

Queen Elizabeth High School

Update for Parents / Carers and Learners

30th September 2021



Dear Parent/Carer,

At the end of our first successful month of this new academic year we hope that this newsletter finds you all well. All of us here at QEH continue to be impressed by the engagement and attitude of all our learners and the positive atmosphere throughout the school.

1. Covid-19

Review of Operating Procedures

This is the second week of Welsh Government's Infection Control Framework for schools that introduces a tiered level of response to the rate of infection and provides increased levels of mitigation based on current local data:

<https://gov.wales/local-covid-19-infection-control-decision-framework-schools-autumn-2021-html>

This new approach still puts great emphasis on keeping everyone safe, but enables us to operate as 'business as usual' as far as possible including the provision of extra-curricular activities and practical subjects. It ensures that we secure the best outcomes for all learners by considering both their educational needs and wellbeing while managing the ongoing risks of COVID-19 as safely as possible and ensuring clarity of actions required if there is a case in a school

In school we are focussing on Six Safety Measures to keep ourselves and each other as safe as possible:

1.Face coverings	2.Handwashing	3.LFT testing
4.2m Distance	5.Good Ventilation	6.Seating plans

Returning to secondary school or college?

Symptoms?
Stay at home and get a PCR test

No symptoms?
Keep doing your regular lateral flow tests

Get the vaccine if you're offered it

Wash your hands regularly

Wear face coverings when needed

#KeepWalesSafe

Logos: DIOGELU CYMRU KEEP WALES SAFE, GIG CYMRU NHS UK, Profi Orlhain Diogelu Test Trace Protect, Llywodraeth Cymru Welsh Government

As a school, we encourage all our community to remain vigilant both in school and in the wider community. ***We would also urge our Sixth Form and Year 11 pupils to show caution around attending group or large scale events e.g. 18th Birthday parties, which have the potential to significantly increase the risk of Covid transmission. We don't want to be party poopers but want to ensure that our GCSE, AS and A Level pupils and students experience as little disruption to their learning as possible in this their examination year.***

It is still really important that you inform us straight away if your child tests positive on either a lateral flow test or PCR test.

2. Applications to QEH

If you have younger children who need to apply for a place in QEH, or if you know someone who does, please note the closing date for applications is **December 17th 2021**. All applications are made online on the Carmarthenshire website (link below):

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-services/education-schools/school-admissions-changing-schools/moving-up-to-secondary-school/>

SCHOOL PLACES
Apply Online
You must apply for your child's school place

Deadline:
Nursery - 31 July 2022
Primary - 31 January 2022
Secondary - 17 December 2021

Logos: sirgar.llyw.cymru, carmarthenshire.gov.wales, Cyngor Sir Gâr Carmarthenshire County Council

In the coming weeks leading up to this deadline there will be additional information made available about our school and our community. This will include videos showing our facilities and information about subjects. In addition we will be providing opportunities for prospective parents to visit our school, in a safe and controlled manner, to see the school for themselves and to answer any queries.

3. Year 10 Information Guide

We are aware that QEH parents and carers are keen to support and help their children; we have therefore arranged an information video to provide you with information regarding GCSEs and give you an overview of the year ahead. Feedback from previous information sessions tells us that parents have found this information useful in helping to manage the demands of the year ahead and whilst we cannot meet this year we have collated this presentation to provide the key information.

Therefore, we would like to invite Year 10 parents to view our virtual Key Stage 4 parents' information guide which will be available on our website from this **Friday 1st October**. A reminder to all Year 10 parents and carers will be sent via email/Xpressions app. The online presentation will provide course information for subjects, as well as key information on how parents can best support pupils as they enter GCSE/Level 2 courses. In addition there will be a series of FAQs which should address any queries parents might have.

4. Year 11 Online Parent'/Carers' Evening

Our Year 11 online parents'/carers' evening will take place on **Thursday 14th October**. Arrangements and details of how to book online appointments will be sent out directly to parents of Year 11 pupils.

Form tutors and the Head of Learning will play an important role in monitoring the well-being and progress of our year 11 pupils and we welcome any communication to support our learners.

5. Adaptions to GCSE Exams

Welsh Government have already announced their intention to run with exams in the summer. It is important for you to be aware that there are adaptations to the GCSEs for pupils sitting the exams in summer 2022 (year 11) but not for summer 2023 (year 10). Information on the adaptations to GCSE exams for 2022 can be found on our website by following this link:

http://www.qehs.carms.sch.uk/media/ilsh1mis/50288_gcse-adaptations-booklet-for-summer-2022-15-july-2021.pdf

6. Adaptions to AS/A Level Exams

The information as regards GCE AS and A Level adaptations for 2022 can be found by following this link:

http://www.qehs.carms.sch.uk/media/zyzbj24/50288_gce-adaptations-booklet-for-summer-2022-15-july-2021.pdf

7. Face Coverings – Being Responsible and Disposing Properly

All pupils were provided with two washable face coverings at the start of this term. We are appealing to parents for their support in reminding and ensuring that these face coverings are brought to school. Increasing numbers of disposable face coverings are being issued and we are concerned about the sustainability and environmental impact of this. Can we also urge parents to remind pupils to dispose of disposable face coverings appropriately. We are concerned at the number of paper face coverings being left on the school premises and on routes home at the end of the day.

8. Pupil Success – Badminton Amay and Eshaan Patil

There have been a number of causes for celebration recently:

Congratulations to Amay Patil, who was selected to represent Wales in the U17 Badminton European Championships 2021 in Slovenia this September. Amay has also recently won the U15 Singles National Junior Championship of Wales 2021 and was the runner up of U19 Singles National Junior Championship of Wales 2021.

Amay and his brother Eshaan competed together at the U15 Doubles National Junior Championships of Wales 2021. They were highly successful and were crowned the Runners Up of the tournament. Really well done!

All our pupil success stories can be found on our website:

<https://www.qehs.carms.sch.uk/about/pupil-achievement-stories/>

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

9. Communication with Parents – GroupCall Xpressions App



In addition to these newsletters, and particularly for new parents, we aim to communicate through our website, social media feeds and most importantly through our **Groupcall Xpressions** parent app. This App is FREE. If you want to register for this please see the information below:

<https://www.qehs.carms.sch.uk/parent-carer-information/groupcall-xpressions/>

The Groupcall Xpressions App provides a convenient way for you to access and review information about your child and receive updates and news from the school. Information such as:

- School term dates, INSET dates and contact details
- Attendance and achievement information

- Pupil academic timetable and examination timetable
- Attainment Grades
- School interim and full report

It will also be used for informing you of any pastoral issues such as Attendance Letters, Late Notification Letter, Covid testing reminders and notification to inform you that your child has been identified as a close Covid contact.

Downloading and engaging with the Xpressions App is now more important now than ever as this is the main method of directly communicating with you to inform you of forthcoming events / activities, such as booking slots for a forthcoming Parents / Carer's Evening, to book a place on a school trips / activities.

We urge parents / carers to continue to record their child's absence daily to school via the Xpressions App; don't forget it's possible to view attendance data there too. Please find below the three step process we have adopted for chasing up unauthorised absences and all of which will be communicated to you via the app.

Reporting an Absence

Steps to take if your child is absent from school:

Report via the app 

Report your child's absence via the Xpressions app by 9am.

This needs to be done every day for the duration of the absence.

This completes the process and avoids further correspondence from the school.

If you fail to report your child's absence:

You will receive a First Day Response text message to notify you that your child is absent from school.

Please respond to this.

If you fail to respond to the above, you will receive a weekly reminder letter requesting the reason for the absence the previous week.

Please respond to this.

Finally, you will receive a letter at the end of the month requesting a reason for absence. Following these reminders, if the absence is not explained then it will be coded as **unauthorised**.

Attendance is really important.

Good attendance is linked to higher attainment and better levels of wellbeing.



Attendance data can be viewed on the Groupcall Xpressions app at any time via any mobile device or computer.



10. Lateral Flow Testing

This is an increasingly important aspect of helping schools monitor infection and keeping Covid out of school. You will have received a request from school for participation in the testing. Could I please encourage you to take school up on the offer of kits which will be provided free of charge from school on request. Pupils from Years 7 to 11 will need a parental permission note via Xpressions. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 can sign the consent form in school.

The schedule for the next round of testing is outlined below:

Upcoming LFT Distribution Dates	Useful Links
Wednesday 29th September	https://www.qehs.carms.sch.uk/covid-19-information/
Sunday 3rd October	
Wednesday 6th October	https://fb.watch/4qTujr4Dm4/
Sunday 10 th October	
If the result is positive, please let the school and NHS know immediately.	

11. Test, Trace and Protect

This week has seen a steady decline in the number of cases in our school, we continue to work alongside the local Health Board to help keep everyone safe.

Carmarthenshire schools now play a leading role in supporting the process by tracking cases and identifying contacts of pupils in our own schools. Parents are asked to inform schools directly should your child display any symptoms or indeed receive a positive test result. Once we have ascertained possible contacts, we will contact parents to inform you if you need to take any further actions.

Contacts who are under 18 or double vaccinated will no longer be asked to isolate but will be offered PCR tests on day 2 and day 8 after coming into contact with a positive case. We must remember that the other procedures remain unchanged:

- Anyone who presents with the main three symptoms (persistent cough, temperature, loss or change to taste or smell) should isolate and book a PCR test (not LFT).
- Additionally, anyone in the Hywel Dda area who has wider symptoms (upset stomach, sore throat, general cold) is also recommended to take a PCR test, unless already taking part in regular LFT testing.

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>

May I thank you all again for your support. As ever, please continue to monitor the website for future updates.

Kind Regards,

Dave Williams
Headteacher