



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, 20 January 2021

First word – A think piece for the week (Dr Pilkington)

The lockdowns have limited my first-hand encounters with the natural world. I've turned to vicarious experiences through the writings of Edward Thomas. He is best known as a poet of the First World War - his life cut short at the Second Battle of Arras. But he was also a walker, a naturalist, a countryside writer and literary critic with a love of the countryside. His work a metaphorical journey of discovery into the landscape, reading it for its history, wildlife, and emotional impact. The work of Robert MacFarlane is a great modern-day accompaniment to Edward Thomas: his book 'The Old Ways: A Journey on Foot' was where I first discovered Edward Thomas. The one poem I've read the most is 'Early One Morning'. Of course the yearning is not just for the natural world.

Early one morning in May I set out,
And nobody I knew was about.
I'm bound away for ever,
Away somewhere, away for ever.

There was no wind to trouble the weathercocks.
I had burnt my letters and darned my socks.

No one knew I was going away,
I thought myself I should come back some day.

I heard the brook through the town gardens run.
O sweet was the mud turned to dust by the sun.

A gate banged in a fence and banged in my head.
'A fine morning, sir' a shepherd said.

I could not return from my liberty,
To my youth and my love and my misery.

The past is the only dead thing that smells sweet,
The only sweet thing that is not also fleet.
I'm bound away for ever,
Away somewhere. Away for ever.

(June 1916, *Poems*)

School council – a note to students (Mrs McPhee)

Please take 30 seconds before 5pm on Friday 22nd January to complete this [question](#), helping me and the QMGs School Council ascertain what our main campaign should be for this academic year ahead of our next meeting on the 26th. Many thanks for your support.

Assessments in Year 11 and 13

The Secretary of State for Education announced on Wednesday 6 January that all GCSE and A-Level examinations are cancelled for summer 2021. An [OFQUAL consultation](#) has been released this week and I would encourage students and parents to both read and respond to this.

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.

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.

Mental health and Wellbeing (Mr Collins)

The first of our new 'Welfare Wednesday' newsletters, produced by the SEMH team, is included at the end of this message. 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@qmgs.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)



House competition #qmgscreates (Mrs Mehta)

For each day between Monday 25th January and the end of the half term (Friday 12th February) we would like students to document something creative you do each day. This could be something you have done in a lesson or outside of school time.

Ideas include: Choreograph a dance, Make music, Do mindful colouring, Animate/Make videos, Paint or draw, Write a song, Bake/cook, Learn magic or juggling, Technical/graphic drawing, Write a story/lyrics or poetry, Exploring new way of customise, repair or up-cycle, Develop a new skill in pretty much anything!

You need to log what you have done each day. This could be with a diary, or a scrapbook of photos. At the end of the challenge you will upload your log to the houses SharePoint. The house with the most logs will win. The best log in each house will win a prize!

Good luck!

Preparing for asymptomatic testing

We are continuing to prepare for [testing in school](#). The government have announced changes to the arrangements for serial testing, although we will continue to provide regular testing for staff. We will communicate changes in due course, with regards to student testing.

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](#).

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.

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

Quas dederis solas semper habebis opes



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.

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

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Well-being Wednesday

A WEEKLY WELL-BEING NEWSLETTER



Each week we hope to bring you all a few hints and tips in order to improve or manage your well-being. Don't forget you can reach us for support at well-being@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk

WINNING WAYS TO WELLBEING



INTRODUCE THESE FIVE SIMPLE STRATEGIES INTO YOUR LIFE AND YOU WILL FEEL THE BENEFITS.

PE Exercise Schedule



The PE Dept have organised an exercise schedule - check the PE Teams page for the daily challenge!

Wednesday = KS3 - 100 squats

KS4 - 200 squats

Quote of the week

"It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness."

Thanks to Mrs Hill for offering the quote this week. What does this quote mean to you? How does it relate to well-being?

Bullet Journals

Bullet journals are "A mindfulness practice disguised as a productivity system". They can be used as a planner, but are designed by you. They can be a great way of tracking moods, planning your week or helping you focus on the positive things. There are lots of examples/great ideas online which will help get you started!

