

Queen Mary's Grammar School



QMGS updates 6-5-20

Dear parents and students

I hope that you are healthy and are finding positive routines. We are continuing to evaluate the work we are setting and we will be communicating soon with those in Year 11 about transition materials for moving into A-level study. It is important that all students are regularly checking their school email accounts, as well as the relevant Teams pages. Work will not be set on Friday 8th May, as we will be observing the bank holiday.

Mr Sepede has provided our think piece to start the notes this week:

A think piece for the week

Lessons from China by Mr Sepede

We are in our seventh week of lockdown now and it is interesting to draw parallels with other countries who started this journey before us. Below is an account of an English teacher, living in China

"We are just finishing our seventh week of e-learning, seven weeks of being mainly housebound and seven weeks of uncertainty. We are healthy, we are happy, and we are humbled. We are allowed to move around freely now with a green QR code that we show when we get our temperature taken. You get your temperature taken everywhere, and it's just become part of the routine. Most restaurants and shopping centres are now open, and life is coming back to our city.

As we watch the rest of the world begin their time inside; here are some of my reflections on the last seven weeks:

1. Accept that you have no control over the situation. Let go of any thoughts of trying to plan too much for the next month or two. Things change so fast. Don't be angry and annoyed at the system. Anxiety goes down, and you make the best of the situation - whatever that might be for you. Accept that this is what it is and things will get easier.
2. Try not to listen to/read/watch too much media. It WILL drive you crazy. There is a thing as too much!
3. The sense of community I have felt during this time is incredible. I could choose who I wanted to spend my energy on - who I wanted to call, message and connect with and found the quality of my relationships has improved.
4. Appreciate this enforced downtime. When do you ever have time like this? I will miss it when we go back to the fast-paced speed of the 'real world'.
5. Time goes fast. I still haven't picked up the ukulele I planned to learn, and there are box set TV shows I haven't watched yet.
6. As a teacher, the relationships I have built with my students have only continued to grow. I have loved seeing how independent they are; filming themselves to respond to tasks while also learning essential life skills such as balance, risk-taking and problem-solving, that even we as adults are still learning.
7. You learn to appreciate the little things; sunshine through the window, flowers blossoming and being able to enjoy a coffee in a cafe.

To those just beginning this journey, you will get through it. Listen to what you are told, follow the rules and look out for each other. There is light at the end of the tunnel."

Online safety

In addition to the guidance I have shared previously, please have a look at the following anti-radicalisation materials: <https://www.ltai.info/staying-safe-online/>

Students in England encouraged to apply now for student finance

The Student Loans Company has confirmed that the application service will remain open to students as part of its response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and are encouraging students in England to apply for student finance as soon as possible to ensure their finances are in place for the new academic year.

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New students are being asked to submit their applications before 22 May 2020. The Student Loans Company is contacting returning students to remind them to reapply for their next year's student finance. The deadline for these applications is 19 June. Applications for student finance can be made here: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

Year 12 exams

I am aware of a number of communications from students to staff with regards to Year 12 exams, in the light of other schools issuing updates. As I have said in my previous correspondence, we do intend to hold some form of exam period for Year 12, but we don't know what this looks like until the government publishes guidance about schools re-opening. The exams are an important part of our programme in the sixth form. Please do not worry about them, as we will be mindful of the disruption caused by school closure when setting the papers. The best piece of advice is to continue to work through the material set by your teachers, as it is important that you cover the curriculum. Adequate notice will be given of the assessments and appropriate time allocated for revision.

Year 9 and 12 reports this week

I finished at the weekend reading through the reports for Year 9 and 12 that are to be distributed this week. Please check your email accounts (including junk mail) for these and let us know of any issues.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education policy for parent consultation

Please find attached a draft policy for consultation, along with an explanatory presentation. Comments should be returned to the email address listed in the presentation.

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@qmg.walsall.sch.uk with any other questions.

This service won't operate on bank holidays and we will provide an update on provision beyond the end of this half term ASAP.

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://qmg.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://qmg.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://qmg.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.

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QMA

As I said last week, we won't be able to host any QMA events this term, but 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/>

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!).

First of all, Mrs Walker has put together a library quiz. Follow the link below and see how many teachers you can name reading. Submit answers via the webpage:

<https://qmgs.walsall.sch.uk/can-you-guess-the-teacher-behind-the-book/>

Manveer and Harjeet Wilkhu of Year 12 contacted the school to say "In the Easter holidays, the RAF music organisation decided that they would put together a virtual camp, where we were asked to contribute to a collective recording". Below is the link to the finished product of the camp, performing the theme tune from 'Game of Thrones'. Well done on a fantastic piece of work!

<https://www.facebook.com/aircadetsmusic/videos/628035864414002/?vh=e>

With warm regards and best wishes



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