



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, March 2023

First word

It has been a short, but eventful half term and I'm sure all members of the school community are looking forward to the Easter break. With industrial action and snow disruption, it has been difficult at times to ensure continuity of education, but I am proud of the staff and students who have worked hard to keep to their routine. The inspection this week is a chance for the school to shine and I am grateful to everyone who is playing a part of the two days. I will write to parents in summer term regarding the outcome.

There has been lots going on from a co-curricular perspective and I attended both the Gresford drama production and the CCF's field day last week. Both occasions were an opportunity to see some outstanding contributions from the students and they were a clear sign of the hard work and dedication that goes in. I have also attended several rugby fixtures to promote the Future Sports campaign and have enjoyed meeting a variety of parents. See later in this newsletter for more information on the project. Although slightly curtailed by the snow, the events in the national careers week were an excellent example of the wider QM community coming together and we look forward to welcoming in various alumni after Easter for the re-scheduled careers surgery. As ever, please look at the School's [Twitter](#) account for full coverage of the life of the School, including coverage of the Ramadan experience being held this week, which parents can support via Parent Mail. All funds raised are going towards the Turkey/Syria earthquake appeal.

Spring Concert Wednesday 29th March 7.30pm (Mr Vause)

An opportunity to hear music from the School's many ensembles, orchestra, jazz band, choir, training band, Clarinet ensemble and more. Tickets are £5 from [ticket source](#).

Queen Mary's Association

The QMA hosted a fabulous Burns night ball on Saturday 28th January, with over 200 people in attendance. The pictures can be seen on the QMA's [Twitter account](#). Thank you to everyone who was involved in planning the event and to those who attended and bought raffle tickets. Just under £5000 was raised, with all proceeds going towards the School's Future Sports campaign.

Our final event of the year will be a **summer arts and music festival, taking place on Saturday 8th July**. It will include lots of student performances and there will be some great food and refreshment. Watch this space for details.

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. If you are interested in supporting the work of the QMA, please contact Prveen Kataria-Raulia (alumni officer) at: alumni@qmgs.merciantrust.org.uk. Also, please contact us if you can provide a good quality raffle prize for any of the events. 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.

Car sharing

During the bus strikes, we were contacted by a number of parents about the possibility of networking for car sharing. If you are interested in doing this, please complete the MS form survey, available [here](#).

Future Sport @ QMGS: A community legacy project

I have spoken at various events about our £1.8million Future Sports @ QMGS project, designed to revolutionise our outdoor sports facilities. I have included some plans below and will be speaking after a series of sports fixtures across the remainder of the academic year. Please see the separate flyer for the games involved and come along both to support your child and to find out how you can support the campaign.



PROJECT PLANS

Above: Pavilion and viewing gallery

Left: Aerial view of facilities

Below: Pavilion view from artificial grass pitch

Bottom left: Pavilion view from side

Bottom right: Artificial grass pitch for hockey and tennis



PARENTAL INFORMATION EVENTS



26 March 1.30pm

Y8 v Walsall RFC (KO. 12.30)

Walsall RFC



28 March 3.30pm

Y9 House Rugby
(KO. 2pm)

QMGS

19 April 8.30pm

Yr10 v Walsall RFC (KO. 7.30pm)

Walsall RFC



24 May 7pm

Y9A v Y10A & Y9B v Y10B
(Start 4.30pm)

QMGS

18 July 7pm

Y7A v Y8A & Y7B v Y8B
(Start 4.30pm)

QMGS



22 April 12pm

Beacon Hockey Club & QMGS
Hockey Festival (Start 11am)

Aston Uni
Recreation Centre

28 May 10am &
12noon

Walsall Asian Sports Association
Hockey Tournament (10am & 2pm)

Aston Uni
Recreation Centre

11 July 7pm

Sports Celebration Dinner

QMGS

Further information on tickets and timings will be issued in due course



Queen Mary's Grammar School
Walsall



Scan to
support
QMGS



THE MERCIAN TRUST

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 iPads and the parental guide can be found on page 8.

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 new wellbeing or safeguarding email addresses.

Qmgswell-being@qmg.merciantrust.org.uk

qmgssafeguarding@qmg.merciantrust.org.uk

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)

Cost of living support (Mrs Youngman)

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 Breakfast Club (Mrs Hill)

The breakfast Club, in partnership with the National Schools Breakfast Programme, offers free bagels and spreads every morning from 8am until 8.30am in the Canteen - all pupils welcome! Click on the [link](#) for more information on the National Schools Breakfast Programme, weekend breakfast ideas and quizzes

Pre-loved Uniform Store (Mrs Hill)

"Thank you to parents and alumni alike who have generously donated uniform and sports kit to our Pre-loved Uniform Store. This is always very much appreciated. We have a healthy stock of pre-loved items, so please do contact Mrs Hill at d.hill@qmg.merciantrust.org.uk if any items are required."

Clive Mark Schoolwear are supporting
The Schoolwear Association to
abolish VAT on all school uniform.



Please help us by signing the
petition here...

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/614214>



Easter Holiday Activities Programme (HAF) from Walsall Council

Please see p9 and the attached booklet for details on the Walsall Council Holiday Activities Programme (HAF).

Food hampers (Mrs Hill)

Food hampers to support families during the Easter holiday, have been generously donated by Ahmadiyya Muslim Women Branch, Walsall. Pictured is Bushra Naureen, President of the Walsall Branch, Balbir Seimar, Secretary of the Hindu Forum, Walsall and Sehajnit Seimar former QMGS pupil. Thanks also Adil and Aayan Parkar from the Masjid Al Falaah Mosque who have also kindly donated food hampers to support our families and the community. Please contact Mrs Hill at d.hill@qmgsmerciantrust.org.uk if your family would benefit from a food hamper.



Homework club

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

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@qmgsmerciantrust.org.uk for assistance. Please send any updates of parental contact details to absences@qmgsmerciantrust.org.uk

Summer exam updates

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

Dates for your diary

The full school calendar can be found the [School website](#), but I have included some key dates for April and early May are below:

Wed 29 Mar	Easter music concert
Thu 30 Mar	End of term for students (3.40pm)
Fri 31 Mar	Staff training day
Mon 17 Apr	Staff training day
Tue 18 Apr	Summer term starts for students (8.45am)
Sat 22 Apr	Y7 MEP Saturday learning; Y11 GCSE Mandarin booster
Sat 29 Apr	Year 13 Pre-U Mandarin Saturday revision
Mon 1 May	Bank holiday
Mon 8 May	Bank holiday
Tue 9 May	Year 10 and 12 exams begin
Tue 9 May	Year 7 Farchynys weeks begin
Wed 10 May	Year 8 HPV vaccinations

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@qmgs.merciantrust.org.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

Parents driving onsite

A reminder that the general rule is that parents should not drive onto site unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been pre-arranged.

Final word

Thank you for your continued support. I wish you a restful Easter break.

Regards

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

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about iPADS

Apple debuted the first iPad in 2010, kickstarting the tablet market, and it remains the best-selling tablet to this day. Although Apple doesn't offer a child-specific version, iPads are hugely popular with youngsters due to their ease of use and endless choice of apps. There's a selection of models, with different-sized screens and distinct features – including the standard iPad; the iPad Air; the iPad Pro; and the iPad mini. Thankfully, they all offer parental controls so you can regulate how your child uses the device ... and how long they spend on it.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

PHYSICAL DAMAGE

While some tablets (such as the Amazon Fire Kids editions) come with rugged shock-proof cases, iPads aren't built for rough and tumble. They're also more expensive than most other tablets, and any damage your child's iPad suffers could be costly to repair. Buying a child-friendly case and screen protector for the device could be a wise move, especially if it's being used by younger ones.

SCREEN ADDICTION

Like most digital devices, tablets have the potential to become quite addictive. You might find your child spending too long staring at their iPad, which could lead to irritability, mood swings and a loss of interest in more important tasks. If this happens, be sure to visit the built-in screen time settings and ensure you limit how long they're able to spend on the device each day.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

18
CONSIDERED

Even if it would never occur to your child to go searching online for age-inappropriate sites, apps or information, there's always a possibility that something unexpected – perhaps a video that auto-plays or content incorrectly suggested by an algorithm – could appear on their tablet and upset them. You can help prevent this by adjusting the content settings (see our 'top tips' section below).

SIRI SUGGESTIONS

The parental controls built into iOS (the fundamental operating system of Apple devices) enable you to block access to most age-inappropriate content – but your child could potentially still bypass these restrictions (either accidentally or deliberately) by using Siri, Apple's voice-activated digital assistant. To avoid this, toggle the 'Ask Siri' functions to 'off' in the iPad's settings menu.

Advice for Parents & Carers

ENABLE FAMILY SHARING

Before letting little ones loose on an iPad, it's a good idea to set up Family Sharing, as this lets you utilise the parental controls to manage exactly how your child is able to use the device. You can do this fairly easily by going into the iPad's settings; once there, you'll be able to add an existing Apple account (if your child already has one) or set one up from scratch.

APPLY SOME LIMITS

The 'Downtime' function allows you to tell the iPad to lock itself at certain periods (at mealtimes or before bed, for instance), while 'App Limits' removes access to certain apps once they've been used for a specified length of time each day. The iPad can display a reminder when these limits have nearly been reached, letting your child mentally prepare for the end of their gaming or viewing time.

STOP ACCIDENTAL SPENDING

To empower your child with an increased sense of freedom on their device (without giving yourself something else to worry about in the process) you could enable the iPad's 'Ask to Buy' feature. Whenever your child tries to download or buy an app, game or product, the iPad sends you a request to approve (or deny!) it. This option only becomes available if you've set up Family Sharing.

SET CONTENT AND PRIVACY RESTRICTIONS

The parental controls can stop the iPad from displaying explicit or age-inappropriate content (in apps like iTunes and Safari, for instance) when your child is signed into their account. You'll also be able to restrict the capacity to download and install apps, and you can specify permissions which prevent children from changing the iPad's privacy settings once you've selected them.

TRACK IT DOWN

Just like the iPhone, Apple's iPads have 'Find My' software to help you locate your child's iPad – or indeed, any linked Apple devices that have gone AWOL, including phones, watches and AirPods. If you enable 'Find My' in the settings menu, it will display the last known location of an iPad that's been mislaid, as well as giving you the option to lock a missing iPad that you suspect has been stolen.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 13 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech website *The Inquirer*, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



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Holiday Activities Programme (HAF)

Walsall's Holiday Activities and Food programme
funded by the Department of Education (DfE)



What is the HAF?

The HAF is a free and exciting holiday programme for children and young people who are:

- aged 5 to 16
- eligible for benefit-related free school meals
- Have an EHCP
- Young carer

The programme runs over the Easter, summer and Christmas school holidays.
It is funded by [the Department for Education \(DfE\)](#).

We are proud to work with a variety of providers to develop an exciting and enriching programme of activities. Our providers include schools, local voluntary and community groups, childcare providers and local businesses.

[Find out if your child is eligible.](#)

How to register for the HAF programme

You can register throughout the year.

Each eligible child should have received a letter with a unique code and information about how to register. If you haven't had a letter, you can [email us](#). You only need to register once for the 2023-2024 programme, and you can access your account throughout the year. You'll be able to book your Easter holiday activities from March 2023. [Log into your HAF account](#) to book.

Please see below some useful links:

- [HAF Website](#)
- [How to register video](#)

For further enquiries please email WR4C@walsall.gov.uk