



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, October 2023

First word

I write this in the week of Speech Day, a hugely important occasion in the QMGS calendar. It gives us a chance to look back and celebrate the past year, but also to appreciate the history of the school and the people who have been influential in its prosperity over many generations. I reflect, in my addresses, on the highlights of inspection, public exam results and the co-curricular activities we have seen in the past 12 months. I also pay thanks to all of those people who have worked so hard to make this happen - staff, students, governors and the wider community.

We currently have students in China as part of the first MEP trip in 4 years and other students are diving over half term in the Canary Islands. There have been lots of other activities and achievements this term and these can be viewed on [social media](#), but parents will need to create an X account to see the posts of the various departmental accounts. It's always good to go into a break on the back of this period of positive reflection and I hope that everyone has a good half term and can re-charge after a busy couple of months.

QMA events 2023-24

We have had a great response from new parents to support the QMA and committees have held their first meetings of the year. The QMA donated £20,000 last year to the Future Sports @ QMGS project and we are looking to raise as much as we can this year for the same goal.

The dates for 2023-24 events are below and I have included some flyers on p2, for you to save the dates for the first two events. The Taste of the World poster includes the QR code for advance ticket sales.

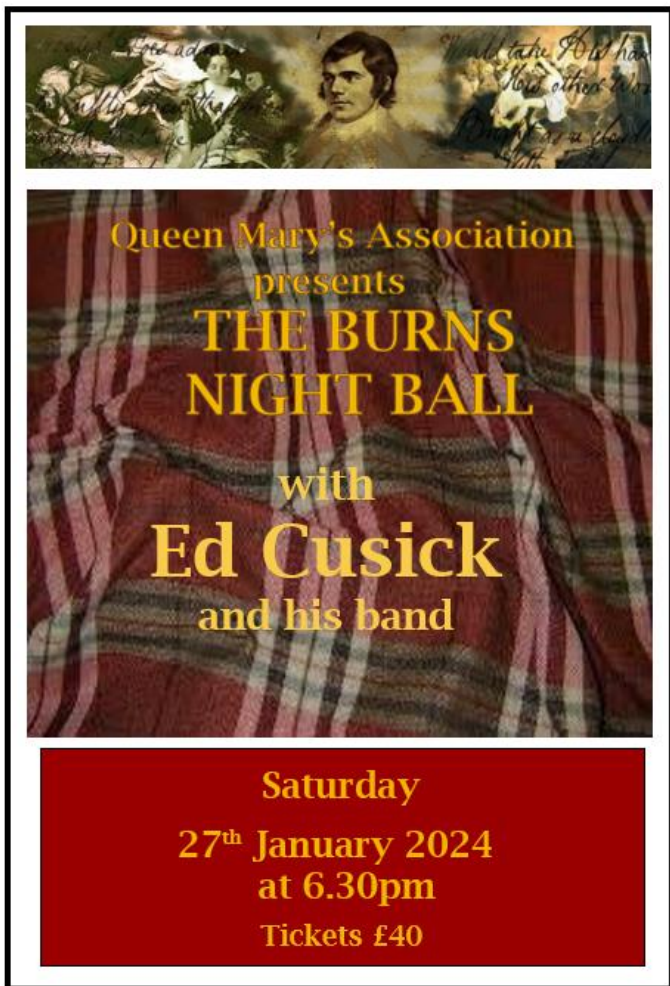
Taste of the World	Sat 2 Dec 2024 (non-uniform day for raffle ticket returns on Tue 29 Nov)
Burns Night	Sat 27 Jan 2024
QM Arts Festival	TBC July 2024

Each event holds a raffle in advance, which will be managed through Parent Mail. Letters will go out for the Taste of the World event straight after half term.

We are always looking for support in the running of the events, but also in the donation of raffle prizes, sponsorship and match funding. Please do contact us if you can help out in any way.

Each QMA 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 Farchyngs. If you are interested in supporting the work of the QMA, please us via: alumni@qmgs.merciantrust.org.uk.

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.



Queen Mary's Association
presents
**THE BURNS
NIGHT BALL**
with
**Ed Cusick
and his band**

**Saturday
27th January 2024
at 6.30pm
Tickets £40**



**CELEBRATE
TASTE OF THE
WORLD**

EXPERIENCE MANY CULTURES, MUSIC AND FOOD AT...
Queen Mary's Grammar School

Tickets can be brought using the
QR Code below:



QMGs Students
& Under 18s: £5
Adults: £15
Family: £35
(2 adults, 2 children)

**DECEMBER
2ND
18:00 - 21:00**

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE!
Prices include entry, entertainment and food from each
stall
There will also be dessert stalls, mehndi artist, games
and a licenced bar for an additional cash fee

Celebrating the rich culture of QMGs
Performances from the Mandarin Excellence Programme
Open Mic Talent Competition
And Much More...

Mental health and wellbeing

The school continues to support staff and students with their wellbeing through the usual communication channels. We work with a number of organisations and any member of the school community can raise concerns via the wellbeing or safeguarding email addresses. These will be checked during the holiday, but there may be some delay in response.

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)
- Mrs Young (nee Burgess) (SEMH mentor)
- Mrs Mohan (6th Form Operations Manager)

Welfare and Support (Mrs Youngman)

At Queen Mary's we want every student to reach their potential and participate fully as valued members of our community irrespective of background or family circumstance. To ensure the right support was being put in place, we opened the doors of the Welfare Hub in September 2020 and in June 2023, we set up the new Community Hub. On our school website, which can be found [here](#), you will be able to find information about a range of support being offered. This is where to find the main areas of support on our website.



PARENTS & STUDENTS NEWS ALUMNI VACAN

Parent & Student resources

Letters for Parents

Welfare and Support

Welfare Hub

Pupil Premium and Free School Meals

Avenues of Support

16 – 19 Bursary

The Welfare Hub: more information about who is based in the Welfare Hub and what support is available can be found [here](#).

Avenues of Support

As the cost of living continues to impact families daily, the school has worked hard to ensure there are a range of avenues of support for those families that require additional methods of support. An overview of the support can be found [here](#). This ranges from the pre-loved uniform and food hampers that Mrs Hill oversees from the new *Community Hub*. Application for the support can be done through this [Microsoft Form](#).



Did you know we can also help some students with *technology at home* so they can use a laptop to complete their homework as we now use TEAMS extensively? If you would like support in this way, please complete this [form](#). We also know that though education is free of charge at Queen Mary's, there are still indirect costs involved in your child's education that we may be able to support with via the *Financial Assistance* support. The form can be found [here](#).

Queen Mary's Foundation Support Bursary

Queen Mary's prides itself in having a wide range of co-curricular opportunities which is a crucial part of our ethos. We would like all students to be able to take part in these but are acutely aware that there are many families who may struggle to afford these opportunities open to their child. Therefore, we have recently launched the *Queen Mary's Foundation Support Bursary* which works on a 3-tier system.

More information can be found via the [Avenues of support page](#) on our website and the form to complete can be found [here](#). On the school website under "Parents and Students Tab" you can also find more information about [Pupil premium and Free School Meals](#) and the [16-19 Bursary](#). If your child was under the umbrella of Free school meals or Pupil Premium in Year 11, we would encourage them to apply for the 16-19 bursary if they haven't.

Home - School Communications

Please be aware that we have introduced a new protocol on home - school communications. In order to help manage their workload and to establish reasonable expectations of communication, staff are not expected to respond routinely to emails outside of School hours. It is our aim to respond to all emails within two School days of receipt. Reception staff will also follow this same protocol when dealing with any telephone enquiries. They will take a message, the name of the caller, and contact details and pass that enquiry on to the relevant member of staff, who will aim to respond within two School days.

The only exception to this protocol is if your enquiry relates to an urgent safeguarding concern. In this case, telephone calls will be put through to the safeguarding team or please contact Graham Collins, our Designated Safeguarding Lead, via gmgssafeguarding@gmgs.merciantrust.org.uk. Alternatively, please call Walsall MASH on 0300 555 2866.

We would also remind all visitors and callers to the school that we will ensure that our School is a safe place for pupils, staff, and all members of the Queen Mary's community. Harassment, abusive, threatening, or violent behaviour will not be tolerated in any form. We remain committed to ensuring that lines of communication between home and school are as effective and as open as possible and we welcome contact from parents, as we know that an effective home-school partnership is the best way of supporting all our pupils to thrive.

Green Bus and alternative transport options

Due to a steady flow of enquiries regarding the resurrection of the 851 (as run by The Green Bus), Thandi coaches are undertaking an exercise to ascertain the viability of the service; by asking interested parties to complete the form (available via this [link](#)) and emailing it to sales@thandicoaches.com.

Speech and Language Screener - Year 7 (Mrs Youngman)

After half term all year 7 will be undertaking an online speech and language screener which is being overseen by the Mercian Trust's Speech and Language team. The screener is an online tool that all Mercian Trust schools are using this academic year to help identify any Year 7 students with Speech and Language challenges.

The Mercian trust have decided to roll this out for all Year 7 students to undertake as the development of language skills does not stop at the end of primary school. Students continue to learn new vocabulary, understand more complex language and use their talking for a wider range of purposes into and beyond Key Stage 3.

The importance of good understanding and functional communication skills are well recognised as essential for literacy development, academic success and enabling students to engage with both the curriculum and their peers. However, difficulties with language can be hard to identify lead to language and communications needs being missed or misidentified. The screening tool will help us to identify any student who may need additional support moving forward.

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

Sports Store changes

We are undergoing changes during this academic year, with Clive Mark taking over the management of sports wear, as well as school uniform. They will be taking on the Samurai stock of kit from January, some of which is running low in supply due to the changes. We will communicate more in due course about these changes. We still have a considerable amount of kit that needs to be collected from the sports store that has been ordered at the beginning of term and this should be collected as soon as possible.

Homework club

Homework club continues to run again in the autumn term, on a Monday-Thursday. More information can be found on the School's website.

Dates for your diary

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

Thu 26 Oct	Speech Day (finish for half term)
Mon 6 Nov	Autumn half term 2 begins (8.45am)
20-30 Nov	Year 11 mock exams
Thu 23 Nov	Sixth form open evening
Sat 2 Dec	Taste of the World
Mon 18 Dec	Leavers' event
Wed 20 Dec	Music concert

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. Thank you to those members of the school community who took part in the Walsall Arboretum Parkrun event on Saturday 23rd September. I have included some plans below and more can be found out about the project [here](#). Current pledges are just under £700,000, which is a great start, but there is lots of work to do. If you would like to discuss how you can help please email our Alumni and Development Officer, Prveen Kataria-Raulia via alumni@gmgs.merciantrust.org.uk or you can make a monthly/ annual or one-off donation by following this [link](#).



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



WellComm Secondary Screener - research project – volunteers wanted (Mrs Youngman)

Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS trust are in the process of developing a Secondary age language screening tool to follow on from the Wellcomm Primary Screen.

Their aim is to create a language screen that can be used in secondary education settings to help identify difficulties with pupils' language skills. For this screen to be developed, it is necessary to carry out a research study to validate and standardise the language screen that has been written.

For this to happen, the WellComm Secondary research team (Speech and Language Therapists and Speech and Language Therapy students) would like to try out the new language screen and standardised language assessments with secondary age participants from local schools. They approached Queen Mary's Grammar School and asked for a selection of students from all year groups to take part in the research project.

The student can be between age 11 and 16 and whom English is their most frequently spoken language. Phases 1 and 2 have already been completed and so our students will be involved in phase 3 and 4. More information can be found here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifN-MyQrs8o>

The screening tool would take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete, and the language assessment will take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

Therefore, we are looking for student volunteers to take part in this research project to help develop the secondary screening tool. If you would like your child to be part of this project, please complete the following [Microsoft form](#) to register your interest. We will then follow up with further information and consent forms after half term.

If you have any further questions, please contact Jenna Medhurst, the Mercian Trust's Speech and Language Therapist and who is also part of the WellComm Secondary Screener research project.

jenna.medhurst@merciantrust.org.uk

Mental Health Support Team
Reflexions

CRAFT 'N' CHAT

Free drop in event for children, young people and their parents and carers.

Tuesday 31st October 2023
Drop in any time between 10am and 3pm

Location:
Floor 1, Activity Room, The New Walsall Art Gallery, WS2 8LG

Parking Information:
-Pay and Display at the Wharf or Premier inn
-Station Street Car Park - £2.50 All Day
-Marsh Street - Free Parking

Walsall Craft 'n' Chat Event (Walsall Reflexions)

Walsall Reflexions are excited to share with you that we are hosting another Craft n Chat event in the October Half Term on Tuesday 31st October 2023. This is a free event for children of all ages.

Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF) – Walsall Council

HAF is a free programme for children and young people. It runs over Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays. Your child is eligible if they are:

- aged 5 to 16
- eligible for benefit-related free school meals

The [Department for Education \(DfE\)](#) funds the HAF programme and more details can be found on the Walsall Council website: [Holiday Activities Programme \(HAF\) | Walsall Council](#)

We work with providers to develop an exciting and enriching programme of activities. These include schools, local voluntary and community groups, childcare providers and local businesses.

Programme aims:

We want children who attend this provision to:

- eat healthily over the school holidays
- be active during the school holidays - take part in activities which support their development and wider educational attainment
- be safe and not to be socially isolated
- have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition
- be more engaged with school and other local services

We also want to ensure that the families who take part in this programme:

- develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting
- are signposted towards other information and support, for example, health, employment, and education

FREE Healthy Meal

#HAF2023 Free Activities

WALSALL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME

A free and exciting holiday programme for children and young people aged 5 to 16 who are eligible for free school meals.

The programme is running over Easter, Summer and Christmas 2023.

To sign up or for more information please contact us on:
www.walsall.gov.uk/children_and_young_people/haf_signup
or email us WR4C@walsall.gov.uk
Contact number 01922 653899

Walsall Council | Walsall Right 4 Children | Department for Education

Litter and parking

I have written regularly in previous newsletters with regards to safe parking, traffic manouvers and general use of the roads around the school. I have continue to receive regular communications from parents and local residents about this matter and urge you to please consider other members of the community. We are continuing to work with the local council and police, to ensure a presence and intervention around peak traffic times. A red line has been placed at the entrance to the flats at the corner of Princes Avenue and Sutton Road; parents (and others collecting pupils by vehicle) must not cross this line under any circumstances. There has been a recent increase in encroachments by parents etc. on to this private property along with highly inconvenient parking at the main entrance to the flats, located in Princes Avenue near to the junction with Sutton Road. Can I also please ask that parents are students are mindful of litter in the community, both in the school grounds and around the local area? We are a busy school, but can make a difference if everyone plays their part.

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@qmg.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](#)

Final word

Thank you for your continued support. I hope you have a good half term and look forward to seeing you at a school event soon.

Mr Langton



Through Easy Fundraising we have raised a total of £6,154.85 for the school from 296 parent and staff supporters, with the leading supporter having single-handedly raised £755.84 towards this! 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, such as Expedia (Up to 5%) and Booking.Com (4%)
- 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.
- You can find our Easyfundraising page at this [link](#)

Thank you