

Queen Mary's Grammar School



A message from the Head of School, September 2017

Dear parents/guardians

Welcome and reflections

It seems a long time since the summer holidays, but I hope everyone had a good break and has returned into the rhythm of school life. A particular welcome to the parents of the new starters (mainly in Year 7 and 12); I hope you find your association with QMGS as fulfilling as your son/daughter. Don't forget the **quiz social event** on Wednesday 4th October for all new parents. This is being run by the **QMA** and I hope you can come along to meet new people and see how you can help the school.

I wrote in my press releases in the summer how pleased I was with our performances at GCSE and A-level, amidst change and uncertainty on a national scale. Our students have (as they always do) risen to the challenges thrown at them. Following on twitter the exploits of the teams on expedition in Borneo, army camp at Nesscliff and cadet programmes in Canada made me very proud (if not a little jealous!). If you haven't already, have a look at the school accounts on twitter and keep up with the life of the school. The main account is **@qmgs1554** and there are accounts to follow from lots of other areas of school life.

Policy changes

We have made a few tweaks to some school policies, in order that we continue to provide the highest standard of education for the students.

The first one relates to the **Behaviour policy**, which you can find attached to this email. We have appointed Mr Farnell as a pastoral support assistant, working alongside the heads of year and Mr Saran across year 7-11. We have also introduced a behaviour points system and ladder of sanctions (available as appendices in the policy), which all students should be aware of.

We have also made changes to our policy on **Homework**. In key stages 3 and 4, the students should still receive one hour per subject per fortnight, but we have taken away the timetable (stating which days each subject can be set on). Subjects may set more than one piece in the fortnight (up to the limit of one hour), but still have to stick to the rule of two days to complete the work. We are currently collating a database of extension tasks and independent learning activities per subject. These activities can supplement homework which is set (if one hour per fortnight is not possible) and provide a range of opportunities for students to work beyond the curriculum. At this time of year, we are working with the upper sixth to complete their UCAS applications and the importance of wider, independent reading and research here cannot be overstated.

Harrisons food survey

As part of an ongoing commitment to improving the standards of catering at the school, I would be grateful if you (with the help of our son/daughter) could complete the survey available from the link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/queenmaryG>

Out of hours care

I am currently writing a letter to all parents outlining our changes to out of hours care at the school. Please look out for this letter (which will be available on the parent section of the website) and let me know of any issues.

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Road safety

The importance of safety on the roads is always stated at the end of term in our important information sheet:

For reasons of Health and Safety, parents should not drive into the School grounds in the morning or before 5pm in the afternoon (6pm on Friday). Please be considerate of others in the Sutton Road, and residents in the surrounding area. Please do not do U-turns in the road, double park, block driveways or ignore the safety marking near the school gates.

Following some complaints from local residents since the beginning of term, could I re-emphasise this guidance? Could I also request that you stress to your son/daughter the importance of managing their own safety, in crossing the road and not accepting lifts from strangers?

Key dates for the diary coming up

Thursday 21 st September	Year 13 parents evening
Wednesday 4 th October	QMA new parents quiz evening
Thursday 12 th October	Year 11 parents evening
Thursday 19 th October	Speech day – lunchtime finish; whole school back in the evening for celebration event at St Matthew's church
Tuesday 31 st October	Non-uniform day (for the return of raffle tickets to support the QMA fireworks event)
Thursday 2 nd November	Sixth form open evening
Saturday 4 th November	QMA family fireworks event, 4-7pm

Your support, as ever, is so important to the school and I am grateful for this. I look forward to seeing you in school over the coming months

Warm regards

Richard Langton

Head of School

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