



13th February 2026

Dear Parents, Carers, Students and Staff

Weekly Bulletin #20

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week

This week we are recognising Children's Mental Health Awareness Week, a time to focus on the importance of looking after our mental health and supporting one another.

Throughout the week students have completed activities, discussions and opportunities to learn more about wellbeing, managing stress and where to go for help if you need it. Mental health is just as important as physical health, and it's okay to talk about how you're feeling.

Remember:

- You are not alone.
- It's okay to ask for help.
- Small positive actions can make a big difference.



Talk it out Tuesday

Students' understanding that talking is a strength and listening matters. During form time students took a moment to discuss the following with their shoulder partner:

- "What helps you feel calm when you're stressed or worried about something?"
- "Who is someone you can talk to if you're worried?"
- "What is one thing that makes your day better?"

Wellbeing Wednesday

Wellbeing Wednesday, a day to focus on the small actions that can make a big difference to how we feel.

During form time, students' thought about simple strategies that support their wellbeing. This might include breathing exercises, making a short list of things enjoy, or sharing ideas with their tutor group about what helps to stay calm and positive during busy days.

Remember:

- Looking after your wellbeing is important.
- Small habits can have a big impact.
- Everyone's strategies are different — find what works for you.

Thankful Thursday

Focusing on gratitude and kindness. Taking time to notice the good things in our lives can help boost our mood, reduce stress, and build resilience.

In tutor time students are encouraged to:

- Share three good things from yesterday
- Think of three things they're thankful for today
- Show kindness and tell others they appreciate them
- Reflect on what helps them feel positive.

Feel-Good Friday

Today is Feel-Good Friday, a chance to end the week on a positive note and take a few moments to reflect. Half term is next week too, and we are all due a well-earned rest. During form time students have had the opportunity to:

- Think about one thing they have learned this week.
- Choose one positive habit or strategy they will keep doing

Talking to a friend, a teacher, any member of staff student feels comfortable with is important. At QEGS we have an amazing team of tutors (take a bow tutors!) and a fantastic pastoral team who are trained to listen and support. TEAMQEGS are here to help every day at school, so if something is bothering, feel stressed or anxious come and speak to staff - we CARE and we will help you.



The Big Red Bus visits for National Apprenticeship week

This week is National Apprenticeship week. The 'Big Red Bus' came on to site on Friday 13th February and parked up in the bus bay for the morning. Seventy Year 10 students attended workshops on the bus about apprenticeships for Post-16 option opportunities. Thank you to the University of Derby and Buxton College for organising the visit.

In addition, Year 10 students completed a quiz activity during form time on apprenticeships to help answer questions on pay, length of time and qualification on completion of apprenticeships.

Year 10 Work Experience reminder

Well done to Year 10 students who are busy securing their work experience placements ready to be added on to the Unifrog.org platform this week, plus the many already agreed. The deadline for organising a placement is fast approaching - **Monday 2nd March 2026**. Mrs Dyer and Mrs Johnson have been speaking with students this week to support with finding a placement, checking in if ready to add to the Unifrog platform.

Following half term, if Year 10 student is still struggling to secure a 'Yes' from an employer, please speak to Form Tutors, Mrs Dyer, Mrs Johnson, Mrs Morgan (Tuesday lunch, Rm 103) or Mrs Bramwell (in the Library) for support and suggestions.

Once the student has submitted the employer information on to Unifrog.org the employer link completes their section of the placement form, followed by parental permission. School will then check all the submitted information and follow up any queries as part of the safeguarding process.

Sixth Form Fun Fridays – Half-Term Finale

Year 12 and Year 13 wrapped up the half term in style with a 12-round general knowledge quiz, brilliantly hosted by our very own Mr Smith. The quiz marked the final event in this half term's Sixth Form interform group competitions, our much-loved *Fun Fridays*.

As we head into the break, the league table stands as follows:

- **Top of the league:** Year 13 – Miss Clayton and Mrs Brown
- **Leading Year 12:** Mr Chow



Well done to all students and staff who took part this half term, and a big thank you to Mr Walker and Mr Smith who helped make Fun Fridays such a success over the past few weeks, we look forward to what next half term has in store!

We would also like to remind students that **Year 13 Study Support sessions** are due to begin to help with preparation for upcoming exams. Students to whom this applies have already been contacted. We hope these opportunities will help build confidence in the run-up to final examinations. These sessions will take place **every Tuesday during Period 4**.

Food update

GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition

Congratulations to all Year 11 GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition students who completed their practical exams last week. All students worked extremely hard to produce 3 dishes in 3 hours. Students were well organised and focused and there were some outstanding plates of food produced. Well done!

Food Update

Springboard FutureChef Competition

Back in October we held our first ever school heat for the Springboard FutureChef competition. This was open to year's 9, 10 & 11. Faith G and Rose D went through to the Local Final. Rose D went on to win the local final progressing onto the regional final.

As part of this Rose was assigned a Chef mentor in order to prepare for the next stage of the competition. Chris Tomlinson provided advice through TEAMS and came into school to give tips in preparation for the competition.

On Friday 6th February, Rose D took part in the Regional Final of the Future Chef competition. This was held at Nottingham College. Rose competed with several other schools from the East Midlands. In an unfamiliar kitchen, Rose had to produce a main course and dessert for two people in 90 minutes. Rose chose Korean fried chicken with rice and banchan, followed by banana gyoza with chocolate sauce. This had to be done on a budget of less than £10. Rose was did amazingly and narrowly missed out on progressing to the national final in London.



Rose has worked incredibly hard, developing her final dishes. We are extremely proud of how far she got in the competition and for doing such a great job representing QEGs. Our thanks also go to Rose's family for their ongoing support with the competition. The whole experience has been fantastic. Look out for the competition returning next year!

Primary Sports, Tag Rugby

This week we had the re arranged year 5&6 tag rugby. Well done to everyone that took part and thank you to the year 9 Leaders for running the event in what was a very damp and cold afternoon.



Swimming success!

A huge well done to Olivia M, Year 10 who is travelling to Egypt on Friday 13th February having successfully qualified to take part in a warm-weather training camp. The camp forms part of Olivia's preparation for the Swimming British and National Championships later this year. We are incredibly proud of her achievement!

School Canteen

Menu choice week beginning 23rd February will be week 1.

Prices for items purchased in the canteen can also be found on the below page:

<https://www.queenelizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk/parents/canteen/>

QEGSMAT Vacancies

Please keep an eye on our vacancies at QEGS and within the trust.

<https://tapestrylearningpartnership.org/job-vacancies> Current QEGS vacancies :

- Exams Invigilator
- Assistant Headteacher

Upcoming Key Dates This Term

- 13th February – Last day of Spring 1 term
- 16th to 20th February – Half term break
- 23rd February – Return to school, Spring 2 term
- 23rd to 27th February – Year 11 mocks continue
- 4th March – Schools In pop-up uniform shop, 3:30pm to 5:00pm
- 12th March – Year 12 Parent Teacher Meetings, in person, 3:45pm to 6:00pm
- 11th to 14th March – School show, Legally Blonde the Musical www.qegs.link/tickets.

Finally

Please take time to read the 'Your Voice Matters' letter sent out today and completing the online form link. Plus, in our ongoing commitment to strengthen and simplify communication with all members of our school community, we will be making a number of improvements over the remainder of the academic year, please see the attached letter to the bulletin for full details.

This half term has been an uplifting and rewarding one for our whole school community. We have seen our culture grow from strength to strength, with students and staff leaving nothing to chance and continuing to embed the QEGS classroom across all areas of school life. The sense of purpose, pride and consistency across the school has been wonderful to see.

Our Year 11 students deserve particular recognition for the exemplary way they have approached their mock examinations this week. Their maturity, focus and resilience have truly stood out, and we are incredibly proud of the standard they have set. A huge thank you must also go to all of our Year 11 teachers for their commitment and support. In particular, we would like to thank Miss Ward and Mr O'Keefe for their continued passion and dedication in ensuring that every student is, as they like to say, "locked in".

We have also celebrated a highly successful National Apprenticeship Week, culminating in today's visit from the Big Red Bus, where students explored a range of exciting career pathways. Congratulations to Rose D for her fantastic achievement in the Future Chef competition a wonderful accomplishment.

As we head into half term, we wish you all a restful break, quality time with loved ones, and a joyful celebration of Shrovetide. We are proud to be part of such a special community here in Ashbourne.

Yours faithfully,



Matt Walker

Deputy Headteacher

Enc – Streamline of Communication letter, 13-02-26