



Queen Mary's Grammar School

A message from the Headmaster, September 2024

First word

It has been a pleasure to welcome so many parents into school this month, attending the information evenings for Years 7, 10 and 12, along with the RSE presentation. Whether you are a new parent to the school, or returning for another year, I hope that you are well and that you feel informed about what lies ahead. The School [website](#) sets out the full range of subjects on offer through our curriculum and the School's [social media](#) accounts give a glimpse at the broader extra-curricular life. We have already had sporting and languages success this term and we look forward to another busy year. This followed [exam successes](#) from the summer, of which we were very proud.

There have been a number of letters sent to parents since the beginning of the school year and I would encourage you to look at these, if you haven't already done so. I wrote before term started about [behavioural and attendance expectations](#) and that we are following tightened DfE guidance. I make no apologies when I say that the students need to be in school as much as possible and would be grateful for your support on this. I will not be able to grant authorised absences in term time, apart from in extreme circumstances. We have also appointed an attendance officer to the school, to work more closely with families where there have been attendance or punctuality issues.

Ms Naguthney also wrote at the beginning of term with regards to changes in some of the [behavioural sanctions](#), including the introduction of same day detentions. It is important that the students learn from this and adhere to the high expectations set out. It is, after all, for their benefit that they develop effective working habits and minimise distraction. These behavioural expectations extend beyond school, including on trips and during their journeys to and from QM. If I may, I would like you to emphasise these expectations.

Finally, I wrote to parents with regards to concerns over driving and parking around the school site. My Senior Leadership Team are on duty outside the school on Sutton Road at the beginning and end of each school day to keep our children safe. Regrettably that job is made difficult due to the dangerous driving and parking of a small but significant number of parents. Similarly, the school regularly receives complaints from our neighbours about inconsiderate parking preventing them from accessing their properties, and from others about the poor standard of driving. We already work with the Local Authority to promote road safety and sustainable travel amongst our students. You should be aware that we proactively invite the police and parking enforcement teams to visit the school at peak times and issue penalties to drivers who are breaking the law. I realise that most parents already drive safely and considerately. As we enter the darker winter months it is important that this situation is addressed.

Annual parent survey

Thank you to those parents who filled in the survey in the summer term. Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all questions, representing a strong endorsement for the work of the school. We will be following up on specific feedback and wanted to make the following points:

- Some parents asked if we could return to in-person parents' evenings. This would be extremely difficult, with larger year groups, without significantly adding to the workload of staff. We have had very positive feedback from most parents on the convenience and efficiency of the system and have tried to provide in-person information events at the start of Key Stages 3, 4 and 5.
- A small minority of parents disagreed that they weren't informed about what their child was learning and or what opportunities there were. Please refer to the [curriculum page](#) of the website and look out for updates via Email and Edulink.

QM Experience Fund and the Future Sport Project

Thank you to those parents who have made donations to the QM Experience fund, following my [letter](#) at the beginning of term. We try our best to provide extra-curricular activities through our school budget or at as low a cost as possible. However, our ambitions often go beyond this income and I am hoping that you will consider giving a regular amount to ensure that we can continue to offer a full range of activities. Prior to the Covid pandemic, we ran the 'Lift Fund' and I am grateful to those of you who supported this. Over the past few years, I have been very conscious of the national economic picture and have been cautious about approaching parents for support. However, I am grateful to those who have given what they can to the school and who have supported events through the Queen Mary's Association (QMA).

For the past two years, we have been fundraising towards the [Future Sport @ QMGS project](#): an ambitious initiative to revolutionise our facilities for the benefit of our students and the wider community. We are very close to receiving planning permission and, with pledges standing just below £1million, we are hoping to start the development this year. Any donations to the QM experience fund will initially go towards this but will support a wide range of other opportunities once we have completed the project.

I hope that you will seriously consider making a regular payment to the QM Experience Fund. We are grateful for a regular contribution as it enables us to plan the best ways in which to support our young people. Please follow this [link](#) for details of how to set up a standing order to the donations account and a Gift Aid declaration which, if you are a UK taxpayer, will allow us to claim an additional 25% on top of your donations. Alternatively, if you would prefer you can make a one-off annual payment (£60) or termly payments (£20 per term), you can do this via Parent Mail. Please select the 'QM Experience' option.

Queen Mary's Association (QMA)

We enjoyed a full range of events in 2023-24, raising over £15,000 towards the Future Sport project. We hope that you can support the valuable work of the QMA in 2024-25 by attending the QMA events and purchasing raffle tickets, so that we can continue to enrich our children's school experience.

The events for this year are:

Saturday 7 December 2024	Taste of the World
Saturday 25 January 2025	Burns Night Ball (adults only)
Saturday 28 June 2025	Summer Arts Festival

We have just welcomed new members of the parent community to the QMA and 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. If you are interested in supporting the work of the QMA, please contact us via Minaxi Patel-Gill at: alumni@qmgs.merciantrust.org.uk.

Easy fundraising is also an easy way to support the QMA. We have raised a total of £7,278.31 for the school from 304 parent and staff supporters. 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; you can find our Easyfundraising page at this [link](#)

Sports Store changes

Clive Mark has now taken over the management of sportswear, as well as school uniform. All uniform and sportswear are available via their [website](#) and in the Walsall branch. We are also working with Clive Mark on their 'reform' programme, to recycle and re-use school uniform. If you have any uniform or sportswear in good condition, you can bring this into school and deposit in the box in main reception. If this is bagged and labelled with your name and details, you can receive a 10% voucher off future purchases. The items will be then made available to families in need. You can also take items directly into the Clive Mark store.

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)

Avenues of support (Mrs Hill)

I would like to remind all parents of the [Avenues of Support](#) we offer, focussing on pre-loved uniform and sports kit and food hampers. We have had donations of uniform from Y11 and Y13 at the end of last year, but there has been a drop in donations to the Community Hub of late.

Thank you to parents and alumni alike who have generously donated uniform and sports kit to our Community Hub. This is always very much appreciated and we look forward to receiving more donations. We have a good stock of pre-loved items, so please contact Mrs Hill at d.hill@qmg.merciantrust.org.uk if any items are required.

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

QMGs 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 above for more information on the National Schools Breakfast Programme, weekend breakfast ideas and quizzes.

Is your child a young carer? (Mrs Hill)

We are proud of being a diverse and inclusive school and strive to support our pupils and their families in any way we can. As we continue to develop our support, we have been improving our knowledge and understanding of young carers. Therefore, we would be interested to learn if your child helps to give ongoing care and emotional support for you or other members of your family who may have an illness, a physical/mental disability, or a mental health issue. With your help, we are looking to gather more information to help us identify and support any of our pupils who have a caring role at home and therefore could be considered a young carer.

We have been conducting assemblies which have raised the awareness of young carers and asked pupils to reach out to us if they think this applies to them so we can try to ensure the right support is given to them. Since doing this we have identified 16 young carers but know that it is a small part of a much bigger picture.

Please follow [this link](#) to help you decide if your child might be a young carer. If you think they are, please email Mrs D Hill, Young Carer's Operational Lead d.hill@qmg.merciantrust.org.uk with the heading 'Young Carer'. Please tell us your child's name and form with a brief overview of the caring role they provide. We will then be in touch with both you and your child to explain how they can be supported here in school (and out of school) and share information about other measures of support available.

Dates for your diary

The full school calendar can be found on the [School website](#), but I have included some key dates for the end of term and beginning of the autumn below:

Thu 3 Oct	Y11 parents' evening	18-28 Nov	Y11 mock exams
Thu 10 Oct	Y13 parents' evening	Mon 16 Dec	Y13 leavers' event
Thu 24 Oct	Speech Day (half term starts after)	Tue 17 Dec	Christmas concert
Sun 10 Nov	Remembrance parade	Thu 19 Dec	Term finishes at 2pm
Thu 21 Nov	Sixth form open evening		

Thank you for your continued support for the school.

Regards

Mr Langton
Headmaster