



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, December 2020

First word

As the autumn term draws to a close, never has the sentiment of wishing people a restful break been as apt. It has been a challenging year, but I am so proud of the way in which the school community has come together to deal with the challenges. We all hope for a calmer 2021 and I wish all parents and students a happy Christmas and a prosperous new year. We will begin departure at 2pm on Thursday for Years 7-11 (with sixth form signing out at the end of their p4) and the school will return at the usual time (according to year group bubbles) on Tuesday 5th January.

Our charity work has continued this term, with over £1400 being raised for the Movember organisation. Staff and students are taking part in the 'Save the Children's' *Christmas Jumper Day* on Wednesday and we are preparing to deliver our food bank donations this week after the House competition.

This week would usually have seen our annual Christmas concert at the town hall and it is a shame that we can't hold this. However, Mr Vause and the musicians have been working hard behind the scenes to put together a very entertaining digital version, which can be viewed [here](#). Thank you to all who have taken part in this and to Mr Vause for his work in putting this together.

Keith Howard, Headmaster of QMGS 1979-95

It is with sadness that we learnt this month of the death of Mr Keith Howard, Headmaster of the School from 1979-95. In a tribute shared with the alumni, Mr Swain wrote the following extract:

"The School's 34th Headmaster brought the vigour and rigour of a new broom to a School that was feeling battered by its fight for survival as a grammar school. To his orders, hair was cut short, shoes polished, shirts tucked in: nothing escaping his notice. Gradually, attention to detail, to what he termed the bread and butter of school life, began to pay dividends in the big picture. By raising the bar in matters of uniform and courtesy, Mr Howard managed to raise expectations of what could be achieved in terms of academic success. It seems to me that not the least of Mr Howard's achievements was for the School to rank top in the UK in the first school League Tables."

It is interesting that these values live on and I have found it humbling to read the tributes which have come in for Mr Howard. We send our condolences to his family and we hope to arrange for a permanent memorial in the New Year.

Staff leaving

Three members of staff are leaving us at the end of term. Mr Drewett joined us in September and has made a big impact over the term. We are grateful for his input into the pastoral team and through his contributions to the PE and PSHEE departments. Mrs Wood leaves us after 3 years working behind the scenes in HR and payroll. She has worked hard to ensure systems and processes are in place and that staff are supported. I am grateful for all of her input and wish her well for her relocation nearer to family in Yorkshire. Finally, Mrs Chatwin is stepping down from her SEMH role, which she has held since 2017. She has been on the staff since 2011 and I know what a difference she has made to the lives of students and staff here. I'm sure we will see her back in the school, but I would like to thank her for everything she has done.

Sixth form open event and Year 11 academic reviews

As a result of the national restrictions, we were unable to host our sixth form open evening in November. In place of this, we have created a range of [online resources](#), which can be viewed on our website. Mr Lax has also made available to Year 11 parents and students a video which explains the A Level options process. Please use the link previously emailed to all Year 11 parents. The online A Level options form for Year 11 pupils is [available online](#).

We will be running our academic reviews with Year 11 in January using the existing [parents' evening online booking system](#). Please check your login details using this link and further information will follow shortly.

Parents' evening feedback forms (Year 12)

Thank you to those parents who took part in the online parents' evening. Please complete the [Year 12 survey](#), if you haven't already.

Covid-19 management and controls

As a result of the change in the self-isolation period for close contacts from 14-10 days, I have updated the [guidance document](#) on our website.

Please do continue to report through positive cases to the enquiries email address and mark them as URGENT. We will be processing track and issues on Monday 21st and Wednesday 23rd December, so please do monitor email accounts.

Please remember the other key control measures in operation:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene procedures by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- a zonal approach and a reduction in close contacts
- Compulsory face coverings on entry/exit to school, in corridors and public areas (except when eating in the canteen)

The government have also released [guidance](#) on protective measures in the home.

Change in Y10 parents' evening date

We have made a change to the date of the Year 10 parents' evening. This will now be held virtually on Thursday 25th February 2021. Information on the booking system and online platform will be issued in January.

QMA Fundraising

As a result of the current restrictions, we are unable to run our regular QMA events. However, parents can still support the school in other ways. The QMA are continuing to promote the **Easy Fundraising scheme** – a great way of raising money for the school with very little effort. Make sure you register, if you haven't already, at: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/queenmarysgrammar/>

Well-being (Mr Collins)

The Student Welfare Hub is up and running and is adding value to our SEMH and SEND provision. The wellbeing e-mail address is still open and parents or students can use this to contact the team on such matters: well-being@gmgs.walsall.sch.uk

Road safety and considerate driving

We have continued to monitor the situation on the Sutton Road and I am grateful for the consideration of parents. You may have noticed the presence of enforcement patrols, whereby people not following the rules may be issued fines. These will be a regular feature and it is vital that you follow the rules. Please work with us in making the surroundings of the school a safe place for everyone.

Key dates for the diary coming up

The following are upcoming, which you may be interested in:

Wed 16 Dec	Christmas Jumper Day and Christmas Lunch
Thu 17 Dec	Finish for Christmas holiday at 2pm (staggered by year group)
Mon 4 Jan	Teacher training day
Tue 5 Jan	Spring term begins at the usual start time (according to year group arrangements)
Mon 11 Jan	Year 13 mock exams begin

The live calendar and term dates for 2020-21 are available on the School's website:

<https://qmgs.walsall.sch.uk/school-live-calendar/>

<https://qmgs.walsall.sch.uk/term-dates/>

Thank you for your continued support and I look forward to hearing from you in the New Year.

Regards



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