

Dear Parents and Students

I write to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the Principal Designate at Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate, officially starting my new position on 1st August 2020. It is a great honour to take over from Steven Jandrell who has led the Collegiate as a dedicated and visionary Principal for the past fourteen years, having spent 25 years of his teaching career at QE.

These unprecedented and unusual times are not quite the introduction to QE that I anticipated; although, I have been fortunate to be in situ for the summer term, which has allowed me to work alongside Steven, and his inspiring and committed Collegiate Leadership Team, in preparation for 2020-21. I can, therefore, offer you some reassurance that we shall provide continuity of QE's usual high standard in the quality of education and care our students receive. I remain optimistic that the everchanging situation in the UK, including the gradual reduction in social distancing constraints, draw me to the belief that UK schools will be back to mostly normal operations from September 2020. However, I can assure you that we have an adaptable plan for school opening that will fully comply with, and exceed, statutory government regulations and Public Health England recommendations.

At this stage, I understand that, as parents, you are particularly interested in our plans for the start of the new academic year. Therefore, I would like to provide a summary of the procedures that are already in place at QE for school opening in September. We already have excellent procedures for safeguarding and wellbeing, as highlighted in our recent school inspection (ISI 2019). This letter summarises our school procedures and the proactive changes we will make to cope with all present or emerging situations, to mitigate against all possible risks.

During these challenging times, we recognise that your trust in our school is of paramount importance, and we will always prioritise the wellbeing and safety of our children and staff.

Our COVID-19 experience to date

Throughout this period of the pandemic, QE has remained open to a group of boarders and some day students, the children of critical workers, and more recently for an increased number of day and boarding students. In response to the advice from Public Health England, the Collegiate has **exceeded** the stipulated guidelines and successfully put all the required measures in place during the period of lockdown.

Our experience and actions during the lockdown period:

- ✓ QE have successfully quarantined students and boarding staff in adapted single occupancy accommodation.
- ✓ The school site is closed to all unnecessary visitors; permitted visitors have no direct contact with students and boarding staff.
- ✓ Exceptional cleaning and housekeeping procedures were quickly adapted and will stay in place, including handwashing and more sanitising facilities and daily deep-cleaning routines in boarders' bedrooms and social areas.
- ✓ Daily body temperature testing has taken place.
- ✓ Education has continued via the Microsoft Teams, Padlet and Tapestry platforms.
- ✓ PPE has been, and will continue to be, available for students and staff to wear as necessary, and it is always worn by catering, domestic and medical staff.



Jeff Smith (left) with Steven Jandrell

- ✓ We are using COVID-19 National Health Service test facilities and will retest where appropriate.
- ✓ **No student, who has remained on-site during the lockdown period, has contracted the COVID-19 virus.**
- ✓ We utilised our highly secure, isolated, and extensive grounds to spread-out and have engaged students with additional outdoor enrichment activities and social events.
- ✓ Our award-winning, 5-Star Standard, catering team ensure the highest levels of food hygiene are maintained and have instigated additional monitoring and social distancing procedures.

In preparation for August/September 2020

Quarantine and Boarding Restrictions

- International students, or those whose parents live abroad, will be able to come back to school two weeks earlier in August for a quarantine period in isolated boarding accommodation, before going into their own boarding houses, even if quarantine restrictions are no longer required in August.
- During the August quarantine period, a curriculum preparation programme for the new school year will be in place in school and online for students who are not on campus or quarantined.
- There will be limited social contact between different groups of boarders during the quarantine period; this may be extended into term time from September for groups of students and boarders if social distancing restrictions remain in place
- Due to our rural location, students can easily be kept safe and may be restricted to campus while any social distancing measures are in place; this will be re-assessed as conditions change. There will be an increased number of enrichment activities provided in school for all boarders, especially at weekends.
- Students will have the option to remain in school for the October half-term to avoid travelling; other holidays will be considered at a later date.

Health and Wellbeing COVID-19 (Testing and Monitoring)

- All students and staff will have access to the Medical Centre, staffed by our team of nurses, a care assistant, and access to our on-site Doctor's Surgery each morning, with additional support services provided by the Priory Medical Care Group.
- If required, daily body temperature testing will be available for any students and staff.
- COVID-19 test will be available at the local NHS testing centre. All boarding students and staff may be tested on arrival at the start of term, if necessary.
- Any student with symptoms will be tested and provided with appropriate PPE and will be isolated in our designated single-occupancy quarantine boarding rooms, or in a designated room in Chapter House for day students.
- We will pay particular attention to, and closely monitor, any member of our Collegiate community who may be considered medically vulnerable.
- We will offer bespoke provision for Wellbeing as part of our Pastoral Support Plan.
- If required, there will be limited access across the site to parents and visitors.

PPE

- QE has extensive stocks of Personal and Protective Equipment (PPE) which will be available for all students to purchase from the school shop. Parents may, of course, provide their children with a preferred variant. As indicated above, all catering, domestic and medical staff will wear appropriate levels of PPE.

- Students may use any PPE as prescribed by parents. PPE will be worn while in transit from the airport to the school, to ensure our travel arrangements are social distancing compliant.
- Initially, there will be no restrictions for the length of time students or staff may wish to wear PPE, even if all restrictions are lifted in August; this will be reviewed after October half-term.

Teaching and the Curriculum

- We will deliver the full curriculum and will utilise our expansive and safe rural location to take learning out of the classroom at every opportunity. We can spread out children during PE activities and in other curriculum areas.
- We have room to apply social distancing restrictions in classrooms or stagger lunch and break times, if required in September.
- We have the capacity, knowledge and experience to mix and merge face-to-face teaching with the use of online learning technologies for the changing educational environment.
- During any required period of social distancing, we will not allow students or staff to congregate in large gatherings such as assemblies.

I do hope this key-point summary has given you some reassurance. I will ensure you are updated at regular intervals as more information becomes available. Further guidance on any changes to our routines will be sent to all parents and students nearer to the start of term. We look forward to welcoming students and parents back to Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate. We will ensure QE continues to be a safe and warm family community that prioritises students' health and wellbeing.

Warmest regards Jeff Smith



Principal Designate