



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, December 2022

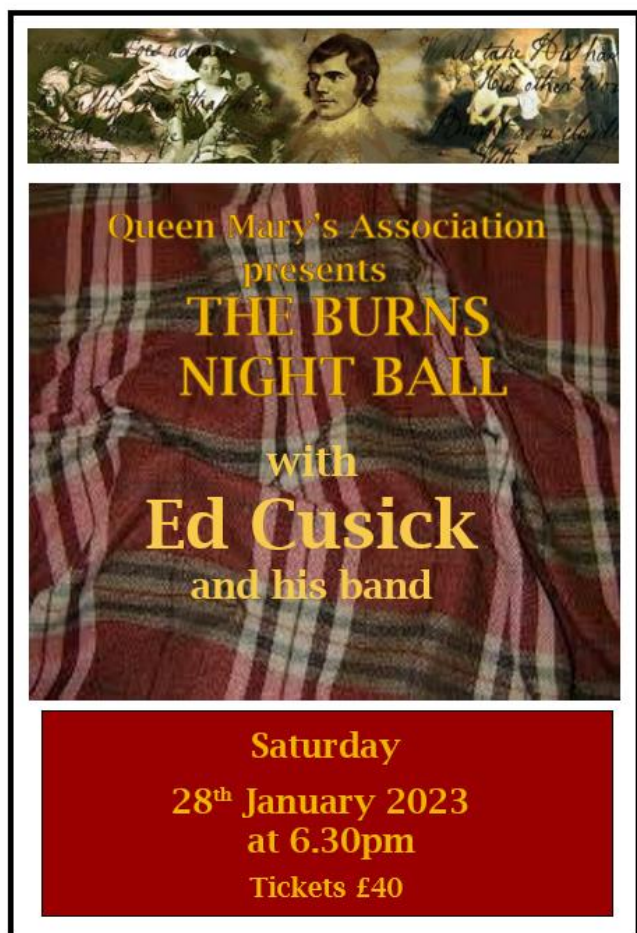
First word

It was brilliant to see so many people in school for the Taste of the World event at the start of the month. The pictures below give a flavour for the event and it was truly a celebration of our diverse school population. The QMA worked really hard to make the event happen and it has raised almost £5000 for the school. Thank you to everyone who was involved in planning the event and to those who attended and bought raffle tickets.



With the wintry weather over the past week, it certainly feels like Christmas and I'm sure all members of the school community are looking forward to the break. We have our Christmas jumper day and festive lunch on Wednesday 14th. Students may wear a Christmas jumper in exchange for £2, which will go towards '[Save the Children](#)'. There has been a large collection via the House system for the local food banks and last minute donations must be brought in by Wednesday. We are all looking forward to the Christmas concert this Thursday and parents can purchase tickets via this [link](#). The School's [Twitter](#) account has full coverage of the co-curricular activities this term. As a reminder, we finish at 2pm on Friday 16th and term starts again at 8.45am on Wednesday 4th January.

Queen Mary's Association



The next event for the QMA is the Burns night ball, taking place on Saturday 28th January. Flyers, letters and raffle tickets have gone out this week and tickets can be purchased via this [link](#). It is always a fantastic event and we look forward to seeing as many parents there as possible.

Each event has a committee to run it and we have a separate group who manage the running of the bar. We also have a separate group to support Farchynys and are looking to have a maintenance weekend there in the new year. If you are interested in supporting the work of the QMA, please contact Prveen Kataria-Raulia (alumni officer) at: alumni@qmgs.walsall.sch.uk

Also, please contact us if you can provide a good quality raffle prize for any of the events. Kombat Kids provided an excellent prize for the Taste of the World raffle and I have included a flyer for them on p5.

I have also included a summary of the progress made on Easy Fundraising at the end of this email. This is a simple and effective way of supporting the school through your online shopping.

Walsall Public Health updates

I recently sent a letter from Walsall Public health. Please follow this [link](#) for the latest data from the UK Health Security Agency regarding recent cases of scarlet fever. Whilst there are no known cases in school, please see the attached important information.

Snow arrangements

In the event of school closure due to adverse weather, notifications will be sent by school email and will appear on Twitter. Once Teams is operational in the new year, students should be set work via Teams for the lessons they miss, but there is no expectation for live lessons.

Summer exam updates

OFQUAL have updated their guidance to support students in 2023 Summer exams, which can be found via this [link](#).

National Online Safety Centre

The School are now signed up to the National Online Safety Centre. Mr Lally recently [wrote to parents](#) about how you can create an account. We will be sending out regular updates on specific E-safety matters. We will be providing monthly E-safety updates. This month, we focus on social media and the parental guide can be found on page 11.

Cost of living support

We are very aware of the current economic challenges and want to support our families as much as possible. Mrs Youngman sets out two initiatives below and parents can view other resources both on our [website](#) and through [Walsall council](#).

QMGS Bagels for Breakfast

As a school, we have linked up with Family Action and the National Breakfast Programme so we are able to provide a free bagel every morning in the canteen between 8am and 8.30am to any student who would like one. They don't need to register for this; just turn up!

Catering

Please follow this [link](#) for the latest catering updates. Full details of the School's catering offer can be found the [website](#). I have included an infographic below of the theme days coming up in 2023.



Walsall Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme Too Good To Go app

Information has been included on pages 8-10 on the Walsall Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme. We would also like to make you aware of the 'Too Good To Go' app, which allows people to buy food which hasn't been sold from supermarkets at the end of the day or during the day, at really low prices. Clicking on this [link](#) will give information about how it works and how to get the app via a QR code. Alternatively, you can just type in Too Good To Go app to download it.

Thanks to Balbir Seimar and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Branch, who have kindly donated food hampers to support our families and the community. Please contact Mrs Hill at d.hill@qmgs.merciantrust.org.uk if your family would benefit from a food hamper.

Home School Agreement 2022-23

Please see the [website](#) for our Home-School Agreement and link to student consent. I would appreciate you taking the time to read this with your child and completing the MS Form to confirm that you have done so.

Homework club

Homework club is running again this term, on a Monday-Thursday. More information can be found on the School's [website](#).

Mental health and wellbeing

The School continues to support staff and students with their wellbeing through the usual communication channels. Any member of the school community can raise concerns via the wellbeing email address well-being@gmgs.walsall.sch.uk or by using the QR code below.

This account is monitored by the SEMH team and is checked regularly:

- Mr Collins (Assistant Head and DSL)
- Mr Farnell (Safeguarding and Welfare Officer)
- Ms Burgess (SEMH mentor)
- Mrs Mohan (6th Form Operations Manager)



SIMS Parentapp

The majority of school communication, including Reports, is sent by email and Parent App so it is crucial that you keep your contact details updated. Please check your account and ensure you can access it. If you have any access issues please email parentapp@gmgs.walsall.sch.uk for assistance. Please send any updates of parental contact details to absences@gmgs.walsall.sch.uk

Dates for your diary

The full school calendar can be found the [School website](#), but I have included some key dates in January below:

Fri 16 Dec	End of term at 2pm
Tue 3 Jan	Staff training day
Wed 4 Jan	Start of Spring term for students (8.45am)
4-13 Jan	Year 13 mock exams
Thu 5 Jan	2022 Year 13 leavers' event
16-24 Jan	Year 11 academic reviews
Thu 19 Jan	Year 10 parents' evening
Sat 28 Jan	QMA Burns night ball

Absences for appointments and religious observance

May I remind parents/carers, as per the [Attendance Policy](#), the below process for absences relating to appointments during the school day:

- Medical appointments should be arranged outside of school time wherever possible
- The school must be notified a minimum of 3 days in advance of any medical appointment that have been made. Without this prior notification and proof of the appointment, the absence will be marked as unauthorised
- This notification should be sent to absences@gmgs.walsall.sch.uk with a copy of the appointment notification
- If you are attending the appointment from school you are required to collect your child from Reception and sign them out using the Exeat Book, you will need to sign them back in on their return
- If the appointment is before school you are required to accompany your child back into school and sign the Exeat Book

- Parents are not allowed to drive onto the school site, please park off site legally and with consideration for local residents
- Parents need to ensure that their child is aware of what time he/she is being collected. The student will be responsible for making their way to Reception so that they are ready for collection when you arrive to sign them out.
- If you require some absence for the purpose of religious observance, please complete and return the form which is available on the school website via this [link](#)

Traffic and parking around the School

I recently wrote to parents with regards to traffic around the school site. This letter can be found [here](#). Please continue to work with us in making the school environment a safer place. In particular, please consider the following:

- Not undertaking dangerous manoeuvres (such as U-turns or overtaking) on Sutton Road or surrounding streets
- Not parking inconsiderably near to resident driveways
- Not using access roads or resident only parking areas
- Dropping the students further away from school
- Encouraging the student to use public transport
- Walking or cycling; a helmet must be worn when cycling and students should make sure they are fully visible (through lights and clothing) in the winter months
- A white line has now been installed at the entrance to the flats on the corner of Princes Avenue and Sutton Road. The white line should NOT be crossed under any circumstances

Final word

Thank you for your continued support. I hope that all members of the School have a restful Christmas and I look forward to seeing you at one of the events over the coming month.

Mr Langton



We have currently raised £4,864.18, from 276 supporters. The top 4 supporters have raised £1303.35 between them!

One supporter has raised a magnificent £521.09 thus far! Just imagine what we could raise if every household signed up, and used, Easyfundraising. It would help us to provide even more opportunities and facilities for our young people. Please support this initiative which does not cost you anything as it is the retailers who donate on your behalf based upon the amount that you spend with them.

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.
- Donations are applied on everyday brands and shopping outlets such as Amazon (Up to 1.5%), TK Max (1%), George at Asda (5%), Selfridges (8%), M&S (Up to 3%), Argos (3%), Groupon (Up to 8%)
- There are big donations on travel bookings. A small selection is below but there are many more:
 - Expedia (Up to 5%)
 - Trainline 2.5%
 - Travelodge 2%
 - Haven Holidays 2.5%
 - Booking.Com 4%
 - Crystal Ski Holidays 0.5%
 - TUI 2%
 - First Choice 1.5%
- 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

KOMBATKIDS

The Right Choice!



**First 3
classes
FREE!**

WELCOMING NEW BEGINNERS AT

KILLOCK CENTRE

Longwood Lane, Aldridge, Walsall. WS5 3AT

SATURDAY 10.15 - 11.15AM

WOLVERHAMPTON UNIVERSITY (WALSALL CAMPUS)

Gorway Road, Walsall. WS1 3BD

FRIDAY 5.30-6.30PM

To register text: child name / class location

t: 07730 899722

e: info@combatkids.com

w: www.combatkids.com

f: www.facebook.com/combatkids



1992-2022

WALSALL CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY PROGRAMME



Walsall Council are offering all eligible children the opportunity to join our Christmas Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF).

How do I know if my child is eligible?

For your child to take part in the programme you must live in Walsall, your child must be eligible for income-based free school meals and be aged between 5 and 16 years old.

What do we offer?

The Department for Education's (DfE) funded, Holiday Activity and Food Programme is delivered locally by Walsall Council in partnership with over 60 local providers.

It is aimed at eligible children and young people and their families to provide an opportunity to be active over the Christmas Holidays, meet other children and take part in activities they may not usually get the chance to try.

At each activity, whether it is a holiday club or pick and mix session a healthy meal will be provided.

When does the Christmas HAF programme start?

The activities will take place over the Christmas holidays for four days from Monday 19 December to Thursday 22 December.

Christmas programme provision

For the Christmas programme running from Monday 19 December to Thursday 22 December 2022 your child can choose one of the following options:

4-Day Activity Club

A holiday club providing a range of activities throughout the day. This is for children to engage with a range of activities for at least four hours a day, four days a week, per child.

OR

Choose up to four session from a range of **'Pick and Mix'** activities on offer.

Children booked to attend pick and mix activities will receive a total of one food box and an activity pack per child.

How can my child take part?

You should receive a letter in the post with your child's unique HAF code. Once received you will need to register your child, if not already registered, by visiting the website www.walsall.gov.uk/children_and_young_people/haf_signup



← OR SCAN ME

Once registered, from 1 November 2022, you will be able to go online and book your child onto the sessions.

My child is already registered for the HAF programme

If your child is already registered on the programme at some point this year, you are able to log onto your account at anytime, and book on from 1 November 22. The letter will have on it a unique access code which will be required to access the booking process. If you haven't received a letter or if you are unable to find your code please contact the HAF team by email or by calling the team with your child's name, Date of Birth and your address. Contact details are below:

If I don't have a code

If you want to see if you have a code, please contact the HAF team by email or by calling the team with your child's name, Date of Birth and your address. Contact details are available below.

What happens after I have registered and booked my child's activities?

Once you have booked your child's activities, you will receive an email with confirmation. The provider delivering the activity will then contact you to confirm details and discuss any practical arrangements such as arrival times and dietary requirements.

Please ensure that you let the provider know if you need to cancel or amend a booking well in advance where possible. Activities are very popular and if your child is not able to attend it is important that we are able to offer their place to another child to benefit from the programme.

My child has Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – can they still take part?

Walsall Council has been working closely with local providers to ensure that where possible SEND requirements can be met on activities that are on offer – specific requirements should be discussed with the provider to confirm the arrangements.

For any further enquiries

Details of how to contact the provider of any of the activities your child is registered on are available on the webpage www.walsall.gov.uk/children_and_young_people/haf_signup

Please email any questions to WR4C@walsall.gov.uk or call our Holiday Activities helpline on 01922 853899 – available from Monday to Friday from 10am until 4pm.



Walsall Council



**Department
for Education**

LET'S GET BOXING



**Monday 19th December -
Thursday 22nd December**
11:00 am - 3:00 pm

**Fearless Boxing Academy, Wharf Street,
Walsall, West Midlands, WS2 9ES**

haf@allstarswalsall.com | 07988692300



**FREE
Activities**

WALSALL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME

For children and young people in Walsall aged 5-16 years who get free school meals

*eligible children and young people who get benefit related free school meals will be able to access free activities over Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays



SCAN ME

For more information please contact us on:

Website: https://go.walsall.gov.uk/children_and_young_people/haf_signup

Email: WR4C@walsall.gov.uk



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH

An estimated one-third of children have a social media account, so it's important that trusted adults know what content young people are consuming, what they're posting and the interactions they're having. On social media, it can be easy to go down 'rabbit holes' that aren't beneficial to our wellbeing. As platforms grapple with managing such 'legal but harmful' content, lives are being impacted – sometimes to tragic effect. We might be daunted by the scale of the tech giants and their content which so enthral young people, but we can still help children to be aware of their mental wellness, recognising when something isn't OK – and knowing what to do about content that upsets them.

1. UNDERSTAND THE ALGORITHM

Algorithms rank content by user interest: someone who regularly interacts with sports news, say, will see the latest results at the top of their feed. Likewise, if a user browses content that can cause harm, that's what will be recommended to them in future. Someone who's had a bad day and looks for posts which reflect their mood will find similar content being suggested to them more and more.

2. AVOID THE MAIN FEEDS

Avoiding the default feeds on social media platforms limits the amount of recommended content that's shown. Users can opt to only scroll through the accounts they follow, use restricted modes, or highlight posts that they don't want to see more of. Explore the platform safety settings to see how you can take control of what your child's phone shows them when they open the app.

3. DISCUSS WHAT THEY'VE SEEN

Chatting about what your child's seen online keeps you aware of the content they're interacting with. Don't assume that platforms are screening out inappropriate material, or even that your child would recognise content as being harmful. Discuss who they follow, what posts they like and what comes up in their feeds: if alarm bells ring, it could be time for a more in-depth talk or to seek support.

4. LEARN HOW TO HIDE CONTENT

If your child stumbles across unsuitable content on social media, there's the option to hide that post as well as indicating you'd prefer any similar material not to be suggested in future. On some platforms, you might also be able to block posts that contain specific words, which is an excellent way to start taking control of what your child sees online.

5. SET DAILY LIMITS

Phones and most apps can tell you how much they're being used. Spending too long online can mean a child misses out on other activities that are important to all-round wellbeing. You could set some family rules – for everyone to follow – around device use, such as screen time limits and tech-free spaces: involving your child in creating this agreement makes them more likely to stick to it.

6. MONITOR THEIR ACTIVITY

Keeping a discreet eye on how your child is using social media can help ensure they're not entering potentially dangerous situations. As they grow up, of course, children need space to exercise their independence – but you can still occasionally ask to see what they're looking at. Be transparent about your own social media use and try not to sound judgemental about your child's.

7. TURN OFF PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Even for adults, it's tempting to check an email or message as soon as the alert sound pings. Push notifications encourage people to open their apps and spend time on their device, so turning them off will help your child to practise mindful use of tech. Most of us have other things that we need to focus on as a priority – and those notifications will still be there later, when we have more time.

8. USE DEVICES TOGETHER

Giving children internet-enabled devices and complete freedom to explore platforms on their own can result in exposure to hugely damaging content. You could consider making a particular area at home a designated space to use phones, tablets and so on – making it much easier to monitor what content your child is viewing and (if necessary) steer them away from any potentially harmful paths.

9. ENCOURAGE OTHER ACTIVITIES

Mental health professionals often highlight the importance of exercise, quality time with loved ones, a balanced diet and restful sleep for our mental wellbeing. Spending hours on social media can cause us to sacrifice other activities that our brains need to feel well – so encouraging your child to put down their phone and enjoy something that doesn't involve a screen can be immensely beneficial.

10. TALK ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

Most platforms default children's accounts to private, so only people they've accepted as friends can see their posts. This reduces the risk of bullying or unkind comments, but – just like offline life – the digital world can still make children feel as if they need to act or look a certain way to fit in. Talk to your child about peer pressure, and listen to any concerns so you can provide the support they need.

Meet Our Expert

Shazia Sarwar-Azmi is executive headteacher at a specialist primary school and, as an emotional therapy coach, works with school leaders to focus on the SEND, mental health and wellbeing agenda. A passionate advocate for vulnerable learners, Shazia is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and the author of *The Rainbow Within*, a book which supports children with SEMH needs.



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#WakeUpWednesday



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