



Queen Mary's Grammar School

Headmaster: R J Langton, MA

5th January 2021

Beginning of term updates – January 2021

Dear parent/guardian

The government's announcement of a [national lockdown](#) on 4th January has meant that we have to change our plans for the beginning of term. This letter is intended as an update to the one sent on 31st December and I will follow this up with weekly community emails in this first part of the Spring Term.

In short, the school is now closed to all students until February half-term, apart from those who are deemed to be vulnerable or are the children of [critical workers](#). Please complete the [MS Form](#) to let us know if you qualify as a critical worker and require your son/daughter to be in school.

From Tuesday 5th January, remote education will be provided for years 7-12 following the normal timetable. For Year 13, the mocks will not take place next week and remote learning will begin on Monday 11th January. I understand the anxiety felt amongst the Year 11 and 13 groups with the announcement that the exams won't run as scheduled in the summer. We know nothing more than the PM's announcement that "the Secretary of State for Education will be asking Ofqual to consult rapidly on an approach for alternative arrangements that will allow students to progress fairly." It is vital that the students continue to follow the curriculum pathways in their different subjects in order to be best prepared for whatever arrangements are put in place. We are keen for the Year 13 mock exams to run at a later point, but need to consider the DfE's guidance. We are still planning to run the Year 11 academic review meetings later in January and will be releasing mock exam data later this week.

Changes to remote learning

Students will have a registration period at 9am each day with their tutor, in order to check that they are up and ready for the day. We will follow up on any absences from this session and it is important that you liaise with the relevant Head of Year if your son/daughter is not able to access their sessions on any day.

We have also updated our [remote learning statement](#). The key addition is that a minimum of 1/3 of subject remote learning each week will consist of live teaching and learning. This can take many forms; live lessons, live delivery of subject materials, Q&A sessions, or teachers being available online on Teams to verbally support pupils with their work. Subject teachers will communicate the timings of these sessions with their groups via Teams, and they will occur during the subject's usual timetabled slots. Please ensure that your child attends all of their live sessions if they are fit and well. Registers will be taken for these sessions. The pastoral team will contact parents if there are concerns regarding the completion of work remotely, or persistent non-attendance at live sessions.

We continue to have high expectations of pupil behaviour in these live sessions. A list of key expectations is here;

- Pupils should have their microphones muted unless asked to unmute by the teacher.
- Pupils must use the Raise Hand Function if they would like to ask a question or answer a question posed by the teacher.
- Pupils should have their cameras disabled on Teams.

- Pupils should treat live Teams sessions in the same way as they would treat a 'normal' classroom lesson. E.g. lesson materials should be to hand, they should be away from potential distractions, mobile phones away etc.
- Note that pupil permissions on Teams mean that they cannot record; they can't start meeting or calls; they can't share their screen or take control of the screen.

Please talk to your child regarding these expectations.

We have asked pupils to complete a short survey regarding their use of Teams and remote learning in the first term. This has been emailed to their school email account. Please encourage them to complete this if they haven't already. We would also really appreciate parents completing a [short survey](#) regarding the use of Teams from a parental perspective.

Children who receive Free School Meals

We are making arrangements for digital vouchers to be circulated for those students who receive free school meals, for the time whilst they are not in school. Please contact us at the enquiries@gmgs.walsall.sch.uk if you have any questions about this.

Safeguarding and other concerns

We maintain our responsibilities for safeguarding and, as previously mentioned, will be proactive in monitoring students where there have been issues in the past. 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 via well-being@gmgs.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? If there are any issues, please contact Mr Brown (behaviour lead) at the school.

Preparing for asymptomatic testing

We have spent much of the past week preparing for [testing in school](#). We will continue this preparation, in order to make sure that this facility is set up for when students return to school. We will communicate in due course with more information and requests for consent.

National guidelines

Please continue to follow the [national guidelines](#) regarding Covid-19, in terms of recognising symptoms, testing & tracing, self-isolation, control measures and other information. Do continue to inform us of positive cases within the student body in line with our [established procedures](#).

Please liaise with the relevant Head of Year if there are issues related to online learning or if you have a pastoral concern.

Thank for your ongoing support at a challenging time. I will write again next week

Yours sincerely



Richard Langton, Headteacher