

# Queen Margaret's

Escrick Park • York



## COVID Safe Return to School

Guidance for girls and parents  
for September 2020

## Message from the Head

The start of term will soon be upon us and I eagerly await the QM Family being reunited at Escrick Park. As I am sure you can imagine, reopening a school in the current climate is a complicated affair, with my colleagues and I dedicating vast amounts of time to plan and prepare for the safe arrival of students. These efforts will soon be rewarded with the sights and sounds of our girls back amongst their friends and classmates.

This document builds upon our earlier 'Keeping the QM Community Safe' information and outlines the key arrangements and practical changes to be expected in the coming weeks and months. We are maintaining a watching brief on the advice given to schools by the Government and we will update our approach as and when we deem it appropriate.

The changes described here are designed to keep our community safe and our intention is to establish a new 'normal' as quickly as possible. I am sure that any anxiety the girls might have will soon be replaced by the excitement and curiosity of learning and living in a slightly less familiar routine.

With best wishes

*Sue Baillie*

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Head



# Start of Term Arrangements

We look forward to welcoming all girls on Sunday 6 September between 12:00-16:00. Whilst all Boarders will (as usual) be spending the first night of term at the School, Day Girls are welcome (though not obligated) to attend should they wish to meet staff or access an academic clinic (see below).

We will be observing social distancing guidelines, so arrangements for this year are different. In particular, when bringing your daughters back to School we ask that you observe the following guidance:

- Appropriate social distancing should be practiced; this means a minimum 2 metre distance from people outside of your family, and no large gatherings of more than 30 people. School staff and signage will be on hand to remind families of these restrictions.
- On entering the grounds you will be directed to a location where your daughter's belongings can be dropped off, labelled and stored. You will be asked to remain in your vehicle and our staff will manage this process. Once complete, you will be able to park your vehicle in a specially designated visitor car park.
- All families are asked to make their way directly to the sports pitches, where we will have a dedicated welcome reception. Your daughter will be registered here, and there will be refreshments and toilet facilities available. Our senior staff will also be on hand to meet with parents and answer any questions. We have set up a number of marquees so that you will have an opportunity to spend time with your daughter, other families and our staff.
- If your daughter is a Full or Flexi Boarder, at this point she will be introduced to boarding house staff and Tutors who will then accompany her to the dorm to settle in (her luggage will have been transferred across) and meet the other girls; for new girls, this will also be an opportunity to meet their Guardian Angels. Unfortunately, we are unable to allow parents access to the boarding houses at this time.

## Academic Clinics for Years IV-LVI:

- All girls in Years IV - LVI will be able to book an academic clinic appointment between 16:00-18:00 on Sunday with Mrs Rhodes and Dr Onyett (Sixth Form), and Mrs Rhodes and Mrs Nadin (GCSE), to discuss their subject choices if these have changed over the course of the summer holidays. To book an appointment, please contact Fiona Jones at [fjones@queenmargarets.com](mailto:fjones@queenmargarets.com) with your preferred time slot.





# Face Coverings

The wearing of face coverings is currently optional for students. Staff will only wear a face covering if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained, ie in corridors and enclosed communal spaces. Whilst the School has a supply of suitable face masks that are available to the whole QM community, students may prefer to bring reusable face masks if they feel more comfortable doing so.

Should the School be instructed by the Government or PHE to adopt a mandatory wearing of masks, we are well placed to implement such a decision with immediate effect. At this stage we cannot rule out further changes to Government advice that could lead to the compulsory wearing of masks during lessons. For this reason, we need to advise parents that our policy towards the wearing of masks may change at relatively short notice to reflect changes to the guidance.

## Year Group Bubbling

We intend to minimise the level of contact between children and staff. This will be achieved by keeping year groups separate (in 'bubbles'), with Years I and II forming a bubble together as they share a boarding house. Bubbles will move around the School independently of each other and, depending on whether they are inside a boarding house or in the School, different social distancing rules will apply:

### **Within the Boarding Houses - Guidance for Boarders:**

- In boarding houses, year group bubbles will be treated as individual households within which social distancing need not be maintained but good personal hygiene must be practised.
- Within boarding houses the girls' dorm allocation will be grouped, as far as possible, in groups of Full/Weekly Boarders and Flexi-Boarders, balancing the needs of COVID safety with the emotional wellbeing of the girls.

### **Within the School - Guidance for Boarders and Day Girls:**

- Day Girls will form part of their year group bubble but will not be able to visit boarding houses. We will, however, provide designated recreational and study areas for Day Girls either in Winifred Holtby House or in the UVI Cottages.
- Outside of the boarding house, those within a year group bubble will need to observe social distancing as both Day Girls and Boarders will form the same bubble.
- We ask that contact between siblings who are at School in different bubbles is exercised observing the two metre rule, and we will encourage Housemistresses to promote and supervise this.



We acknowledge that this means that Day Girls and Flexi-Boarders will be moving in and out of School, and thus in and out of their year group bubble, but we consider that this is the optimum that can be achieved and that the risk is mitigated by the measures mentioned elsewhere.

# Start of the School Day Arrangements

Boarders will be supervised to ensure that they wash their hands before leaving their boarding houses each morning. Girls arriving at School in the mornings should be dropped off in the car park and we would ask parents to remain in their vehicles. Girls should then make their way to either of the two washing areas as marked with a 'W' on the map at the end of this document. Once they have washed their hands they should make their way either to their boarding house (Boarders) or study space (Day Girls) for registration at 08:15.

Day Girls have been allocated the following recreational and study spaces, where they will need to register every morning and where they can study and spend their break times:

- Years I - LVI: Winifred Holtby House (ground floor)
- UVI: Cottages

On the very first day of lessons (Monday 7 September), we ask that all girls arriving on site that morning **only** use Cellars (opposite the Music block) for hand washing.

## Academic Arrangements

### Classrooms:

- With the exception of a few specific subjects (eg Science), girls in Years I to III will be taught in designated classrooms around the English and Mathematics courtyard. For those subjects and more generally for Years IV to UVI, where movement by girls is essential to ensure delivery of the curriculum, classrooms have been rearranged so that pupils face forward and distancing is maintained.
- We have moved some furniture from classrooms, both for ease of cleaning and to ensure that the 2 metre distancing can be achieved between teachers and pupils. Where this distance cannot be maintained, either in the classroom or in other enclosed spaces within the School, teachers will wear a face covering. Visualisers and projection equipment will be used for the delivery of practical demonstrations in Science, Mathematics and Food Preparation. In Science, where it is not practicable for girls to be fully distanced from each other, girls will be grouped into Boarders and Day Girls.

### Timetables:

- The timetable has been designed with the aim of keeping bubbles apart and allowing them to move around the School independently. The movement of bubbles around the School will be planned for and supervised so as to minimise contact between bubbles. Lunchtimes are staggered to ensure girls can eat safely together and attend activities during this time.
- The School day will begin at 08:15 with morning registration; there are six lessons in the day and lessons finish at 16:35. This is followed by enrichment clubs and sports activities.
- Periods will continue to be 60 minutes, of which 10 minutes will be ring-fenced at the end of the lesson to allow girls time to wash their hands at the closest hand washing station or bathroom.

### QM Connect:

- Our remote learning platform **QM Connect** has proven itself as a valuable tool for keeping students connected to their teachers so that they can actively participate in learning. **QM Connect** will continue to play a vital part for a small number of girls who are presently unable to rejoin their classmates in September.

# Sport, Music, Drama, Dance and Enrichment

## Sport:

- It is unlikely there will be any competitive matches until after Half Term, however, we are keeping in close contact with governing bodies and our neighbouring schools to ensure we have a common approach to the resumption of sporting fixtures.
- For Years I-III, Sports lessons will be timetabled into the School day. Years IV & V will have sporting activities scheduled into lunchtimes and there will be training sessions in the week between 16:35 and 17:30. Activities on Saturday mornings will be Sport-focused and all girls are encouraged to participate. There will be skills development workshops across all the major sports, as well as team games, during this time.

## Music:

- Because our ensembles are formed of students from many year groups it is currently not possible for them to perform together. Where possible and within the current guidance, we will continue to provide a range of musical activities for all girls this term.
- Individual Music lessons and timetabled lessons will also continue as normal. The nature and format of these will be communicated at the start of term. Girls can of course continue to use their own instruments for composition work.
- There are no current opportunities for public singing and this will limit what we are able to offer; however, we will continue to monitor the guidance in this regard carefully. Where we have sharing of instruments, we will ensure that these are carefully cleaned after use. Lunchtime and after School opportunities will be offered this term and the full schedule will be shared shortly.



### **Drama:**

- For Years I, II and III we will be splitting the performance space (the stage) into two areas, so that both bubbles (ie Years I/II and Year III) within each year group can work together and also come together as a whole class. This framework will also be put in place for classes that will take place in Thompson. GCSE, A Level and LAMDA classes will continue with both practical work and academic studies whilst adhering to social distancing.
- In preparation for returning we would appreciate it if all girls in Years I-III, GCSE/A Level Drama students and LAMDA students have a pair of Ballet or Jazz shoes to wear as 'indoor shoes' for all classes and activities. Please ensure that these are clearly named as pupils will be required to change into and out of the shoes on arrival and before entering the performance spaces.

### **Dance:**

- All Dance will resume in September and all Dance genres will be available: Ballet, Contemporary, Modern Jazz, Hip-Hop and Tap. Students will be asked to come to class already changed; the floor will be marked into 2 metre squares and, therefore, there will be no more than four students in a class.

### **Enrichment:**

- Enrichment activities will continue as normal with any required adjustments to maintain social distancing. Students will be able to sign up for these activities over the lunchtime period on Monday 7 September, so that the relevant sessions can start thereafter (this includes peripatetic Music lessons).

## Dining Arrangements

The Dining Room has been reconfigured so that, while diners will sit within 1 metre of each other; they will either be back to back or separated by Perspex safety screens. The School timetable has also been altered to enable bubbles to eat together safely over a longer lunch period, allowing for fewer students to be in the Dining Hall at once. Staff will make alternative dining arrangements and will not eat with the students.





# One Way System

We are now using signage to direct movement around the School to avoid, so far as possible, the need for those moving around the School to come into contact with each other. In the case of larger corridors, travel on the left hand side in either direction will allow for appropriate distance to be maintained.

## Hygiene and Cleaning

Our hygiene protocol ensures compliance with PHE guidance; in addition to routine cleaning, a range of repeat cleaning exercises will be carried out during the day including (but not limited to):

- In corridors, frequently touched areas and surfaces will be wiped and disinfected throughout the day by QM Housekeeping staff.
- In boarding houses, we will wash and disinfect frequently touched areas and surfaces once the girls have gone to lessons. Floors will be mopped with disinfectant, and boarding house kitchens will be subject to a similar cleaning regime.
- All toilets will be equipped with disinfectant spray and paper towels for individual use.

To ensure that we have the resources we need to deliver this enhanced cleaning regime, we are working with an external contractor to provide an additional 1,200 hours of routine cleaning across 40 weeks of the year. We have the ability to call on this external provider to deliver deep cleaning, carpet cleaning, cover cleaning and decontamination ('fogging') services on an ad hoc basis as the occasion demands.

## Chapel Services and Assemblies

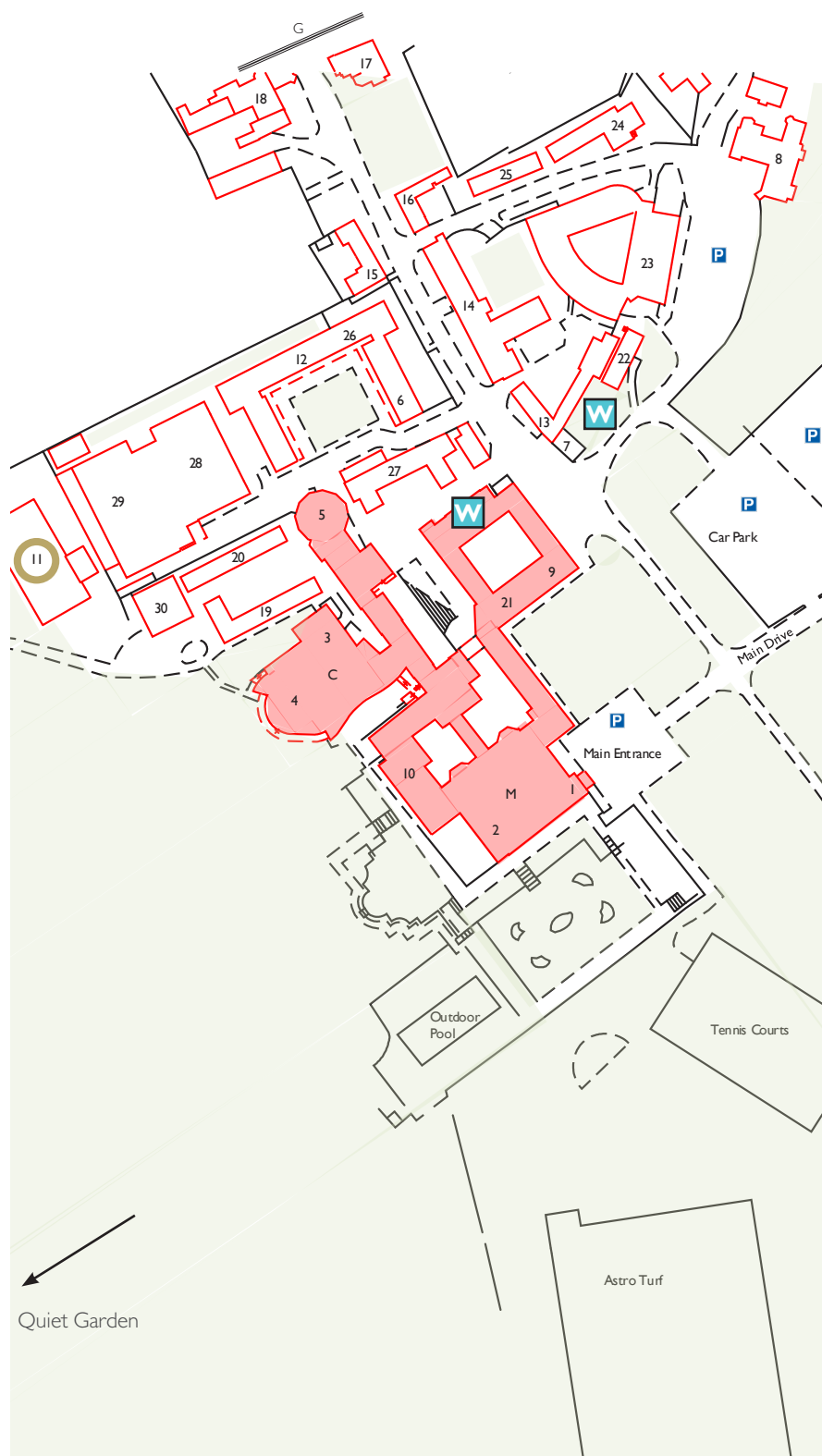
Chapel Services and Assemblies are a vital part of maintaining the QM community spirit. We have created a rota so that each year group bubble will have the opportunity to attend either a live Service or Assembly in the Theatre on a regular basis. All of these Services and Assemblies will be available on **QM Connect** to students who are not in attendance.

We have also made arrangements for a special Chapel Service outside in the Quiet Garden on Monday 7 September, which will be staggered across the morning to give every student the opportunity to hear from the Head and the Chaplain at the start of the term.





# School Map



- 1 Main Reception
- 2 Wenlock
- 3 Chapel
- 4 Theatre and Dance Studio
- 5 Dining Room
- 6 Health and Wellbeing Centre
- 7 Security
- 8 Red House
- 9 Scarborough House
- 10 Atholl House
- 11 Winifred Holtby House
- 12 Cloisters
- 13 Stables
- 14 Carr House
- 15 Gardeners Cottage
- 16 Red House Cottage
- 17 Parkgates
- 18 Covers
- 19 English
- 20 Mathematics
- 21 Science
- 22 Classics
- 23 Art and Technology
- 24 History
- 25 Geography
- 26 Languages
- 27 Music
- 28 Indoor Swimming Pool
- 29 Sports Hall
- 30 Squash Courts
- M Main School Building
- C Centenary Building
- G Pedestrian Gate to Escrick

 **Hand Washing Stations**

 **Day Girl Recreation and Study Space**



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