



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, April 2021

First word

It is with sadness that I start my monthly update with news of the passing of a former colleague. Mrs Jane Phillips worked at the school as a Food Technology teacher from 2010-2020. When I joined the school in 2011 as deputy head, I was immediately struck by the energy and enthusiasm of Mrs Phillips. The Food Technology room was a hub of activity and life, with staff and students alike drawn to it because of her infectious character. I very much enjoyed dropping into the room on a regular basis to catch up with Mrs Phillips and to speak to the students who taking part in the classes and enrichment that she ran. The room was always full of laughter and enjoyment and I am sure that there are a great many present and former students who have been set off on the right path for a healthy lifestyle because of her work. She put me through my paces on a number of occasions with her professionally delivered food safety courses and was a patient and accessible teacher. Her contribution to the wider life of the school, through the QMA and support for a huge number of events, was hugely valued and the school is a better place for Mrs Phillips being a part of it. All at QMGS will miss her, but she will never be forgotten.

Speech Day Prize video

The 2020 Speech Day prizes were presented in a series of year group events before the Easter holiday. Students and parents can view the recording of this, which includes some highlights from the 2019-20 academic year, by clicking on this [link](#).

Application of the substance abuse policy

Following an incident before the Easter holiday, three students have left the school as a result of a contravention of the [Substance Abuse Policy](#). I spoke to the students about this in assembly last week and emphasised that the School strongly opposes substance abuse (such as drugs, Legal Highs, alcohol, solvents and tobacco) and that we will take appropriate disciplinary action against offenders. Any pupil found to be in possession of an illegal substance, or Legal High substance can expect to be permanently excluded. Please take the time to support these messages in family discussions at home and report any concerns to the school.

Year 11 and 13 assessments and early closure for moderation

Assessments are underway and both students and staff are working hard to ensure positive outcomes. We will be communicating more details to Year 11 and 13 parents/students this week with regards to the School's policy around the awarding of grades this summer. We have distributed a letter this week to all parents, with information in about early finishes, to enable staff to complete assessments and moderations. You can find the letter [here](#).

Ramadan and religious observance

We have been speaking to students in school over the past two weeks about Ramadan, to encourage understanding and empathy with those who are observing the fast. For those families celebrating Eid in May, can I please ask that a [religious observance form](#) is completed from the school website to request the absence?

The Big Ask

The Big Ask is a survey for children and young people aged 4–17 in England, overseen by the Children's Commissioner. They have split the survey into different age groups, so you can fill in a version appropriate for your age. Students can follow the link [here](#).

Hay literary festival

We have previously run trips to the Hay literary festival at the end of May. This isn't possible this year, but parents and students may be interested in the digital version of the 2021 festival at the links below:

[Events for young people](#)

[Events for children and young people](#)

Charlie Waller resources

Following their contribution to the School's mental health events in February, the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust has provided a booklet of resources for parents, which is included as an attachment with this email.

Mental health and Wellbeing

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)



Second hand kit

We are looking for donations of good quality second hand uniform and kit, for distribution to families in need. Can I please ask that students bring these in a carrier bag and hand them in to a member of staff in their year group zone? Thank you for your support

Walsall Police - WMNow

West Midlands Police have launched a community messaging service, WMNow. They want to ensure that people who live and work in Willenhall are kept up to date with what's happening in the area and the best way to do that is sign up to our email based messaging service.

WMNow is a free community messaging system that delivers up to date information from police and partners direct to your inbox. From updates on crime, to local news, appeals and safety advice, don't miss out on information that's important to you - [sign up now](#).

Further details are included at the end of this newsletter.

Internet Watch Foundation campaign

In the last year, ["self-generated" child sexual abuse imagery](#) has increased by 77% and is a third of all child sexual abuse material identified and removed from the internet. These included images of girls aged 11 to 13 whose abuse had been recorded via a webcam in a domestic setting.

To help prevent the creation of this type of abusive imagery, a campaign has been launched by the [Internet Watch Foundation](#) (IWF) backed by the Home Office and Microsoft. It aims to help raise awareness of this type of criminality among parents and carers of young teens, empower and educate girls aged 11 to 13+ to spot the techniques used by sexual predators and give them the knowledge to Block, Report, Tell someone they trust. It is a national campaign running from Wednesday 21 April for six weeks. You can find out more on the [IWF website](#), as well as specific sites for [parents](#) and [young people](#).

Travel, road safety and traffic around the school

I have written extensively in the past about traffic around the school site and parents may have noticed a recent increase in the number of police and community officer personnel at peak times. This is part of our drive towards improving the safety and traffic compliance around the school site. I have received a number of complaints from residents since we returned in March about inconsiderate parking and trespassing on private land from people connected to the school. I urge you to be considerate when parking and driving around the local area and to read signs carefully on access.

The DfE are promoting the following messages on how students can travel to and from school safely:

- if you live a short distance from your school or college, walk, cycle or scoot to and from school wherever it is possible and safe to do so
- avoid sharing a car with anyone outside of your household or support bubble
- if you are using public transport to get to school or college, plan ahead and allow more time for your journey
- when you are travelling by public or dedicated school transport, don't forget to:
 - wear a face covering (unless you are exempt – including if you are aged 11 and under). It is important you wear them for the entirety of your journey, including inside a bus or train station
 - social distance where possible
 - wash or sanitise your hands regularly
 - be considerate to fellow passengers and staff.

Further information can be found in our [guidance on transport to school and other places of education](#). The Department for Transport has also created [resources](#) that can be downloaded and used by education settings to promote safe travel to school.

Testing and contact tracing in schools and colleges

Following the asymptomatic testing programme on the return to school and college, it is vital to keep testing at home throughout 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.

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

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'R. J. Langton'.



Richard Langton

Headmaster

Queen Mary's Grammar School, Walsall

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www.qmgs.org

Twitter: @qmgs1554



Community messaging
giving you live police
updates of what's
going on where you
live and work

Sign up today for free at
www.wmnow.co.uk

**stay updated
get involved**



- Receive regular updates from your local policing team
- Tell us what you are interested in and how you want to receive your information
- Look out for our updates and use them to let us know if you have any information or concerns
- Reply to messages and share information with us



www.wmnow.co.uk