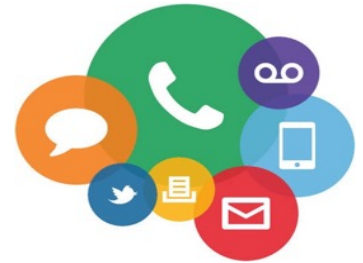


Queen Elizabeth High

Update for Parents -



Dear Parent/ Carer,

Once again, I hope this update finds you and your families safe and well in what has been a challenging week for the school, in the light of the expanding Covid pandemic. It is clear, both nationally and locally, that the incidence of Covid infection and transmission is rising. There is an increase in the number of positive cases in the Carmarthen community and this has impacted on the school this week. However, I do take confidence in the fact that our processes and protocols have worked this week to keep our school community safe.

We operate a Year group bubble system. When we receive a positive Covid result we work very closely with the Track Trace and Protect (TTP) team and health advisors to limit transmission. This can entail withdrawing part or all of a year group from school until TTP have had an opportunity to track and trace the infection. They then advise on whether to isolate specific groups, classes or year groups. This is not the school's decision; we are guided by health. In the last two weeks, we have seen this graded approach first hand. In Year 9 we were able to identify and isolate approximately half a year group, with the remainder of the year group safely returning to school. In Year 11 the decision was made to self-isolate the whole year group, initially for 48 hours following TTP investigations and then for 14 days to maintain safety. Most recently, on receiving positive test outcomes that morning, we were able to isolate and return home the whole cohort. Following TTP investigations the decision was made to self-isolate that year group for 14 days, with them returning after Half Term. Following a positive test result within Canolfan Elfed the decision was made quickly to self-isolate our community there in order to protect our most vulnerable of learners.

I would ask for your continued patience and support. When positive outcomes of tests are made available to us and confirmed, sometimes late at night, over weekends or during the school day we act quickly to mitigate its impact. In each incidence we take the appropriate actions quickly, supported by Health and TTP. Let me assure you that our systems in school are safe and robust. Covid infection and transmission is present in our wider community and I kindly ask for extra vigilance from parents;

- If your child has symptoms that relate to Covid then please keep them at home.
- If you have taken your child to be tested then please do not let them attend school while you are awaiting the outcome of results.
- If there is a positive test result in your family then please self-isolate and keep your child home.
- If your child does receive a positive test result then inform the school immediately. 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.

The number of positive cases in school is very small: 9 out of a school population of 1300. We have put in place the procedures to keep our pupils and staff safe.

I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to you all for your help and support last week. It is reassuring to know we are able to keep our school safe for everyone thanks to the support of our parents and the mature conduct of our pupils.

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:

<https://gov.wales/operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19>

1. 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

- Since the introduction of Llanelli’s Health Protection Zone, shared lifts to and from school are to be avoided.
- May we also take the opportunity to remind parents that they are to wear face coverings when collecting pupils from school.
- Face coverings are also mandatory on school transport and when moving around the school
- **To minimise all risks, could we please ask parents to remain in your cars when in the school car park.**

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>

2. Lunch and Break Time

We continue to operate a staggered provision at break and lunch times with pupils being able to spend their time in their classrooms or the indoor and outdoor areas of their allocated Curriculum Zone. The canteen has now extended their provision at lunch time and, although more pupils are taking the opportunity to

enjoy a hot meal, the queues are very short, and the system is working well. Pupils have indicated that they enjoy lunch times and spending time with their own year group.

The canteen only serves food during lunch time so pupils are reminded that they need to bring a snack for morning break and drinks for the rest of the day, if desired.

3. Learning Matters

Outstanding Learning

It is exciting to see our learners continue to thrive in their new routines as lessons at QEH remain interactive and engaging. We have been impressed by the creativity and critical thinking of our learners this week. We are developing the skills and strategies to further support learning in these challenging and unprecedented times. The focus for staff in the coming month is upskilling our blended learning and live streaming skills. We feel this is important as it lends high calibre support to learners at home, above and beyond the existing Google classroom provision.

Google Classroom

All pupils should now have Google Classroom codes for each of their lessons. These are used for homework tasks and to enhance learning in the classroom. They are also available for online lessons if needed during times of stricter health restrictions when schools may be directed to ask pupils to work from home.

Google Classroom codes can be found on our social media pages and will soon be uploaded in class lists on the school website.

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.

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, many thanks for your support this week. While there is no foreseeable short-term end to the COVID pandemic, 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**