

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to you this week to provide a further update on some important information.

Yesterday, we recorded a video update which echoes the information below and highlights the classes who have impressed staff this week with their engagement in home learning. You can see this video on our Facebook page or watch in full here: <https://youtu.be/BjOo3yw03yE>.

### **Good news from our Sixth Form**

This week, our Head Boy, Zakariya Bux, was offered a place at Oxford University to study Philosophy, Politics and Economics. You can read more about this news [here](#). Well done again Zak, we are very proud of you! We also held our second Sixth Form Open Event last week and shared new information including student testimonials and information on the Taster Day in February for external applicants. If you know of anyone who would like to apply to our Sixth Form, please direct them [here](#).

### **Lateral Flow Testing**

Last week, we started to test pupils and students in school, from Year 7 upwards. If you have not returned your consent form and your child is currently in school, please check your email and **respond as soon as possible**. This testing allows us to potentially locate asymptomatic cases and ensure that our critical worker children, vulnerable children and staff stay safe in school.

### **Examinations update**

We have had some pupils and students enquire about the planned mock examinations in February. I can assure all children that there will be no mock examinations in February. We are unsure at this stage of our return dates for any year group and therefore we cannot plan for any mock examinations in the near future. We will ensure that should any mock examinations take place, all pupils and students will be given ample opportunity to settle back into school life and revise for these, before they take place.

In relation to this, the government has opened a consultation process for all parents, carers, pupils and students in Year 11, 12 and 13 to input their feedback on what should happen later this academic year, regarding examinations and grades. We would appreciate if you could contribute to this consultation, [here](#).

### **Welfare calls and reporting**

Welfare calls are currently taking place every 2 weeks for each year group. Members of staff are calling parents and carers of every child who is not attending school to check in and see how they are doing at home and if there is any further support the school can give. Please look out for these calls as it helps us support your children and maximises their learning in these challenging circumstances.

We are also currently in the process of finalising our Year 9 reports and reading these has provided me with a sense of great pride, I have read some very positive feedback from staff on our Year 9 pupils' performances in the first term of the school year. The process for Year 7 reports will also start in the next few weeks so I would like to remind these pupils that the work they are doing at home will be looked at, so to continue to keep trying their best and working hard on their remote learning.

The collation of further evidence for Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) starts next week for pupils in Year 11 and students in Year 13. As part of this process, we will be taking into consideration the

remote learning that is currently taking place in these year groups. I would urge all Year 11 pupils and Year 13 students to stay engaged and continue with their studies, as what they do now will most definitely contribute to those CAGs, should they be needed.

Finally, last week we shared the incredibly sad news that our minibus driver, Ian Yates, had passed away. You can read our tribute to Ian, [here](#). I ask you to please pray for Ian's family and friends, may they find comfort in your prayers and thoughts during this difficult time.

Below I have shared some information which has not changed since my last letter but serves as an important reminder should you require it. Thank you for your continued support and please continue to check our website and social media channels regularly for any important updates.

Best wishes,

Mrs CY Gammon

### **Critical worker/vulnerable children**

We have over 160 pupils and students in school per day this week, 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](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.

### **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.