



Contact

The Newsletter of St Alban's Catholic High School

Winter Term 2021
Edition No. 3

Comments from the Headteacher

Matt Baker

My thanks for all the 'new teaching staff' we have enlisted this term in parents, carers and siblings! The team effort has been simply brilliant. I recognise how difficult it has been for many families to juggle the demands of jobs, worries, and home school. Well done to everyone – the average engagement for all students across the school and sixth form is over 4 hours per day! – and that is just the online work. Amazing stuff.

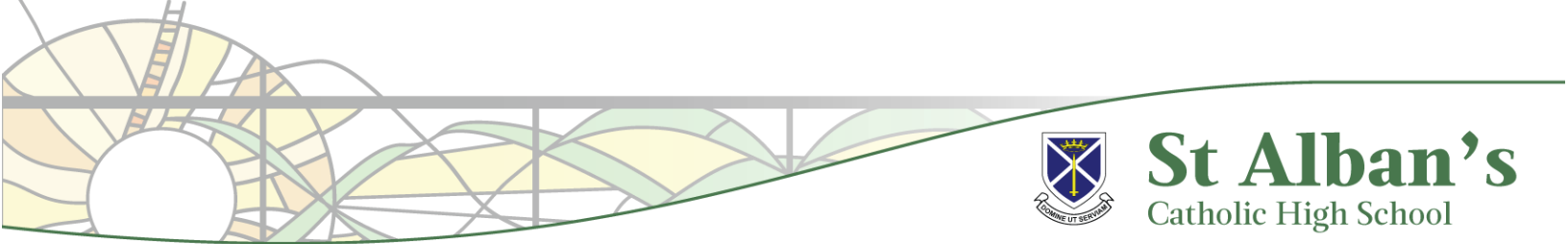
As well as the switch to digital learning, we have also had 3 virtual consultation evenings. We thought this was an excellent solution, and are helping to roll these out to our partner primary schools. This is something we will consult with you on as to whether we switch to these permanently.

As Lent approaches, we begin to think about those things we can do without – those sacrifices that mirror the greatest sacrifice. We have given up so much already over the last year. Why not, instead, think how we can give to others to recognise the great works they have done, or the sacrifices they have made, or to support those in trouble, fear, or loneliness? It may be your time, your love, your prayers – or all three! Many of you have already made this Christian gesture – thank you.

God Bless.

Key Upcoming Diary Dates

February Half Term	Monday 15 February 2021 – Friday 19 February 2021
Year 12 Virtual Consultation Evening	Wednesday 24 March 2021
Easter Holiday	Monday 29 March 2021 – Friday 09 April 2021



Year 7

Miss Bright – Head of Year 7

An end of half term message from Miss Bright . . .

I have been so impressed by the resilience shown by the students in Year 7 and their dedication to continue learning during this lockdown. Whether it has been resourcing and building a set out of cardboard for Drama; exploring the world of Tom's Midnight Garden in English or even building French snowmen!



At a time where our world can seem a little bleak the students of Year 7 have provided staff at St Alban's with enthusiasm in abundance and plenty of laughter along the way. Over half term I would like all Year 7s to take a break and reflect on their successes from this half term. In our PYF session on the 11 February we focused on our wellbeing and I introduced the 'Wellbeing Rainbow' to give students the opportunity to bring a little colour into their lives. I look forward to seeing your representations of your own rainbows after your well-deserved break. Remember - The greater the storm the brighter the rainbow!

Miss Bright



Wellbeing Rainbow – create your own rainbow!

Complete an activity from each colour to build your own rainbow! – Send in a picture to get a wellbeing house point!

cbright@st-albans.suffolk.sch.uk

<p>HAVE DESSERT BEFORE DINNER!</p>	<p>TRAIN YOUR BRAIN . . . COMPLETE A SUDOKU, WORD SEARCH OR CROSSWORD</p>	<p>Have a dance party!</p>	<p>Make an origami animal</p>	<p>Text a friend to check they are ok!</p>	<p>Create a den & read your favourite book</p>	<p>SPEAK TO A FAMILY MEMBER YOU MISS</p>
<p>BREAK A SWEAT!</p> <p>DO A HOME WORKOUT</p>	<p>LIST 3 GREAT THINGS ABOUT YOURSELF</p>	<p>Write down 5 things that made you smile today!</p>	<p>Bake your favourite sweet treat.</p>	<p>POSITIVE VIBES ONLY</p> <p>Give a compliment to everyone you see</p>	<p>COOK YOUR FAVOURITE DINNER FOR YOUR FAMILY</p>	<p>Find your inner zen!</p> <p>Complete a YouTube meditation.</p>
<p>PLAY YOUR FAVOURITE GAME!</p>	<p>Send a positivity postcard to a friend</p>	<p>Go out for a nature walk</p>	<p>Say thank you 5 times in the day!</p>	<p>DO A CHORE WITHOUT BEING ASKED.</p>	<p>Watch your favourite film</p>	<p>HOLA amigos!</p> <p>Learn how to say hello in 10 different languages!</p>



Attendance

Mr Moulding – Attendance Officer

We are monitoring participation with lessons whilst the students continue with remote learning. Please let us know if your child is unwell or as an appointment and so will not be able to engage with some or all of a day's online lessons. You may call the school on 01473-726178 and take option 2 or else email me at rmoulding@st-albans.suffolk.sch.uk.

Similarly, if your child is currently attending school part or fulltime then please let us know if they will be absent.

Senior Maths Challenge

Mr Rob Silk – Head of Maths

Maths – What is one thing that students can do to make a huge difference?

Hegarty Maths MemRi tasks

These are personalised tasks which repeat topics each student has covered in the past. The absolute best way to learn any topic is to do a little bit very often.

If a student were to get in to the habit of completing two (or more) MemRi tasks per week, it would be a transformative experience for them.

Every student can access these by logging in to their account at www.hegartymaths.com and clicking on **Revise > MemRi**



Chaplaincy Update

Miss Edwards, Lay Chaplain

Prayer

Chaplaincy continues to support students both spiritually and pastorally. During lockdown each day a prayer reflection has been provided for students and staff. These reflections encourage the school day to start with prayer and provide a challenge for each person to live out Gospel values. I would encourage parents to join in with these prayer reflections each day.

On Fridays, students and staff have an assembly which is led by members of the Senior Leadership team or the Chaplain. This is a time for us to come together as a school community in these difficult socially isolated times.



On 02 February we marked the feast of Candlemas with a prayer reflection devised by all the school chaplains of our diocese. Each school was invited to take part, either virtually or physically, if possible. At St Alban's we had a short service in the Chapel with a number of students. The theme of the Service was bringing 'light to our world'.



Mr Corless and a Year 7 student lighting our school candle as we prayed for the light of Christ to come into our world. The cards on our prayer mat contain the names of people we have been asked to pray for during lockdown.

Lent

The season of Lent will soon be upon us. It begins with Ash Wednesday, 17 February, during half-term. I have prepared a short reflection for Ash Wednesday which can be found on our school website via the main page school front page. The presentation will also be sent out via email to all students. I do encourage you as a family to mark this occasion in some way. Catholics are advised to fast and abstain from eating meat. If you do want to celebrate Mass virtually I would recommend listening to Mass from Holy Family Mission, Waterford. This is a centre for young people who are spending a year exploring and deepening their faith. It is truly inspirational.

In normal times during Lent we would have fundraising events supporting the work of CAFOD. Obviously, during lockdown this would be difficult to arrange. However, CAFOD are challenging individuals, families, schools and churches, to walk 10,000 steps a day and raise money to provide water pumps for people in developing countries. Each water pump costs £33 and would provide clean water for a small village.



You can sign up as a family on the CAFOD website or I can arrange for you to pay the money through ParentMail. But I will let you know details later.

I realise that there are families in our community who are suffering financially at the moment and would not therefore be able to take part. However, if you can, it is a great cause and you will be improving your well-being and fitness at the same time! Many of you will have watches that will count steps but if not there are apps that can be downloaded onto your phone.

Prayer Garden

It has been my wish for some time now to provide a place of peace and sanctuary for students and staff when they need it. The school applied for a small grant to develop the garden area outside the Chapel as a place of prayer and reflection. We have been successful in securing this grant but it will not be enough to have the benefit of professional landscapers. I am therefore wondering if there are any parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles who could help first in the preparation of the site. There are bushes which need to be dug up (these have quite long roots) and the soil needs to be turned over. Access to the use of a small digger would be a godsend. In time, I would be grateful for any donations of plants and shrubs but in the meantime, if anyone could help, please let me know. kedwards@st-albans.suffolk.sch.uk. It is hoped that we will find a way to remember family members and friends who have died within the garden.



Careers update

Mrs Michelle Shemming, Careers Advisor

CAREERS UPDATE



Suffolk & North
East Essex ICS

We have had a busy start to 2021 with some of our Yr11 students securing a place on the virtual **Health & Care Academy at the Ipswich Hospital**. We hope that this gives them a real insight into careers in the health service and we look forward to hearing about their experience.



Apprenticeships

Our year 13 students also took part in a **Higher & Degree Apprenticeship Workshop** in January. They were able to ask questions and find out about the application process. Many thanks to Lily from ASK Apprenticeships!

neaco



A number of our Yr11-13 students took part in NEACO (University of Suffolk) **CV workshop**. This was very well received by all participants. Winning CV's all round!



Medicine Calling – our Psychology and Sociology students had an interesting talk on **Careers in Mental Health** on 2 February. Our thanks to Sarah from the University of Leicester for running this.



BT Apprenticeship Presentation BT very kindly put together a bespoke presentation for us on 3 February to showcase their apprenticeship programme. We want to thank all the BT apprentices that gave their time to give our students such an excellent overview of the application process and 'life as an apprentice'.



St Albans are pleased to announce that they are partner schools with InvestIN and Oxford Scholastica and our students are entitled to discount on their courses/internships/conferences. There are bursaries available for students who meet certain criteria.

<https://www.oxfordscholastica.com/> <https://investin.org/>



Upcoming events

Careers Fortnight 1-12 March



We have lots of events planned: live talks from members of our alumni, form time activity worksheets and talks on higher education and apprenticeships as well as all year groups will have a live talk from one of our STEM Ambassadors.

Every afternoon during Careers Fortnight at 3.00pm we will have a talk from a member of our Alumni. They will talk about their career journey since leaving St A and what they are doing now! All students will be sent the Teams link to join in with these talks.

The Careers Team regularly send out emails to all students with lots of different opportunities, virtual work experience and events – please ask your child about them!

Sixth Form - Written by Clive & Annabella, our Head Boy and Girl

2021 Feb Lockdown Article from our Head boy and girl

It's great to see how committed students have been with attending classes and submitting their work to teachers. Although we haven't been in school, lockdown lessons have been positive. I can honestly say, sitting at my desk each morning and signing onto classes in my pyjamas and with an endless supply of tea to keep me going - has been brilliant!

The teachers seem to have mastered the art of online teaching; despite the difficulties of teaching students, you can't even see. They have worked tirelessly for us, and we appreciate how well each teacher has adapted and evolved throughout the Lockdowns. Even the so called 'technophobes' have become Teams pros. From all the students, we would like to say a HUGE THANK YOU!!!

Even though school has moved to an online setting, Sixth Form students are still being offered plenty of opportunities to get involved with virtual experiences and workshops. Teachers are always keeping us up to date with links to useful lectures and webinars, to help support our learning and to prepare for our futures. There have even been mock interviews arranged to help strengthen university applications! This term, students from years 10, 11, 12 and 13 were invited to join an online CV workshop, delivered by our Higher Education Champion Zarielle. During this session, students were given an insight into the working world and introduced to the key skills required to write a great CV.



Sitting in front of a computer screen each day can start to take a toll on both students and teachers alike and so our Sixth Form's Pastoral Care Leader Justin has been encouraging everyone to take part in a weekly 'cook off challenge', to get away from our screens and have a bit of fun! The entries from teachers and students have been looking amazing! This is just one of the ways the school has tried to help maintain the wellbeing of students during these stressful times. We've also had Independent Learning Plans 'ILP' meetings to check up with our Form tutors and there was even a 'Year 12 social catch up' event!



[Some of the previous recipe ideas have been chocolate chip cookies, banana bread and a delicious chickpea and sweet potato curry! Mmmm yummy!]

With the half term fast approaching, we would like to congratulate everyone for keeping up with online lessons and their continuous hard work over these past few weeks, it's important that everyone takes a well-deserved screen-free break.

Stay safe and enjoy the half term!

Head Boy and Head Girl,
Clive Sam and Annabella Labella.