



Queen Mary's Grammar School

Headmaster: R J Langton, M A

10th June 2020

Partial re-opening of the school from 15th June (Years 10 and 12)

Dear parent/guardian

Further to the government announcements that secondary schools can partially re-open to some members of Years 10 and 12, I am writing to you with some updates on the School's approach.

Significant risk assessment and planning has taken place in order to make sure that the site is safe. This has been done in conjunction with the safety advisors to the multi academy trust.

We have received survey responses from the vast majority of Year 10 parents and a well over half of those in Year 12. Just over three quarters of parents have said that their children would come into school and have indicated key subject areas for support. We will collate all of this information and make it available to departments. Most of the reasons for not wanting to come in focus upon uncertainty with the current national situation, concerns over transport and health vulnerabilities within the family home. I understand all of these anxieties.

It is very difficult to establish a meaningful programme of study in school for the Year 10s and 12s, whilst respecting the national advice, particularly in terms of 'social bubbles'. The initial thinking was to give an opportunity for them all to come in on a rota, but it is going to be very difficult to provide them the opportunities to spend time with staff, whilst respecting the fact that they follow different options pathways and therefore cannot see everyone. Equally, staff would not be able to see more than one set of students and we cannot disadvantage those who cannot come in. To that end, I cannot see how we can provide anywhere near their usual curriculum entitlement in school. I am also mindful of the distance some of them have to travel (including using public transport) and the fact that the government is saying that this is to support their online learning, not to replace it.

To that end, I am proposing the following model from 15th June:

- (a) **Designation of students most in need of face-to-face support** – The Year 10 and 12 pastoral teams already have comprehensive lists of those students not engaging as well with online work, along with the survey responses from parents. The proposal is that a relatively small group of Year 10/12s come into school to work in a supervised and structured environment (fewer than 20% of the cohort) for certain days in the week in order to bring them up to speed with their learning. They would be supervised by a small group of staff each day, who could provide subject-specific support according to need, as well as pastoral input. By only bringing in a small number, it reduces the complexity (and therefore risk) of so many students/staff being in school.
- (b) **Adapt and develop our online learning approach** – I have consistently said that the blended learning approach will continue for some time and we need to develop our approach. We will be increasing the interactivity of our delivery online, using Teams, through the use of tutorials with small groups of students in order to maximise engagement. I think that this has (with the correct safeguards in place) huge potential for 'face-to-face contact' without the risk of being in school. It also means that staff can interact with different groups and students can speak with more than one teacher. Sessions will be set up in what would usually be a lesson for that group on the timetable, to avoid clashes. Please note, this is not an expectation of whole-group live lessons and certainly not at the frequency that they would be on the timetable. It is a

tutorial-based approach to support learning and will vary between departments. This will be gradually rolled out over the term, once the necessary preparation has been put in place.

- (c) **Pastoral contact** – I would also like greater opportunities for form/group tutors in Years 10/12 to contact their tutees, either through small-group tutorials or by phone. This is to check-in with them generally about their learning, but also to support in areas such as UCAS. The pastoral team are already calling large numbers of students, but I would like to re-establish the form/group tutor link, which will be vital in September when the students return to school in a more formal way.

I will be writing soon to the parents of those students designated as most needing face-to-face support separately, to set out our arrangements and safeguards. I will also be circulating renewed school policies, to cover distance/blended learning approaches in terms of behaviour, safeguarding and assessment.

I appreciate that for lots of parents and students, this may be frustrating, as you would like school to re-open for more people. At a time where there is still considerable uncertainty, I cannot take undue risks and need to prioritise our approach. When the scientific advice allows for more of a conventional curriculum to be delivered, we will expand this provision.

Many students are missing their friendship groups and I suspect that is a big reason for the demand to return, but we have to be patient and respect the national situation. The government have produced specific guidance for young people, as they recognise the difficulties of social distancing:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stay-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-guidance-for-young-people/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-guidance-for-young-people>

Key worker and vulnerable children provision

We will continue to provide our service to care for these groups of students throughout the summer term. If you would like to enquire about this, and are not included in the other support groups, please contact us at enquiries@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk

Safeguarding and other concerns

We maintain our responsibilities for safeguarding and we continue to be proactive in monitoring students. We have written and published an amendment to the School's safeguarding policy, to take into account specific issues related to school closure and partial re-opening. If any parent or student needs to make contact with the school because of a safeguarding concern, they should do so via Mr Collins (the designated safeguarding lead) through his email address:

gk-collins@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk

Behavioural expectations

We continue to expect the highest standards of behaviour and conduct of the students during this period of enforced school closure. Can I ask that all parents re-enforce this, with particular reference to online activity via social media and other sources? We have re-written our behaviour policy, with reference to specific issues in school closure. All updated policies will be available on our school website, under 'about us' and 'policies'. If there are any issues, please contact Mr Brown (behaviour lead) through his email address:

tb-brown@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk

Thank you for your ongoing support at a difficult and uncertain time.

Yours sincerely



Richard Langton, Headteacher