

24<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your families are well and that you are clear about the arrangements for our return to school.

I know that you will have seen the recent coverage regarding the tightening of restrictions in some of the Blackburn with Darwen and Pendle boroughs and I urge you and your families to comply with these restrictions in order that we can all return safely to school. The restrictions do allow for children to return to school as planned as long as they or anyone in their household are not displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. As part of the overall strategy to control the virus and to keep everyone safe, those living in these areas are encouraged to be tested even if no symptoms are shown and I urge you to assist with this.

Please forgive me if you feel that this letter does have some repetition of the information that I sent last week but it is extremely important that everyone reads and understands this information so that we can keep safe as a community. This letter does contain some new and updated information and therefore please do read all of the letter carefully.

To remind you of the plans that school has introduced for our return:

**The “system of control” which is at the heart of how the school operates is in two parts and is as follows:**

**Prevention:**

- 1) minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school;
- 2) all pupils, students and adults' clean hands thoroughly more often than usual;
- 3) all pupils, students and adults follow good respiratory hygiene using the [catch it, kill it, bin it](#) approach;
- 4) the school has enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach;
- 5) minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible whilst ensuring that we also deliver a balanced and broad curriculum;
- 6) in specific circumstances and where necessary, adults and children will wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

**Response to any infection:**

- 7) all of the school community must engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
- 8) we will work with the local authority and PHE (Public Health England) to manage confirmed cases of COVID-19 amongst the school community
- 9) we will endeavour to contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

## Dates

School is reopening to pupils and students from Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September. This is slightly later than I had originally hoped but with the extra restrictions that are in place for both the boroughs of Blackburn and Darwen and Pendle, I believe that this is the correct decision. We will be implementing a phased return following the schedule below:

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September and Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September: Only pupils and students in years Reception, 2, 6, 7, 11, 12 and 13 should come to school.**

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September: All pupils and students should attend school.**

## Attendance

All children should be attending school in September and school has been informed to resume the process of issuing fines for those who have periods of unauthorised absence (this will be from 7<sup>th</sup> September). If your child still requires to shield then please contact Mr NH Vyse via email, [nvyse@qegsblackburn.com](mailto: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.

Should your child be ill then you must report their absence either via email on [reportchildabsence@qegsblackburn.com](mailto: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.

## 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 14 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 14-day isolation period.

## Self-Isolation Due to Travel

Due to the current travel guidelines in place, we are asking parents and carers to please inform us of any overseas travel that your child has done, where the date of return was **on or after 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020**. This includes any upcoming overseas travel you have planned before your child returns to school. We require this information so that we can accurately record which pupils and students will require a 2-week self-isolation period after returning from overseas. To view an up-to-date list of countries that are within one of the Government's 'travel corridors' and therefore exempt from this process, please click [here](#).

If the country your child has travelled to is **not within a named 'travel corridor'**, and you **returned on or after the 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020**, please email [travelupdate@qegsblackburn.com](mailto:travelupdate@qegsblackburn.com) with the following information:

- Pupil/student name(s):
- Year group(s):
- Country visited:
- Date of arrival in country visited:
- Date of return to England:
- Contact telephone number:

As outlined [here](#), your child will need to self-isolate if you visited or made a transit stop in a country or territory that is **not on the list** in the 14 days before you arrived in England.

## 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. **Please note that the new restrictions in some areas of Blackburn with Darwen and Pendle are asking people not to use public transport unless there are no alternatives.**

## Face Coverings

Public Health England does not (based on current evidence) recommend the use of face coverings in schools as pupils, students and staff are mixing in consistent groups, and because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. Face coverings must be worn by children (over the age of 11) who come to school by public transport or by minibus.

We ask that you demonstrate how to correctly use a face mask to your children including how to put on and take off. Pupils and students arriving at school wearing a face covering must **not touch the front** of their face covering during use or when removing it. They must **wash their hands immediately on arrival**, dispose of temporary face coverings in the covered bins which are in each area of school or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then **wash their hands again** before heading to their classroom. We ask parents and carers to read the guidance on [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care](#) which provides more advice.

## Arrival

We ask that no child arrives at school before 8.15 and that all children arrive by 8.40. We will not be opening Q Plus for the first half term. Please make every attempt to ensure that your child does not arrive late to school in order that we can avoid different groupings of children meeting. In an unavoidable situation, please bring your child directly to Main Reception.

On arrival at school all children must go to their form rooms. They will be asked to wash their hands and/or to use the hand sanitiser that will be provided.

Primary Phase: Pupils should be dropped off using the entrances off Duke's Brow. We ask that parents and carers socially distance at all times. Parents and carers must not gather in groups or enter the school playground areas without an appointment.

Secondary Phase:

Year 7 must use the Main Reception entrance

Year 8 must use the entrance from Top Quad and the stairs between Q3 and Q4

Years 9, 10 and 11 must use the ginnel to enter school and go directly to their year bases which are Hartley House, Ormerod House and Radcliff Wing respectively.

Years 12 and 13 must use the entrance to Singleton House.

## **Departure**

Primary Phase:

**Pupils in Reception, will finish school at 14:30 up to and including Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September and will be dismissed from their classroom doors.**

Years 1 and 2 will finish school at 15:20 and will be dismissed from:

Year 1 from the Reception playground,

Year 2 from the Primary Phase doors next to Mrs Tighe's office.

**Please note: To ensure that we can stagger the departure of children from the school, any child with a sibling in KS2 will be dismissed at 15:40 NOT 15:20. They will stay in their classrooms until this time supervised by school staff. All pupils with a sibling will be dismissed with their eldest sibling from their dismissal location.**

KS2 pupils will finish school at 15:40 and will be dismissed from:

Year 3 and 4 pupils (plus any siblings of Year 3 and Year 4 pupils) will be dismissed from the gate behind the Gym where the large gate will be opened. Year 3 will be on the left hand side and Year 4 on the right hand side.

Year 5 (plus any siblings of Year 5 pupils) will be dismissed from the Top Playground

Form 6LB will be dismissed from their classroom.

Form 6ZE will be dismissed from the KS2 building Main Entrance.

All parents, carers and pupils must leave the school site as quickly as possible and maintain social distancing at all times.

Parents and carers must not gather in groups or enter the school playground areas without an appointment.

Secondary Phase and Sixth Form:

Pupils and students will be dismissed from school after their period 6 lesson at 15.50. They must leave the school site as quickly as possible following social distancing measures. Please can you ensure that your child understands the importance of following social distancing when they are in public areas making their way to and from school.

All children, unless they are taking part in a staff run activity, must have left the school site by 16:00.

### **Equipment and Uniform**

All pupils and students in Years 3 and above must bring to school each day the equipment required to complete their studies as they will not be allowed to share equipment. This means that they require: pens, pencils, ruler, protractor, compass, glue, coloured pencils or felt tips, whiteboard pen and a calculator (year 7 and above). They must also bring their books and equipment in a small bag/rucksack as they will not be allowed to use lockers and will have to instead carry their resources with them. For pupils in Reception, Years 1 and 2, equipment will be provided in their classrooms. Pupils and students should also bring their own refillable water bottle. Please do encourage your child not to bring in any unnecessary equipment or items.

All pupils should attend school in full school uniform. Sixth Form students should attend in smart business dress. The exceptions are when your child has timetabled PE or Lammack. On these days your child should attend in school PE kit and their blazer (for sixth form students they should attend in smart and appropriate sports kit). Uniforms and PE kit do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.

### **Regime**

We are very aware that children will have developed new routines with such a long absence from school. Please can you use this week and next to prepare your child for their return to school and the normal school routine. This means getting them up at the normal time they would need to get up to come to school and ensuring they eat breakfast at this time. Please can you try to arrange for them to eat lunch at a similar time as to what they will do when back at school and for them to go to bed at the time you would expect on a normal school evening. This is to try and avoid children becoming anxious at school because they are tired and hungry.

### **Well-Being**

We are aware that children will be experiencing a mixture of feelings regarding returning to school. Some will be feeling excited to see their friends again whilst others may be feeling very anxious, particularly if they or their family members have been isolating or if they are wondering how they will be affected by the examination situation. Please can you spend some time talking to your child about their return to school and reassuring them that whatever they are feeling it is absolutely normal. Please remind them that all feelings are good and healthy to experience, it is what we do with these feelings that is important. For example, feeling worried is completely normal in these strange times and, by sharing their concerns, adults can really help ease a child's worries. The most important thing is to talk about these feelings and ensure your child feels heard. If you do have any particular concerns that you think we need to be aware of before your child returns to school then please email Mrs Southworth, [hsouthworth@qegsblackburn.com](mailto:hsouthworth@qegsblackburn.com), or Mr Vyse, [nvyse@qegsblackburn.com](mailto:nvyse@qegsblackburn.com), and they will ensure that your child's Form Teacher or Head of Year will be in contact.

### **Computer Access**

We have fully linked all our schemes of work to remote learning so that any child who is isolating can continue to access the curriculum. We are aware that some children did experience problems with accessing remote learning during lockdown and situations may also have now changed due to individual circumstances. If you feel that your child would struggle to access remote learning in the future due to the equipment available to them at home, then please email [homeit@qegsblackburn.com](mailto:homeit@qegsblackburn.com) stating your child's name and year group and the issues that your

child would have so that we can see as a school if there is anything that we can do to provide support. Alternatively, please write a letter addressed to Mr Vyse, marked as Home IT, which your child can hand in at Main Reception.

### **Behaviour**

It is essential when we return to school that all pupils and students display exemplary behaviour at all times including being kind and patient with all members of the school community. Please can you reiterate to your child the importance of following social distancing measures, good respiratory hygiene and washing/sanitising hands frequently. These are the most effective ways of keeping us all safe and therefore we will treat any breaches of our safety measures extremely seriously, sanctions will be imposed and parents/carers contacted.

### **Scopay**

Please remember to place funds on your child's Scopay account ready for the start of term if your child is in Years 3 and above and your child is not eligible for a free school lunch. If you have had any changes in your circumstances that you feel school will not be aware of or if your child has very recently become eligible for a free school lunch then please email Mrs D Griffiths [dgriffiths@qegsblackburn.com](mailto:dgriffiths@qegsblackburn.com)

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

We will be aiming to run some year specific clubs and subject clinics when we return to school. Details will be available later in the term. We will not be offering educational visits until later in the school year and we will have some disruption to sports fixtures. We will be reviewing our extra-curricular offer on a half termly basis to ensure that we can return to a full and engaging extra-curricular offer as soon as possible.

Hopefully the communications that are being sent are answering many of your questions. You will receive a parent/carer agreement form this week which must be signed and returned for each one of your children before the start of term. I will endeavour to continue to send weekly updates with more information. In the meantime, please continue to enjoy the final few weeks of the holidays and I look forward to welcoming your children back into school in September.

Yours sincerely,



**Mrs C Y Gammon**