

Queen Mary's Grammar School



QMGS updates 29-4-20

Dear parents and students

Following the Easter break, it feels like we are back into some kind of normal routine of home-working. We are busy maintaining our pastoral and curriculum work, alongside making plans for activities that should have taken place in the summer term, as well as thinking ahead to September.

Mr Dryhurst has provided a think piece to start my updates this week.

A think piece for the week

A sermon for students (Mr Dryhurst)

Crises reveal things for what they are. With public exams suspended, teachers and students find themselves with only teaching and only learning. In such conditions it is natural to ask, what exactly is education? Or has it been covered by so many things and for so long that its meaning is lost?

Words have a kind of wisdom to which it is worth attending. Only teaching and only learning are the two to which I direct your attention now. The first is from the Old English verb *tæcan*, meaning to show or to point out. The second, also from Old English, comes from the verb *leornian*, which refers to the range of actions by which we may acquire knowledge: reading, hearing, seeing, experiencing.

Students and their teachers are to different extents, along with parents, conditioned to consider education in instrumental terms. Study of Literature, of Natural Science, of Mathematics is the tool by which some other end may be achieved: the praise of others in the short term and the career laid out by ambition in the long. The meanings of the words teaching and learning, however, remind us that education is in fact an expression of a mutual need.

On the one hand we have the learner, who seeks knowledge, and on the other we have the teacher, who seeks to point it out, as though showing the way to one lost on the road. That these should be desires widely felt by anyone who has ever asked a question or anyone who has ever rushed to answer shows them to be, at root, something more fundamental: curiosity.

If you should ask over the days to come why you should study, it is because you were born to be curious. You have eyes that face outwards, not in. If you should ask what study is, it is the means by which you express your curiosity. A smile gives form to gratitude as easily as reading does the desire to learn.

The quarantine continues to tick by and you must continue to study. This is not because you have exams or will one day sit in the exam hall. It is because you are human. The mute letters of the pages before you, whether open in your books or in the book of the world, will speak volumes to you if looked at correctly.

GCSE and A-level grades

I wrote at length last week about the setting of grades and the rules around this. I appreciate that these are unsettling times, but we must stick to the rules set out to us. With respect to Years 11 and 13, no additional work should be set that contributes to the centre-assessed grade since the guidance was released on 3rd April. However, it is absolutely right that these year groups keep working on set work in order to best prepare them for the next stage of their education. The distinction is simply that it will not be used to calculate a grade. Any discussion over work set by teachers, is fine, but no conversations should take place related to final centre estimated grades.

Home learning

Departments have been updating their set work, in order to cover curriculum areas that should be taught at this stage of the year. Remember the additional national resources, released last week:

www.thenational.academy

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize

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As I said last week, it is our intention that the internal exams for years 9, 10 and 12 will take place as planned, but we obviously cannot give firm assurances on dates. It is important that the students in these year groups are working towards them, as they are key assessment milestones.

Online safety

In addition to the guidance I have shared previously, there is new government guidance and advice for online safety:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-staying-safe-online>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online>

Additionally, a 'Skills toolkit' has been released, with some interesting free courses available:

<https://theskillstoolkit.campaign.gov.uk/>

Supervision of children with key workers as parents

We have continued to work with QMHS to provide this support, which will continue for those who need it over the coming weeks. I have written to these parents separately, but please do contact us at

enquiries@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk with any other questions.

https://qmgs.walsall.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020_letters_key_workers.pdf

Free school meals

We have been contacting parents directly about the voucher system for those who qualify for free school meals. If you haven't heard from us, and you think you should have, please visit the school website:

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

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

An emergency safeguarding number is available on the answerphone if you call the main school number and lots of information is on the website:

<https://qmgs.walsall.sch.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare-concerns/>

Mr Farnell is available from 2-4pm each week day on a school mobile (07849398033). This service is being provided for students who would like to talk to a member of the pastoral team with any concerns or worries that they might have.

CCF

The CCF will be holding "virtual parades" through the CCF Teams site on Fridays starting at 4pm. Please follow their communications channel to find out about these.

QMA summer ball

It is with regret that we have had to take the decision to cancel the QMA's Summer Ball, due to take place in conjunction with QMHS at the end of term. I am grateful for all the work that has gone into fundraising through the QMA this year and hope to get things started soon.

Also, please don't forget the **Easy Fundraising scheme** – a great way of raising money for the school with very little effort during online shopping. Make sure you register, if you haven't already, at:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/queenmarysgrammar/>

Queen Mary's Grammar School



Walsall community response to Covid-19

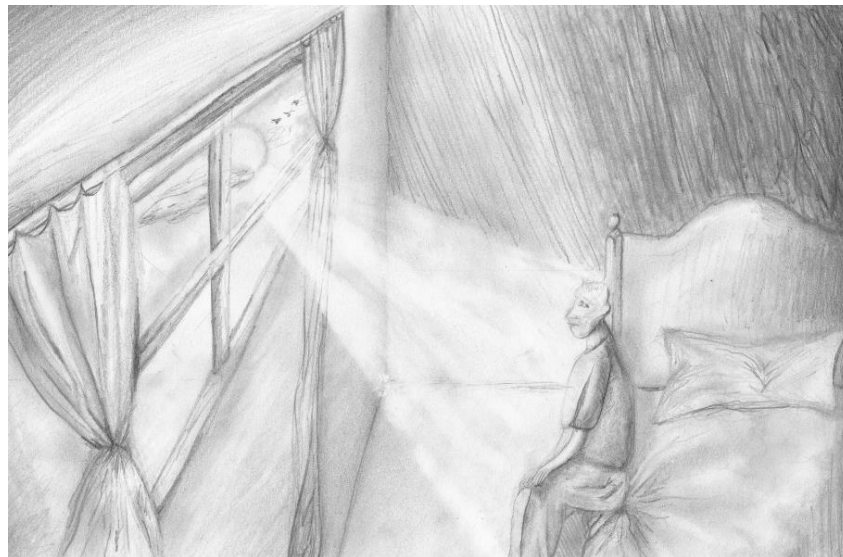
I have included a flyer from Walsall council at the end of this email, setting out a range of services for families in need.

Final thoughts

I'd like to finish this week with two good news stories again (and I'd like more in future weeks if possible!).

Firstly, Mr Rockett has sent me the results of the 2020 Intermediate (GCSE) Physics Challenge, testing the skills of Year 11. I am delighted to say that 19 students were given an award, with nine of these being bronze, six silver and two gold. Congratulations to Alexander Wilson and Gabriel Stewart-Barry who achieved the gold awards. Alexander scored the highest mark!

Secondly, Mrs Mcgranaghan has let me know the results of art completions which have been run within the department for Years 7 and 9. The Year 9 competition was entitled 'Through my window' and was won by Bilal Adnan. The Year 7 competition required students to design a comic strip in the style of Roy Lichtenstein about Hero's and Villains' and was won by Mohammed Jelany. Congratulations to both winners and to all who took part.



Year 9 competition winner: 'Through my window' by Bilal Adnan



Year 7 competition winner: 'Comic strip in the style of Roy Lichtenstein about Hero's and Villains' by Mohammed Jelany



With warm regards and best wishes



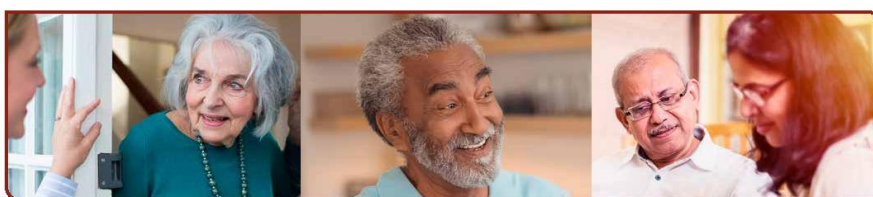
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Making Connections Walsall



Your local community response to COVID-19 Coronavirus

A friendly service for older or vulnerable people and families



If you need practical help with:

- shopping
- picking up prescriptions
- food parcels
- advice on financial help
- reassurance calls/befriending

email:

COVID-19communityhelp@walsall.gov.uk
 or call 0121 380 6690

Who can call?

Any Walsall resident

How does it work?

Referrals are processed by West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) and allocated to one of the four hubs via the NHS Data Collection and Recording System (DCRS). The Hub will arrange to contact you to discuss your needs.

Hubs	Service User Geographical Area of Residence
Bloxwich Community Partnership (1)	North Walsall Bloxwich East, Bloxwich West, Birchills Leamore, Blakenall
Old Hall People Partnership (2)	West Walsall Bentley and Darlaston North, Darlaston South, Willenhall North, Short Heath, Willenhall South
Manor Farm Community Association (3)	East Walsall Pelsall, Brownhills, Aldridge North, Rushall-Sheffield and Walsall Wood, Aldridge South, Streetly, Pheasey Park Farm
Accord Age Matters (4)	Walsall South St Matthews, Paddock, Palfrey, Pleck

Note: Personal data will be collected, processed and stored in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations and the reformed Data Protection Act 2018. Please visit our website for further information on our privacy notice statement.

If you want to volunteer to support your community, please visit www.onewalsall.org.uk to register your interest



Walsall Council

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

