



Parent Guide 2017-18

Dear Parent / Guardian,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Queen Mary's College community. I am delighted that your son or daughter has chosen QMC to continue with their education, and am confident that they will have a happy and rewarding time here with us. Making the transition from school to College can be a little daunting for students but please be assured that your son/daughter will be warmly welcomed and will be supported every step of the way, helping them to settle in quickly and easily.

At QMC we value the importance of establishing a partnership with parents, to support our young people through this important phase of their lives, and you probably have questions about how we do things at QMC. We kindly ask that you take the time to read through this short guide, it will provide you with an overview of the support and systems we have in place. It is our aim to enable all of our students to achieve their aims and reach their potential whilst at College. We hope you will familiarise yourselves with our procedures and invite you to work with us in ensuring your child has a successful and enjoyable time at College.

Should you have any further queries, or want to talk to us about any aspect of your son's or daughter's education, please feel free to contact us.

Ali Foss
Principal

Progress Tracking

Personal Tutors

All students at QMC are offered a great deal of support to help them progress and succeed at College. Every student is assigned a Personal Tutor when they join QMC. Your son's/daughter's Personal Tutor will also be one of their subject teachers, but has additional responsibility for ensuring that their overall academic and personal needs are met. Personal Tutors meet with their students as a whole Tutor Group in a timetabled lesson and regularly on a one to one basis to discuss individual attendance, progress and achievements, and may contact you if issues arise. Please make sure that you know who your son's/daughter's Personal Tutor is by looking at their timetable - you are always welcome to contact them.

Consultation Evenings

Consultation Evenings offer the opportunity to meet with your child's tutor and/or teachers to discuss progress and action-planning at various points throughout the year. We will send you a letter shortly after term begins inviting you to meet with your son's/daughter's Personal Tutor on either **20th or 21st September 2017**. This is a group session with other parents/guardians and the date will depend upon the Curriculum Division your child is in. Later in the year, we offer

'Invitation Only' consultation evenings with specific subject teachers. The first of these is provisionally scheduled for **17 October 2017**. Letters for these evenings will be sent to you and include instructions for booking appointments online. If you do not receive an invitation you are welcome to contact teachers for an appointment. You are also welcome to contact the Personal Tutor and/or teachers at any time to discuss your child's progress.

Termly Newsletters

Every term we will email you with important information, news, updates, term and other useful dates. Please advise us of any change in your contact details. You can do this by emailing us at info@qmc.ac.uk. We may send out other information in a variety of ways depending on content.

Vista

Vista is our comprehensive online system which allows you to easily monitor your son's/daughter's progress at College. You can access a wide range of information relating to attendance, homework completion, marks/grades and reviews. It enables Personal Tutors, teachers, support staff, students themselves and parents to monitor progress effectively, and focus on areas for improvement. You will receive your Vista for Parents login details towards the end of September which you will need to access the system. Please email v4p@qmc.ac.uk if you require further information regarding access.

Assistant Principals

The Assistant Principals are Kate Need and Helen Henderson who are each responsible for half the curriculum departments. The subject your son's/daughter's Personal Tutor teaches determines which Curriculum Division they are in. If you have any major concerns about your child's progress that you do not wish to speak to your child's Personal Tutor about you can ask to speak to an Assistant Principal. Call the Help Desk on **01256 417500** and ask to speak to an Administrator who will be happy to make you an appointment. In some cases the Assistant Principals' Administrators may also call you to discuss any issues which arise.

Attendance and Absence Reporting

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all timetabled classes, support sessions, enrichment sessions and tutor sessions. Attendance and success are very closely linked. Attendance, and punctuality, for each class is recorded electronically and Personal Tutors receive a weekly absence report. Any absence is investigated and if a Personal Tutor is not satisfied with the explanation given, they will contact you. You can monitor your son's/daughter's attendance online through Vista. However, if you are concerned about the amount of time that your son/daughter is spending away from College you should contact their Personal Tutor directly.

In addition, the College will endeavor to notify the primary contact, by the absence text messaging service, if their son/daughter has missed registration in any class. Information on attendance and punctuality is always available online through the Vista for Parents system.

Illness and Absence Reporting

If your son/daughter is unwell and unable to attend College, a parent/guardian **ONLY** should notify the Help Desk on each day of their absence by calling **01256 417500** or emailing helpdesk@qmc.ac.uk. Likewise, if you know your child cannot attend College because of an important appointment (i.e. a medical appointment) you must inform the Help Desk prior to their absence. This information is coded in our electronic registration system and Personal Tutors are informed.

If a student is taken ill during the day they must report to the Help Desk. The Help Desk staff will contact you or another named person in order to make the necessary arrangements for the student to be taken home. Unfortunately we are unable to keep unwell students on site as we do not have appropriate facilities. If the absence becomes long term please contact the Personal Tutor to discuss the situation.

First Aid

The College has a dedicated team of First Aid trained staff whose primary responsibility is to deal with medical emergencies that happen on site or on the way to College. Please be aware the first aid team **are not** medical experts and as such they are not here to respond to undiagnosed medical concerns or injuries that have occurred outside of College hours. Please seek medical advice from a medical practitioner in these cases.

Please be advised we are unable to dispense any medication.

Holidays

Please do not arrange to go on holiday during term time. Group work, continuous assessment, and coursework are now a feature of many courses and absences can have serious consequences. If it is absolutely necessary for your son/daughter to be absent, please ensure that you inform the Help Desk in advance. This can be done by email or letter, addressed for the attention of the Principal, giving the duration and reason for the absence. Your son/daughter will need to consult each of his/her subject teachers including their Personal Tutor to ensure that they have an action plan in place, prior to departure, which will enable them to keep up to date with any lesson content, coursework and homework missed.

Expectations of Students

Behaviour

In Year 11, and in the Learning Agreement students sign before entering the College, your son/daughter will have been made aware of their new responsibilities as a member of the College community. The vast majority of students welcome this invitation to be part of a more mature working environment. When things go wrong we are usually able, through working with students and parents/guardians, to resolve issues and help students to succeed. However, you need to be aware that if a student's behaviour becomes difficult and destructive, or has a serious impact on others in the College community, immediate action will be taken which could lead to suspension and ultimately exclusion from the College.

Smoking

The College is committed to becoming a non-smoking site. To this end we provide support for any student trying to quit. For those who choose to smoke there are designated smoking areas on the College site (this includes vaping).

Part Time Work

Part time work is often an important aspect of a student's life, giving financial independence and in some cases valuable work experience. However, students need time both to study and relax if they are to realise their full potential. Part time jobs should not interfere with their College work, nor should they be undertaken during normal College hours. We recommend no more than one full day's work at the weekend and one evening during the week.

Parking and Driving onto the Site

QMC has a Green Travel Plan which commits us to cutting down car use to the site as much as possible - both for the benefit of the neighbourhood and to reduce the College's impact on the wider environment. When thinking about travel to College please look for the most environmentally friendly form of transport. We encourage students to consider walking or cycling to College if they live within Basingstoke. We also encourage the use of public transport; College buses or Stagecoach services are available on most routes to College, and it is a short walk (20 minutes) from the train station and the bus station to College.

If your son/daughter is being given a lift to College they must be dropped off and picked up from Cliddesden Road, using the turning circle and drop off point at the far end of the road. Please be considerate to our neighbours and do not park in neighbouring streets or block driveways.

Please be aware that passing a driving test will not give students the automatic right to park at College. They will need to apply for a parking permit and preference is given to student drivers who have completed one full year at the college, are over 18, need to use their own transport for reasons of disability, have a good attendance record, come from an area where access to public transport is poor, have paid all their course fees and/or travel the furthest distance. Application forms are available from the College Help Desk. Each application will be considered on its merits and special cases will be viewed sympathetically. The permits cost £50 for the whole academic year, or £20 per term.

Examinations and Arrangements

Examinations

Examinations take place at various points in the year. The busiest time is early May to the end of June, when the vast majority of examinations take place. Beyond examinations there are many critical periods of assessment and course deadlines throughout the year. For further information please contact your son/daughter's Personal Tutor.

Special Arrangements for Examinations

If your son/daughter had extra time for examinations at school, or needs special arrangements to be made at the College, it is important that we are made aware of this as soon as possible so that procedures can be put into place. Please encourage your son/daughter to go to the Learning Hub in The Spectrum to arrange this.

Student Protection and Support

Support Services

At College we offer specialist support services including learning support, counselling, careers services and skills support. Personal Tutors will liaise with the relevant services to ensure students receive the support they need. Personal Tutors can also signpost students on to appropriate talks and presentations, be these to do with Higher Education, employment, or general health and welfare.

Child Protection

Legally, a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18. The College therefore has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of our students. This responsibility necessitates a Child Protection Policy, and we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare. In general, we will seek to discuss any concerns about a child's welfare with the family and, where possible, seek their agreement to make a referral to Children's Services. However, we are not obliged to inform parents if we consider that by doing so a child would be at increased risk of significant harm. The child's views will also be taken into account if the child is considered to be sufficiently mature to make informed judgements about the issue. Decisions about informing parents will be made by Beth Linklater, who is the Assistant Principal responsible for Student Support and Safeguarding. Beth is also the College's designated Child Protection contact. Where appropriate, Beth will make these decisions with the guidance and advice of statutory agencies such as Children's Services and the Police. A copy of our Child Protection Policy can be found on our website.

Extra Support

Some students may need additional support from a member of staff. Staff frequently, and willingly, help students on a one to one basis at a time when they are both free. In addition, each Advanced Level course devotes time to providing work at a variety of levels. This ensures that those students who need extra help in developing a particular skill for a subject receive assistance. At the same time, those students who are achieving high grades can be given the opportunity to explore and investigate topics which will stretch them and enable them to reach their maximum potential. Students are able to refer themselves to the Learning Hub at any time in order to receive additional support, if considered appropriate. Students work with a member of staff on either an individual basis or in small groups, according to their needs. Support can be given for just a few sessions or it can be a regular session for the duration of a student's time at College.

Counselling Service

Personal problems can have a detrimental effect on students' work. Sometimes students have concerns which are, or are perceived to be, topics that cannot be taken to anyone they know. To assist students we offer a confidential counselling service which is easy for them to access, and well publicized throughout the College.

Financial Support for Students

The College seeks to help students as far as possible with financial problems, which includes signposting to other agencies. The College has a bursary fund for students whose household income is below £25,000 and your son/daughter may be entitled to free college meals if your household income is below £16,190. There is also a small hardship fund to assist students in buying items essential to their studies, provided by The Queen Mary's Foundation. Students in need of further financial support are also able to make direct applications to the Foundation. All application forms for grants may be obtained from the College. For further information, contact the College and ask for Denise Valler or Beth Linklater.

Beyond QMC

Options

Throughout the time that your son/daughter spends at QMC we shall be talking to them regularly about their options for when they leave us. To help students make decisions about their future we offer a lot of careers advice, education and guidance, not only through tutorial meetings, but also through our links with external providers. If your son/daughter would like a careers interview, please encourage them to book one with us. You are welcome to accompany them.

Higher Education

We encourage a variety of entry routes into Higher Education which we discuss with students and are always happy to discuss these with you too. Students will have full support in applying to university through UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admission Service) and the chance to attend Higher Education fairs and open days.

One of the most important careers talks we attend is the Surrey University UCAS fair in March 2018, which gives students the opportunity to meet a wide range of universities and to decide whether Higher Education is the correct route for them. It is absolutely essential for students to keep an open mind about their future at this stage in their education. The Fair is an easy way to find out more about university life and the prospects it opens up. Regardless of whether a student ultimately goes, the experience affords them a chance to speak to professionals, network with like-minded people, expand their knowledge about the choice that is out there and, ultimately, assists in arriving at an informed decision. There is lots of help and support available at QMC and this is a vital component to the decision-making process that is not to be missed.

In the first year we hold an evening presentation for parents about Higher Education, and in the second year we will send you information about applying for student finance and HE funding.

Work Placements, Volunteering and Employment

Students are encouraged to undertake work placements and volunteering as this can be valuable in preparing them for their future careers and in writing their personal statements. We are always looking for employers for new placements so if you are able to help by providing a work placement please contact the College Work Placement Co-ordinator, Nicky Mirza. Students who want to go into employment after College will be given advice and guidance, and we encourage them to explore their options.

Governance

The Governors of the College

The College became an independent corporation as a result of the 1993 Further and Higher Education Act. At this time, the role and responsibilities of the Governing Body increased significantly. The Governors have final responsibility for ensuring that the College operates professionally and competently, is financially sound and provides an excellent educational experience for those people who wish to extend their learning. Full details about the Governors, including how to contact them can be viewed at <http://www.qmc.ac.uk/governors-documents>

You are welcome to contact the Governors should the need ever arise.

Term dates

Autumn Term 2017	*Tues 29 th August – Thu 21 st December
Half Term	Mon 23 rd October – Fri 27 th October
Spring Term 2018	Fri 5 th January – Thu 29 th April
Half Term	Mon 12 th February – Fri 16 th February
Summer Term 2018	Mon 16 th April – Fri 13 th July
Half Term	Mon 28 th May – Fri 1 st June

*Enrolment week commences 29th August 2017 – First year induction day is 12th September, all students on timetabled lessons from 13th September 2017.

Inset Days will be scheduled throughout the year.

You will find important dates on our website at www.qmc.ac.uk/college-calendar. Please check the College Calendar regularly to ensure you know what is going on when.