

# Queen Mary's Grammar School



## QMGs updates 1-7-20

Dear parents and students

### A think piece for the week

We have featured a number of pieces in recent weeks on the *Black Lives Matter* theme and I am delighted to include a thought-provoking piece this week from outgoing captain of School, Zachary Elliott. Zachary raises some extremely important points, which we all need to consider as we address this vital issue as a community. Linked to this, I have also attached a *Black Lives Matter* guide for parents, distributed to schools from Walsall council.

### A lesson on modern Black History and what we can all learn from it – by Zachary Elliott

#### *Outline of the Birmingham Black Lives Matter protest on the 4th of June*

On Thursday 4th of June, I decided to attend the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protest in Centenary Square, Birmingham as an act of solidarity after the killing of George Floyd. The atmosphere was one I'd never experienced before; feelings of sorrow, anger, but also hope, were strong throughout the 4-hour duration of the protest. Over 4000 people were present from all different ethnicities. Masks and hand sanitizer were given out. No arrests or disorder were reported.

#### *Introduction to being black in Britain; 1950-80*

In the United Kingdom, discussing British history in regards to race has been a topic that has generally been avoided. Up until 1965, discrimination on the grounds of colour, race or ethnic background was not illegal, however racism against BAME British citizens was often overtly normalised in society until the late 1970s where programmes like 'The Black and White Minstrel Show' would air with white actors blackening their faces to impersonate black people so enforcing ethnic stereotypes. Whilst this was happening, black footballers were facing near constant abuse on the football pitch, and games would be marred by monkey chants and bananas thrown at black players from the stands.

#### *The Windrush scandal*

In more recent times, discrimination against Black Caribbean people was evident in the Windrush scandal which took place between 2012-2017. In 2010, thousands of landing cards detailing the legal entry of Caribbean people into the United Kingdom were destroyed and consequently almost 1000 black British people were wrongly detained, denied legal rights, threatened with deportation, and, in at least 83 cases, wrongly deported from the UK by the Home Office. To get an understanding of what it was like for those affected, I'd recommend searching on BBC iPlayer for 'Sitting in Limbo' which follows the ordeal of Anthony Bryan. David Olusoga's documentary, 'The Unwanted: The Secret Windrush Files' provides the historical background to the modern scandal. An independent investigation into the conduct of the Home Office found that their handling of Windrush individuals was an inexcusable "ignorance and thoughtlessness", and that what had happened had been "foreseeable and avoidable". Officials had made irrational demands for multiple documents to establish residency rights.

#### *Being black in modern day Britain*

Many are led to believe that the decline of racial discrimination in society signified the end of the societal struggle for Britain's black community. This was not the case. Post 1980 and even to this day, the crisis of representation holds back the black community from being able to reap all the benefits that society has to offer. Years of socially enforced segregation and extortionately high rent prices charged to black tenants did not allow first generation black migrants to save any money or afford their children any educational privileges such as higher education. However, even if they were able to overcome the socio-economic hurdles, black and ethnic minority groups still face greater challenges when applying for jobs. A study by researchers at Nuffield College's Centre for Social Investigation found that British citizens from ethnic minority backgrounds have to send, on average, 60% more job applications to get a positive response from employers compared to their white counterparts, highlighting the racial bias that continues in our society.

#### *Psychological implications of discrimination*

An aspect which I believe is often overlooked, both by those in the black community and society in general are the emotional implications of past events and how these have shaped the psychology and social norms of black people

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today. Countless psychological studies have shown the correlation between; poverty and poorer decision making, and the impacts of traumatic experiences being passed onto children down the generations. The genuine impacts experienced by black people purely due to the colour of their skin, have profound repercussions on the following generations, even if they haven't experienced the same kind of overt racism that their parents and grandparents did.

A study by Steven Hobfoll, Presidential Professor of the Department of Behavioural Sciences at Rush University Medical Centre, USA, tested a sociocultural model of stress and coping in a sample of 215 African-Americans supported by social resources (family adaptability and cohesion) and cultural resources (racial pride, religiosity). The findings showed that race-related stress was a significantly more powerful risk factor than stressful life events for psychological distress. This would suggest why a black parent experiencing heightened psychological distress with little additional support could pass their own painful experiences on to an impressionable child, hence fuelling the cycle of racial inequality. The facts reflect this reality as the risk of psychosis in Black Caribbean people in the UK is estimated to be nearly seven times higher than among white people.

## *Britain and institutionalised racism*

This is the reality of being black in the United Kingdom today. The longevity of and inability, or unwillingness to tackle these ongoing issues is evidence of the disadvantage you face being black on an institutional scale in the UK. This is institutionalised racism.

## *The police and young black men*

The incident that sparked the current wave of protests was the tragic death of George Floyd at the hands of 4 US police officers. Much of the controversy surrounding police brutality, both in the US and the UK, comes from whether the disproportionate involvement of young black men with the judicial system is justified or not, rather than the indefensible acts of violence that we see time and time again. Statistics won't show you whether officers are racially profiling and targeting young black men or if a minority are engaging in more criminal activity per capita; perhaps a combination of both. Nevertheless, black men are disproportionately targeted by stop and search (which tends to be based heavily on suspicion at the discretion of an individual officer), being 40 times more likely to be stopped, as shown in Home Office internal data from 2018. Even excluding London (where black on black violence is often quoted as the primary source of knife crime without any context as to why this might be the case) black people are 26 times more likely to be stopped. Furthermore, black people are 12 times more likely than white people to be subjected to a "more thorough" search once stopped. In my opinion, these statistics clearly show that some kind of reform is required to create a policing system where this shocking disparity isn't considered to be acceptable.

## *A policing solution*

One city in the US, Camden in New Jersey, has already experienced significant positive change following a complete reassessment of policing methods. In 2010, Camden was considered one of the most dangerous cities in America with a reputation for bad policing; now the crime rate has nearly halved since the police department was disbanded and rebuilt from its foundations. The solution they implemented was community policing, a concept based on identifying and addressing community problems as well as enforcing the law. This allowed officers to identify the community's distrust in officer conduct and address it by becoming more actively involved in the areas they policed; examples included setting up street parties, buying ice cream for children, and introducing themselves to residents. I feel similar reforms would be effective in British communities that suffer from high amounts of antisocial behaviour and would also build trust which has been lost through decades of mistreatment and misunderstanding.

## *Why the Black Lives Matter campaign is needed*

So how does all of this information justify the need for the Black Lives Matter campaign? The movement exists to create a collective voice to advocate for reform of racial injustices where a singular voice has little power to force change. Moreover, the primary goal is to change how racial inequalities are viewed in society.

## *An analogy of systemic racial inequalities*

Take this analogy; there is a group of people, some of whom are suffering from an illness. In a public health emergency, you support all, with an extra level of attention for those who are most vulnerable. Our society has a systemic illness of racial inequality; however, efforts aren't currently being made to resolve these deficits,

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particularly in the black community. We can't afford this to continue to be overlooked or to ignore how we arrived at the current situation as this may lead to further ignorance and greater divisions in generations to come rather than a more harmonious proportionately represented society. With regards to ethnicity, this would be the natural result if all individuals had access to a certain standard of opportunity and emotional deficits mentioned earlier were addressed.

## *What it means to support Black Lives Matter*

Supporting Black Lives Matter means to be anti-racist, not because the lives of everyone else on earth don't matter, but because in order for everyone's life to matter in our communities we must first focus on ensuring this standard is met across all individual groups, be it ethnically, socio-economically or by sexual orientation. Being a supporter of Black Lives Matter doesn't have to entail going to protests, in fact the most important action you can take is to be an advocate for opportunity equality and seek what is necessary to achieve this. This all begins with education, which represents the foundation upon which everyone builds their life and career. It is important that we support these values in school through the history we teach, the debates we observe, and the clubs we run. If we cannot have transparency and provide our youth with both sides to every argument then how can we expect to make any progress nationally and break the current recurring cycle?

## *Anti-racism solutions in schools*

For this reason, until the government provides sufficient advice and support\*, schools should start proposing new innovative solutions to champion anti-racist notions and progressive actions/activities. I have provided some to be considered below:

- Decolonisation of the Canon- Reconsider or add literature we deem to be fundamental to gaining the most unbiased and transparent version of British History. Student boards could be created to review student opinion on literature we have in our libraries and around schools.
- Schools could empower students to learn about more controversial details of British history by running societies that focus specifically on ethnic minority British history. 'The Black Curriculum' is a website that provides free KS3 black history learning material.
- Inclusion of white privilege education and anti-racist lessons in PSHEE- This topic can be uncomfortable for some, however, understanding what white privilege means and its implications is integral in order to develop compassionate young adults to be a positive force of change. Mrs McPhee has taken great steps to educate students on implicit racial biases already.
- Mental Health awareness relating specifically to ethnic minority groups; as mentioned earlier black people are much more likely to suffer from mental health conditions like psychosis. Furthermore, there are noticeable stigmas surrounding mental health across most other ethnic minority groups in Britain. This could make up a particular facet of schools' mental health awareness work.

\*At the time of writing, the British Government has pledged to establish a cross-government commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparities. This has been met with a mixed response as the government is yet to act on the recommendations of earlier commissioned inequality research such as the Windrush Recommendations (2020) and the Lammy Review (2017).

## **Partial re-opening, DfE guidance and home learning**

As I have said in the last few weeks, home learning will continue until the end of term (Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July) for most year groups. We've received confirmation from the DfE that schools and colleges will not be required to remain open over the summer holiday for vulnerable children and children of critical workers, so the school will close at the end of Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July for all students until September.

## **Planning for September at QMGs**

I wrote last week about a number of possible scenarios for September. We await the DfE guidance on this, which is expected later this week. I will hopefully give more of an update next week, but it will also depend on the local and national picture at the time.

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Whilst the term dates for 2020-21 will remain the same, it has been decided across the MAT that the start of term in September will look slightly different to usual:

Mon 31 Aug	Bank holiday
Tue 1 Sep	Staff training day 1
Wed 2 Sep	Staff training day 2
Thu 3 Sep	Induction for Years 7/12
Fri 4 Sep	Induction for Years 7/12
Mon 7 Sep	First day back for other students
Wed 9 Sep	First MAT lessons for sixth form

This is to allow more time for the induction of new students at the beginning of term (as we have lost face-to-face options from the summer term) and also gives more time for staff CPD and planning.

## Microsoft Teams: A guide for parents by Mrs Round

Mrs Round has recorded an explanatory video for parents on the workings of Microsoft Teams. Please take the time to watch this, in order to best support the online learning going on:

<https://youtu.be/2cGenlmhJgk>

## MFL options for current Year 7 students

A reminder to Year 7 parents to follow the link below to choose a Modern Foreign Language for their child to study from September Year 8. Letter also attached:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=E1T1PdfoSEuPbjC8TawIT16VNIstSuf1NrC5wIUqKWrtUQURO N1E4SIJONzIKUEFMTUgyVVICNU00RS4u>

## Year 13 Book Returns

Year 13 students should have received a letter outlining the details for book/equipment returns in July. The link below provides a copy of this letter:

[https://qmg.s.walsall.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020\\_letters\\_y13\\_book\\_return.pdf](https://qmg.s.walsall.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020_letters_y13_book_return.pdf)

## UCAS Day (Mr Matley)

As promised after Friday's UCAS Day event, Mrs Round has managed to attach the recordings of each of the talks to the links below. If you scroll down within the invite (after pressing the link) you will see that it says 'recording'. I hope that you found the event useful. Thank you to those who have returned your questionnaires; Miss Weston and I will compose some answers to commonly asked questions and send those out in a subsequent email. Please do get started on your UCAS Apply and make sure that you are in contact with your GT as much as possible, to help make your reference as personal as possible.

## Welcome to UCAS Day

Details on deadlines, pre-admissions tests, finance etc. (RJM)

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_MTIjM2Y0ZDQtZjhiMi00YjBILThhMTEtMGVjOTlkNTM5jVjk%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%223df55413-ced7-4b48-8f6e-30bc4dac254f%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22fadf7589-5358-40e6-9634-92f47a5f7e5f%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3atrue%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MTIjM2Y0ZDQtZjhiMi00YjBILThhMTEtMGVjOTlkNTM5jVjk%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%223df55413-ced7-4b48-8f6e-30bc4dac254f%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22fadf7589-5358-40e6-9634-92f47a5f7e5f%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3atrue%7d)

## Apprenticeships

Different routes and where to apply (Jenny Savory & Tina Patel, National Apprenticeship Service)

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_NWFjNTVmMjUtOTQ2OS00YjMwLWJmZGUtN2YxZDM5NmRlM2Jj%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%223df55413-ced7-4b48-8f6e-30bc4dac254f%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22fadf7589-5358-40e6-9634-92f47a5f7e5f%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3atrue%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NWFjNTVmMjUtOTQ2OS00YjMwLWJmZGUtN2YxZDM5NmRlM2Jj%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%223df55413-ced7-4b48-8f6e-30bc4dac254f%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22fadf7589-5358-40e6-9634-92f47a5f7e5f%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3atrue%7d)

## UCAS Registration

A chance to ask Qs and listen to advice from staff (MEL, RMW, JEM)

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_NWFjNTVmMjUtOTQ2OS00YjMwLWJmZGUtN2YxZDM5NmRlM2Jj%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%223df55413-ced7-4b48-8f6e-30bc4dac254f%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22fadf7589-5358-40e6-9634-92f47a5f7e5f%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3atrue%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NWFjNTVmMjUtOTQ2OS00YjMwLWJmZGUtN2YxZDM5NmRlM2Jj%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%223df55413-ced7-4b48-8f6e-30bc4dac254f%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22fadf7589-5358-40e6-9634-92f47a5f7e5f%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3atrue%7d)

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## *Durham University & RAF*

Hear from a former pupil and ask Qs on two different experiences (*Sam Shackleton*)

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NGMyZWJlZDIYzRiMy00NjVmlThjNzMtZTA5MjJlY2FhZDh%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%223df55413-ced7-4b48-8f6e-30bc4dac254f%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22fadf7589-5358-40e6-9634-92f47a5f7e5f%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3a%22true%7d)

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## *Personal Statement Advice*

Get tips on what should and should not be included (*Anna Milewska, Loughborough University*)

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MmZhYTMwMmltYTc2OS00YmYxLWJiNGMtMTA0ZTE3YTZhMTF%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%223df55413-ced7-4b48-8f6e-30bc4dac254f%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22fadf7589-5358-40e6-9634-92f47a5f7e5f%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3a%22true%7d)

[join/19%3ameeting\\_MmZhYTMwMmltYTc2OS00YmYxLWJiNGMtMTA0ZTE3YTZhMTF%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%223df55413-ced7-4b48-8f6e-30bc4dac254f%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22fadf7589-5358-40e6-9634-92f47a5f7e5f%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3a%22true%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MmZhYTMwMmltYTc2OS00YmYxLWJiNGMtMTA0ZTE3YTZhMTF%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%223df55413-ced7-4b48-8f6e-30bc4dac254f%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22fadf7589-5358-40e6-9634-92f47a5f7e5f%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3a%22true%7d)

The UCAS Hub is available online webinars/lectures:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/ucas-hub-live>

## **Y12 UCAS Predicted Grades**

These will be based upon STAR Estimated grades along with internal data and teacher professional judgement. They will be issued along with reports before the end of term. Please do not contact staff regarding predicted grades before reports are issued. Any appeals related to the UCAS Predicted Grades should be made in writing to the Headmaster, after the grades are issued. A letter is attached to this email, explaining the process in more detail.

## **End of year reports**

We will be sending out reports to all student email accounts by the end of term. Staff are currently awarding an Attitude to Online Learning Grade based upon pupils' engagement with remote learning since school closed in March. There will be no attainment grades awarded this term

## **Policy updates and risk assessment**

As a result of the partial re-opening, we have updated a number of school policies, including safeguarding, behaviour, assessment and attendance. We have also published our overall risk assessment for re-opening:

<https://qmgs.walsall.sch.uk/policies/>

It is important that all students and parents read these updates, including the acceptable use agreement (attached separately to this email) and complete the simple forms survey below to confirm this:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=E1T1PdFOSEuPbjC8TawIT3BJaE5hQ4BGiUJstzCZV9ZUMzlySTdWVDBPSFITUUFWWTg1VEpNSENYVC4u>

## **Updated student loan guidance**

There is some updated guidance related to student finance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-prospective-students>

## **Pastoral matters**

We have continued our 'safe and well' calls across all year groups. Please contact Mr Collins/Mr Brown directly or refer to the website with any concerns: <https://qmgs.walsall.sch.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare-concerns/>

Mr Farnell is available from 2-4pm each week day on a school mobile (07849398033). Mrs Chatwin

Can be reached between 10am-midday each week day on 07592 376697. 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.

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## QMA

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

To finish this week, Dr Pilkington has sent me the results of some Chemistry Competitions. Although the formal occasion of an assembly wasn't possible, medal winners in the Chemistry Olympiad were able to receive their certificates prior to school closure:

Gold	Robert Peacock (Year 13)
Silver	Aadam Rabani (Year 13)
Bronze	Ameen Mahmood (Year 13), James Fearon (Year 12), Nick Ntiruhungwa (Year 12), Amrit Singh (Year 12), Krish Shah (Year 12)

Robert Peacock's gold medal is a tremendous achievement. It is only the third time a Queen Mary's pupil has been rewarded one in the past seven years.

Despite the current circumstances, a number of Year 12 pupils took part in the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge on June 26th. Pupils were sent the paper by e-mail just before the start time and then returned their answers to Dr Pilkington for marking shortly after finishing. Grade boundaries for the medals are not announced until July 20th but based on previous years' results we should have several medals (including golds) to celebrate.

Well done to all who took part!

With warm regards and best wishes



**Richard Langton**

Headmaster

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