



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, 24 February 2021

First word

I hope that all members of the school community managed to have a good break over half term. I have set out below some of the implications of the government announcements from this week. Please also take the time to complete the Wellbeing award surveys, as communicated before half term:

[Student survey](#)

[Parent survey](#)

Think piece: Mr Hawkins - Geography and happiness

In the past year, the topics of health and children's happiness has been at the forefront of national debates as we have lived through the lockdowns and restrictions placed on our lives. During this academic year with the Year 12 and Year 13 geography students, we have studied and debated these links between happiness/well-being and health, looking into the factors and exploring the relationship between health with nature and our environment. This is of relevance to us as geographers as fostering 'a sense of beauty and awe of the world' is key to understanding our place in the world and also obtaining a higher level of happiness.

Happiness in its widest sense is intimately connected with our health and quality of life. In 1946 the World Health Organisation set down a marker when it defined health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease and infirmity'. Key ideas in geography linked to happiness are 'hope' and 'place attachment' with our perspective of the world around us, crucial to developing an interest in people, places and different cultures.

Hope is linked to happiness through seeing the beauty and wonder of the world around us (something which has been difficult for all of us in the past year). Through learning about other people's experiences and discovering new cultures, we can gain a new insight into our own lives. As geographers, we develop a global perspective and understanding through our studies and we can use this to develop a more optimistic perspective and increase our own happiness. With our A Level geographers, we have recently studied a model of place attachment where we explored our sense of belonging and identity to places and why it exists. We maintain an attachment to places through our cognition and behaviours. Through thinking and remembering places that we have a strong attachment too, this can contribute improved health and well-being as feelings of topophilia (love of a place) lead to a more positive frame of mind, where we can be more creative and integrative.

So what can we do to reflect on our levels of happiness and subsequently improve our health? Students could attempt an 'emotional map' around the home or their local street. Using a blank map, classify reactions to certain rooms/places with words or even be creative with emojis 🤔 🤔 🤔. Colour code your reactions as positive or negative. This will form the basis of thoughts as to why you experience these emotions in certain places and lead to you consider how you could change your environment to improve your own health. This will also provide some valuable time away from screens as well as developing new skills that can be developed further when back in the classroom.

Finally you could think of and write/talk about a special place, something which the Year 7's have done recently with their 'Amazing Place Shoe Box' designs (check out some of these on the Geography twitter page @QMGS GEOGING). Consider what it is that makes that place special? How could you recreate an environment in your own home that makes you feel closer that place? What milestones/experiences do

you recall from this place? This will evoke positive emotions and lead to a more positive mind-set helping us through the last few weeks (hopefully) of lockdown and improving our mental and physical health.

Looking after our health has never been more important. Through attempting some of the activities mentioned, I hope you can see the value of geography as a subject in helping us through these strange and difficult times and achieving a higher state of happiness. Stay safe everyone and I look forward to happier times where we can return to a sense of normality whilst appreciating and experiencing the beauty of the world around us.

PSLT blog

The Pupil Senior Leadership Team (PSLT) have launched a new blog via the School's website. This will be used to highlight key issues related to their responsibility areas and to share news. Captain of School, Matthew Daniels, has provided the first post: <http://qmg.s.walsall.sch.uk/category/pslt/>

Government announcements: roadmap out of lockdown

- On Monday, the Prime Minister announced the government's plan for the return of all pupils to schools and colleges from 8th March, as part of the [roadmap for leaving lockdown](#).
- In short, most of the guidance is the same as we operated in the autumn term, in terms of year groups bubbles, staggered starts/finishes and split lunches
- There is an additional requirement that face coverings should be worn in all areas (including classrooms), if social distancing is not possible
- Educational visits still can't take place
- Announcements on exams will come later this week, after which we will communicate arrangements for Years 11 and 13
- The big change is the expectation to operate asymptomatic testing:
 - All students will be asked to undertake 3 tests in school from the 8th March onwards (3-5 days apart) to make sure they can do the tests
 - I would be grateful if you could give consent for this in advance of the return via this [link](#)
 - We are currently making arrangements to expand our testing facility beyond our current operations
 - Students then receive a home-test kit to carry out additional tests at home, under the supervision of parents
 - The DfE are allowing schools to be flexible in their arrangements, in order to stagger the return of students and we are proposing the following arrangements from the W/B 8th March:

Mon 8 Mar	Year 11 (am) and 13 (pm) in school for testing, before attending lessons (Y11 from p3, Y13 from p5) Staff due to teach these Year 11/13 at their testing times to help supervise All other year groups remote learning
Tue 9 Mar	Year 10 (am) and 12 (pm) in school for testing, before attending lessons (Y10 from p3, Y12 from p5) Staff due to teach these Year 10/12 at their testing times to help supervise All year groups not in school remote learning
Wed 10 Mar	Year 9 (am) and 8 (pm) in school for testing, before attending lessons (Y9 from p3, Y8 from p5) Staff due to teach these Year 10/12 at their testing times to help supervise Year 7 remote learning
Thu 11 Mar	Year 7 (am) in school for testing, before attending lessons (from p3) Beginning of test 2 from pm
Fri 12-Fri 19 Mar	Tests 2 and 3 on rotation for all Year groups

I will issue more specific guidance to staff, students and parents early next week, including arrival times and expectations for being in school.

A reminder of the main system of controls

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are required to self-isolate by ensuring they do not attend the school
2. Ensure face coverings are used in recommended circumstances
3. Ensure everyone is advised to clean their hands thoroughly and more often than usual
4. Ensure good respiratory hygiene for everyone by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
5. Maintain enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents
6. Consider how to minimise contact across the site and maintain social distancing wherever possible
7. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated
8. Ensure individuals wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) where necessary
9. Promote and engage in asymptomatic testing, where available.
10. Promote and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
11. Manage and report confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community
12. Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

The main risk assessment will be updated and I will make this available in my communications

Year 11 and 13 reports (Mr Lax)

In light of the uncertainty over the awarding of grades in this Summer, and the dependence upon remote learning and assessment since January, reports will not be issued to Year 11 or Year 13 students this term.

In particular, Year 13 grades, due to be released on 8 March, were intended to report on performance in the mock exams in January, which were unavoidably postponed due to the national switch to remote learning. We still intend to hold assessments for Year 13 at a later date but will make plans for this once we have a definite date for schools re-opening and further information on the awarding of grades. **It is not our intention to hold mock assessments as soon as Year 13 students can physically return to school.**

Year 10 Parents' Evening 25-2-21

Ahead of the evening, myself and Mr Mackenzie have recorded videos, to replace what we would have said in our address mid-way through the evening. Please take the time to watch them from the links below:

[Mr Mackenzie](#)

[Mr Langton](#)

I would also be grateful if Year 10 parents could complete the [Year 10 parental questionnaire](#), which replaces the paper version normally collected. Your feedback is important to us.

Children who receive Free School Meals

We will continue to make 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.

Mental health and Wellbeing

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.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)



Alumni Careers Meets (Mr Sunley)

The second of the Careers Meets sessions took place this week. The standard of these have been very high and students in Years 9 and above should look out for the upcoming sessions after half term, which take place on a Tuesday lunchtime via Teams:

Date	Speaker	Job Title/Industry	Time at QMGS
25th Feb	Peter Freeth	Careers	1979-1985
2nd March	Owain Johnson	MD, Global Head of Research and Product Development at CME Group	1987-1993
9th March	Tulsi Parekh	Research Optometrist at Moorfields Eye Hospital, London	2009-2011
16th March	Robert Selmes	Head of Rights for Sky Sports	1998-2005
23rd March	Mohammed Al-Sharif	Senior Civil Engineer	2007-2014
30th March	Simran Patel	Investment Banking Analyst at Barclays Investment Bank	2008-2015

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.

If any parent has a concern over access to remote learning because of device or internet issues, please contact the school. A number of mobile phone providers are offering access to data for families and this must come via the school.

Updated guidance for parents for supporting children's remote education

The DfE have updated the guidance for [parents to support their children's remote education](#) to provide more information for parents and carers as they support their children at home.

They have added top tips for supporting children during remote education, including links to information about the Reading Well booklist that supports mental health. Information is also provided on how to access online resources and services through your local library and online [support for parents and carers to keep children and young people safe from online harm](#)

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/>

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



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