



# Queen Mary's Grammar School

Headmaster: R J Langton, M A

1<sup>st</sup> March 2021

## Full re-opening of the school from 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021

### Government announcements: roadmap out of lockdown

Since the start of term, we have operated remotely to most students. I am incredibly grateful to staff for the work they have put into this provision, as well as to those onsite providing care and keeping the site safe for the small number who have attended.

On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February, the Prime Minister announced the government's plan for the return of all pupils to schools and colleges from 8<sup>th</sup> March, as part of the [roadmap for leaving lockdown](#). Gavin Williamson MP has written an [open letter](#) to all parents explaining that there is an expectation for students to return to school from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March and we are looking forward to welcoming staff and students back safely.

Due to the requirements to provide asymptomatic testing for all students, the DfE are allowing schools to be flexible in their arrangements, in order to stagger the return of students from the 8<sup>th</sup> March. This letter sets out these arrangements.

### Control measures and arrangements

We have carried out extensive planning in school, but it will mean that the student experience will be different to before. In accordance with the [government's guidance](#) to schools, the essential measures include:

- a requirement that people who are ill, who have received a positive test, who have recently returned from a country requiring a quarantine period or who are identified as close contacts of positive cases stay at home (please see our [guidance](#) on this, along with that from the [government](#))
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene procedures by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- face coverings to be used in recommended circumstances
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable
- keeping occupied spaces well ventilated
- promoting and engaging in asymptomatic testing
- manage and report confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community
- contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

A copy of our [risk assessment](#) is available on the school website and this letter sets out some of the details around the school day and various routines. We will have the enhanced onsite cleaning during the day that was in place in the autumn term in order to make sure shared areas are sanitised between use. There continues to be extensive signage and hand sanitiser stations around the school.

In short, most of the guidance is the same as we operated in the autumn term, in terms of year groups bubbles, staggered starts/finishes and split lunches. There is an additional requirement that face coverings should be worn in all areas (including classrooms), if social distancing is not possible. It will be made clear to students where this is the case and they should have adequate face coverings, including a spare, in their possession. These should be disposed

of in a refuse bin or taken home. A [guide](#) to the wearing of face coverings and exemptions can be found on the government website.

### COVID-19 testing for pupils on return to school

The DfE have announced testing for those without coronavirus symptoms (asymptomatic testing) as pupils return, using devices known as ‘lateral flow tests’.

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.

On return to school pupils will be offered three tests, spaced 3–5 days apart. I enclose an instructional leaflet and FAQs at the end of this letter with some more information about how the tests will work. The ‘lateral flow’ tests are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat and give a result in 30mins. These tests will be supervised by school staff and help to ensure pupils know how the testing process works.

Following these three tests in school, pupils will be given home test kits and asked to test themselves twice a week. More details on home testing will follow.

There has been much coverage in the news about the performance of these Lateral Flow Tests. Research shows these tests work - in validation studies conducted by Oxford University and Public Health England, they were shown to be as accurate in identifying a case as a PCR test (99.68% specificity). The tests have lower sensitivity but they are better at picking up individuals with higher viral loads who are more likely to be spreading the virus.

Participation in testing is voluntary and free of charge. 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.

### Key details from 8<sup>th</sup> March

The specific details for return are set out below. Students should arrive via the pedestrian gate next to the sports block on their first day back and assemble in the CPA. The testing takes place in the main changing rooms and the year group will be held in the sports hall until the first negative test is received. All students should bring some work into school, or a book to read, whilst they are waiting for the testing process to be completed. Once a negative test result is confirmed, they can then continue into school for their first classes. For the second and third tests, the students will be collected from class.

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|------------------|--|
| <p>Mon 8 Mar</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 11 and children who have previously been in school as part of the critical worker/vulnerable care (am) and Year 13 (pm) in school for testing, before attending lessons (Y11 from p3, Y13 from p5)</li> <li>• CWV children, 11A1, 11A2, 11D to arrive at 8.45am; 11G and 11P from 9.45am</li> <li>• Year 13: Humanities and Maths forms from midday; Science forms from 1pm</li> <li>• Staff due to teach these Year 11/13 groups at their testing times to help supervise</li> <li>• Year 11 lunch in the main canteen at 1.05pm; Year 13 to bring a packed lunch</li> <li>• All other year groups remote learning for the whole of Monday (Years 7-10, 12); Y13 remote p1/2</li> </ul> |
| <p>Tue 9 Mar</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Years 10 (am) and 12 (pm) in school for testing, before attending lessons (Y10 from p3, Y12 from p5)</li> <li>• 10A, 10D, 10G to arrive at 8.45am; 10M and 10P from 9.45am</li> <li>• Year 12: Humanities and Maths forms from midday; Science forms from 1pm</li> <li>• Staff due to teach these Year 10/12 groups at their testing times to help supervise</li> <li>• Year 10/11 rota lunch in the main canteen at 1.05pm; Year 12 lunch in Café 6 at 1.05pm; Year 12 to bring a packed lunch</li> <li>• All year groups not in school remote learning (Year 7-9); Year 12 remote p1/2</li> </ul>   |

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Wed<br>10<br>Mar         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Years 9 (am) and 8 (pm) in school for testing, before attending lessons (Y9 from p3, Y8 from p5)</li> <li>• 9A, 9D, 9G to arrive at 8.45am; 9M and 9P from 9.45am</li> <li>• 8A, 8D, 8G to arrive at midday; 8M and 8P from 1pm</li> <li>• Staff due to teach these Year 8/9 groups at their testing times to help supervise</li> <li>• Canteen back to split lunch from 12.10-2pm for Years 9-13, according to the schedule; Year 8 to bring a packed lunch</li> <li>• Year 7 remote learning all day and Year 8 remote learning p1/2</li> </ul> |
| Thu<br>11<br>Mar         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 7 (am) in school for testing, before attending lessons (from p3)</li> <li>• 7Q, 7R, 7S to arrive at 8.45am; 7X, 7Y, 7Z from 9.45am</li> <li>• Staff due to teach these Year 7 groups at their testing times to help supervise</li> <li>• Canteen back to split lunch from 12.10-2pm, according the schedule</li> <li>• Beginning of test 2 from pm</li> </ul>  |
| Fri 12-<br>Fri 19<br>Mar | Tests 2 and 3 on rotation for all Year groups  |

### **Zonal approach and structure of the day**

As in the autumn term, we will operate a zonal model, with each group as a separate bubble. The students will, in the main, not be able to mix with students from other year groups. The regular teaching timetable will operate in the usual six periods of the day. However, there will continue to be a staggered start and end to the day and it is important that you look carefully at the detail in the separate guide to remind yourself of the arrival/departure times and zones for the relevant year groups.

Each year group has been assigned a zone in the school, where their lessons and non-contact time will take place. They will receive the full range of curriculum subjects, but these won't necessarily be taught in specialist rooms. Teachers will move between the zones, but students will remain in the same part of the school for the day. Lunch will be staggered and carefully managed and there will be designated areas for non-contact time. A non-teaching member of the pastoral team will be assigned to each year group for support.

### **Curriculum expectations, online learning and catch up support**

It is important that we ascertain early in the term what the learning needs of the students are after such a period of not being in school. Teachers will be assessing groups and academic support and curriculum modifications will be communicated accordingly. We will continue to use MS Teams widely and this will be the fall back, should there be a period of remote education for a particular group.

### **Safeguarding, SEND, SEMH and pastoral support**

As with the curriculum section, we are committed to assessing the pastoral needs of the students as they return to school. We recognise that such a period of absence brings its challenges and there will be more time spent as form groups to check on the pupils. We shall be working with our SEND students to support their learning and develop plans moving forward. Please highlight any concerns on the [MS Forms link](#) or contact the relevant Head of Year.

With the recent restrictions and disruption to school life, attendance is an ever more important factor that all pupils must focus on during this new academic year. Attendance has a direct correlation with performance. Equally, pupils' health and the health of their families is of the utmost importance too. We may need to risk assess the return of some students to school. Therefore if you are concerned, unsure or require any further support then please contact the school via the [MS Forms link](#)

### **Behavioural expectations and school policies**

We continue to expect the highest standards of behaviour and conduct of the students. We re-wrote our behaviour policy in September, with reference to specific issues related to re-opening and the need for social distancing and hygiene, along with expectations for classrooms, at lesson change-overs and in non-contact time. We will run school detentions, but this will be organised in year groups and we will communicate more on this. All updated [policies](#) will be available on our school website.

### *Key principles for conduct*

- All members of the school community should show respect for others and consider our Pastoral Charter
- There are clear signs around the school setting out expectations
- Students should remain within the groups they are designated to, including travelling to and from school
- Phones should be switched off and placed in bags once in schools, unless required by the teaching staff
- Wash/sanitise hands on arrival and regularly throughout the day, including after break times
- Students will be expected to queue/wait patiently between lessons and adhere to social distancing where required
- Whilst moving around the site, do not touch door handles if doors are already propped open
- Do not linger or wait for others at the end of the day; observe social distancing and make your own way home immediately
- Students are responsible for the carrying and administering of medication

### **Transport and arrival/departure**

It is really important that the students stick to their designated times for arrival and departure. The government has produced [guidance on the use of transport](#) which is important to read and understand. Students and parents should refrain from congregating at the school gates. We are currently in conversation with the Green Bus with regards to arrangements, but they have published Covid-19 arrangements on their website.

### **Uniform, lockers and sports store orders**

We are expecting all students to return to school in full uniform, as this is an important part of our ethos. As before Christmas, there will be restricted access to lockers, so students should bring their daily requirements in a small bag. Students who have PE/swimming or games will come to school in their QMGS tracksuit and sports kit, so as to minimise use of the changing rooms.

The sports store will be open for purchases, but access will be limited. Orders will be bagged up and delivered to the year group zone in school. Please place all orders as soon as possible for processing. If you have any queries please contact Mrs Hopkinson on [sports-store@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:sports-store@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk)

### **Extra-curricular provision, music lessons and educational visits**

There will be limitations on what we can provide in terms of extra-curricular activities, especially where this involves different year groups coming together. We will endeavour to continue adapt our provision and students will find out about this in due course, including from the CCF, PE and music departments. It is our intention to run peripatetic music lessons and we will communicate on the exact arrangements for these. No overnight visits will take place under the current restrictions.

### **Catering and the use of parent pay**

Harrisons caterers will be providing a food service at lunchtimes. As in the autumn term, lunch service will be split over p4 and the regular lunchtime and the canteen will be segregated. A cleaning service will operate between sittings. The sixth form will still use Café 6 and students can eat outside on the furniture next to the Student Welfare Hub. To make the service more efficient, we would like students to make more use of the existing pre-order service and there will be no facility to use the cash revaluer on site – please top-up student accounts using Parent Pay. There will be no break service from the canteen, although Harrisons are looking to extend their pre-order service. Alternatively, students will need to bring any snacks and drinks into school with them.

### **Non-contact time**

As set out on the separate attachment, each year group will be allocated zones for non-contact time. There will be restrictions on activities (i.e. ball games).

### **Sixth form matters**

There are a number of issues that relate specifically to the sixth form, more detail of which will be circulated to the students at the beginning of term:

- *Signing in/out* – we will be operating flexibly so that we manage the number of students onsite. Students need to use their ID badges for this. In the first two weeks, students should remain onsite if required for their lateral flow tests (the timings for these will be communicated)
- *Supervised private study* – this will take place in the sports hall at exam desks, with students wearing masks

- *MAT lessons* – these will take place remotely, in the first instance, and students should not travel to other MAT schools
- *Collier centre* – there will be restricted access to the Collier Centre as a social space and the Bateman Room will be closed at break and lunch
- *Form groups* – we will continue the arrangements from the autumn term of tutor groups being made up of either Year 12 or 13

### **Parent contact and visits to the school**

Up to the start of term, please use the [MS Forms link](#) to raise concerns and questions. During term time, please continue to correspond with the school in the usual ways, but be minded that we are restricting the amount of visitors onsite. Please do not arrive onsite without an appointment.

### **Concluding thoughts**

We continue to live in challenging and anxious times, but I am sure that staff and students alike are looking forward to the return. I ask that all students and parents read this guidance carefully, including the embedded links. We are trying to make the school environment as safe as possible, but this will need the co-operation of the whole community.

Thank you for your ongoing support at this time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. J. Langton'.

Richard Langton, Headmaster

# Lateral flow test information and FAQs

## Registration & Results

- To process the test, participating pupils are registered through an NHS website. To ensure this can happen smoothly please provide all the details on the consent collection form.
- Pupils will be given a registration card with the test barcode.
- Those with a smart phone can use this on the NHS site to register the test and receive results by SMS text message and email.
- The school can manually register tests if the pupil does not have a smart phone or cannot do this themselves.
- The school will undertake management of positive or invalid results and contact parents directly.
- The school will hold details of the tests we deliver in line with DfE guidance and our Privacy Notice.
- The NHS registration can be done before the day or a test:
  - a) Go to <https://test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/register-kit> and click start now.
  - b) Click “register for myself” then click “Register using NHS login”
  - c) You need to have cookies enabled for this bit to work.
  - d) Type in your email (the one you want results sent to).
  - e) If you already have an account it will ask for your password; if you don’t it will ask you to create a password.
  - f) You will get sent a confirmation link by email that you need to click, then go back to where you were before and click “I have confirmed my email”.
  - g) Then enter your mobile number. You will get sent a confirmation code to enter.
  - h) Agree to share your details with the COVID-19 Digital Testing Service
  - i) Unfortunately you can’t enter any more details until you register the first test.

## What if a pupil tests positive?

- Participating staff and pupils who test positive will be informed about their results individually. Where participants are under 16, parents or legal guardians will also be notified.
- Guidance on safe travel and additional precautions will be provided along with test results.
- Any pupils who test positive will need to self-isolate in line with government guidance.

## What happens if the test is negative?

- They will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal.
- A pupil will only be told if they test positive on a ‘lateral flow’ test, so if you do not hear you can assume it was negative.
- A small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.
- It is important to remember, however, that a negative test does not mean it is safe to ignore any of the other control measures.
- Whilst a positive result gives a “red flag” that a person is highly likely to be infectious with coronavirus, a negative result does not provide the certainty that they not carrying the virus.

## What if I don’t want to consent?

- Testing is voluntary and, like any medical intervention, requires consent from the individual.
- For pupils under 16 that consent must be from the parent/guardian; pupils over 16 may consent themselves
- A small number of people, for various reasons, may decide not to consent. They will return to school at the same time as others in their form group and simply not participate in testing.
- If you have queries and wish to speak to someone before making a decision you can contact the school

## What if my child develops symptoms?

- This testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms.
- If your child develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) they must **immediately** self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or 0300 303 2713 (Scotland) or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>.

What if my child has had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days?

- Those individuals who have had a positive PCR result in the past 90 days are exempt from testing, but may choose to take part in routine testing if they wish.
- Whilst it is believed that being infected gives some immunity to the individual, it is not yet clear whether they can still carry and transmit the virus to others.
- However if an individual chooses to take part in testing and gets a positive LFD result or is a close contact of another positive case they will still be required to self-isolate.

We will support our staff and pupils throughout, but please contact us if you need more information or have any questions. You can call the office on 01922 720696 or email [enquiries@gmgs.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@gmgs.walsall.sch.uk)



### HOW TO DO YOUR TEST

WHILE THIS IS A SELF-SWAB TEST, THERE WILL BE A TESTING HELPER WHO WILL OVERSEE THINGS AND PROVIDE HELP IF YOU NEED

**1** YOUR COVID-19 TEST WILL BE SCHEDULED. IF YOU ARE UNDER 16, YOUR PARENT / CARER WILL HAVE CONSENTED

**2** YOUR TEST WILL BE FAST AND WHILE IT MIGHT FEEL A LITTLE UNCOMFORTABLE, IT WON'T HURT YOU

**3** BLOW YOUR NOSE IF NEEDED. WASH AND DRY/SANITISE YOUR HANDS. REMOVE THE SWAB BEING CAREFUL NOT TO TOUCH THE SOFT PART

**4** OPEN YOUR MOUTH WIDE AND USE A MIRROR TO LOOK AT THE BACK OF YOUR THROAT, THEN USE THE SWAB TO RUB FIRMLY 4 TIMES ON EACH SIDE

10 SECS

**5** REMOVE THE SWAB CAREFULLY WITHOUT TOUCHING YOUR TEETH, TONGUE OR GUMS

**6** GENTLY PLACE IT ABOUT 2-2.5 CM INSIDE ONE OF YOUR NOSTRILS. ROLL THE SWAB 4-5 TIMES ALONG THE LINING OF THE NOSTRIL, THIS WILL TAKE 10-15 SECONDS

**7** AFTER THIS, YOU'RE DONE, GENTLY REMOVE THE SWAB BEING CAREFUL NOT TO LET ANYTHING TOUCH THE TIP

**8** YOUR SWAB CAN THEN BE PLACED IN A TUBE FOR TESTING, THIS TAKES ABOUT 30 MINUTES

**9** YOUR SCHOOL / COLLEGE WILL CONTACT YOU OR YOUR PARENT / CARER WITH THE RESULTS AND LET YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT