



11 February 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support. Since the start of the Spring Term in January there have been a number of virtual Progress Evenings. This half term we have spoken with families about the progress of students in Years 7, 9, 11, 12 and 13. When we return from the half term break we will continue with Year 9 Option Evening and Virtual Progress Evenings for Years 8, 10 and 11 (invited families only).

### **INSET Half Day - Monday 21 February**

I draw your immediate attention to Monday 21 February which will now be changed to a half day for all students, leaving the school site from 12pm. On Monday 7 February Ofqual issued all the exam guidance for all subjects (not previously released) with changes to the actual exam structure and the number of questions or choice of questions to answer. Many topics have been removed or will not be directly questioned now which negatively impacts the work put in place for the mock exams. The INSET half day will now be used to interpret the information for students, have this information verified and to amend the mock papers for Year 11. We hope you understand this is something beyond our control.

It has been an exceptionally busy year so far with all students and staff working hard up until now, at the end of this half term. The week ahead will provide an opportunity for us all to recharge and refresh ourselves for the remainder of the academic year.

We would like to take this opportunity to give some information to families and students of upcoming events as well as some expectations as we continue to move forward. Most of the information that follows has been communicated in letters through previous academic years (on the school website) and information evenings for families and in assemblies and the planner for students.

### **Late detention**

Families will always be notified of any detention, and the reason for it, in advance by letter. We run after school late detentions for 45 minutes on Mondays for students who have accrued two lates in a week previously.

### **Head of Year detention**

This is on a Monday after school and applies to Years 7-11. A detention may be given for persistent uniform infringements or disruptive behaviour in lessons, repeated refusal to follow instructions, defiance, etc. Failure to attend detention because a student forgot or refused to attend will result in the removal of social times the following day, i.e. a student will be supervised at break and lunch.



## **Lunchtime detention**

If a student is being disruptive to their peers or the school community at lunch, a Head of Year may take the student to a quiet space to reflect on the impact of their behaviour. Members of the senior leadership team, Ms. Hillman or the Heads of Year are the only staff that authorise this. Students can still have their lunch at that time under supervision.

Heads of Year will authorise detention and have oversight of a student's pastoral issues or changing circumstances that would warrant some understanding and a varied approach.

## **Uniform expectations and standards**

All students are expected to wear the correct school uniform at all times. This includes when travelling to and from school. When wearing our uniform students represent Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School and are role models in the community, both inside and outside of the school grounds. The uniform standards for Queen Elizabeth's Girls' school are published on the school website. The school uniform includes the blazer; wearing the blazer is not optional at any time - it should still be worn when wearing a raincoat, coat or outdoor jacket. Hoodies are not permitted.

While the list below is not exhaustive it seeks to remove any elements of fashion or trends from our uniform. All uniform infringements carry sanctions. Please note that John Lewis are the only authorised supplier of our branded school uniform.

## **PE Kit**

PE kit will now no longer be permitted to be worn to and from school, for students in any year groups. The Covid requirements that supported this are no longer in force. This is with immediate effect. The solitary exception to this rule is the Year 11 GCSE Class who are currently filming their performance in selected sports during PE lessons, as part of their GCSE examination.

## **Jewellery and piercings**

Expectations regarding jewellery and piercings have always been consistently communicated and reinforced on a daily basis. Items of jewellery outside of those allowed are confiscated for collection at the end of the half term.

Students are allowed only a small plain silver or gold stud (matching) worn at the bottom of each ear lobe. Students are allowed a small religious symbol worn inside the blouse (and covered). We do not allow piercings to be worn on the tongue, gum, inner lip, cheek, eye brow, wrist, nose or upper ear (only the bottom of the lower ear lobe is allowed).

Returning from holidays with piercings is not acceptable. The same rules apply. Students will be internally secluded to complete work set by their teachers until they remove the items. We will not make any allowance for recent piercings that may close or become infected with removal of the jewellery piece. Should a student be wearing an upper ear piercing or nose, tongue or lip stud will have it confiscated and will have a lunchtime detention on the same day.

Each instance of incorrect uniform is recorded and when we deem the infringement to be persistent (occurring frequently) a student may have a day in internal exclusion. After one day of internal exclusion families will be made aware that school will send the student home to get into the



appropriate uniform, removing piercings, returning only when able to comply with the standards outlined.

## **Socks, Tights and Skirt**

A reminder that when the warmer weather comes school allows white ankle socks to be worn instead of the standard black opaque tights. Annually, the option of white ankle socks will be from the 1<sup>st</sup> of May until the 1<sup>st</sup> of October.

- Opaque plain black tights, without any sort of pattern, are the uniform standard all year
- White ankle socks are allowed from the 1st May until the 1st October
- The white ankle socks should not be frilly or have coloured trim, a bow or design of any description including sports logos
- Any other colour sock is not permitted
- Skirts must be worn to the knee or no more than 5 centimetres above
- Rolling up the skirt is not permitted
- All skirts must have the rose emblem fully visible beneath the waist band.

## **School shoes**

- Sensible flat walking shoes in black leather/leather look
- Trainers, boots, Vans, Converse and casual shoes are not permitted
- If a student is wearing trainers they must report to their Head of Year
- The Head of Year will verify why shoes are not worn and will work with families to agree a suitable way forward
- Students without the appropriate socks, tights or shoes may be presented with some to borrow, as a requirement, by their Head of Year.

## **Nail polish, false nails, hair and make-up**

- No nail polish colour or style is allowed
- False eyelashes are not permitted
- Excessive make up is not permitted
- Only discrete and hair coloured hair bands are permitted to be worn
- Any other hair accessories are not permitted, including metallic adornments and fabric intertwined with the hair
- Students will be instructed to remove any such prohibited items, in school, when they are identified
- Only hair colours that occur naturally are permitted
- Hair should not be shaved below a grade 3.

## **Accessories**

- Toys and fashion trends, like slime and fidget spinners, are not permitted
- Aerosols, perfume and sprays of any kind are not permitted. They constitute a prohibited item that will be confiscated.

This list is not a definitive and exhaustive list and may be added to at any time by the school and communicated to students and families.



## **Social Media**

Increasingly, students are using social media platforms such as Whatsapp, Snapchat and Instagram for communicating with a wide range of people, typically other students at school. Families are reminded there is a legal lower age limit for many of these platforms and for good reason.

<https://www.common sense media.org/>

Too often students find themselves saying/typing unkind or derogatory remarks about individuals or expressing views that are against our 9 Protected Characteristics. Often, these remarks are claimed to be made in a 'joking' manner. It is prudent therefore to be aware of what platforms are being used by your daughter, who is in the group and what topics are being discussed. Parents should have access to their daughter's phone and the password should not be unknown to you. We do educate students on ESafety and Cyberbullying; the effectiveness of this only extends to how engaged parents are with their daughter's online activity.

The school does not interpret any name calling, offensive terms of reference or any means to belittle any person with a protected characteristic, as a joke. A Fixed Term Exclusion is likely as a result of such behaviour.

## **Smartphones**

You will be aware that the school conducted a survey in March 2019 around wellbeing and technology. This provided feedback which formed the basis for a decision moving forwards. The link below is the letter outlining the request for parental feedback for wellbeing and technology.

<https://www.qegschool.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=3690&type=pdf>

The feedback from this information gathering exercise and subsequent operational change within the school was communicated by letter. Please see the link below.

<https://www.qegschool.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=3775&type=pdf>

We are aware that we have a number of students who may present as having particular vulnerabilities. In particular, these may be students that are:

- supported through an Educational Health Care Plan
- identified as having an underlying long term medical condition (Type 1 Diabetes, etc.)
- subject to a Child Protection Order or other significant safeguarding concern.

In such circumstances, the school may agree to logging the phone in and out of the school office and safe, on a daily basis. There is no capacity to extend this provision to students beyond the above clearly defined groups or to provide support with other tracking devices currently in use. We allow a basic phone and this should be sufficient from a safeguarding perspective for students to travel to and from school in safety.



## **Videos and Images**

Should evidence of online activity during the school day or off site, particularly when in uniform, is subsequently found (eg live streaming, chat activities etc), then a fixed term exclusion will be issued. The length of the exclusion will depend on what media was used and whether it was distributed online. This also applies to any actions offsite with students identifiable in school uniform behaving in a manner that brings the school into disrepute. Any video or images taken on the school site will result in a Fixed Term Exclusion. If the videos or images are used and shared on social media, even with private groups/followers, the Fixed Term Exclusion will be longer. This sort of misuse is one of the reasons why the school has banned Smartphones.

## **Screening, Searching and Confiscation**

In March 2019 and July 2019 a letter was emailed to families and put on the school website in direct reference to an Electronic Archway and how the Department for Education has guided schools and given them powers to act in support of safeguarding students and staff.

<https://www.qegschool.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=3685&type=pdf>

Smartphones are considered 'Prohibited Items (to see a non exhaustive list of items use the link below)' and as such the school has the power to screen for and remove prohibited items (for reference updated Behaviour for Learning Policy will be on the school website with a link sent to families in the second half of the Spring Term).

<https://www.qegschool.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=5136&type=pdf>

We have been conducting screening for prohibited items on a regular basis in order to safeguard everyone on site. We use a number of wands, rather than an electronic bridge, to support more ad hoc screening around the school site. I would like to take this opportunity to outline the following with regard to screening, searching and confiscation:

- Any medication, whether over the counter or prescribed, needs to be given to the Medical and Welfare Officer, to be taken under supervision. For the safeguarding of individual students and others, any medication is not permitted to be freely on a student's person or in their bag
- Aerosols and perfumes are not permitted due to the high number of students that have breathing related difficulties
- No sharp objects including scissors are allowed to be brought on site
- Vapes and other smoking material are prohibited items.

The school does not need permission to carry out searches because they are requested and sanctioned by the Department for Education to ensure your daughter is kept safe.

Smartphones if found are confiscated and held for two weeks with no exceptions. If a student has their Smartphone confiscated a second time, then the confiscation period will be for three weeks. A third confiscation and the phone will be held for four weeks etc..



## **A review of Covid arrangements and staff wellbeing**

Finally, we have been consulting with all staff about wellbeing and more specifically changes that were implemented in the school as a result of the pandemic. These are being reviewed. I will be sending another letter by the end of the first week back should there be any changes to operational arrangements within school.

## **Safeguarding Information**

**It is important that we can safeguard your child in every way possible. Please ensure that:**

- we have at least 2 emergency contacts for your child (a contact other than parents is also helpful as parents may be together and jointly uncontactable)
- if you change your address and/or telephone numbers please inform the school office immediately via email
- we can only change our records for student names/ parental responsibility if we see evidence from a court order
- if your child needs medication during school hours, please let our Nurse know and send in the medication in a named bag
- you update us promptly about any changes to your child's medical history as soon as possible.

Finally, thank you for your continued support. On behalf of all the staff, I wish you and your families a restful break next week.

Yours faithfully

Mr. M. Duffy  
Deputy Headteacher