

18 May 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

The wider reopening of schools

Further to my letter to you on Tuesday last week, the senior team has been collecting thoughts on how best to proceed in light of the government's recent announcement that schools should begin to prepare for the possible return of some pupils from 1st June. Specifically, for high schools, this means supplementing remote learning for students in years 10 and 12 with some face-to-face support. As things stand, there has been no mention of other secondary year groups, other than they should continue remote learning at home.

I shall be writing separately to parents of students in years 10 and 12 to provide more details on the arrangements for these year groups. General information for all parents and carers is provided below, with some specific detail for those in years 9, 11 and 13.

Children of key workers and those who are vulnerable

Arrangements for those for whom on-site provision has been available since lockdown began, will continue each day next half-term. Please note that from 1st June, this will no longer be at the middle school for QE students but will instead be at the high school. Students will be greeted upon arrival on site by staff and supervised from there.

Year groups leaving this year

It is a source of significant disappointment to staff, as it will certainly be for the students themselves, that we are not able to have our usual end-of-schooling celebrations for those who are leaving. However, Mr Vasey and Mr Brown are giving thought to how we may mark the occasion in some way, in lieu of physically coming together. We will write separately to years 11 and 13 about this in due course. Ms Platts and Ms Innes will also be in touch next half term regarding arrangements for results days in the summer.

Remote learning at home

Thank you very much to all who responded to our recent survey on this. We had 367 responses. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and we really appreciated the many lovely comments. We also valued the suggestions you made about how we can do even better and are fine tuning our approach as a consequence. There was follow-up action on all student-specific points raised, but if there are any outstanding issues, please do let us know.

A small number of parents have asked whether there could be more 'live' teaching, for example via a platform such as Zoom. Such teaching is taking place to a degree in the sixth form (using Teams) and we are looking to extend this. However, after much discussion, we have decided to broadly maintain our existing approach for students in lower school, with some adaptation to enable better connectivity with teachers.

Pastoral contact

As you know, pastoral staff have been in touch with parents to find out how students are getting on at home and to provide you or them with the opportunity for a follow up telephone call. If you would welcome this but haven't yet been in touch with us, please don't hesitate to let us know via pastoral@gehs.net. Beyond this, we are looking at ways we can further enable better contact with each individual student, particularly those in year 9 who won't have the face-to-face opportunities available to those in years 10 and 12. Our regular pastoral newsletters will continue and we would ask that you share them with your son or daughter. Previous issues can be found [here](#).

New build activity and decant of the Hydro

Despite the current lockdown, the contractor's programme continues to be, by and large, on track. Much of the activity thus far has been preparatory, associated with levels, drainage and utilities. The summer months will see the establishment of a temporary "village" of classrooms on site, adjacent to the Hydro, to provide accommodation in lieu of the fact that this building will be fully decanted by September to allow for its renovation and refurbishment. I shall write to you in due course with more details.

Staffing update

As you know, Mr Andriot, Head of School, leaves us at the end of this half-term to take up the position of Principal at Excelsior Academy in Newcastle. Mr Andriot has been an outstanding servant to Queen Elizabeth High School over the past eleven years, not least as Head of School over the past three. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his excellent work and support, and wish him the best of luck as he takes up his new post.

In early March, we began the process of seeking a new Head of School. However, given the current situation, we decided to place this on pause for the time being. Until such time that a successor is appointed and takes up post, Mr Andriot's responsibilities will be allocated among the senior team. I shall write to you at the start of next half term with more details.

With all good wishes until my next letter to you.

Yours faithfully



Graeme Akins
Executive Headteacher