

4th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome

On behalf of the Physical Education and Games Faculty, we look forward to welcoming you back to school after what feels like an eternity away. Whilst under lockdown restrictions, we hope that you and your families have enjoyed and engaged in the daily physical activity challenges that were posted on twitter and the school website to keep you active and healthy in mind and body. To those of you coming to QEGS for the first time whether it be in Year 7, 12 or are joining already established year groups, we are very much looking forward to meeting you. You are entering a school steeped in sporting history and tradition that offers a programme unparalleled by any other maintained school in the district. Welcome to QEGS!

September Return

The return to school in September will be a learning experience for us all but we have no doubt that in true QEGS spirit, we will all rise to the challenge and adapt accordingly. This will be the case in Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity where our return in September will be different to what many have you have been used to in the past.

In planning our programme for your return, it has been necessary to ensure that we follow government guidance on safety, cleaning and hygiene before restarting our sporting offering. We have made judgements regarding what physical activities can take place in light of our school specific environment, measures that relate to Blackburn with Darwen and other local boroughs in the North West area, and the advice offered by the Association for Physical Education and National Governing Bodies with whom we work closely.

Our ultimate aim is to provide a high quality Physical Education and School Sport enrichment programme that makes available as many activities as possible to all pupils and students. We will endeavour to provide a positive sporting and Physical Education package that will engage, motivate and enthuse our pupils and students.

Planning

We have worked hard to provide as near as a normal Michaelmas Term programme as we can however, a number of adaptations have been made which will be reviewed regularly as and when new guidance and legislation is provided. These are:

- As many lessons as possible will be delivered outdoors
- Pupils and students will come to school in appropriate PE or Lammack kit on timetabled days
- There will no teaching of swimming or use of the cardio suite until further notice
- Lessons will be taught in year group option choice 'bubbles' or designated classes
- Physical Education lessons will continue to be taught in a coeducational setting. The majority of Lammack games enrichment classes will be taught in single sex groups

- Risk assessments have been reviewed and updated for the use of all sporting facilities
- Transport to and from the Harrison Playing Fields at Lammack has been risk assessed in line with DfE 'dedicated transport' guidelines to include the wearing of face masks
- Staff have received induction that has focused on the implementation of QEGS whole school guidelines in regards to Covid-19 procedures and also operating procedures that relate specifically to the teaching of Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity

Physical Education

Physical Education remains compulsory for all pupils in Years 7-11 and refers to those lessons taught in the mornings. The programme focuses on developing fundamental movement skills, knowledge of how the body works and adapts to exercise and health related exercise and fitness testing. We will also deliver 'Covid-19 friendly' activities that will boost physical activity levels and promote fitness.

There will be no teaching of swimming nor use of the cardio suite until further notice.

Most of the activities will be taught outdoors where possible although contingency plans have been made for when the weather deteriorates.

Pupils must come to school in their PE kit wearing their QEGS blazer on the days when they have PE. Given the outdoor nature of the programme, it is advisable to bring a lightweight wet weather jacket to remain dry and stay warm.

Afternoon Games Enrichment

Afternoon games enrichment is the programme of activities that take part in the afternoons and we refer to it as Lammack. This is compulsory for all pupils and students in Years 7 – 12 and optional for students in Year 13.

Pupils and students will be taught afternoon games enrichment activities within their year group 'bubble' in class sizes that will not exceed those typical in any other lesson. On Wednesday afternoons, pupils and students in Years 11, 12 and 13 will be taught and transported to Lammack separately with Year 11 as one group and Year 12/13 as the second group. An individualised programme has been designed for each group. For all year groups, individual squads in football, and netball where scheduled, will receive some specialist coaching although the focus of the sessions in the main will be on fitness and skills practices.

The programme we offer has had to be adapted to adhere to government guidelines. Some activities have been removed from our offering for the time being due to the nature of the sport and / or facility restraints. However, these will be constantly under review and when it is appropriate for us to reinstate these, we shall do so immediately.

On the days when afternoon Lammack is timetabled, pupils and students must come to school in their PE kit and wearing their blazer. Sixth form students must attend school on Wednesdays in appropriate smart kit. It is advisable to bring a lightweight wet weather jacket and tracksuit bottoms to remain dry and stay warm. Those pupils and students identified as forming part of the football squads must bring football boots and shin pads.

Extra-Curricular Clubs and Activities

We intend to ease into the return to 'normal' lunchtime clubs and societies once the school is fully functional. No time period is allocated for this phased return but we shall endeavour to commence these activities as soon as we can. Activities will be offered to single year groups only and these will be advertised. The activities offered will be 'non-contact' in nature and be delivered, in the main, using the school gymnasium. Some house sporting competitions will proceed but will be year group focused. Pupil and student numbers attending in some of the

more popular clubs may well have to be restricted as necessary. All activities will adhere to the relevant National Governing Body and government guidelines. Pupils must arrive to school in full school uniform, (business wear for students), on those days bringing with them a pair of training shoes.

Whilst all competitive fixtures in our traditional after school activities such as swimming, table tennis, football, netball and badminton have already been planned, it will not be possible to go ahead with these until further notice. In line with all other schools, once legislation is passed and it is safe to do so, we shall re-commence immediately.

Saturday Morning Sport

QEGS is one of the few maintained state schools that offers a fully inclusive Saturday morning sporting programme and this will resume as soon as it is feasible and safe to do so. At present and in line with the policy adopted by all other schools, we are unable to offer our regular programme of inter school sporting fixtures in football and netball at home or away.

Saturday morning squad training in netball and football will commence as soon as it is practicable to do so. All practices will follow National Governing Body 'return to competition' guidelines in line with government authorisation. A strict schedule will be observed relating to arrival and departure protocol. Regular hand sanitization and the cleaning of equipment will apply. Pupils and students will arrive in kit bringing appropriate wet weather attire as necessary. A full risk assessment will be published in preparation for the first Saturday morning. Pupils, students, parents and carers are asked to adhere to the guidelines outlined in order to ensure that this sporting offer remains as safe as possible.

We appreciate that the lack of sporting fixtures initially will come as a disappointment to many. It is our intention to implement the planned competitive fixtures as soon as possible across all sports and we will expect pupils and students in squads to attend training sessions when they resume, as would be typical of a normal Saturday morning occasion. There is still much that can be done to prepare our teams technically, tactically, mentally and physically for when we re-commence.

Please be aware that although some sporting National Governing Bodies' roadmaps enable competitive grass roots sport to be played, we are also adhering to local restrictions and the Department for Education guidance which, at present, does not permit this. All of our fixture playing schools are applying this at the present time. When we can, we shall play!

Health & Safety in Lessons

Additional health and safety measures have been introduced to supplement those that operate within normal QEGS whole school health and safety guidelines.

These include:

- Thorough risk assessments of all facilities being used
- Pupils and students will hand sanitise more frequently than normal
- Staff will carry additional hand gel with them
- Additional cleaning of equipment will be undertaken before, during and after lessons to avoid viral transmission through equipment contact
- Designated hand sanitiser and cleaning stations
- No lending of lost property kit
- A 'cleaning culture' will be developed within the Faculty that all pupils and students will be introduced to in their first lesson.

Kit should be washed as normal after use. In all circumstances, pupils and students should come to school in clean kit. Should this not be possible, a minimum expectation of a plain white t-shirt will be acceptable.

Wet Weather / Extreme Cold

The majority of activities are scheduled to be taught outdoors and pupils and students should bring a lightweight wet weather jacket to make this possible in the event of inclement weather. Where necessary, the use of large indoor spaces including the Gymnasium, Lammack Sports Hall, Library Annexe and Assembly Hall may be used to facilitate the programme.

On afternoons when the weather is particularly poor, an adapted indoor programme will apply. A carousel of indoor activities will be delivered satisfying Covid-19 friendly guidelines. It may be necessary that for part of the afternoon, some of the lesson time will be classroom based to focus on such issues as diet and nutrition, government guidelines for exercise, mindfulness and mental health.

We hope that this letter gives you a brief summary of what we are delivering and how we are going to deliver it. We look forward to working with you during this academic year.

Yours sincerely,

Dr ME Butler
Head of Physical Education and Games Faculty