

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you had a restful and healthy half term.

As announced by the Prime Minister on Monday evening, schools will reopen from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and we are working hard to finalise our plans for this reopening.

### **Primary Phase**

All Primary Phase children should return on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021, following the same procedures that were in place before the Christmas break during Michaelmas Term. As a reminder, your child/ren should be dropped off and collected via the Dukes Brow entrance at the usual times. Please remember to stand in the correct place whilst dropping off and collecting your child/ren to ensure that social distancing is observed and bubbles are maintained.

Unless your child is shielding and you have already confirmed this with Mr Vyse (via [NVyse@QEGSBlackburn.com](mailto:NVyse@QEGSBlackburn.com)), your child must attend from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

### **Senior Phase and Sixth Form**

On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March, we are planning to return three year groups. Then, over the following days, we will invite each year group to return, with all year groups back in school by Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March. As part of this task, I need your help in the form of consenting 'yes' or 'no' to lateral flow testing before the order of year groups returning can be confirmed as it is dependent on the number of pupils who will take part in lateral flow testing.

I have shared a video today which outlines our current plans for the return and further details on the testing procedure, which I would be grateful for you to watch with your child/ren. Please click [here](#) to view the video.

The link to the 'yes' or 'no' consent is [here](#). Parents/carers of pupils and students who are currently attending school and participating in the testing programme will not need to re-consent.

Please note, during the week commencing 8<sup>th</sup> March, we will not be able to invite our critical worker or vulnerable children into school in their current bubbles for Years 7 and above. Therefore, for those parents/carers who have had their child/ren attend school during the closure, please make arrangements for your child/ren to take part in remote learning until their year groups return that week.

Unless your child is shielding and you have already confirmed this with Mr Vyse (via [NVyse@QEGSBlackburn.com](mailto:NVyse@QEGSBlackburn.com)), your child must attend from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

### **Testing (for pupils and students in Year 7 and above)**

I invite you to please [watch the video](#) to learn more about the testing process that we are currently delivering in school. Testing has taken place since the start of this term for those pupils, students and staff in school and since the start of January, we have administered over 450 tests. Since starting the testing, we have been able to identify a number of asymptomatic cases in both staff and pupils, with only one false negative produced.

The testing will allow us to identify any asymptomatic pupils and students in school and reduce the need to close bubbles and whole year groups, as results from these tests are available in less than 30 minutes. If a test has not been taken in school, but a child begins to show symptoms and later tests

positive via a PCR test, we will need to send a greater number of pupils and students home to self-isolate and therefore disrupt the education of these pupils and students once again.

Therefore, I urge you to please consider giving consent for us to test your child/ren when they return and invite you to read the documentation that has been sent with this letter. You can then give your consent by clicking this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Z5NSQQN>. You need to complete this form by Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, at the very latest, as I need this information to confirm the final plans for returning all year groups in our Senior Phase and Sixth Form.

Pupils and students in our Senior Phase and Sixth Form whom we have consent for will be tested on their first day back at school, again 3-5 days later, and for a third time 3-5 days after this. After the three tests have been completed, we will be sending testing kits home and we do not expect to be doing any further testing in school.

If you have any questions about the testing process, please contact my PA, Miss Newton, via [LNewton@QEGSBlackburn.com](mailto:LNewton@QEGSBlackburn.com). If you are satisfied with the information provided and have a child in our Senior Phase or Sixth Form, please [click here](#) to give your consent.

Below I have shared some information which has not changed since my last letter but is an important reminder should you require it.

Thank you for your continued support and I look forward to welcoming your child back into school.

Best wishes,

Mrs CY Gammon

### **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.

### **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 before 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021. 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.

### **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.