

Queen Mary's Grammar School



QMGS updates 25-3-20

Dear parent/guardian

This will be the first of my weekly emails to the school community, providing updates and guidance in this uncertain time.

First word

Following the emotion of last week, it has been very strange to be in school over the past few days. We have a small number of staff in school, looking after the children of key workers. I appreciate the arrangements parents have put in place for childcare to reduce the pressure on school. With the small numbers we have, we are teaming up with QMHS for provision. The sessions will be here for the remainder of this week, but will be located at QMHS for next week. Please contact us at enquiries@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk for questions on this and for any other problems (that you don't have a direct email address for).

I hope the home-learning is bedding down and that all students have established a routine. The staff have put a huge amount of material online and just one look through the School's twitter feed gives plenty of encouragement for establishing routines and keeping in touch with others: <https://twitter.com/qmgs1554>

Pastoral matters

Mr Collins, Mr Brown and the pastoral team have been making active contact with students who have identified SEND, safeguarding and other welfare needs. This will continue through the closure and please refer to the contact details in my letter dated 19/3/20: https://qmgs.walsall.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020_mar_school_closure.pdf

Please see the flyer at the bottom of this email for the Kooth organisation's support for mental health. I hope that all students were able to collect belongings, including medicines last week, but please let us know if there is an issue with this.

Vouchers for Free School Meals

We have been contacting parents for those students who regularly receive free school meals. If you haven't received these emails or have any questions, please contact us.

GCSE and A-level grades

Following the government's announcement on Friday about GCSE and A-level grades being set by schools, we have received a large amount of enquiries, many of which we can't answer at this point. As I have said to those who have been in contact, the school will develop a fair and robust policy, once the methodology has been established by Ofqual and the exam boards. We can't say anymore at this point, but we will communicate when we have more information.

I have included a link to the DfE website, which sets out a number of questions, along with answers and guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020>

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You may also find the following government link useful in terms of general questions on school closures:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

A think piece for the week

Finally, I will be asking staff over the next few weeks to produce think pieces in the place of school assemblies. For this week, I'd like to share what I am reading at the minute. As a geographer, I am interested in books about people and places. Over the past 12 months, I have set myself the target of reading more fiction and have re-read a number of texts which I studied for my A-level in English 25 years ago. However, I am always drawn back to books about distant places and human endeavour. Whilst in a train station a few weeks ago, I came across 'War Doctor' by David Nott. Perhaps a strange choice at this time, but the book shows the power of humanitarian spirit. David recounts his work in some of the world's most dangerous places, all the way giving a glimmer of hope and focussing on the power of the human spirit. Well worth a read:

https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/War_Doctor.html?id=SNegDwAAQBAJ&source=kp_book_description&redir_esc=y

I have kept up my subscription to the RGS's 'Geographical' magazine since I was in sixth form myself. I think there are 3 copies on my coffee table at home that I haven't even opened yet, but I look forward to catching up with these. I often encourage the students to read around the subject they are interested in and I hope they are using the enforced time away from school to build on their passions.

<https://geographical.co.uk/>

I will write again next week, but, in the meantime, stay safe and look after each other

Regards



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Kooth.com

Online support for young people


We would like to remind you of the availability of our online service to support the **wellbeing** and **resilience** of your students.

Kooth is a web based confidential support service available to young people. Kooth provides a safe and secure means of accessing mental health and wellbeing support designed specifically for young people.

Kooth offers young people the opportunity to have a text-based conversation with a qualified counsellor. Counsellors are available from 12noon to 10pm on weekdays and 6pm to 10 pm at weekends, every day of the year on a drop-in basis. Young people can access regular booked online counselling sessions as needed. Outside counselling hours' young people can message our team and get support by the next day.

When students register with Kooth they will have support available to them now and in the future. Support can be gained not only through counselling but articles, forums and discussion boards. All content is age appropriate, clinically approved and fully moderated.

To find out more visit [kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com) where young people can register and others can find out more about the service.



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