

Queen Margaret's

Escrick Park • York



QM Connect

Remote Learning Guidance
for Parents: January 2021

Message from the Head

I am immensely proud of the way in which QM girls and their families have embraced **QM Connect**. Everyone wishes we were together physically at Escrick Park but as we all do what we can to keep others and ourselves safe during this lockdown, **QM Connect** is designed to provide the QM Experience - not only in terms of teaching and learning - but also with lots of opportunities to learn outside of the classroom and connect with others through House meetings and various challenges.

I know learning online can be tough. The concentration needed to stay focused on the screen is more exhausting than one realises because it seems such a passive thing. For parents trying to support their children and work from home at the same time the pressures can be great. Whilst we might hope that the girls will be fully engaged in their daily lessons and activities, for our younger girls in particular this might prove challenging and if home broadband isn't all that we might dream of then this can make family life an additional challenge.

We can only do our best. Whether student, teacher or parent (and many are both parent and teacher of course), we are all trying to do our best during the worst moment of a global pandemic and we are not alone. **QM Connect** provides structure to the week, access to learning at a time which suits you (live lessons are recorded so they can be viewed again) and the community routines which help us all to root ourselves in the familiar when the world around us feels less so. This guide is intended as a reference point for the QM Family to know what is available, what is expected of them and what we are doing as a School to support you at this time.

With best wishes

Sue Baillie

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Head



Some Key Terms

Google Meet: An online meeting, the most common way teachers and girls will connect.

Google Classroom: A 'remote classroom' where the teacher and the girls can post and access work and receive feedback.

Google Drive: A place to save and share files.

VLE (Virtual Learning Environment): A place where teachers will upload explanatory videos and set work. Also the home of our 'Community Corner' with links to Chapel and Assembly plus enrichment activities. Teachers will tell the girls whether to use the VLE or Google Classroom.

The Role of the Tutor: Your Link to QM

Personal tutor meetings are the lynchpin of the **QM Connect** platform. Just as we pride ourselves on the individualised approach of our support for the girls when they are at Escrick Park, the same is true when we are supporting them remotely. All girls have the opportunity for one to one sessions with their tutors and this is the usual way we can monitor their overall progress, offer advice and help with learning issues, and also gauge their more general wellbeing. If you are worried in any way about your daughter's learning or wellbeing, her tutor is your first port of call. Their email address is in the following format; initialsurname@queenmargarets.com. The tutors are supported by the senior tutors who are also there to help the girls:

Amanda Debenham (Years I-III) adebenham@queenmargarets.com

Claire Nadin (Years IV-V) cnadin@queenmargarets.com

Isabelle Leaf (LVI-UVI) ileaf@queenmargarets.com



Teaching and Learning

Academic Programme

When we initially went into lockdown in March 2020 we operated on a reduced timetable to enable the girls to get used to a new style of learning and also to give the teachers the chance to juggle the many challenges of working from home in a national pandemic. The girls and staff not only rose to the challenges but they exceeded them in such that we have had an online learning provision (blended learning) ever since in the form of **QM Connect**.

Our girls and teachers have been increasingly used to working both online and face to face in the classroom. We were therefore ready to teach the girls online when the subsequent national lockdown was announced.

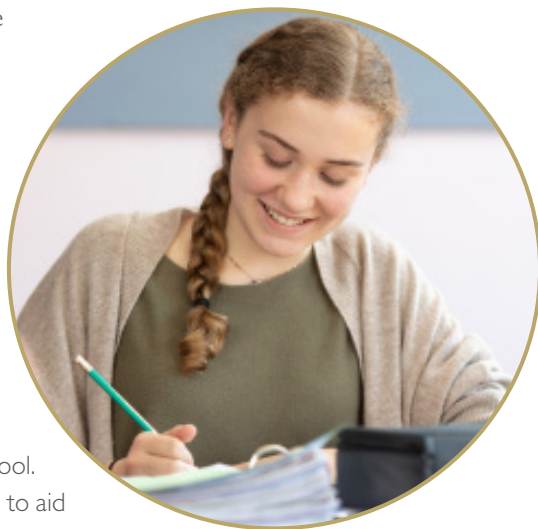
Our usual timetable follows a two week cycle and in September 2020 we were keen to return to what was familiar with all the advantages that a two week timetable brings in terms of greater flexibility. We have therefore made the conscious decision to keep our full two week timetable for all year groups for the time being. We do of course hope that we are in a position whereby we will be back in the classroom with face to face teaching in February.

The structure of the School day also remains familiar in that we have six sessions per day with a 16:35 finish for academic lessons. There is currently no Saturday teaching of academic lessons. This is time for the girls to spend away from their computers and also to recharge after a busy week, as well as spending time with family. This is also time for their teachers to leave their computers behind and have some time away from the screen.

Online lessons are mainly live but research does say that a mixture of live and recorded sessions are the most beneficial for student learning.

A number of our girls identified through the recent Pupil Work Review that the ability to pause a teacher was most definitely the way forward! Where needed, lessons are recorded and uploaded onto the VLE for the girls to access at their convenience.

All girls in Years I-III, V and UVI will take part in online Study Skills sessions this term. These are designed to support our girls and to give them the necessary skills and confidence to get the most from their online learning. Year V will have their session on Thursday 28 Jan from 09:00-11:00 and UVI on Thursday 4 February from 09:00-11:00. Girls in Years I-III will have their sessions when we are back together in School. Girls in Years IV and V have unlimited use of GCSEPod which is designed to aid revision for all specifications and subjects. This is a fun and interactive way to not only consolidate learning but also to expand knowledge beyond the online classroom.



Sixth Form (UVI and LVI)

In the Sixth Form our girls have 5 sessions per subject (10 over the fortnight). These are predominantly live lessons. The girls also have a significant number of study periods along with Sport which are both, for very different reasons, incredibly important. Having time away from the screen is also key and girls are encouraged to take part in a number of extracurricular activities available to them.

Lifeskills lessons are not currently running but we hope to resume these lessons as soon as we are back to physical teaching. This is also the case for PSHE but both of these will be reviewed in the coming weeks.

Prep is being set as normal for LVI. UVI girls are being asked to focus on revision for their mock examinations.

GCSE (Year V and Year IV)

At GCSE our girls have 2.5 sessions per subject each week (5 over the fortnight). Again, these are a mixture of live and recorded lessons. Girls also have access to Sport as well as study time which are a welcome addition to the timetable in this lockdown. Practical lessons often have to make the most sacrifices when it comes to online learning but I was hearing from Teacher of Food Preparation and Nutrition, Sarah Clark, only this morning on how she was doing live practical demonstrations in her kitchen for her GCSE groups. The possibilities are endless!

PSHE lessons are not currently running in lockdown due to the nature of the topics we would ordinarily cover and the difficulty delivering these in an online setting. We do plan for these to resume when we are back in the physical classroom.

Prep is being set as normal for Year IV girls. Year V girls are currently being asked to focus on their revision on the upcoming mock examinations.

Year III

The Year III curriculum remains unchanged, with girls studying their full quota of subjects each week. These are the same number of lessons that the girls would be having if they were physically in the classroom. Year III girls have 3 study periods over the fortnight which they can use to catch up where required. Girls also have Sport lessons during the week to give them access to guided exercise and activities.

PSHE lessons are not currently being taught during lockdown but this will be reviewed. There is no prep for Year III girls at the moment. Prep needs to be time away from the computer doing something other than online learning.

Year II

The Year II curriculum remains unchanged with girls studying their full quota of subjects each week. These are the same number of lessons that the girls would be having if they were physically in the classroom. Year II girls have 5 study periods over the fortnight which they can use to catch up where required. Girls also have Sport lessons during the week to give them access to guided exercise and activities.

PSHE lessons are not currently being taught during lockdown but this will be reviewed. There is no prep for Year II girls at the moment. Prep needs to be time away from the computer doing something other than online learning.

Year I

The Year I curriculum remains unchanged with girls studying their full quota of subjects each week. These are the same number of lessons that the girls would be having if they were physically in the classroom. Year I girls have 6 study periods over the fortnight which they can use to catch up where required. Girls also have Sport lessons during the week to give them access to guided exercise and activities.

PSHE lessons are not currently being taught in lockdown but this will be reviewed. There is no prep for Year I girls at the moment. Prep needs to be time away from the computer doing something other than online learning.

The Year I girls of course have not experienced online learning in this way before and we are mindful that the current curriculum is very full. We will be reviewing the Year I provision in the next week or so to ensure that we are offering the most appropriate curriculum for all our girls.

If you have any questions about the curriculum or timetable and wish to discuss these further please contact Academic Deputy, Claire Rhodes, on crhodes@queenmargarets.com



PASS Department:

Support for Girls with Additional Learning Needs

All girls receiving support from the PASS department are continuing to receive their weekly lessons as part of their timetable. These are delivered as live lessons via Google Meet and girls can email their PASS teachers in advance with work they would like support with, share documents which can then be screen shared in the lesson and bring work to the lesson itself. All the PASS Department teachers have reassured girls that they do not need to wait until the following week's lesson for support; the 'door' is always open and girls are able to email their PASS teacher in between lessons with any difficulties so that these can be addressed straight away, either with a reassuring reply or with an extra Google Meet lesson. Should parents have any concerns about their daughter then in the first instance, please contact your daughter's PASS teacher:

Juliet Edwards jedwards@queenmargarets.com

Dawn Hill dhill@queenmargarets.com

Kathryn Hornby khornby@queenmargarets.com

EAL Provision

EAL (English as an Additional Language) lessons in their usual format will not be taking place during lockdown but we are offering weekly support sessions for girls in Years III-IV who would usually have EAL lessons. Aside from these sessions Girls can also email Estelle Leclerc and Amanda Debenham at any time to arrange for a specific session or to ask for any support they require. Should you have any concerns or questions regarding EAL please contact:

Amanda Debenham (Years III) adebenham@queenmargarets.com

Estelle Leclerc (Years IV-V) eleclerc@queenmargarets.com

Careers and Higher Education

The QM Careers and HE VLE is designed to be a portal or hub that collates all the resources the girls will need to support them as they plan for life after QM and the world of work. It contains print and online links, resources, guides, videos and ideas covering topics from Oxbridge to gap years and careers from medicine to business. In addition, girls in Years III-UVI also have access to the Morrisby Careers package, which they can access at www.morrisby.com. All girls and parents are welcome to contact Head of Careers, Higher Education and Project Qualifications, Nicola Onyett, on nonyett@queenmargarets.com at any time for advice, support and information.

Summer Examinations

It is very difficult to speculate what summer will bring but at the moment we are aware that GCSE and A Level examinations are not taking place as normal this year. We have seen in recent days that there is a calling for an externally set 'mini' examination that is marked internally by teachers. Nothing further has been said about how these might run. We have been led to believe that Centres will be required to give some kind of Centre Assessed Grade (CAG) but as yet we are unaware of how and what these look like. You may have heard on the news that iGCSEs have not been cancelled given that they do not fall under the control of the UK Government, but again this hasn't been confirmed. If this were to stand it is not possible to enter girls who have been studying for GCSEs and switch them to the iGCSEs due to the major difference in content and type of assessment. As soon as we have greater clarity from the Government we will of course let you know.

GCSE Options

Even though we are in a national lockdown we do need to look ahead to next academic year and shortly Year III girls will be asked to make their GCSE choices. All girls will be given a GCSE choices brochure and will receive a talk about options and what is involved in the decision making process. Parents of girls in Year III will be invited to view an online options information package as well as attend virtual Parents' Meetings which will take place from Wednesday 10 - Friday 12 February. Girls will then be asked to make their choices before Easter 2021. Please watch out for the information and invitation to the GCSE Options Event.

A Level Options

Following on from the mock examinations in February, Year V girls will be asked to look ahead to September in making their A Level choices. The girls have already taken part in a taster day and indicated their provisional A Level choices. In March the girls will be asked to think about their choices and indicate what they would like to study in September. A presentation and discussion process will take place with girls and parents alike.

How You Can Support Your Daughter With Online Learning

Routine is the most important key to success. The timetable maps out the day, including study periods where girls do not have a formal lesson, but have time to either complete work already set or take time away from their screens to move about, walk the dog, prepare a snack or do one of their household chores. Try to stick to the timings as much as possible, with lunch at lunch time and the end of School at 16:35.

Keep a running reminder on the fridge or family notice board of the tasks or appointments which need doing. Some girls will be very well organised and have this already set up in their study areas but others might prefer a more 'whole family' approach to keeping everything under control.

'Don't sweat the small stuff'. We are all doing our best during a national emergency. If your daughter is late for a lesson because she was enjoying a walk and forgot the time then it isn't the end of the world. She will need to explain her tardiness but she won't be punished for it. If you as a family feel you need some time together during the week, take it but ensure your daughter has let her teachers know. On the other hand, if you are worried about an unusual lack of enthusiasm or, indeed, over zealous working then let us know and we can look at the bigger picture.

In the physical School time outside of lessons would have largely been spent with friends so don't be too worried about your daughter catching up with friends on WhatsApp or other media but do agree with them how they are going to manage their time, especially as this 'social' time is screenbased too.

Physical exercise is important for learning and the PE lessons plus the daily and weekly challenges help to provide some focus for daily exercise, perhaps they are also a source of family rivalry?!

For girls in examination years, the added anxieties of public examination uncertainty and the mock examinations and assessments will be looming large. Parents will also be worried too. It is important to maintain some degree of proportion and to focus on what can be achieved now. It is tempting to feel you are supporting your daughter through joining her in with her worries when this can serve to exacerbate the impact of understandable anxieties.

Absence Due to Ill Health

No girl who is unwell for any reason should feel that she must attend lessons. If your daughter is unable to attend **QM Connect** please contact her tutor as soon as possible.

If your daughter has tested positive for Covid-19 but is feeling well then she is more than welcome to continue to join in her online lessons and engage in her learning. Self-isolation is a difficult time and any connection to friends and community will be of help.

Clubs and Enrichment Activities

Extra curricular enrichment activities are an important part of the QM Experience. There are many opportunities to learn outside the classroom and these are detailed on at the link below on the VLE:

<https://vle.queenmargarets.com/mod/page/view.php?id=15142>

This page of the VLE gives you an idea of the clubs, House activities and challenges that are on offer to the girls. In addition to the regular clubs there are Daily Challenges set by the Prefects, and the Sports Department. The Sports Challenges are something you can all do as a family and there is always a new topic discuss at the 'tea table' if girls are involved in those challenges. Talking of the 'tea table', in good QM tradition, cooking is a feature of the Community Corner with recipes and healthy eating ideas being shared among the community. If food for the mind and soul is more the order of the day then all the Chapel Services are also recorded and available on for you to access via the Community Corner at any time. If you have queries about the enrichment programme please contact Senior Deputy Head, Lars Fox, who is leading this aspect of the programme on lfox@queenmargarets.com.

Individual Dance, instrumental and LAMDA lessons are also continuing during lockdown and appointments for these should now be in place. If you have queries about individual lessons please contact:

Alison (Dance) aleadley@queenmargarets.com

Sam Horseman (Music) shorseman@queenmargarets.com

Jonathan Neaves (LAMDA) jneaves@queenmargarets.com



Sport

Sport is an important aspect of QM life and in maintaining the structure of the full timetable we have enabled Sports lessons to continue during the day so that all girls have the opportunity of at least one 'live' lesson of Sport a week, in addition to skills and conditioning challenges which they are set daily. The girls have been asked to log their activity in an online Sports log book so that the Sports Department can see what they are doing. The log book is saved on the Google Drive - you can ask girls to show you and remind them to add any activities you undertake as a family. This month we are asking girls to log any walking, running, cycling and swimming distances they do to see if we can collectively notch up enough miles to make it to our sister schools in Chile and Australia - a great reason to get them walking the dog!

Wellbeing During This Time

During the first lockdown, we launched our **Five Ways to Positive Wellbeing** programme which aims to address the mental health impact the pandemic and the impact of the lack of social interaction. There are many ways that we can look after our mental health and also manage the impact of screen time and communicating with friends online.

Five Ways To Positive Wellbeing

#QMConnect

Encouraging girls to connect with other people, both the people with whom they are living and their wider family and friendship groups using social networking apps which are easily available. At present your daughter also has the opportunity to attend her weekly house meetings which offers the chance to meet up in a social context with girls for her Year Group.

#QMTakeNotice

Encouraging the girls to take notice of the changing world around them. As we move through the winter months (and perhaps into Spring) we ask that the girls are sending in photos of their gardens changing and the animals they are noticing on their daily walks.

#QMGive

We would like to see girls participate in giving to their own community, this may be their immediate family community, or the wider community. There is significant evidence to support that people who give of their time to others are more likely to report feeling connected to their community and feeling happier. Please ensure that this is done in line with current lockdown restrictions.

#QMBeActive

Regular physical exercise is good for our bodies, our brains and our wellbeing. In addition to the guided sports sessions your daughter has every week, the PE department are sending out daily challenges as well as longer-term challenges (which all families are welcome to participate in).

#QMLearn

Our [QM Connect](#) digital platform encourages girls to learn a wide range of new skills outside of the classroom, including a huge variety of enrichment clubs which they can engage in.

There is a wide choice of clubs available ranging from Dance, Textiles and Cookery Club to History, Politics Debating Club. In addition, our Prefect's Daily Challenges on the VLE are encouraging the girls to learn and think differently about the challenge in short, achievable chunks.



Need Help?

There are times during this pandemic, when everyone feels a little low; during these times it is really important to reach out for help and support. A good start for this are teachers and tutors, who can put girls in touch with a wide range of support. There is a lot of support available through charities and external organisations which the girls can find on the VLE, in the Community Corner where there is a section on Sources of Support: Signposting to wellbeing support

In addition, Mrs Thomas is sending out weekly meditation exercises; if you or your daughter has missed any of these sessions you will be able to access the recorded sessions in your own time on the VLE.

Support for Parents with Home Schooling

One of the teaching and learning experts we have been working with as a School has produced a number of free vlogs that are designed to provide some support for parents with their children's home learning.

There's a short introduction here, which outlines the purpose of the vlogs:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4lnbf_Jay4

Here is one of her vlogs on developing Our Children's Resilience. It is applicable to all ages:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSE2dHECTow>

Safeguarding on social media platforms

Part of our PSHE programme is to teach the girls about online safety. We know, though, that although girls are receptive to advice in a classroom it is a different environment when they are at home or alone in their bedroom.

The most important, practical piece of advice is to get to know the apps your daughter is using. Ask them to show you how it works, out of interest rather than as a "policeman" and explore when and how your daughter is using the app as part of that conversation.

Be aware that communication online comes through a number of different means. In addition to the more well known platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat many online games have chat features which children and young people use to communicate. These chat features can be fine, but largely depend on whether the chat rooms are public or private, a simple question to ask (and insist on).

The benefits of reducing screen time before bedtime is well known and one useful approach might be to have household rules about the use of screens in the time leading to bed, during mealtimes and in the mornings.

One of the best places to stay updated on the newest platforms and online trends for young people is parentzone www.parentzone.org.uk

If you have any concerns about your daughter's online life please get in touch with her tutor or Mr Fox lfox@queenmargarets.co.uk.





01904 727600

QUEENMARGARETS.COM

QUEEN MARGARET'S
ESCRICK PARK, YORK YO19 6EU

