

Queen Mary's Grammar School



QMGS updates 1-4-20

Dear parents and students

I wrote two separate emails last week, but my weekly addresses from now on will be to all members of the school community. I finished last week with a think piece of my own, but would like to start this email with a contribution from Mr Lax.

A think piece for the week (Mr Lax)

Since the school has closed, I have been at school once a week, in support of our provision for those children of critical workers. It is vitally important that we continue to do all that we can, as a community, to assist those people delivering such essential services.

On the other days of the week I have had to adjust to a completely new way of working, which has posed a number of challenges but just as many opportunities. I have been in regular contact with students, parents and staff via email and am able to work remotely for much of what I do, although I am missing the day-to-day contact with staff and pupils that makes QMGS such a great place to work. I am trying to get to grips with Teams for my teaching groups and we are working on innovative solutions to other issues that go along with working from home: everything that we usually do in hard copy, for example.

Reclaiming my commuting time has given me the chance to do a few more things that I should have been doing anyway. I now exercise for half an hour every morning and evening instead of sitting in the car. During that exercise time I am also listening to an audiobook that I have intended to read since a Y13 student recommended it a few years ago: *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand. Audible has made a significant number of their audiobooks available, free of charge, during the school closures and I can highly recommend a visit to <https://stories.audible.com/discovery> to discover what's available to listen to over the coming weeks. I am really looking forward to listening to the 63 hours of *Atlas Shrugged* in audiobook form. While it is a 20th Century American fiction classic, published in 1957, it asks questions of our social and economic structures in modern-day Britain and I am keen to find out why my former student was so impressed by it.

Home learning

Assignments and work will be set this week, but won't be set over the Easter break. The summer term begins on Monday 20th April, when new material should appear through the usual routes.

The following parental guide gives lots of tips on managing the situation at the minute:

<https://www.theparentsguideto.co.uk/coronavirus>

Online safety

It is likely that all members of the school community are spending more time online than they were. This comes with risks and it is important that we are all aware of the dangers. I attach a guide from the National Online Safety Centre.

The UK Safer internet Centre has identified the following online risk categories;

- Behaviour: sharing too much information
- Content: age-inappropriate or unreliable content or fake news
- Contact: strangers, bullies, groomers or radicalisers can contact children
- Commercialism and financial exploitation: hidden costs of advertising in apps, games and websites
- Extremism and radicalisation

Also, please be aware of the potential increase of fake/poor quality organisations offering online learning to young people. Some good resources to be aware of are listed below:

- Online material promoting terrorism or extremism can be reported anonymously using [the Online Tool](#) on the Gov.UK website.
- [NSPCC NetAware](#) provides a useful guide to social networks, apps and guide.
- [National Online Safety](#) have produced a series of top tips guides to support remote learning for Parents, Children and Teachers.
- [Thinkuknow](#) is the education programme from NCA-CEOP, a UK organisation which protects children both online and offline for different age groups and parents.
- [Childnet](#) has produced a Parent and Carer Toolkit which is a collection of three resources designed to help you talk to your child about their online life, manage boundaries around family internet use and point you in the direction of where to get further help and support.

Queen Mary's Grammar School



Supervision of children with key workers as parents

We have teamed up with QMHS to provide this support, which will continue for those who need it during the Easter break. I have written to these parents separately, but please do contact us at enquiries@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk with any other questions.

Free school meals on website

We have updated our information on free school meals:

<https://qmgs.walsall.sch.uk/students-eligible-for-free-school-meals/>

I also wrote to parents last week about a number of scams which are occurring around free school meals. Please only deal with the school/MAT directly.

GCSE and A-level grades

We still don't have any more detail on the methodology being proposed for the setting of GCSE and A-level grades. 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.

It is important that Year 11 and 13 students keep working towards their previous targets (i.e. finishing the syllabus of each course they are following) as we don't know what the next steps will be.

End of term grades and reports

We are intending to send out digital versions of the reports/grades for Y7, Y8 and Y10, subject to final refinement of the online delivery method. If you are a parent/student in one of these year groups, there will be separate communication on this.

Y9 and Y12 will follow after Easter and all parents/students will be advised when they are coming out.

Please get in touch with Heads of Year if there are any issues. We intend to run our internal exams for Years 9, 10 and 12, so it is vital that the students consider these reports carefully and work towards these important assessments.

Years 11 and Y13 will not be receiving reports as this point, in order to avoid any confusion while we await further guidance on setting grades for external qualifications.

Pastoral matters

Mr Collins, Mr Brown and the pastoral team have continued to make 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

I will write again on 22nd April, but, in the meantime, stay safe and look after each other. I attach the Spring version of the QM Observer for you to look over and I hope that you manage to have some downtime over Easter

Regards



Richard Langton

Headmaster

Queen Mary's Grammar School, Walsall

01922 720696

www.qmgs.org Twitter: @qmgs1554