



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, December 2023

First word

I write this at the start of the last week of term, which seems this year to be later than ever! We welcomed back our 2023 Year 13 leavers on Monday evening to present their prizes, whilst on Wednesday the main hall will be full of parents and performers for the Christmas concert. If the performances in assemblies are anything to go by, we are in for a treat.

It's been a busy month, with trips and visits going out right up to the end of term: A-level DT students at Morgan motors, Year 7 artists at Wolverhampton art gallery, CCF cadets at Farchynys and Year 8 English students at Harry Potter world. I am grateful for the staff who have made these activities (and lots more besides) happen. Pictures can be viewed on [social media](#), but parents will need to create an X account to see the posts of the various departmental accounts.

We are delighted to have been included in the Cricketer Magazine Top 100 Schools Guide for the sixth time in 2024. The guide is now available to read as an e-edition [here](#). The print edition of the guide also remains available for purchase [here](#). Sport has been a real highlight this term and it is great to see the teams thriving.

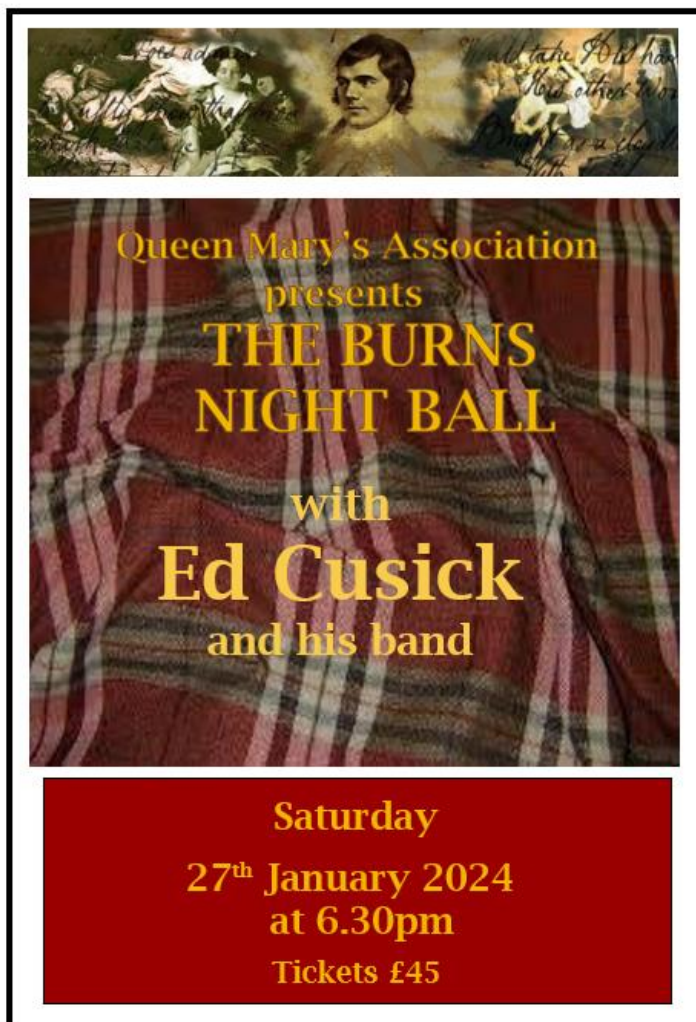
We finish the term on Friday with our Christmas assemblies and I will be speaking to the school about the importance of thinking about others. As a school, we have supported the Glebe centre's foodbank initiative this term, along with celebrating the 'Save the Children' Christmas jumper day. Along with our other charity work (Birmingham Children's Hospital, Movember and others), we try and live by our motto of giving.

We say goodbye to five colleagues at the end of term. Mrs Xia is leaving to become head of Mandarin at BVGS and goes with our best wishes after two years. I am grateful to her for her commitment to the MEP and for accompanying the Year 10 trip to China in October. Mr Smith leaves his position as SSI in the CCF to take up another role within the cadet training team. He has been with us since 2021 and has worked really effectively to help restore the full offering of the contingent since the Covid restrictions. Mrs Longdon is moving on from her position as the admissions, outreach and partnerships officer after three years. She has been instrumental in growing our primary school outreach work and in setting up the partnership with the other Midlands grammar schools for one entrance exam across the region. Mrs Wilcox is also leaving after three years to join the exams team at Aldridge School, after being the exams officer here. Her work during a difficult few years through, and just after, the pandemic has been greatly appreciated. Finally, Mrs Hopkinson is moving on from her role in managing the sports store, which she has done for almost a decade. She has worked with a large number of parents and students in that time and I know how grateful people have been for her support. We wish all colleagues well for their future endeavours.

The QMA present Burns Night – Saturday 27th January

Thank you to everyone who made the Taste of the World event in December such a success. We are delighted to announce that the event (and associated raffle) made a profit of £6000 towards the Future Sports project. We are delighted to invite you to the next event in the Queen Mary's Association fundraising calendar: Burns Night. The event will take place on Saturday 27th January 2024 from 6.30pm until midnight.

Burns Night is an adult only, formal evening of first-class dining and live music. We also offer a casino experience and a raffle on the night, with all money raised going to support the work of the QMA, our parent's association. Burns Night always proves to be an enjoyable and entertaining event providing an opportunity for guests to socialise with family and friends, as well as to meet other parents and friends of the school.



Tickets are £45 per person and include a formal dinner, welcome drink and entertainment. Numbers will be limited, so we would recommend you buy your tickets as soon as possible via this Ticket source [link](#).

As with each of the three annual QMA events, we are also holding a Pupil Raffle. Please look out for further information and this will be available via Parent Mail from 8th January. There will also be a non-uniform day on Tuesday 23rd January 2024 for those who purchase raffle tickets or make a donation of £2.

All of the money generated through sales of raffle tickets, the non-uniform and cultural dress day and profits from the Burns Night event, raise vital funds for the school which ultimately benefit many of your children. Previous fundraising events have enabled the school to purchase a minibus, erect outdoor cricket nets, install cricket covers and have recently facilitated a refurbishment of the Library.

As in 2022-23, the QMA are supporting the School's [Future Sport @ QMGS campaign](#). £20,000 was donated in the summer and we hope to match that

this year across our QMA events. We hope that you can support the valuable work of the QMA by attending the QMA events and purchasing raffle tickets, so that we can continue to enrich our children's school experience. 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 Farchynys. If you are interested in supporting the work of the QMA, please us via: alumni@qmgs.merciantrust.org.uk.



Through Easy Fundraising we have raised a total of £6,593.91 for the school from 302 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.

- 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](#)

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.



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.

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

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)
- Miss Daniels (SEMH mentor)
- Mrs Mohan (6th Form Operations Manager)

Sports Store changes

Clive Mark has now taken over the management of sports wear, as well as school uniform. All uniform and sportswear is available via their [website](#) and in the Walsall branch.

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

Christmas concert (Mr Vause)

The Christmas concert takes place on Wednesday 20th December at the school. Tickets can be purchased [here](#). Tickets are £5 (under 12's are free. Pupils participating do not need a ticket). This promises to be another fantastic evening of music featuring all our school ensembles: Orchestra, Jazz Band, Training Band, Intermediate Band, Choir, Clarinet ensemble, Guitar, String & Saxophone ensembles.

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:

| | |
|------------|--------------------------------|
| Mon 18 Dec | Leavers' event |
| Wed 20 Dec | Music concert |
| Fri 22 Dec | Autumn term ends at 2pm |
| Mon 8 Jan | Staff training day |
| Tue 9 Jan | Spring term begins at 8.45am |
| 9-19 Jan | Year 13 mock exams |
| Mon 15 Jan | Year 11 academic reviews begin |
| Thu 25 Jan | Year 10 parents' evening |
| Sat 27 Jan | Burns night |
| Thu 1 Feb | Year 12 futures evening |

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



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



The poster features a collage of images showing children engaged in various activities like kayaking, playing basketball, and eating. Text on the poster includes: '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'. Logos for Walsall Council, Walsall Young Children, and Department for Education are at the bottom, along with a QR code.

Final word

I hope that all students, staff and parents have a restful and energising Christmas and look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Mr Langton



Richard Langton

Headmaster

Queen Mary's Grammar School, Walsall

01922 720696

www.qmgs.org

@qmgs1554