



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, 13 January 2020

First word – A think piece for the week (Being safe online, by Mrs Round)

For the period of school closure, we will be providing a weekly think piece. This is intended for parents and students and will feature a range of thought-provoking issues from staff. Mrs Round provides the contribution for this week, on the theme of safety in online learning. A recording of her presentation to students is [available here](#) and she has written the following for parents:

I know from personal experience that home schooling can be difficult and I know that teenager's relationships with technology can be tough to handle. The Internet and today's technology are what are allowing us to conduct school life and I would imagine in most households it's also your son's and daughter's lifeline to allow them to socialise with their friends; after all school is not just about the curriculum. I also know that keeping up to date with all the apps they want to use and games they want to play can be difficult. What is safe for them to be doing? How long should they be on their devices? During the school day, how can I ensure they are focused on their schoolwork?

Many parents report feeling that their children know more about how to use electronic devices and the Internet than they do. Please remember you have the parental wisdom! Talking to your child about their online life is important. Don't blame, it is paramount everyone is as open and honest as possible. Finding out what apps they use, playing the games they like with them and discussing their use of social media are all key. Clearly, what is and is not appropriate will vary widely depending on your child's age. Links to up to date advice is always available via the e-safety section of our website: [E-Safety - Queen Mary's Grammar School \(qmg.s.walsall.sch.uk\)](#)

This week all students will have had the opportunity to see an assembly posted online raising their awareness of current issues to do with e-safety and well-being. One of the matters raised was being able to switch off from school time and relax and vice versa. In the Teams app there is an option to set quiet times and modify the way in which your device receives notifications. Secondly, on apple and android devices it is possible to alter settings for all apps to control the way they notify you of messages. Alongside this, you can set time limits for specific apps and schedule downtime for all or some of the apps on your device. Looking at this can really help manage distractions during school hours.

Mental health and Wellbeing (Mr Collins)

It is a challenging time for us all and it is vital that students talk about any worries they have. We are carrying out welfare checks across the school and parents will be contacted to make sure all is well. Staff and students can raise concerns via the wellbeing email address well-being@qmg.s.walsall.sch.uk or by using the QR code.

This account is monitored by the SEMH team:

- Mr Collins (Assistant Head and DSL)
- Mr Farnell (Safeguarding and Welfare Officer)
- Ms Hendricks (SEMH mentor)
- Miss Weston (6th Form Operations Manager, Girls welfare)



Mental health awareness week (Mrs McPhee)

The present school closure means that a number of our keynote speaker events will not place as planned at the beginning of February for our fifth annual Mental Health Awareness Week, but there will be lots going on in curriculum subjects for the students.

During, we will also be hosting the following online seminars for parents:

Monday, 1st February, 7-8.15pm

Charlie Waller Memorial Trust will be delivering an information session about teenage mental health

Thursday, 4th February, 7-8.15pm

Author and campaigner Hope Virgo will be delivering an information session about eating disorders

Both events will be hosted on MS Teams. If you would like to take part, please email

sl-mcphee@gmgs.walsall.sch.uk, indicating which event(s) you would like to take part in, and which email address you would like the invite sent to.

Walsall for All Award: Health and Wellbeing Category

Continuing the theme of mental health, I am delighted to announce that the School's 'Change your Mind' programme (run by Mrs McPhee) has won the Health and Wellbeing Category in the 'Walsall for All Awards'. Read more about this [here](#).

Remote learning

I have received some excellent feedback about the online learning that is going on and I am grateful to all staff for the time and effort that is going into this. If you haven't already, please read our [remote learning statement](#). Please ensure that your child attends all of their live sessions if they are fit and well. Registers will be taken for these sessions. The pastoral team will contact parents if there are concerns regarding the completion of work remotely, or persistent non-attendance at live sessions.

We continue to have high expectations of pupil behaviour in these live sessions. A list of key expectations is here:



Pupils should have their microphones muted unless asked to unmute by the teacher (although there may be times where this is not appropriate, i.e. in Language lessons).



Pupils should have their cameras disabled on Teams.



Pupils should only use the Conversation function when instructed to by the teacher. Anything posted must be related to the learning and/or to offer support to other pupils. Emojis, 'likes' and other such inputs should not be used



Pupils must use the Raise Hand Function if they would like to ask a question.



Pupils should treat online sessions in the same way as they would treat a 'normal' classroom lesson. E.g. lesson materials should be to hand, they should be away from potential distractions, mobile phones away etc.

Remote Learning

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Please talk to your child regarding these expectations.

We have asked pupils to complete a short survey regarding their use of Teams and remote learning in the first term. This has been emailed to their school email account. Please encourage them to complete this if they haven't already. We would also really appreciate parents completing a [short survey](#) regarding the use of Teams from a parental perspective.

Children who receive Free School Meals

We are making arrangements for digital vouchers to be circulated for those students who receive free school meals, for the time whilst they are not in school. Please contact us at the enquiries@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk if you have any questions about this.

Year 11 academic reviews

We are looking forward to meeting with students and parents online next week. Most appointments have been made and pre-meeting documents submitted, but please let us know of any issues with either of these tasks at enquiries@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk

Assessments in Year 11 and 13 (Mr Lax)

The Secretary of State for Education announced on Wednesday 6 January that all GCSE and A-Level examinations are cancelled for Summer 2021 and that an OFQUAL consultation will begin very soon. The School will strictly adhere to any guidance from OFQUAL and exam boards that follows that consultation, ensuring that the process for awarding grades is robust and fair to all.

Please check the most up to date information here:

[OFQUAL](#)

[AQA](#)

[OCR](#)

[Pearson / Edexcel](#)

We will, of course, issue more information as it becomes available. It is important that the students continue to work as hard as they can in your studies, as directed by your teachers while we are working remotely.

Preparing for asymptomatic testing

We are continuing to prepare for [testing in school](#). We will be looking to test staff and students who are in school during this half term. We will communicate in due course with more information and requests for consent.

National guidelines

Please continue to follow the [national guidelines](#) regarding Covid-19, in terms of recognising symptoms, testing & tracing, self-isolation, control measures and other information. Do continue to inform us of positive cases within the student body in line with our [established procedures](#).

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/>

Christmas music concert (Mr Vause)

If you didn't get a chance to see the Christmas concert, it is still available and can be viewed [here](#).

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 feedback

Regards



Richard Langton

Headmaster

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