



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, 27 January 2021

First word – A think piece for the week (Mr Hitchin)

As we are all aware, being in Lockdown can have a significant negative effect upon both our physical and mental health. Guidelines suggest that children should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day, however Sport England found that only 44.9% of young people achieved this last year. Worryingly this is down 1.9% on the previous year. This downward trend is only going to be compounded by periods of Lockdown. This is extremely concerning as a sedentary lifestyle is linked to; increased risk of disease, increased risk of obesity, poor mental health and poorer quality of life. Whilst in school our pupils have plenty of opportunities to meet the recommended guidelines, however during a lockdown, this is tricky.

In an attempt to increase the physical activity levels of our pupils, the PE/Games staff have been providing an exercise schedule for KS3 and 4. These are uploaded to their PE Class `Team` every Monday morning. This schedule will have a daily workout or challenge for students to attempt at home. These workouts/challenges are purposefully designed to require little or no equipment at all, therefore there are no excuses for students to participate. Many of the challenges require students to feedback to their teachers so that they can receive House points. If as a parent you would like to attempt these workouts, they are regularly tweeted via QMGSSPORT: <https://twitter.com/QMGSSPORT>

As a parent I am very conscious that my child is physically active and exercises regularly, during a lockdown this is very difficult. However just 30 minutes away from the screen, attempting the daily workout (during their scheduled PE or Games lessons) will; maintain physical fitness, improve mood, improve self-esteem and increase productivity. Therefore, please encourage your child to engage with the opportunities in front of them.

Welcome to new staff

We welcome a number of new staff to the school in January:

- Mrs Wilcox as the examinations officer
- Ms Hendricks as an SEMH counsellor, replacing Mrs Chatwin
- Mrs Sarwar as a pastoral support assistant, replacing Mr Drewett

Mr Lally has also been appointed to the post of 'Educational Technology Co-ordinator'.

I wish all of these staff the very best for their new roles.

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 and I would encourage students and parents to both read and respond to this before the end of the week.

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 awareness week (Mrs McPhee)

Children's Mental Health Week is taking place on **1-7 February**. This year's theme is [Express Yourself](#).

We have a range of events throughout the week:

- **PSHEE (Years 9-11):** Disability awareness
- **History (Years 7 & 8):** The history of mental health treatment
- **Art (Key Stage 3 classes):** Mindful mandalas
- **Form time (all years):** Kooth (instructional video about accessing this mental health service); *Our fight for disability rights - and why we're not done yet* (TED talk by disability rights activist Judith Heumann); *Boys of Yoga Documentary Short: The Truth*
- **Change Your Mind:** *Staying healthy during lockdown* (pre-recorded video by Mohammed Kalam to be sent out to Walsall primary schools)

Specific events taking place are:

Monday 1st February

p1, 3, 5: T'Challa Greaves 'Racism and mental health' (All years not in a live lesson, Live Event on MS Teams, link to be posted on PSHEE Teams)

7-8.15pm: Charlie Waller Memorial Trust (Parents, Zoom event)

Teenage Mental Health parent webinar with Gemma Fieldsend (Charlie Waller Memorial Trust), 7-8.30pm on Monday, 1st February, also on Zoom. Please join by 6.55pm.

Please consider making a donation to CWMT in return for the event, as they are not charging us, but rely on donations:

Topic: Teen Mental Health Parent/Carer Session with Gemma CW

Time: Feb 1, 2021 07:00 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86233140633>

Meeting ID: 862 3314 0633

Passcode: 122409

Tuesday 2nd February

p1, 3, 5: Chris Hemmings: Empathy and masculinity (Virtual sessions)

(Year 12 & 13 not in a live lesson, Live Event on MS Teams, link to be posted on PSHEE Teams)

4.15-5.45pm: Charlie Waller Memorial Trust (Staff – optional)

The Teenage Brain

Wednesday 3rd February

1.10-1.40pm: Mr Abbas: Mental Health, Sport and being a British Asian (Year 10-13 not in a live lesson, Live Event on MS Teams, link to be posted on PSHEE Teams)

Thursday 4th February

7-8.15pm: Hope Virgo: Eating disorders. (Parents, Zoom event)

Topic: Parents Session

Time: Feb 4, 2021 07:00 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89579752262>

Friday 5th February

9.30am & 4pm: Change Your Mind induction training (SMcP)

Online training for secondary schools looking to set up the programme

1.10-1.40pm: Mr Abbas: Mental Health, Sport and being a British Asian (Year 7-9, Live Event on MS Teams, link to be posted on PSHEE Teams)

Later in the year:

- Diversity Role Models, LGBT inclusion and empathy (Year 7)
- Natasha Devon, mental health author and campaigner (Year 8)
- Hope Virgo, eating disorder campaigner (Year 10)
- Andrew Bernard, domestic violence awareness (Year 11)

I would like to thank Mrs McPhee for all the work she has put into planning the week and for her ongoing work on such an important area.

Chemistry updates (Dr Pilkington)

As with much of the world during the pandemic, Round 1 of the Chemistry Olympiad moved online this year. A number of pupils subjected themselves to a brutal two hours of challenging questions. A tenet of what we do in the Chemistry Department is to offer meaningful contexts and applications that demonstrate the breadth of chemistry and its contribution to society. Olympiad questions do such a thing too. This year they covered substances such as phosphine (recently detected in the atmosphere of Venus and potentially of biological origin), levulinic acid (a feedstock for pharmaceuticals, plastics, and fuels), and hydroxychloroquine (that was at first seen as a treatment of COVID-19 in the early days of the pandemic – but has since proven to lack efficacy). The technology of carbon capture through calcium looping also featured. We await to see how our pupils fared and look forward to medals being won.

The University of Birmingham's 6th Form Lectures are now run online too. Under the coordination of Dr. Miah, we've had excellent attendance from QM pupils. The most recent lecture was 'The Wonders of Element 6: Carbon', delivered by Prof. Julie MacPherson of Warwick University. Dr. Mark Read will present the next, titled 'Nuclear Energy: Modelling the Chemistry'.

Mental health and Wellbeing (Mr Collins)

The 'Wellbeing Wednesday' newsletter 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!

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](#).

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



Pupils should have their cameras disabled on Teams.

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.



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

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.

Microsoft Teams Weekly Digest (Mr Lally)

Each week, parents should be receiving a weekly 'Microsoft Teams Digest'. This digest outlines all the assignments your son/daughter have been given by their teachers. The email is divided into two sections, the first part shows assignments for the previous week and the second part gives a preview of assignments that are due for the upcoming week.

In the first part, assignments will either include an '!' (exclamation mark) or a '✓' (tick).

! indicates the assignment has not been completed or submitted.

✓ indicates the assignment has been completed and submitted

Notice:

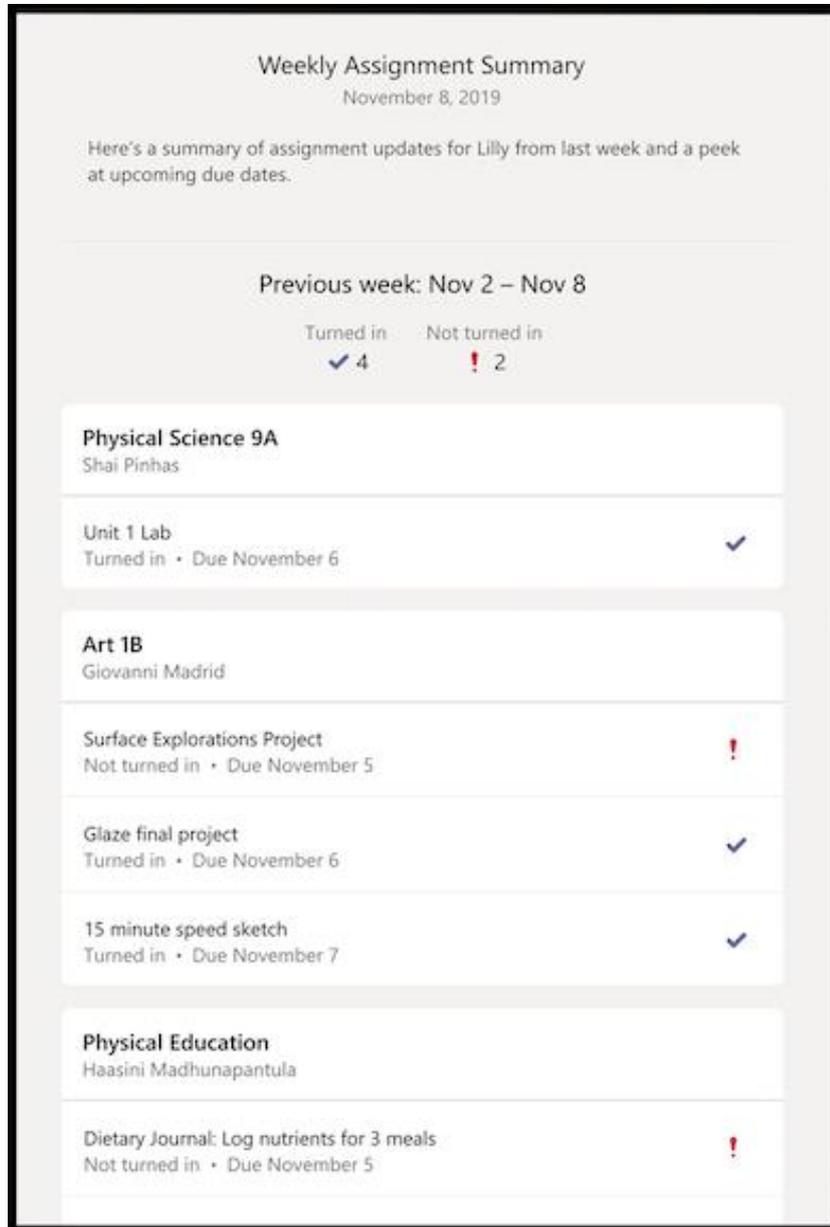
How to identify the email:

Sender: Microsoft Office 365

Subject: Assignment Summary for (child's name)

Arrival Time: Sunday mornings

Please see an example of the 'Microsoft Teams Weekly Digest' below:



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@qmg.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](#).

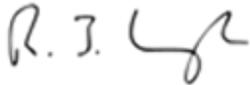
The live calendar and term dates for 2020-21 are available on the School's website:

<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



This week the PE staff have upped the ante! Head over to @QMGSSPORT on Twitter to see what's going on. Mr Hitchen has set a score of 62 press ups in 1 min & Mr Francis has set a score for sit ups in 1 min. Can you beat them?

Quote of the week

"A bird sitting on a tree is never afraid of the branch breaking, because her trust is not on the branch but on it's wings. ALWAYS BELIEVE IN YOURSELF"

Thank you to Miss Hendricks for this weeks quote. Sometimes we have to ignore what is going on around us and have faith in our own ability.

Catch it, Check it, Change it

Sometimes we can get stuck in a cycle of negative & unhelpful thoughts. It can be difficult to spot sometimes, so being able to recognise these thoughts & having the tools to think about things a bit differently can be really helpful. Check out this short video which gives an explanation of reframing thoughts, as well as some tips.

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/top-tips-to-improve-your-mental-wellbeing/>

5 Finger Breathing

5 finger breathing is a great way of calming ourselves down and centring ourselves. Trace up each finger as you breathe in and down as you breathe out

Deep breathing using your hand.

