



Queen Mary's Grammar School

Headmaster: R J Langton, M A

September 2025

**RE: Expedition to Indian Himalayas – Spiti Valley. July 2027. Open to current year 9 – 12.
Online Parents Meeting at 7pm on Tuesday 30th of September.**

I am writing to inform you about a very exciting opportunity to take part in an expedition to the Indian Himalaya in July 2027. This follows on from a similar, successful visit to Malawi in 2025 and the school's previous biannual expeditions all over the world.

The expedition itself is the pinnacle of a much larger student development programme. This is an 18 month long endeavour with both UK and India based phases. In the UK, students undertake a Leadership Development Phase with the expedition provider, Outlook Expeditions. This is designed to develop character, build resilience, and improve well-being — the tools required to be a leader and tackle life's challenges effectively. Delivered in a hybrid format of both face-to-face and interactive, online events, this is where the journey really begins. These skills are put to the test in an expedition training weekend to a UK National Park.

The India based phase is a 28 day multi-activity and student led expedition. We have chosen the Indian Himalaya as being both highly culturally and physically challenging yet also accessible for an expedition. The Spiti Valley will provide the backdrop for the project phase and physical challenge phase of the expedition. We have also provisionally included visits to Agra and the Taj Mahal, Delhi and New Delhi, and Manali. Note, the final expedition itinerary is determined subject to the choices made by the students themselves both on and before the expedition.

A highlight of this destination is the opportunity to trek in the Himalayas, with a choice of itineraries that will be determined by the groups themselves with a unique focus. All will involve spectacular high altitude trekking over high passes as well as lower level sections taking in cultural sites such as monasteries and village homestays. The valley is visually and culturally spectacular, and unlike many other areas of the Himalayas, relatively off the beaten track, being only accessible in summer.

As well as the physical challenge, there will be ample time for cultural interaction as well as the opportunity to make a real difference to the challenging lives of people living in the area. Like the trekking, the project phase of the expedition is determined and led by the students themselves. In the Spiti Valley this would likely involve a construction project that leaves a lasting legacy, working with locals to make a meaningful difference. This could be the construction of greenhouses to improve food security or working on small scale solar projects in a village. This part of previous expeditions has always proven to be the most enjoyable and most meaningful.

We have planned time in the 28 day itinerary for exploring other areas of India, namely Delhi, Manali and Agra. This is a long trip with plenty of time to explore and a little longer than most other schools in each destination. For example, the Taj Mahal could be witnessed at sunrise rather than a whirlwind day trip from Delhi.



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The trip is organised with Outlook Expeditions, an experienced school expedition operator who has worked with Queen Mary's Grammar School since 2015. Full details of how an expedition works and what to expect can be found on the link [here](#) and also as a link in the email to parents and students. The link takes you to the sign up page for the **student and parents webinar on the 30/09/2025 at 7pm** as well as the deposit payment page.

The total cost of the 18 month Leadership Development Programme, UK training weekend and 4 week expedition is £4495. We appreciate that this is a very large amount of money and will appear daunting. For an expedition, students are expected to fundraise at least some of this themselves, they will get more out of the whole programme if they do. Indeed, some students have fundraised their entire trip in all previous expeditions. Support and advice is provided by Outlook Expeditions as well as experienced members of Queen Mary's staff. The cost of the expedition is all inclusive for the 28 days on expedition as well as all UK based training events. It does not include personal equipment (clothing, rucksack, passport etc or insurance for these items) or UK airport transfers. It does include medical insurance, all activities, visits and entrance fees, all food and accommodation for the month.

The deadline for the payment of the first deposit of **£275** is on the **14th October 2025 – this is to be paid directly to the expedition company via their dedicated QMGS expedition page [here](#)**. Please note that payments are not made on parent mail for the expedition.

At Queen Mary's Grammar School, we would like to enable students to take part in co-curricular activities such as this expedition, and to ensure that there is no participation gap due to family circumstances. Firstly, students eligible for Pupil Premium (Bursary funding in 6th form) may receive funding of £100 per academic year. Secondly, The QM Foundation Bursary is another avenue of support which could part fund the expedition. If this is the case, please complete our financial assistance form which can be found on the school website [here](#).

Expeditions are at the very top of a broad range of trips and visits that are offered at Queen Mary's. It can be a life-changing experience for young people and is far more than just another trip. Please have a look at the online resources provided on the links above. For any other questions please do not hesitate to contact Mr Rendu via email m.rendu@qmgs.merciantrust.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Richard Langton
Headmaster

Mr M Rendu
Head of Science