



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, 3 March 2021

First word

Ahead of the school returning next week, this will be the last of the weekly newsletters. I will revert to a monthly update. Please refer to the [parental letter](#) sent out earlier this week with details on the return to school, along with the [entrance maps and routines](#).

To start with this week, I am grateful that Mr Rockett has chosen to share some personal reflections as an inspiring think piece:

Think piece: Lessons in life (Mr Rockett)

Life had been relatively easy for me for my first few decades. I had been knocked out by a falling toilet, lost several teeth to a flying squash racket and been blinded by a physics experiment for a week but these events are now fond memories which add to my life experience. I enjoyed school and university, married a wife I love, watched my two lads grow into superheroes, landed on a job I enjoy and I have worked for many years with a great bunch of staff and students in the Physics Department at QM. But nobody's life is ever plain-sailing. My last decade has been dominated by my wife's Huntington's disease. It's a genetic problem which shows up in middle age and leads to lack of muscle control, extreme obsessional behaviours and paranoias. So my relatively simple, cosy life has taken a hit and I am a carer as much as a husband now.

We had plans, organised pension savings, thought about a retirement together in the wild Scottish Highlands and Islands... but we didn't just live for the future so I have no regrets about our time together. My youngest son earned a good degree in Computer Science but has opted to stay at home and care for his mum rather than earn big money. He gets a carer's allowance and is on call at all times to look after her many needs. We get regular visits from District Nurses and leading experts in Huntington's disease and they have all been wonderfully supportive; even throughout the pandemic the visits have been maintained which has made me appreciate the type of person who joins our NHS. Having said that, the experts know nothing compared to my lads when it comes to caring for my wife. They have redesigned furniture, developed drinking techniques, installed no end of hand rails and are forever creating new ways of making her life better.

I have found the demands of being Head of Science and Physics to be too restrictive on my time recently. Though I enjoy the roles, I am stepping down in the summer to allow others a chance to forge ahead for the school and to give myself more time to help at home. I will still be a teacher here as I enjoy physics and teaching and the people here too much to let go, but I will cut down my hours. And I won't miss the endless paperwork. My sons both have a 50% chance of inheriting Huntington's. But my wife still has good times when she clearly enjoys a mishap or gets pleasure from a simple act of kindness.

So for all you young people embarking on your own lives I just warn you that there will be many turning points which affect even the best laid plans. Life is about the way you handle such changes in many ways, it is not simply about reaching goals and targets. And there is laughter and there are good times to be had in even the darkest of situations. So live life to the full and when you get knocked down, come back wiser and stronger.

Wellbeing award

Please also take the time to complete the Wellbeing award surveys, as communicated before half term:

[Student survey](#)

[Parent survey](#)

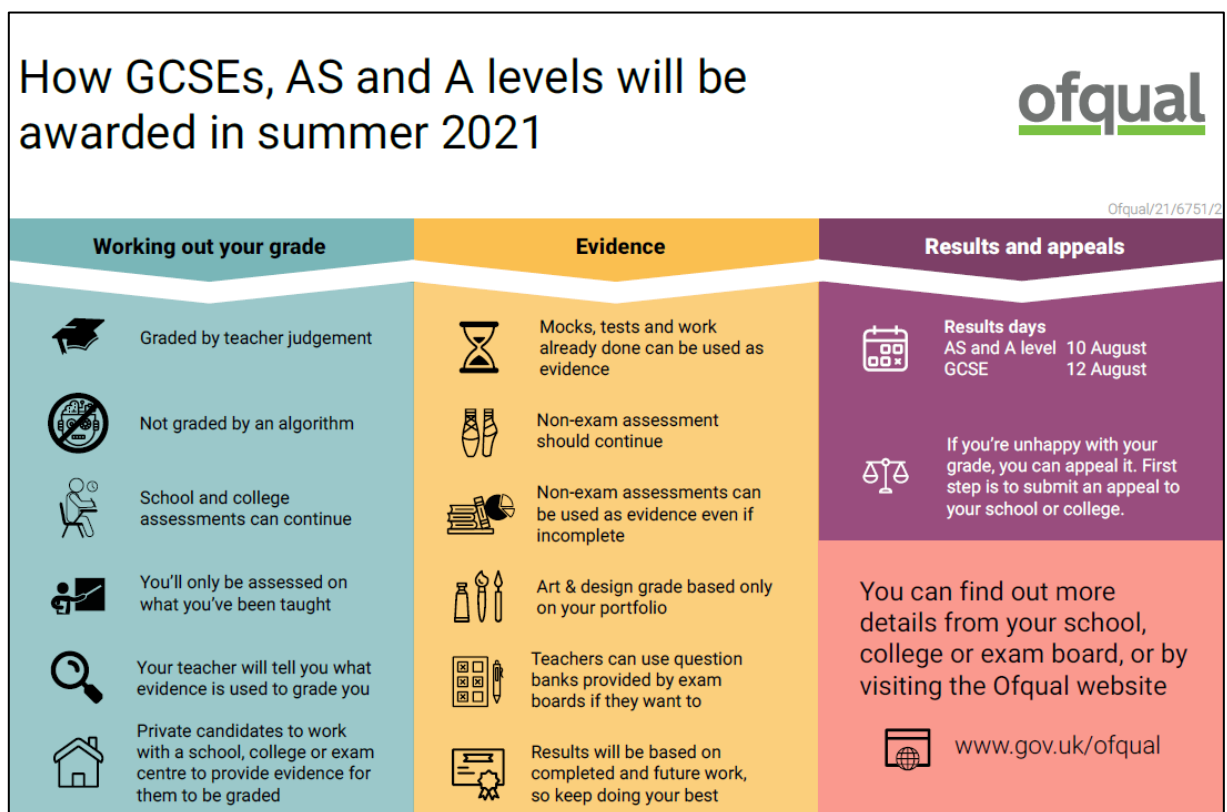
These will close at the end of the week.

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/>

GCSE and A-level grading

Following the [headline announcements](#) concerning how GCSE and A-level grades will be awarded, we are working hard behind the scenes to make decisions on our next steps. Ofqual have released some guiding principles (see infographic below), but the exact details will come out from exam boards towards the end of March. We will, of course, communicate arrangements as soon as this information is available. The clear message is that we should continue to teach the content of the GCSE and A-level courses and it is vital that students continue to engage with this, in order to best prepare for any assessments and for their next stage of study.



Walsall music competition (Mr Vause)

There is a music competition at the moment in Walsall open to all young musicians with a £100 first prize. I sent an email out to our students a few weeks ago but apparently no one yet from QMGs has entered. The link is here with [full details of the event](#)

OMEGLE warning (Mr Collins)

Last year schools across the UK were warned about a well-known chat room, Omegle. Some schools issued warning to parents and carers urging them to talk to their children about these types of platforms.

Content from Omegle is now being shared by popular influencers which could encourage young people to visit this platform. We are aware of instances where popular influencers are livestreaming reaction videos of them using the platform.

Young people are likely to use these chat rooms and chat room apps because they seem fun, and the randomisation of people can be exciting. As young people spend so much more time online due to ongoing restrictions there is an increased chance that they will come across these sites.

The risks are:

- Young people are at risk of seeing distressing or highly sexualised imagery without warning
- They may be asked or pressured to remove clothing or reveal personal information
- They may be asked to have private conversations on other apps or platforms
- They may be sent malicious links or spam

Top tips:-

- Discuss with your children the importance of never live streaming with strangers
- Keep on engaging young people in a conversation about keeping safe online and who they would talk to if someone made them feel uncomfortable
- When talking to a child or young person it is best not to mention the website or app by name as it may increase the risk of them checking out the platform
- If concerned please discuss with your family, teacher or submit an online report to CEOP

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](#)

Mental health and Wellbeing

It is a challenging time for us all and it is vital that students talk about any worries they have. Mr Farnell has produced the 'Wellbeing Wednesday' newsletter, which is at the end of this email. We look forward to welcoming the school community back next week and it is important that anyone who is struggling or anxious speaks up. 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)



National careers week (Mr Sunley)

This week (1st – 6th March) is National Careers Week (NCW). The week is a celebration of careers guidance and free resources in education across the UK. The aim is to provide a focus for careers guidance activity at an important stage in the academic calendar to help support young people leaving education.

This year the week has a range of virtual events including a virtual careers fair and employer videos. Pupils can access the virtual events at <https://www.ncw2021.co.uk/>. A parents' guide is also attached.

Alumni Careers Meets (Mr Sunley)

We are half way through the 'Alumni Careers Meets' series. Students in Years 9 and above should look out for the upcoming sessions this term, which take place on a Tuesday lunchtime via Teams. Arrangements will be communicated about accessing these once we are back in school.

Date	Speaker	Job Title/Industry	Time at QMGS
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



Congratulations! Our community has raised **£3184.61** 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
- **121** of those registered have never shopped, which means that
- **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!

- During this challenging time when we can't fundraise in person, we would like to remind you that we are on easyfundraising, which means you can still help Queen Mary's Grammar School by raising free donations when you shop online.
- 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!



Free Awareness Session on Child Exploitation

Good Morning Walsall,
Please see the below message and opportunity from our partners at Street Teams Community Futures.

Parents/Carers in Walsall, please join Street Teams Community Futures for part 1 of their free awareness session on Child Exploitation on Wednesday 3rd March at either 12pm or 5pm. This will be a 45 minute session via Zoom and the following week part 2 will be delivered. All you need to do is download the Zoom app and click either the 12pm session link or the 5pm session link

12pm session

<https://zoom.us/j/93575405701?pwd=SIF2ZS9ROGVkLzF5TnpVTjBpRkRKdz09>

5pm session

<https://zoom.us/j/97897512054?pwd=WnYrSExOdjc3MENkRmxENVcyTlpaUT09>

Message Sent By

Andrew Ryan (Police, Engagement & Consultation Officer, Walsall NPU)

Site team role

We currently have a site team vacancy for someone to work at weekends, to manage lettings and carry out site work. Please go to the website to see the [advert](#) and [job description](#).

Final thoughts

Thank you for your all of your feedback and support over the period of substantive school closure. I hope to see more of you all over the next few months. Please do take time to read our guidance and let us know of any questions.

Regards



Richard Langton

Headmaster

Queen Mary's Grammar School, Walsall

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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



We have some more challenges from the PE staff this week. How many can you do?

Leg Raises (1 Minute)

Wall Sit (As long as possible)

Squat Jumps (1 Min)

Bottom of push up hold (As long as possible)

Lateral jumps (1 Min)

Give them a go and let your PE teacher know how you do!

Quote of the week

"Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared."
Buddha

Even the smallest act of kindness/happiness can have a massive ripple effect. Spread joy wherever possible!

Return to school

With the return to school next week i am sure there are a lot of people that are stuck in two minds - looking forward to seeing friends again but also worried about the uncertainty.

This week it would be good to reflect on this last lockdown and take the opportunity to look forward. Write down something that you are looking forward to doing once lockdown ends, or something positive you have started as a result of lockdown that you hope to continue.