



Queen Mary's Grammar School

Final reminders for return to school on Monday 8th March

All

I wrote to you earlier this week with regards to arrangements for next week. The following documents are available on the ['Letters for parents'](#) page of our website:

- Covid-19 related pupil absence – a guide for parents Dec 2020
- A message from the Headmaster – 3rd Mar 2021
- School re-opening Mar 8th 2021
- School entrance maps and timings Mar 8th 2021

There are a few particular matters I would like to draw attention to.

1. COVID-19 testing for pupils on return to school

Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and pupils to remain in school safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. By testing we will help to stop the virus spread and help to keep our school open as safely as possible. The test is voluntary, but I want to encourage everyone to take part – indeed the greater the coverage the greater impact it has as a public health control measure.

If you are happy for your child to be tested, please fill in the [online consent form](#). We will not discriminate in any way against those students who chose not to consent to the testing.

2. Submitting questions

Please do take the time to read these documents and use the [MS Form](#) embedded into the letter to ask any questions

3. Homework and assessments

Following discussions, we have decided that no H/W should be set in the first two weeks and teachers will be mindful of assessments in class. We have to prioritise the re-integration of students and be mindful of their mental health as they return. Students should take the time in form and class to speak to their peers and staff about any concerns.

4. Year 11 and 13

Following extensive consultation and discussion with staff and students, the decision has been taken not to hold Year 13 mocks in exam conditions this year. The rationale for this is follows:

- We are very mindful of the importance of student mental health and the anxiety that may build up over impending "high-stakes assessments". We want students to feel confident returning to school without the additional pressure of mock exams waiting for them
- The guidance issued by OFQUAL on Thursday 25 February gives schools some freedoms to use assessments in the widest sense to contribute towards the awarding of grades this Summer
- We still have to wait for further guidance from exam boards, due to be released by the end of March, before we can give any further information about how and what assessments can be used towards issuing grades.

Please do not contact the school or individual teachers regarding how we are going to be awarding GCSE or A Level grades this Summer. We realise that this is a particularly challenging time for all students but staff need time and space to respond to the changed landscape, in light of the guidance that has been released and is going to be released at the end of March. Rest assured, we are doing all that we can behind the scenes to ensure that all students will be given opportunities to be awarded the grade that they deserve.

We have taken the decision to inform all students in Year 11 and Year 13 that no assessments conducted between the return to school on March 8th and the Easter holiday will contribute towards the grade awarded. This will allow

staff and students to continue to identify gaps in learning, without the additional pressure of high-stakes assessments.

We will be communicating with Year 11 and Year 13 students and parents as soon as we have more definitive information. This is most likely to be after the Easter holiday.

5. Rollout of lateral flow testing (LFT) for wider members of the school community

Since my correspondence earlier in the week, the government has announced the [further roll-out](#) of lateral flow testing (LFT) for wider members of the school community and this includes:

- households, childcare and support bubbles of primary and secondary-age pupils
- households, childcare and support bubbles of primary and secondary staff

From **1 March 2021**, if you're a member of a household, childcare bubble or support bubble of staff or a pupil you can get a twice-weekly test:

- i. through your employer if they offer testing to employees
- ii. at a local test site
- iii. by collecting a home test kit from a test site
 - You can collect up to 4 home test kits at a local collection point. Each kit contains 7 tests.
 - Anyone 18 or over can collect.
 - You can check online if the location is busy before you go.
 - <https://find-covid-19-rapid-test-sites.maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/>
- iv. by ordering a home test kit online

If you cannot get tested at your workplace, or are unable to go to a test site or collect test kits, you can order a home test kit online. This service will launch on 1 March and you can order via this link: Schools testing: Order coronavirus (COVID-19) rapid lateral flow home test kits – <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

The full guidance on the roll out of testing to families of primary children and staff can be found using the link below: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff>

What does twice-weekly testing involve?

You will be asked to:

- take a test twice a week (each week 3 or 4 days apart)
- report every result to NHS Test and Trace on the same day you take the test. Report your test result online or by calling 119.

I encourage you to take part in this programme, as it is intended to further reduce the rates of transmission. By doing so, we can all work together to make the school a safer place

Regards



Richard Langton

Headmaster

Queen Mary's Grammar School, Walsall

01922 720696

www.qmgs.org

Twitter: @qmgs1554