



Contact

The Newsletter of St Alban's Catholic High School

Autumn Term 2020
Edition No. 2

Comments from the Headteacher

Matt Baker

Looking back to what seems ages ago to September, we should be proud to think that we have stayed strong as a community through all the various challenges. Attendance has been outstanding in the school and college. We have been fortunate not to send bubbles home in any year group but also we should congratulate ourselves that we have stuck firm to healthy behaviours. Thank you to all families for supporting the new rules and regulations – everyone at St Alban's benefitted.

We were able to hold the PPE (pre-public exams) for Year 11 over two weeks in November and December, followed by days for specific subjects in the final week. Throughout the time, Year 11 were amazing – what a fantastic group of young people they again proved themselves to be! After Christmas Year 13 start their mocks; we wish them all the best as they enter into their final year of further education with us.

We recognise that Christmas has not been the reward that we had all hoped for in terms of families coming together after so much effort. In so many national communications, we heard the analogy of 'light at the end of the tunnel'. In times of uncertainty and anxiety we remember that as Christians, the Light comes to us each year in the birth of Christ. This is not changed by 'tiers' or other earthly rules. A new year is always brighter because of this!

We will continue to monitor the guidance coming from the government to inform you about the start of the next term and we will let you know with as much notice as we can.

Enjoy the rest of the break. Peace be with you all.

God Bless

Matt Baker

Key Upcoming Diary Dates

Christmas Holidays Friday 18 December 2020 – Monday 04 January 2021

Spring Term starts Tuesday 5th January 2021

PD Days Friday 18 December 2020 & Monday 04 January 2021

Year 13 Mocks W/C Monday 11 January 2021

Bosco House Charity Day Wednesday 27 January 2021



Year 12 - International Student

Justin Toombs – Sixth Form Student Support

We have a great international student, Eddy from Germany who is with us in the Sixth Form until June. He has been placed with a host family in Felixstowe and although he enjoys being with them, he is really struggling with the travelling and being so far from friends, school and clubs. In Germany Eddy lives within walking distance of school and most of his friends. Eddy loves American Football and as Felixstowe doesn't have a club, he has joined the one in Ipswich, where he has made some good friends, as he has here at school. Eddy would love the opportunity to live with a host family in Ipswich so if there is anybody within our extended school community who may be interested or know of a potential host family for Eddy then please do get it touch with J.Toombs or S.Morris for more information.

Year 9 - Drama

Mr Silburn – Head of Drama

This half term the year 9 Drama Pathways group have been fortunate enough to take part in a series of practical workshops hosted by the New Wolsey Theatre. It has been fantastic to see the students engage with industry professionals, and to have the use of the Wolsey's brand new NW2 studio at their disposal for the 3, 2-hour workshops sessions. On the 13th November the group participated in a workshop on devising theatre, which is such a core part of their studies. It was great to see the students show such energy and enthusiasm – especially on a Friday afternoon. We returned on the 27th for a creative and technical workshop where students were busy coding sound and lighting cues and building their own set boxes. Our final workshop will be on the 11th of December where we are looking forward to a stage combat workshop (socially distanced of course).

Student Support

Mrs Land – KS4 Student Support Manager

Please keep an eye on the student support section of the school website which can be found at <https://www.st-albans.suffolk.sch.uk/student-support>

It is regularly updated with a variety of support information, and links to resources around issues such as mental health, online safety, domestic abuse, wellbeing, parenting advice and online courses, plus useful websites and apps.

You can also keep up to date regarding school contact information for key members of pastoral staff associated with your child's year group.



Year 7

Miss Clare Bright – Head of Year 7

We have finally made it to the end of a long and tough term, one that will go down in history. The Year 7s have made me very proud of how they have handled the challenges of the term, they have shown great resilience and aimed to succeed despite the obstacles in their path.

We have had lots to celebrate over this term and I am looking forward to a brilliant Spring Term. Wishing you all a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Senior Maths Challenge

Mr Rob Silk – Head of Maths

Congratulations to the A Level mathematicians who participated in the Senior Maths Challenge earlier this term. Well done to the following students who gained the following awards.

Silver:

Oliver 13MT (Best in School)
Connor 13GY
Connor 13NW
Albert 13NI
Patrick 13NI

Bronze

Fayo 13GY
William 13RC
Bartosz 13MT
Clive 13NI
Ewan 12HI (Best in Year 12)

Scientist of The Month

Miss Clare Dunderdale - Teacher of Science

Every month one student is chosen from each Science group to be a Scientist of the Month. These are students who have shown consistent effort, resilience and focus in all their lessons. We believe that these are the qualities which allow students to progress academically and as individuals.

November's Scientists are:

Malcolm 7LO
Boban 7BX
Brian 7TO
Toby 7RB
Phoebe 7SB

William 8GD
Matthew 9FS
Fabi 9PG
Alexandre 9PG

Felicity 10WM
Olivia 10KE
Preston 10KF
Jay Hume 10KF
Daniel Alba 10KE
Evie Mitchell 10RT

Leejay 11DU
Joshua 11NC
Esther 11DU
Sophia 11WS
Kieron 11NC
Ellie-May 11PT



Anna Airy Art awards 2020

Mrs Anna Wright – Head of Art

Anna Airy Art awards 2020

Congratulations to MELVIN SAM whose work has been displayed in the virtual Anna Airy exhibition this year hosted by University of Suffolk. This exhibition showcases the work of A level students across 9 schools in Suffolk and is a fantastic opportunity to exhibit the work of our very talented students.

We are delighted to announce that Melvin has won £100 for the superb paintings titled 'Poppy'. We are very proud to teach such a talented group of A level students here at St Albans and continue to see such high standard of work. Well done Melvin.

Congratulations





Free School Meals

Are you eligible for free school meals?

This saves families around £400 a year and gives £900 (per child) of additional funding to their school. Your circumstances may have changed if COVID has affected your working situation.

Your child will be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income based Job Seeker's Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (without Working Tax Credit) and an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs) that does not exceed £16,190
- If you are supported under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Working Tax Credit during the four-week period immediately after your employment finishes or after you start to work less hours per week.

If you are unsure or would like to enquire about this, please go to <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/school-meals-uniforms-and-trips/apply-for-free-school-meals/>

Odd Socks Day

To help celebrate this year's Anti-Bullying week and to help raise awareness we held an **Odd-Socks Day**. The Odd-Socks Day is to signify the diversity within our school community. We are all different and unique, and this is something that we should celebrate, rather than using it against individuals to bully.





Chaplaincy Update

Miss Edwards, Lay Chaplain

During November, students from years 7-11 had the opportunity to reflect and pray for people they had lost in their lives. It was an opportunity for them to give thanks for the lives of people who had died and to recollect happy memories of these loved ones. On 11 November, the school community remember those who had died in the two great wars through a Service prepared by the student Chaplaincy group. In its act of Remembrance, staff and students also remembered the great sacrifice made by NHS key workers who had lost their lives during the pandemic.

December



December saw the start of Advent, the Christian countdown to Christmas. During form time, students and staff reflected on the family tree of Jesus.

We will also be supporting the work of MIND, our third school charity as we know that many people in today's world are struggling with their mental health with a donation of £250.

As a school community we have not forgotten our brothers and sisters who are not so fortunate as us.

We are currently in the midst of our Christmas 'Sweet Treat' hampers and it is hope that we will collect enough items to provide 100 hampers.

Thank you to all who have responded so generously. We would particularly like to thank 'Stokes' who provided jam for each hamper.

We are also going to buy some CAFOD gifts – pigs, chickens and goats for people overseas. These gifts are possible because of the money raised on our Charity days this term by Botolph, Avila and Edmund Houses.



Year 7 students have been preparing for Christmas through reflecting on the main themes of Christmas. Students, through various activities, have been examining how they can bring the true meaning of Christmas into their lives.

The student Chaplaincy group are currently busy preparing and recording our end of term Service. The theme of the Service is 'Hope' and invites students to listen, reflect and pray on the Nativity Story. Our Year 12 and 13 students will provide the musical accompaniment to the Service.



Year 11

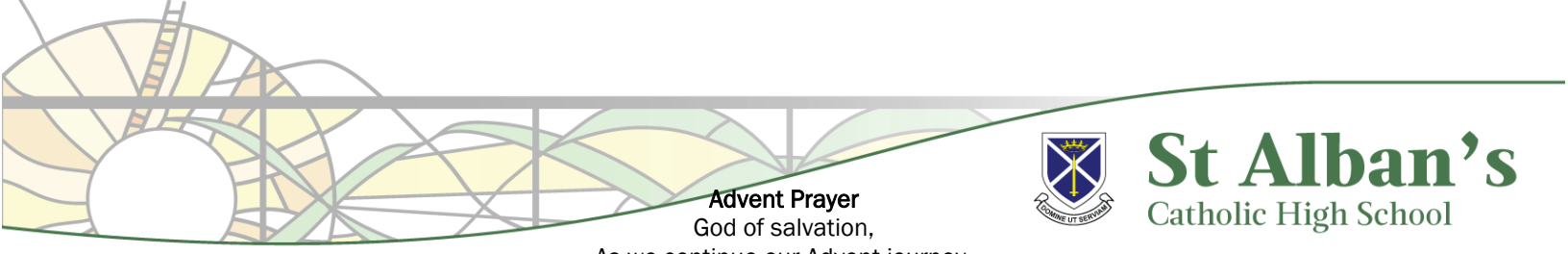
Mr Corless, - Deputy Head Teacher

It has been some time since my last official communication via Contact but wanted to say that as cold winter nights draw in and in the midst of COVID restrictions, hope can sometimes seem so far away. Some of you might be familiar with the passage from St John's Gospel, which is always read at the beginning of Midnight Mass on Christmas eve: *".... the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it"*

We continue to pray for good health and wellbeing for all members of St Alban's community. I have included a picture of a nativity scene below which was kindly arranged by parishioners of Christ the King Metropolitan Catholic Cathedral in Liverpool. I know within our school there a number of family members who have ties with the great city of Liverpool and may have seen this already.



Despite the many interpretations that we see of the nativity scene it really signifies the simplicity and innocence yet reminds us all of great hope.



St Alban's
Catholic High School

Advent Prayer

God of salvation,

As we continue our Advent journey,

Give us the grace to repent

To change the way we see things,

Until we see the world through the compassionate eyes of Jesus Christ, your son

Our Lord

Year 11 Pre Public Examinations (30th November – 11th December)

As most of you know already we have held the majority of written exams during this window. As a school we have aimed to deliver these in a purposeful way aimed at providing your son and daughter with the confidence to do their best. There is no doubt that this year has been a challenge for our students especially those involved in these examinations. On behalf of the senior leadership team, I would like to thank all our Year 11 students for their commitment to following the rigorous guidelines as well as coping with the daily challenges of doing exams over this last fortnight. I know some students still have Art, Food and Textiles to complete, but it will provide our departments with valued data and opportunities for all our students to reflect and where applicable improve on these outcomes. As many of you know the GCSE public examinations were cancelled last year and we would like to emphasise how important it is for students to remain positive and continue to work hard throughout the academic year.

We are aware that the DfE would like to 'boost fairness' in recognition of the 'unprecedented disruption' to students' learning and have put a package in place so that students are not disadvantaged. A much more detailed letter about exams will follow in the new year as soon as we have further information from the DfE.

Period 5 – Exam support sessions

You may recall that I wrote to Year 11 Parents/Carers back in September about this. I can say that after all departments ran a range of sessions aimed at delivering subject/assessment content that phase 2 will be rolled out after the Year 11 PPEs have been completed. The purpose is to support students whom we feel will benefit from further guidance during these sessions. Students will be invited along to these sessions and will continue to run each week on a Monday through to Thursday after school. If students feel they would like to attend then they are always welcome to come along.

May I take this opportunity to thank you all for your support to our school and please God that 2021 brings continued hope and greatness for all members of our community, your families and those that need our prayers at this time. Have a very happy and Holy Christmas.

God Bless

Mr Corless

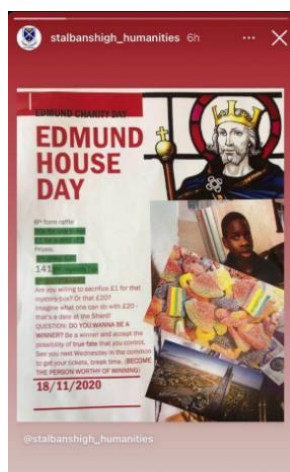
Deputy Headteacher



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

Since September we have had three charity days Botolph, Avilla and Edmund - all of which have been a great success! Students have really got on board with raising money, with events like a COVID secure Bake Sale and a whole school Raffle Competition. As well as our beloved House Captains helping to manage it all. It's great to see students in every year group taking part and doing their bit. So, a massive THANK YOU to all the students and parents for their continued generosity and support!

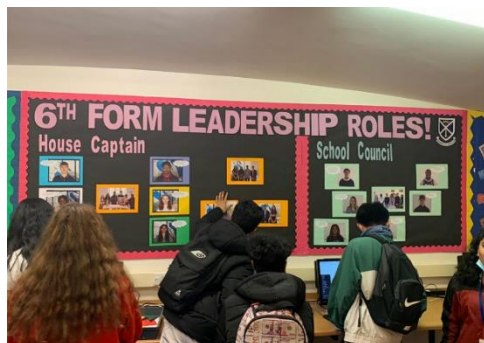
The Sixth Form Instagram Takeover Day is a new addition to the Sixth Form, managed by some of our students, shout out to Emily, Georgia and Anangan for taking charge of the Instagram story and posting pictures of their Sixth Form day. We hope that this can give prospective students an insight into what being a Sixth Former at St Alban's is like. With positive responses from both staff and students, we have decided to make it a regular initiative to help promote the school's Sixth Form - so be sure to follow the schools Instagram page to keep updated! (@stalbanshigh_ipswich)



In Year 12 the students have started to think about university applications and the types of things they can get involved in now – to better prepare themselves for next year. They have had a presentation on personal statements, a workshop lead by the University of East Anglia and a session presented by former student Sam, who is currently studying for a Masters at the University of Oxford. Others have attended workshops about applying for creative subjects at university as well as teaching – presented by former student Molly. There is also a big focus on future careers, with a number of students taking part in the new Career Ready programme – an exciting scheme which partners students with industry mentors. These sessions have really helped the year 12 students gain a clearer understanding of university applications and their future plans.

This term, our Sixth Form has been busy organising events for Black History Month. Some of our Sixth Formers hosted and took part in a privilege race to help develop and raise awareness of the privileges that they may possess - a great way to encourage conversation about diversity and inclusion. This alongside a display, focusing on the impact of influential black figures was part of our efforts to celebrate Black History.

We would also like to say a big thank you to all the Sixth Formers who helped contribute with organising and putting up the Leadership Roles boards in our Sixth form block!



Finally, we as the Sixth Form Council felt that we should do more events - to have fun and to just bring Year 12 and 13, closer together. And so, this half term has been packed with activities such as 'Cake and Colouring', 'The Great Debate' and 'Brilliant Board Games'. We've also been getting into the festive spirit, giving the whole of the Sixth Form a 'Christmas Glow Up' - with tinsel, lights and ornaments. It looks amazing and that's thanks to the efforts of students from both year groups - special thanks to our Deputy Head Charlotte for leading it all! With the upcoming, 'Christmas Jumper day', 'Wreath Making' and 'Christmas Window Challenge' we are certainly enjoying the holiday season.

All in all, it has been a great term especially considering the difficulties we have faced. We hope everyone stays safe and has a lovely break, Happy Christmas!

Head Boy and Head Girl,

Clive Sam and Annabella Labella.

