

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to you as we bring the first half of the Lent term to a close today and finish for the half term break. I have also shared a video message on our social media pages this afternoon, which again mentions those classes who have impressed staff over the past week with their efforts, both in school and at home. Please take some time to watch the video with your child/ren, here:

<https://youtu.be/9Sbo0wtBQVg>.

As mentioned in the video, I would just like to reiterate the appreciation I have for the excellent work ethic shown by many of our pupils and students in recent weeks. It is a challenging time for us all but I have been very impressed by the way our community continues to pull together to ensure that our pupils and students have the support they need. I would also like to say a huge thank you to the teaching and support staff here at QEGS for their resilience during these unusual circumstances.

February Half term

School will close today for all pupils and students, with a staff INSET taking place tomorrow (Friday 12th February). As a reminder, no work will be set for over half term as we feel that pupils, students, staff and parents/carers at home would benefit from the rest, ahead of a busy second-half of the Lent term.

School will re-open on Monday 22nd February for our vulnerable children and children of critical workers who have a confirmed place in school. Those who do not have a confirmed place but would like to request a place for their child for after the half term break should email criticalworker@QEGSBlackburn.com with the child's name, year group and reason for attending.

The government have announced that they will provide an update on the 22nd February 2021 so I would like to ask you to please bear with us once this information is announced, as we receive this update at the same time as you. We will of course communicate the plans for a wider reopening of any year groups as soon as we can.

Sixth Form Applications

Applications to join our Sixth Form in September 2021 close on the 21st February so if you know any Year 11s at other high schools who are considering applying, please remind them of this deadline. We will then be holding a virtual Taster Day for all external applicants and communicate next steps for our current Year 11 pupils, including conditional offers.

Below I have shared some information which has not changed since my last letter but is an important reminder should you require it. We ask for you to please follow all local guidance and the measures that are currently in place over the half term break and we hope you and your family stay well.

Thank you for your continued support and I wish you a restful half term.

Best wishes,

Mrs CY Gammon

Critical worker/vulnerable children

We have approximately 200 pupils and students in school per day, classed as either vulnerable children or children of critical workers. Whilst we welcome these pupils and students into school, please ensure that you only request a place in school if you absolutely require one. Where possible,

please do keep your children at home unless they are classed as vulnerable so that we can support the overall aim of reducing infection rates in the area and can continue to protect our community. As a reminder, please email criticalworker@QEGSBlackburn.com if you wish to request a place in school for your child/ren.

We understand the challenges of remote learning whilst parents and carers work from home and although we encourage children to follow their timetable as closely as possible, we do not expect all lessons to be followed live as we appreciate the difficulties of accommodating the balance of working from home whilst supporting the learning of your children. All teachers are available during normal school hours and are keen to support every pupil and student so please do encourage your children to use this support.

COVID updates

We have a duty to report to the Department for Education on the COVID-19 situation in our school and wider community. Therefore, please do keep us informed if your child is self-isolating for any reason. You can do this by emailing reportchildabsence@qegsblackburn.com or calling 01254 686300. In addition, if your child has to take a COVID-19 test, please email me directly with the details of the test date and the outcome, at the earliest opportunity, so we can continue to report this information to the DfE.

As mentioned in my previous letter, if you require equipment to aid with your child's remote learning, please email homeit@QEGSBlackburn.com and we will do our best to fulfil your request. We have a small number of devices left in school which we are happy to loan to pupils and students, regardless of their year group.

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 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.

Shielding

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.