



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, March 2021

First word

It is a strange feeling to have reached the end of this term when, in many ways, it feels like we have only just returned to school. I'm sure that all members of the community, however, are ready for a rest after a long term, with many hours spent looking at screens. Let us hope that the sun continues to shine and that we can all spend some time outside and recharging our batteries. I have spoken to the School in assembly this week about hope. After a difficult 12 months, we are daring to hope that the remainder of the year will represent a return to more of the normality of school life, in terms of our curriculum and offering outside of the classroom. As Joe Biden said, "fear never builds the future, but hope does".

For now, however, we must be patient and respect the rules. School will look quite similar after Easter, but we will be reviewing our arrangements in accordance with national guidance. With reference to the national picture, the Secretary of State for Education has written an [open letter](#) to all young people.

End/beginning of term

The staggered starts and finishes remain in place until Wednesday this week, with school finishing from 3.40pm on Wednesday (according to staggered dismissal times). The summer term begins at the regular time (from 8.45am) on Monday 19th April (staggered per year group).

As we reach the end of this term, we say goodbye to Miss Ahmed today, as a Teacher of RPE, who leaves us to join a school in Solihull. I am grateful to Miss Ahmed for all the work she has done whilst at the school and wish her well for the future on behalf of QMGS.

There have been some summer term calendar changes, mainly in connection with internal exams, which are available on the [school website](#). This is to accommodate the demands of assessments for Years 11 and 13, which will be communicated in due course.

National headlines around school cultures

The recent national press accounts of rape culture on the Everyone's Invited website are alarming, especially as it appears children and young people around the country did not feel they were able to come forward and speak to staff in their schools. Schools should be safe places to be able to be and I am committed to that as Head. I have spoken to the School this week in assembly about the importance of speaking out and seeking support if they are concerned of such matters.

We are proud of the really strong culture of welfare we have fostered but, like all schools, we recognise the need to do everything possible to ensure the thoughts, behaviours, and attitudes of our students do not normalise or trivialise unacceptable language or behaviour, including sexualised language and behaviour. I have reminded students of our pastoral charter (see p2) and that the first part of this refers to human dignity. All members of the School sign up to this as part of the home-school agreement.

We are developing our PSHEE curriculum programme to address issues such as healthy relationships and mutual respect as they become teenagers and adults. Students are taught about the law and consequences of their actions. I am grateful to Mrs McPhee for her work on this and for facilitating the discussion at the Student Council. Misogynistic language, victim blaming, and sexual harassment can all lead to a culture in society where sexual violence is ignored or tolerated. Any such behaviour or language is unacceptable in our School.

We are encouraging anyone in our School community to speak to a member of staff (or a trusted adult outside of school) if they have witnessed or experienced abuse or have experienced sexual language and behaviours that have caused them distress. Speaking to a member of staff means we can provide support and escalate cases to our colleagues in social care and the police where required. The zero tolerance approach applies to how pupils behave away from our school premises, i.e. whenever they can be identified with our school.

Parents are encouraged where possible to talk about these issues at home with their sons and daughters, to supplement work going on in school.

Appendix A: QMGS Pastoral Charter



- Human dignity matters
- Justice is an absolute priority
- Serving others is part of the School's DNA
- A sense of Community holds everything together
- Inclusion & diversity are fundamental principles
- Our approach must be holistic: what we **do** must be informed by who we **are**
- Generosity is the key to our motto: it often means getting your hands dirty
- Supporting others means we have to step out of our comfort zone
- There is always hope ...

Mental health and Wellbeing

I have attached a leaflet from the Walsall School nursing Service for the attention of parents and students. Any member of the school community can raise concerns via the wellbeing email address well-being@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk or by using the QR code below.

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)



International Women's Day (Student Council)

International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. At QMGS, one of the ways in which we celebrated IWD was to engage with inspirational female writers and learning from female-centered narratives. In a collaboration between Mrs. Walker and the School Council, we have created a QMGS international Women's Day reading list which we would love to share with our community.

- Invisible Women: Exposing data bias in a world designed for men ~ Caroline Criado-Perez.
- Americanah ~ Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.
- Clean ~ Juno Dawson.
- Watch us rise ~ Ellen Hagan and Renee Watson.
- Women don't owe you pretty ~ Florence Given.
- No one is too small to make a difference ~ Greta Thunberg.
- Crater Lake ~ Jennifer Kilick.
- You should see me in a crown ~ Leah Johnson.
- I am Malala: The girl who stood up for education and was shot by the Taliban ~ Malala Yousafzai.
- Clap when you land ~ Elizabeth Acevedo.
- Becoming ~ Michelle Obama.
- Girl, Woman, Other ~ Bernardine Evaristo.



Testing and contact tracing in schools and colleges over the Easter holidays

Following the asymptomatic testing programme on the return to school and college, it is vital to keep testing at home throughout the Easter holidays and into the summer term. All students should have received additional home-testing kits.

Staff and students should:

- continue to test twice a week at home (all those who are able to)
- report positive, negative or void results using the [report a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test result](#) portal
- test before returning to school or college for the summer term, either the night before, or morning of, the first day back to find and isolate any positive cases
- Continue to use our [established reporting procedures](#)

Acceptable Use Agreement (Students and Parents/Carers)

We have updated our [E-safety policy](#) and require all students and parents to complete the new acceptable use agreement. Please use this [link](#) to do so.

Walsall music competition (Mr Vause)

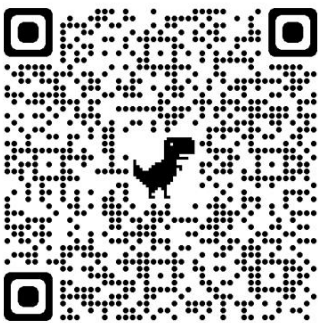
It gives me great pleasure to announce, that Dhyana Sehmar (flute) of Year 12 was awarded 1st prize in this year's 'Aspiring Musicians of Walsall' competition, receiving a £100 prize and a professional recording studio session to record her performance. Over 1500 people sent in votes. In the end, 3 of the 7 selected finalists came from QMGs which was fantastic publicity for our school. Commiserations go to Jonathan Peacock (piano) and Harvey Clarke (drums) on this occasion, however they should still feel very proud on getting to the final.


Art competition (Mrs Gray)

This is a free art competition that is open to all UK students aged 5-19. QMGs is registered to allow for entries to be made. You can enter your artwork yourself online unless you are under 12 and then either your art teacher or a parent/guardian will need to do this on your behalf. If you require your art teacher to submit your entry for you then you will need to hand this in to Mrs Gray on Monday 19th April. All online entries need to be submitted by Monday 26th April.

There is no theme or medium restrictions and each student can submit up to three entries. The work entered can be new art work or work that you have already created. When you enter, you will be asked for images of your artwork plus some information about the piece such as title, size, and a little text about the artwork and why you made it. All entries will be judged by a panel of artists, who will choose which artworks will be shown online and which will be shown at the Royal Academy. Prizes are awarded to two inspiring artworks from each key stage. All prize winners will receive vouchers for art materials plus a free practical workshop for their school.

**FOLLOW QR CODE OR EMAIL MRS GRAY
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**





Young Artists' Summer Show
Made possible by Robin Hambro

Call for entries
An exciting opportunity for students aged 5-19 to exhibit their artwork online and at the Royal Academy of Arts

Open for submissions
11 January – 26 April 2021

Find out more and enter
[royalacademy.org.uk/youngartists](#)
#youngartists

RA Royal Academy of Arts

Green Bus

The Green Bus have recently released their new routes and passes for the new academic year starting in September 2021. You can view all of their routes here: <https://www.thegreenbus.co.uk/> Pass prices do increase after 30 April 2021 so The Green Bus would advise to purchase as early as possible to avoid a higher cost! The majority of routes are over 50% sold already. You can purchase your bus pass here: <https://shop.thegreenbus.co.uk/shop/pass/>. If you have any questions, you can contact their customer service team at hello@thegreenbus.co.uk



Our community has raised **£3,340.00** in total through easyfundraising. Here is a quick update of the statistics, which you may find interesting.

- **1243** pupils currently on roll
- **239** supporters have registered with easyfundraising
- **128** supporters have raised our total so far
- **10** supporters alone have raised a staggering £1700.44 to date

We need your help to raise much needed funds!

- easyfundraising has over 4,400 shops and sites which will donate to us at no extra cost to yourself, including lots of big name retailers like John Lewis, Argos, Uswitch, eBay, M&S, Just Eat, Now TV, Domino's Pizza and Audible.
- All you have to do is sign up to support us using the link below and the next time you shop online go through the easyfundraising website or App and we'll receive a free donation.
- We really need all the help we can get at the moment and any funds we raise will make a big difference to us!
- You can find our easyfundraising page at this [link](#)

Thank you!

Final thoughts

Thank you for your continued support for the school and I hope that you enjoy a restful Easter break.

Regards



Richard Langton

Headmaster

Queen Mary's Grammar School, Walsall

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