

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your families have had a restful break and that you have remained healthy. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy new year.

I apologise for the length of this letter but it does contain essential information that I must ask you to read so that we can return to school in the safest way possible.

As you will be aware, government guidance has changed during the Christmas break and the government has announced a phased return to school for some children. This means that the start of term will be different to our published term dates for some pupils and students.

Primary Phase

The Primary Phase will open to all children as planned on Wednesday 6th January at 8.40 am. We will be opening our gates on Dukes Brow at 8.20am for our soft start to continue our staggered pupil entry.

Secondary Phase and Sixth Form

The Secondary Phase and Sixth Form will open on Wednesday 6th January at 8.40 am **for vulnerable children and children of critical workers only**. All other children should remain at home and follow online remote learning.

Vulnerable children and young people include those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
 - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
 - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
 - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
 - those living in temporary accommodation
 - those who are young carers
 - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
 - care leavers
 - others at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils and students who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health

Critical workers

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and EU transition response include those who work in health and social care, and in other key sectors, outlined in the following sections.

- Health and social care - This includes, but is not limited to, doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

- Education and childcare - This includes childcare, support and teaching staff, social workers, specialist education professionals who must remain active during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response to deliver this approach
- Key public services - This includes those essential to the running of the justice system, religious staff, charities and workers delivering key frontline services, those responsible for the management of the deceased, journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting
- Local and national government - This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the coronavirus (COVID-19) response, and the delivery of and response to EU transition, essential public services, such as the payment of benefits and the certification or checking of goods for import and export (including animal products, animals, plants and food), including in government agencies and arm's length bodies
- Food and other necessary goods - This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery, as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines)
- Public safety and national security - This includes police and support staff, Ministry of Defence civilians, contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and EU transition), fire and rescue service employees (including support staff), National Crime Agency staff, those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas
- Transport and border - This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response and EU transition, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass and those constructing or supporting the operation of critical transport and border infrastructure through which supply chains pass.
- Utilities, communication and financial services - This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure), the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage), information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response, key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services), postal services and delivery, payments providers, waste disposal sectors

If you wish for your Secondary Phase or Sixth Form child to attend school from 6th January due to being either a vulnerable child or a child of a critical worker, then you must register **before 5pm on Tuesday 5th January**. Please note that such pupils and students **must enter school via Main Reception** until the school fully reopens.

To register, please email criticalworker@QEGSBlackburn.com with the following information:

- Pupil/student name:
- Pupil/student form:
- DOB:
- Parent/Carer name:
- Reason for attendance:
- Job role (if relevant):

We do understand that this will create some difficulties for some parents and carers but we are following the guidance set by the government for Secondary Schools and Colleges to prepare for a

phased return to face-to-face provision, ahead of a full return of all pupils to face-to-face education from 18th January 2021.

In advance of 18th January, we will ensure:

- vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers can attend for face-to-face teaching from the advertised first day of term
- remote education is prioritised for pupils in examination year groups (primarily years 11 and 13 or those preparing for upcoming assessments or examinations) during the week commencing 4th January and full-time on-site provision for these groups from 11th January
- all other pupils or students will be provided with remote education while testing is underway until the 18th January, when they should return to school or college. Whilst they will be encouraged to do so, pupils and students will not need to have had a test to return to school or college on 18th January

If you are a critical worker, or your child is vulnerable, we do expect you to send them to school from the first day of term and their place must be confirmed using the email address stated above.

The current framework we are working towards is

- Wednesday 6th January: Primary Phase return to school, vulnerable children and children of critical workers in Secondary Phase and Sixth Form return to school. All other children to access remote learning.
- Monday 11th January: Year 11 and Year 13 pupils and students to return to school.
- Monday 18th January: Year 7, Year 8, Year 9, Year 10 and Y12 pupils and students to return to school.

Remote Learning

We expect all pupils and students who are not in school to access online remote learning following their normal timetable. Teachers will be delivering a mixture of live and pre-recorded lessons following the exact timings of the timetable and teachers will be available over email during the exact lesson times and therefore it is essential that your child attends lessons via their computer/tablet as if they were in school. I ask for your support with ensuring that your child does do this.

If you have any issues regarding your child accessing a device then please do email homeit@QEGSBlackburn.com with your concern. We do have a small number of devices that we can lend to pupils/students but they will be allocated on a needs basis with those currently entitled to free school meals and/or several children sharing one device in a household being given priority.

Testing

We will be offering lateral flow testing in school to year groups on a rota system, as per government guidance. If you wish your child to take a test then you will need to return a consent form. Further details regarding this will be sent separately.

Covid-19 Test Results

If you have any Covid-19 related issues, including any test results or isolations, then please do email me in the first instance at head@qegsblackburn.com. Please do remember that if your child has taken a Covid-19 test, then they **must not return to school** until the results of the test are known.

Travel

If you have travelled to another country during the Christmas break and now need to isolate, please can you email reportchildabsence@qegsblackburn.com with the dates of your travel, including when you returned to the UK.

Uniform

We do appreciate that the weather has turned cold and there is a delicate balance between the need for essential ventilation required to keep classrooms safe, whilst also remaining warm. With this in mind, I ask that children come to school wearing suitable warm clothing. This means that they should wear layers including a t-shirt or equivalent underneath their shirt/PE top and a jumper underneath their blazer. Children should also bring a suitable warm coat. As always, if any family requires any assistance in ensuring that their child has appropriate clothing and equipment then please do email Mr NH Vyse in the first instance via nvyse@QEGSBlackburn.com.

Below I have placed a series of information which has not changed since my earlier letters but is a useful reminder of what school is expecting this term.

Thank you again for your unwavering support and I truly appreciate your understanding as we work to bring all pupils and students back to school for the new term in the safest possible way.

Kind regards,
Mrs CY Gammon

Symptoms of Covid-19

The symptoms of Coronavirus (Covid-19) are a new continuous cough or a high temperature (over 37.8°C) or Anosmia (the loss of or a change in your normal sense of smell. It can also affect sense of taste as the two are closely linked). If your child or any member of their household has any of these symptoms, then your child must not come to school.

If your child is ill due to having symptoms of Covid-19, please notify school immediately, marking your email as urgent, follow the PHE 'stay at home' guidance, which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 10 days and arrange for your child to have a Covid-19 test immediately to ensure full engagement with the test and trace system. Please inform school immediately of the results of the test. A member of school staff will contact you during the first day of absence to confirm dates of the isolation period. This also applies if your child is isolating due to being in direct contact with someone who has symptoms of Covid-19.

If your child becomes ill with symptoms of Covid-19 during the school day they will be immediately placed in isolation (in accordance with government guidance) and you will be contacted and asked to collect them. If you cannot be reached, the other contacts given will be called as it is essential for your child to go home as soon as possible.

If your child has a positive result from a Covid-19 test, then they must inform the school immediately and follow the stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed Covid-19. They must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. The rest of the household must self-isolate for at least 10 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following '[stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)'.

If your child has a negative result from a Covid-19 test then they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 10-day isolation period.

I realise that you will be naturally concerned regarding children self-isolating. I do hope to limit the number of times any year group/ group of children do have to spend time in self-isolation but I am sure that you understand that this may be out of my control. Each time we are informed of a positive case, we do work with the DfE Covid-19 response team and the local education response team to identify any children or staff that could be close contacts. Our aim is always to keep as many children in school as possible whilst ensuring that all members of the school community remain as safe as possible. These decisions are not made lightly.

I ask that you keep a close eye on your children and do not send them into school if they are displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. This is to ensure the safety of the whole QEGS community. If you do decide for your child to have a Covid-19 test then please do not send them into school until the result of the test is known, even if they seem well.

If your child is self-isolating then please do email myself at head@qegsblackburn.com as we are endeavouring to keep detailed records of who is isolating and for what reason. The details that I need are whether they are isolating due to a member of the household or due to a close contact outside of the household/school and, if so, what date the isolation ends or if they are isolating due to having symptoms themselves and, if so, have they had a test and when. If your child has had a test then please do email me the results so that we can update our records.

If your child is isolating their work is available through Google Classroom and Class Charts. We endeavour to ensure that it is available as soon as possible matching the timetable as close as possible however, sometimes we do have a delay of 24 hours due to ensuring that teachers are able to upload work alongside teaching in school. Please ensure that your child looks at all their subjects each day for work even if they do not have a certain subject on that day. We are providing some live lessons but the quantity of these of these does depend on the workload of individual staff and how confident they feel in delivering these alongside their normal busy working days. You will find, however, that over the 2 week timetable, there will be at least some recorded elements for all children in all subjects.

Shielding

All children must be attending school from September 2020 and school has been informed to resume the process of issuing fines for those who have periods of unauthorised absence. If your child still requires to shield, then please contact Mr NH Vyse via email, nvyse@qegsblackburn.com, to explain the reasons why your child can not attend school. Mr Vyse will then contact parents/carers directly to discuss the situation including appropriate measures.

Travel

We ask that all parents and carers think carefully about how their child travels to school. Please read and follow the [safer travel guidance for passengers](#) when planning your travel. **If your child is traveling by public transport then they will be expected to wear a face covering.** The preferred method is to walk when possible following social distancing measures.

Absence

Should your child be ill then you must report their absence either via email on reportchildabsence@qegsblackburn.com (this is the preferred method) or via phone 01254 686300 choosing option 1. In both cases you need to state the name of your child, their form and year group, the reason for the absence and when you expect them to be well enough to return to school. This must be completed on every day your child is absent.

