

2 June 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

An update on arrangements for students in years 10 and 12

I hope this letter finds you and your family well. Last week, the government published its guidance for secondary and high schools relating to years 10 and 12. They have specified that home learning is to remain the predominant mode of education throughout this term for students in these year groups, but schools should plan to supplement this with some face-to-face support from 15 June.

I would now like to share with you the details of what the support at QEHS will look like, as well as the principles guiding our thinking. Once you have read the details below, I would be grateful if you would complete a short survey by **3pm on Thursday 4 June** to let us know whether your son or daughter intends to come into school to access the support. This will enable us to plan specific groups and times for students to be in.

You can access the survey [here](#).

I have included the key arrangements as an appendix to this letter, given the amount of detail there is. In arriving at these arrangements, we have followed carefully the Government's guidance on reopening schools and are drawing up a comprehensive health and safety risk assessment.

In broad terms, our intention is for each year 10 and 12 student to be in for an initial face-to-face session from week commencing the 15th of June, with further face-to-face support as the half term progresses. Each day, certain groups of students will be scheduled to arrive at staggered times, to then be organised into smaller groups of no more than ten in classrooms. Students in year 10 will not be required to be in school uniform.

The students' first time in school will focus on unpicking the past two months from both an academic and pastoral perspective – what's working, what isn't; aspects they are coping with, aspects they are struggling with, and so on. Subject-specific perspectives will be prompted and fed back to individual members of staff to follow up on directly. Mental health and wellbeing guidance will also be part of that first provision, as will more bespoke pastoral support as required. We will determine follow up sessions on the basis of students' feedback in the first sessions.

The provision that has been in place until now for key worker and vulnerable children will continue throughout the half term. Students here will still be allocated a group, a date and start time in accordance with the plans for years 10 and 12, but will resume their usual on-site provision either side of their face-to-face support.

The more detailed arrangements follow in the appendix. My hope is that they give you the confidence you and your son or daughter need for them to come in to access the support. However, should you decide you would rather keep your child at home for the time being, we shall of course respect your decision and will continue to provide online resources. Either way, please do let us

know your intentions via the [survey](#). Thank you in anticipation and please get in touch should you have any queries or concerns.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Akins', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Graeme Akins
Executive Headteacher

APPENDIX TO LETTER

Clarity on who is and isn't able to attend school

In its most recent [guidance](#), the Government provided updated clarification about who is and isn't able to be in school, as follows:

- Children who have been classed as **clinically extremely vulnerable** due to pre-existing medical conditions (as outlined [here](#)), have been advised to shield in accordance with this [guidance](#). We do not expect children in this category to be attending school. Neither do we expect children who **live in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable**, to attend.
- **Clinically vulnerable** (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people, as defined [here](#), are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. Few if any children will fall into this category, but parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.
- A child who **lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable)**, including those who are pregnant, can now attend school.
- Children with symptoms of coronavirus or who are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household should not attend. Guidance on this can be found [here](#).

The nature of the support

- From 15 June, students will be invited into school on a specific day at a specific time for an initial two-hour session with members of staff. You will be given good notice of your son or daughter's session and its start time. Any students using a service bus to get to and from school will be allocated the first morning start time and will be enabled to stay in school for the rest of the day until the bus departure time. Lunch provision will be available for those staying in school for the day due to transport requirements. Please note they should not bring any payments for school lunches as these will need to be pre-ordered and paid for online.
- We would encourage those not relying on school transport to walk, cycle or travel by car rather than by public transport wherever possible. More details about transport arrangements follow below.
- The main focus for the first face-to-face session will be to get each student's detailed perspective on their home learning experience thus far – what's working, what isn't; aspects they are coping with, aspects they are struggling with, and so on – with a view to teachers giving initial guidance to them in the session. Subject-specific queries will be fed back to individual members of staff and the students' broader feedback will be reflected upon by school leaders, with a view to making adaptations to our online provision for the rest of the half-term and beyond.
- The first session will also provide an important opportunity to discuss with students their experience from a pastoral perspective and to address issues that may be concerning them. We will offer mental health and wellbeing guidance to support students through this strange time. In addition, we will enable individual students to discretely flag any private concerns they may have. Pastoral staff will then arrange any bespoke support as required.
- We are aware that students with additional needs may find coming back to school difficult initially. We will be mindful of their needs when placing them in small groups and will have additional support available as required.
- As mentioned, we will determine follow up sessions on the basis of students' feedback in the first sessions. These may involve reflecting on the period of time since the first session, to

determine whether issues raised previously have been addressed and to provide the opportunity for further pastoral guidance and more specific subject support.

Health and safety arrangements

- Preparatory work is well underway to ensure that we have as safe an environment as practically possible for year 10 and 12 students coming in. The school is being cleaned thoroughly and staff will be on duty throughout each day to ensure the regular, scheduled cleaning of surfaces, including desks, door handles and switches, and equipment, with the regular emptying of bins.
- Hand wash will be available in all toilets for students and staff as well as in the additional hand washing facilities that will be set up. Anti-bacterial gel will also be available but this will be for use as a secondary measure; the emphasis will be on proper handwashing at a sink.
- In classrooms, desks are being placed two metres apart.
- Markings of two metre distance are being placed in the corridor spaces and will be used to guide student movement and any queueing that can't be avoided. Arrows will indicate the direction of student movement. It is important to note that the Government guidance does allow for corridor passing as an inevitable aspect of operating a school and, whilst we will try to avoid this, we cannot eliminate this entirely.
- Clear signage is being put up around school to give specific directions for key areas such as toilets, handwashing zones and corridors, as well as positive messages to encourage mental wellbeing for students and staff.
- We expect students to bring in only a very small number of personal items, such as coat, basic learning equipment and water bottle, with no items to be shared.
- A handwashing station is being established in one of our science labs and groups will be taken on arrival to wash their hands, and thereafter as necessary.
- Students will of course have access to toilets whilst in school and arrangements will be in place to manage safe movement to and from these.
- Arrival and departure times will be staggered, with specific times being shared with parents once we have processed the survey findings. We ask parents to ensure that students do not arrive at school earlier than their scheduled time. If students do arrive on site early, duty staff will take them to a designated area where they will wait until their arrival time.
- Students will be organised into small classroom groups of no more than ten, and will remain with their group for the session, interacting with no more than two teachers. This arrangement will enable us to keep the number of people with whom students and staff come into contact low, in line with government guidance. The make-up of the groups in year 10 will reflect maths sets.
- In the sessions, we do of course expect that everyone will behave sensibly. Teachers will deal with any issues in class as they usually would. They will use our behaviour system which gives students different warnings and a chance to make the right choices. We know that they will need reminders to follow the new routines and initially they may forget. However, anyone who is intentionally not following the guidance, and is putting the safety of others at risk, will be dealt with very firmly.
- If a student develops suspected Covid 19 symptoms whilst at school, they will be isolated in a classroom, under supervision, until a parent comes to collect them. Thereafter, we will follow the up-to-date government guidance on this situation.

Transport arrangements

- If your son or daughter relies on a school bus to get to school, you should have received a letter from Northumberland County Council requesting that you inform your child's

transport provider directly of the days they will be in. We have organised the groups to enable you to give the three days' notice requested. If you should experience difficulties contacting your child's transport provider, please contact NCC's school transport team on 01670 624839.

- The Government is strongly advising against the use of public transport (as opposed to school buses) for children to come to school next week. They have issued advice on safe travel to school as part of the #TravelSafely campaign. The resources can be found [here](#).