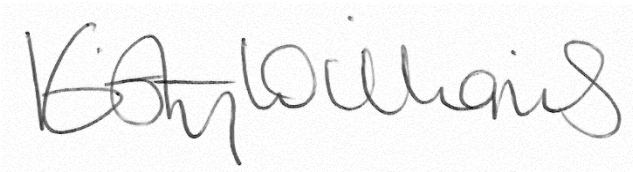
- Primary schools and special schools will re-open as normal after half term on Monday 2 November.
- Secondary schools will be open for children in years 7 and 8, whilst other pupils will continue their learning from home for that week.

- Those sitting GCSEs and University entrance exams in November will be able to do so at school/college.
- College students will also continue their learning from home for the week beginning 2nd November.
- We will be issuing guidance for the period which will include minimum expectations for learning. This will include teachers delivering online lessons from the classroom.
- Free school meals arrangements have already been put in place for half term and will continue for pupils in year nine and above for a second week.

Restricting the numbers of pupils in schools and colleges is a contribution of the wider national effort.

I know that schools and colleges have learnt lessons from the first lockdown and put in arrangements in case of disrupted learning this term.

We will work with you, our local authorities and our unions this week to provide you with further guidance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kirsty Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education