



# Contact

The Newsletter of St Alban's Catholic High School

Spring Term 2021  
Edition No. 4

## Comments from the Headteacher

Matt Baker

The school has reopened in a calm and productive manner. Thanks to all parents and carers for their support throughout lockdown, as well as helping us to rebuild our connections. It is brilliant to see so many happy children back where they should be – in classrooms!

We will obviously continue to keep strict rules in place – a few local schools have had bubbles sent home already and we do not wish to join that list.

Holy week is, as you know, always centered around Jesus' sacrifice for us all. In a very personal way, this year we have all made deep sacrifices. As the future appears brighter, let us all consider how we reconnect and cope with these difficult and painful feelings the pandemic has brought to our lives. In His resurrection, we are blessed with hope everlasting, helping us setting a path of reconnection throughout 2021. I hope you find love and joy for yourself and others in this.

God Bless

Matt Baker

## Key Upcoming Diary Dates

**Easter Holidays** Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021 – Friday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021

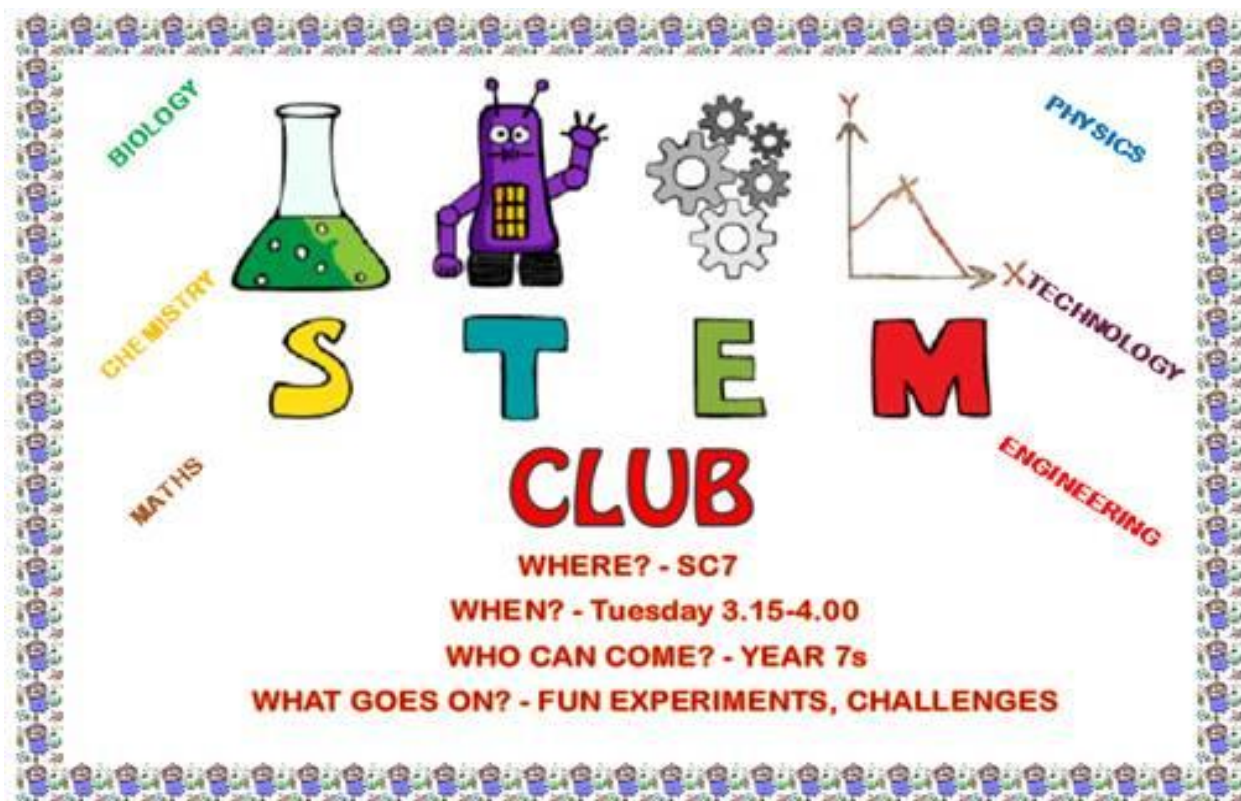
**May Half Term** Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021 – Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021



## Year 7

Miss Bright – Head of Year 7

STEM club is restarting after Easter, please see the details below! The first week back we will be doing an Easter Egg challenge, see you there!



## Year 9 Textiles

Miss Lewis, Technology Teacher

This half term Year 9 Textiles students are studying Japanese culture, fashion and Origami. In a few weeks time they will be making their own kimonos using upcycled bed linen.

If you have had a clear out during this lockdown and have any patterned duvet covers then please consider donating them to us.

Students can bring them to the Textiles room in a carrier bag.



## Senior Maths Challenge

Mr Rob Silk – Head of Maths

### Intermediate Maths Challenge 2021

Well done to the 50 students who took part in the UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge from home on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021.

In total, students from Years 9, 10 and 11 achieved:

- 10 x Bronze awards
- 8 x Silver awards
- 1 x Gold award **Millicent (11PT)**

Congratulations to **Emil (9MF)**, **Jack (10WM)**, **Nathan (10WM)** and **Millicent (11PT)** who got the highest scores in each year and all qualified for the next round of the competition!

## Chaplaincy Update

Miss Edwards, Lay Chaplain



Since coming back to school, Year 7 students have been reflecting on the last week of Jesus' life on earth. In a Covid-secure way, at each prayer station students offered up prayers for themselves and wider community. Year 7 parents will be pleased to know that their sons and daughters are willing to show service within the family by washing up, helping mind younger brothers and sisters and generally being helpful





On March 24, students in Bosco and Magdalen Houses are raising money for our school charities; MIND, SVP and CAFOD. We hope that we will be as successful as Botolph, Avila and Edmund Houses were in the Autumn term.

## WALK FOR WATER

Students in their PE lessons have been raising money for solar water panels for Ethiopia. For many people in developing countries it is not just the mileage they walk to collect water but are often hindered by the terrain. Students have been sponsored by family and friends to walk 10,000 steps during Lent to get some idea of the hardship people have.

Could sponsorship money be in after Easter please?

## PRAYER GARDEN

I would still like to hear from any parent, grandparents or other family member who could help us in creating an outside reflective space for prayer and worship. Please let me know if you can help at [kedwards@st-albans.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:kedwards@st-albans.suffolk.sch.uk).

## END OF TERM SERVICE

Our final act as a school before we break up for Easter is to watch a Service prepared by our student Chaplaincy group. It is an act of worship, praise and thanksgiving for the suffering, death and Resurrection of Jesus. This will be the last whole school liturgy that they will prepare and deliver and I am extremely grateful for their commitment, service, witness and faith that they have demonstrated to the school community throughout this year.

## Uniform

We appreciate that there are difficulties at the moment with many shops closed, however, Coes our main uniform supplier is offering a click and collect service, many supermarkets who offer their own school uniform ranges are running special deals at the moment, and **we also carry a number of items through our second hand uniform. Any second hand uniform that you may wish to donate to the school will always be gratefully received (especially blazers and PE kit).** If you are experiencing any difficulties regarding uniform or have any questions, then please do not hesitate to contact the school.



## Vacancy for school Governors

We are currently looking for Parent and Foundation Governors to join our existing Governing Body. As school Governors we have a very important part to play in the strategic direction of our school community and to support the Head Teacher to enhance the experience of both Students and Staff during their time at St Albans.

The role is one of being a critical friend, it is voluntary and extremely rewarding to be part of such a great community. If you are interested in information about the role of a school Governor, please see the Governance page of the school's website where an application form can also be found:

<https://www.st-albans.suffolk.sch.uk/page/?title=Governance&pid=24>

For an application form in the post, please email [lgittins@st-albans.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:lgittins@st-albans.suffolk.sch.uk) giving your name and address.

Thank you  
Mrs L Gittins  
Office Manager

## Sixth Form

Mrs Morris, Head of Sixth Form



RAG week this year has been packed full with vibrant colours, fun activities and plenty of laughs! The past year has been full of uncertainty and this week has been a great way to celebrate the positives and look at the bright side of being back with peers and in the classroom. *Not so blue Monday* was like entering the week in a sea of blue with all the students in the Sixth Form wearing blue from head-to-toe and taking part in Bingo at lunch where great prizes were up for grabs! After school was the Great Badminton Games where Sixth Form students and teachers entered the court and battled against one another, this was great fun to take part in and watch as it was a complete contrast to what we all do in the classroom. This is mainly what RAG week is about! Yes, the fundraising is important but the Sixth Form council made it a mission this year for RAG week to celebrate students and their successes by providing fun activities to forget the struggles of the past year. When *Not so blue Monday* had been and gone *Tangerine Tuesday* arrived. *Tangerine Tuesday* was filled with the vibrant colour orange worn by the students. While students were encouraged to wear orange in support of our charities, some teachers also participated. Moving onto our lunchtime activities, students competed against their peers in an egg and spoon race and tangerine toss. During the egg and spoon race, students had to race each other in teams around





an obstacle course without dropping the egg while in the tangerine toss Sixth Formers tossed tangerines through targets scoring themselves points. Many students took part in these activities with other students cheering them on. With eggs and tangerines rolling across the floor, Sixth Formers were able to enjoy themselves and have plenty of laughs which was nice to see after the uncertainty of the year. After the success of *Tangerine Tuesday*, *Wear White Wednesday* was upon us. Year 13's are only present on Wednesdays due to the Year 12's having it as a day off so with upcoming assessments the Year 13's took Wednesday as an opportunity to revise whilst wearing white to support the coloured themes for RAG week. Thursday was a House Day for Bosco and Magdalen where we raised money through wearing Green and Purple as they are the corresponding House colours as well as a Pub style Quiz held in the common room for both Year 12 and 13 students to take part in. After school, *Brownies and Bubble tea* were sold to help raise money for charity as well as giving students' time to have a sweet treat and share the laughs from the week so far. Finally, *Formal Friday* arrived to wrap RAG week up where students dressed up in: suits, prom dresses, businesses attire and anything smart! Whilst in our formal attire at lunchtime there was an Easter egg hunt that took place where Sixth Formers were frantically running about the Sixth Form block desperate to win prizes. Throughout the week we have made it a priority to have fun! The Sixth Form had a great atmosphere the whole week with everyone taking part in events and themed outfits for each day. The week would not have gone so smoothly without the support and guidance of Miss Guy who helped lead the week with positivity and fun as well as Georgia for keeping the Instagram updated with the events throughout the week.



Deputy Head girl Charlotte, Georgia

## Careers update

Mrs Michelle Shemming, Careers Advisor



### Careers Fortnight Programme

We had a busy fortnight of activities across the school. We began on the Monday with Higher Education. We had talks from the UEA for our Sixth Form students and the University of Suffolk spoke to our younger years.





Each afternoon after school during the first week of Careers Fortnight we had a talk from a member of our Alumni. We had talks on Parliament, Finance, Law, Data Management and Architecture. Our sincere thanks to our Alumni speakers Banseka, Kit, Matt, Andrew and Dan. It was great to see so many of our younger students attending these talks ☺

On 10 March each year group had a talk from one of our STEM ambassadors who gave them an insight in their own career journey and industry. Our grateful thanks to the seven ambassadors who gave up their time to talk to our young people. We hope to invite them back again very soon.

We had a little fun during the week when students had a chance to see photos of their teachers in their graduation gowns. They were also able to find out about their individual career path that led them to teach at St Albans – some fascinating and entertaining stories were shared!

We hope that this fortnight of events and activities has given our young people inspiration and enthusiasm for the world of work!

We are continuing our Career Insight Talks after Easter and our first speaker will be Daniella Lord who will be talking about routes into the police force.



We will be publishing our programme for the Summer Term after Easter – and we would like to encourage students to attend these talks!

Mrs Shemming

## Year 11 – Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) update

Mr Corless, Deputy Head

I hope you are all well and safe. Since my last letter, you are all aware by now, the GCSE exams series for 2021 has been cancelled and schools have been asked to award students with GCSE grades. These are Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) and will be awarded for all GCSE qualifications. Instead of an exam, all students will receive grades based on assessment by their teachers. Following this, the TAGs will be sent to the exam boards to be processed and verified in order for the students to be awarded with their GCSEs in August. I have tried to give you a detailed explanation of the process in the paragraphs below so you know how we are planning to award GCSE grades for our students this year.

### How will teachers make judgements on grades?

Teachers will use a range of appropriate evidence of the students' work, such as:

- Coursework
- Classroom work
- Practice papers
- Assessments including Pre-Public Exams
- Homework



We will use evidence gathered since the start of GCSE courses at the beginning of Year 10. We want to ensure that every student will be rewarded for what they know and can do. I want to assure you that nothing will be assessed/tested/graded if it has not been taught. We will help and support students to provide us with the necessary evidence for a fair grade based on what they have been taught so far.

### **How will I know grades are awarded fairly?**

Our school will have an internal quality assurance process in place. This is to make sure that teachers' judgement is not too harsh or too lenient. Furthermore, several departments will be working closely with other secondary schools, in order to create a robust system of moderation for all subjects so we can avoid harsh or lenient treatment. In addition, exam boards will have their own quality assurance process. They will check that our internal procedure is robust before they process any grades, and they might also visit our school to review evidence for some subjects. In order to comply with all requirements, we will submit a declaration to the exam boards confirming that we have followed all suggested guidance for our internal quality assurance process.

### **Can I appeal if I disagree with my grade?**

Yes, all students will have the right to appeal their grade. We will give you all the details of the appeal process when you collect your results. If you appeal, we will carry out an internal review to make sure we have followed all necessary processes correctly and that we have not made an error in awarding a grade. If we find an error, we will submit the revised grade to the exam board and if the board is satisfied they will issue a new grade. If we do not believe an error has been made, you can ask us to appeal to the exam board directly on your behalf. We will share the evidence we used to determine the grade and the exam board will decide whether we have made the right judgement. If they think our grade is not reasonable, they will provide an alternative grade. If you disagree with the school's and the exam board's judgement, you can refer the issue to Ofqual's Exams Procedure Review Service (EPRS). The exam board will have the final say unless the EPRS determines they have made an error.

In addition to what has already been stated, I wanted to confirm that after further consideration we have decided **not to run** any formal assessments in the Sports Hall (May 10 -21). We are mindful that with all the stress and anxiety caused during the lockdown period, we want to ensure that students feel best prepared and at ease in their classrooms. There will be a range of assessments but departments will be communicating this with their groups in due course. I would, however, want to confirm that we are planning to run a number of class based assessments from Monday 12 April until Friday 23 April. Year 11 will be informed by departments when their assessments will be after Easter.

### **When will I get my results?**

Results day for GCSEs will be Thursday 12 August. On behalf of the school, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for all the support you have shown to our school over the last 12 months. I can only imagine the uncertainty and anxiety that a situation like this creates for both students and parents at home. However, I can assure you (and your children) that we will do our utmost to give our students every opportunity to prove what they know and can do in their GCSE courses. Teachers here at St Alban's will support all students to achieve a fair and accurate GCSE grade to mark the end of their secondary education. As always, if you have any questions on any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me and I will be more than happy to clarify any points you may have.