

Queen Elizabeth High School

Update for Parents / Carers and Learners

13th May 2021



Dear Parent/Carer,

It is a month since we welcomed all our learners back on premises. It has raised everyone's spirits to see the school returning to some form of normality and the feel the energy and enthusiasm that children have brought back into our building.

The emphasis has been on returning to the routines of school life and to re-establishing learning. In KS3 and Year 10 the emphasis has been on catching up as well as providing the experiences in lessons that pupils have missed out on while in lockdown. For exam groups, there has been a focus on collecting the evidence to support Centre Determined Grades (CDGs) and completing assessments. This has been a challenging time for both staff and pupils, but I am confident that we have adopted a sensible, consistent and well-structured approach to supporting our pupils and students.

Monday of this week saw the end of our assessment window, though there will be the opportunity for pupils and students to catch up this week with any assessments missed. Our staff will now be involved in the marking, collation and moderation of all evidence. In this context, we have designated May 20th and 21st as our INSET days. We appreciate that our community have faced much disruption to their learning this year, but we have had to prioritise the needs of our exam groups and ensure we give our staff the necessary time needed to complete this process of internal assessment and arrive at accurate CDGs.

I would like to extend my thanks once again, to all parents and carers for your continued support of our school community.

News in Summary

1. **New operational Guidance for Schools Issued by Welsh Government 10th May 2021**
2. **Lateral Flow Testing for all learners in all year groups is now available and conducted on Monday and Thursday evening. LFD testing kits for pupils are available from the school reception.**
3. **Monday May 10th assessment window closes (catch up available this week).**
4. **Thursday May 20th and Friday May 21st INSET days.**

Canolfan Elfed – Celebrating Tri-Lingual Success



Canolfan Elfed have been working in partnership with the Siarter Iaith to make the bronze award accessible for ALN pupils. They achieved the bronze award in January 2021 and went on to pilot a project with the Welsh Language development team, called 'Den Y Dreigiau.'

Each class entered the competition and presented their prototype via Teams call to the judges, Dosbarth Caerfyrddin's (6th form) project won! This project has now been developed by Canolfan Elfed into a tri-lingual audio/visual story (Welsh, English & BSL) with a sensory sack, to support learners. This is being trialled in 4 Primary Schools around Carmarthenshire and we will be launching the book on July 15th during our 'Derwin fest' in Canolfan Elfed.

A really big thank you to all involved in this special and exciting project.

We also have fingers crossed that the team in Elfed will be successful after their nomination and successful shortlisting for the BBC's Lockdown Heroes Teaching Award- fingers crossed for further success.

Estyn Remit Visit

Yesterday we received a one day visit from Estyn. The aim of the visit was to review the school's experiences through Covid, to reflect on those experiences and discuss our plans moving forward. The inspectors toured the school, met with SLT, subject and faculty leaders, teachers, a panel of Year 10 pupils and a panel of Year 13 students.

The feedback we received was very positive. Students and pupils spoke honestly about their experiences and were very positive about the support they had received. Estyn commented on the positivity around the school, the consistency in the feedback from all parties and the real sense of a community working together.

I have been genuinely proud and appreciative of everything we have achieved throughout the Covid pandemic and since I have been here; it was just lovely to have that endorsed by Estyn.

Attendance Years 11 and 13

As the assessment window closes, and from May 10th, it will no longer be necessary for Year 11 pupils and Year 13 students to attend lessons or be on school site. Material will be made available on line, through Google Classroom to support transition arrangements until the official leaving date on Friday 28th May. Should pupils require support from staff as regards advice on next steps or wellbeing support, then school will remain open to them. All Year 11 and 13 pupils should be available during this period should the need arise to consult on any aspect of their evidence for CDGs.

Arrangements for outdoor 'Covid Safe' leaving assemblies are being made for both Year 11 and Year 13 and further information will be provided once plans are finalised.

Attendance Year 12, 10 and KS3

All pupils and students in these year groups are expected to attend as normal through until the end of term Friday 16th July 2021.

Year 11 Leavers – Enrolment in 6th Form

Official enrolment for Year 11 into Year 12 will take place on August 12th 2021, GCSE results day. Further detail to follow.

Covid - Arrangements in school

The latest operational guidance regarding how we will operate from 10th May can be accessed at:

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

- Lateral flow testing is available for all staff, pupils and students who wish to participate in it.
- Carmarthenshire County Council provided face coverings at the start of term to be worn by all non-exempt individuals whilst on the school site. These face coverings together with disposable blue coverings provided by school are the only acceptable coverings that can be worn on site.
- Please bear in mind that as part of this staff may remove their face coverings in classrooms, where they can remain 2m from everyone else, to enable them to be clearly heard at key points.
- Use of hand sanitisers and social distancing will continue to be essential in order to keep everyone as safe as possible.
- Maintaining a safe distance and avoiding contact is still a key Covid safe guidance.

Uniform

As we move towards a greater sense of normal, we will gradually be raising our expectations on how pupils present themselves in school as regards school uniform

The Welsh Government guidelines are very clear that school uniform is an important part of “normal” life at the moment, and of benefit to student’s wellbeing. We are also glad to see that supermarkets etc. are now able to sell school uniform. **To this end can we remind parents that full school uniform is expected and that normal rules apply regarding jewellery, length of skirts, footwear and hair colouring.**

PE Kit: Can we remind parents that pupils should only wear PE kit on those days they have PE. That the PE kit worn to school needs to be the school’s designated kit.

While we appreciate there have been some difficulties around purchasing of items and the fit of items as children have grown during lockdown, I would urge parents to revisit suppliers for new uniform where it is needed.

If you have any spare or unwanted school uniform, please consider donating it to the school to offer support to others.

We are aware that though these plans are designed to provide for all students, individual circumstances may vary. Please contact us if you require support or help.

As mentioned above, if there are any issues please contact the school at [office @qehs.carms.sch.uk](mailto:office@qehs.carms.sch.uk)

Reminders of Further Important Information

A) Road Safety, behaviour and courtesy towards the public

Could I ask parents to pass on reminders to pupils of the importance of road safety on the way home? The road outside the front of the school can be very busy, especially at the end of the day and it is important to remain on the pavement. Some of our pavements are quite narrow and I would remind pupils to be courteous and respectful of other pedestrians. It is not safe to be running off the pavement or to play ball games on these narrow walk ways on the way home.

Senior staff have been on duty at the end of the school day and arrangements are now in place for our police community service officers to have a regular presence and to keep pupils safe on their journey home.

B) Social Media

Though technology has been a huge benefit to the world in recent times, it is equally important that we also educate and support our children in its safe, correct and proper use. A useful guide on which apps etc. to use at correct ages can be found at the link below:

What age can my child start social networking? - Internet Matters

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/what-age-can-my-child-start-social-networking/>

There are also very helpful links on the Welsh Government website HWB, regarding keeping safe online, reporting abuse as well as advice on how to monitor your child’s digital use. This can be accessed by parents and pupils alike:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online/>

We would appreciate your support in reinforcing our message that no videoing or picture taking is allowed on site unless conducted or directed by a member of staff. This is an important part of our safeguarding procedures and included in our “acceptable use” agreement for using mobile phones on-site.

Inappropriate use of phones on site or indeed off site could result in students being unable to access their phone during the school day, in order to protect both their own wellbeing and that of others. We would greatly appreciate your support in keeping everybody safe

C) Support and Wellbeing

We are aware that these times are difficult for us all, especially our young people, and so will be continuing to make welfare checks with students, we would also like to make you all aware that there are a number of resources on our website designed to help this situation, that can be accessed via the link below:

<http://www.qehs.carms.sch.uk/safeguarding/>

Pupils are also, able to self-refer themselves to the area 43 counselling service via a link on our website. To do so please follow the link below:

<https://www.area43.co.uk/counselling/>

D) TTP

Whilst COVID infection rates continue to fall, it still remains important to contact the school if your child receives a positive test result. Please email us on either Office@qehs.carms.sch.uk to let us know if your child has symptoms, a positive test or needs to isolate.

If your child has any of the symptoms of COVID then please book a test via the Welsh Government website and inform the school and Delta Wellbeing by email on: TTP@deltawellbeing.org.uk or by telephone on 0300 333 2222

Please note – lateral flow tests are not to be taken if your child has symptoms of COVID and should be replaced by a PCR test.

All information is treated confidentially and allows us to plan for pupils’ safe return.

If your child is identified as a contact of someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, they will need to self-isolate at home for 10 days. This means they can't leave the house; they can't go the shops or exercise anywhere outside your home/garden, and they can't have any visitors to your home/garden. Everyone else in the household can continue as normal in line with the fire-break regulations. However, if your child becomes symptomatic, the whole household would then need to self-isolate.

To find out all the latest information, visit the Carmarthenshire County Council website:

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-services/education-schools/re-opening-schools/?type=45926>

Important contact information regarding TTP:

Queen Elizabeth High School	01267 245300 Office@gehs.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

E) Communication

As we return to school this still remains is a difficult and challenging time, therefore we will continue to try and keep in contact via updates on our website, our Xpressions APP and through our social media platforms of Facebook and the ParentPay service.

If you change your mobile number/ contact details it is important notify us as soon as possible so that you are able to receive important information.

Finally, a big thank you for your continued support of our school and community.

Kind Regards,

Dave Williams
Headteacher