



Diocese of St. Albans



ST MARY'S
CE HIGH SCHOOL

27th September 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

This year, as in previous years, we are supporting The Trussell Trust (see flyer attached to the email) for our Harvest appeal. We are asking students to perform a random act of kindness by bringing in much needed dry food goods for local foodbanks, and passing them to their form tutors to then lay them on the stage during their Act of Worship in Harvest Festival Week. Students need to bring items in before 21st October and suggested items are indicated in the attachment with this email. I am told that you and the rest of the community have been very supportive of this appeal in the past, and I thank you in advance for helping us support this good cause again.

Last Tuesday I was privileged to open our doors to about 800 visitors for our Secondary Transition Evening. I was so proud of the many student guides that we had, as well as Sophia, Karolina and our Head Prefects Elizabeth and Mentos, who all stood with me on stage and demonstrated examples of our students' many talents. I had a number of emails back from our visitors about how great our students were on this night and thought I would pass that on to you. One parent wrote:

"I am a parent of a prospective year 7 student. I attended your open evening this evening and was shown around your school by a young gentleman... I would like to let you know how brilliant he was at showing us around and explaining everything. He did a very good job in showcasing the school in an excellent light... Although he said he was very nervous he came across very confident and was very well mannered. I would really appreciate if you could let him know he did an amazing job and made something very daunting into an enjoyable experience. Something I feel is very important to a young person making a big decision about their future."

If you know any parents/carers or their children who are thinking of coming to us but haven't visited, please encourage them to book an Open Morning Tour with me, by calling reception.

Yesterday (26 September) was the second day of Year 11 GCSE Geography fieldwork. All Year 11 Geography students were off site at either Epping Forest to do a river study or Stratford Olympic Park to do an urban study. Miss Douglas, the Head of Geography, says that the day started off very wet but the students were all in good humour and got on with the day with few complaints! The sun came out by midday and they enjoyed the outdoor learning. The students and staff had a great day and the students were a credit to us all.

Yesterday was also European Day of Languages. The Modern Foreign Languages Team have run various events across the week to celebrate European Day of Languages: 30 Year 8 students were involved in the creation of the front page of a multilingual newspaper, which showed a great deal of research into world current affairs and use of language skills; there was a treasure hunt open to students of all year groups to find out as much information about languages spoken by members of

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Head Teacher: Mr Nicholas Simms B.Sc. (Hons), NPQH

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staff; all form groups competed against each other to see who knew most about European culture and languages, and in the dining room we served paella for the day. I was really impressed by the different types of activities in which students could be involved in to celebrate European Day of Languages!

Following the success of last year's STEM CLUB, the Science Department are running the same programme this year and the first event was yesterday, 26 September. Sessions will run for one hour every Thursday after school, and can involve any student in Year 7, 8 and 9. There will be a different activity in each STEM session, and there will also be the opportunity to achieve a Bronze CREST award (CREST is a nationally recognised scheme for student-led project work in the STEM subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). Students choose their own topic and methodologies, giving them complete freedom over their work. If your child is interested then please ask them to speak to Mr McDougall, the Director of Science and Technology. It doesn't matter that they missed the first meeting; there is still plenty of time to take part.

We have had a long-term working relationship with an organisation called Place2Be. This organisation supports many of our students in many different ways and has proven really effective in helping them. Their lead in our school, Mrs Chapman, has asked me to pass on to our parents/carers that there is free, 24 hour, and confidential support available if your child is in crisis. Students can text Place2Be by sending the message "text P2B" to 85258. There is further information on the flyer attached to this letter.

Our Drama teacher, Ms King, put one of our Year 9 students, Sofia, forward for an audition as the soloist in a performance at the Royal Albert Hall for the Hertfordshire Schools' Gala. I am delighted to report that Sofia was selected to take the part of a teenage girl called Lucy. The character acts as the story's modern narrator in 'I Am Alban' (a newly commissioned work by Anne Dudley, conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra) on March 8th 2020 and she looks back on the events of Alban's life, interpreting them for the modern audience. This comes in collaboration with Hertfordshire Music Service and we are very proud and delighted at Sofia's success.

News from the Sports Desk: we have three Year 9 boys who are currently playing for the Lea Valley District football team (made up of students from across the district at different schools). They beat the Dacorum District on 12 September 4-1, and have reported back from the game last week that they beat the Watford District side 3-2. Well played gentlemen! If your children are interested in trialling for this team, please get them to talk to someone in the PE department who will be able to pass on the information they need.

I am going to end with a plea for better road safety: many children cycle to/from school and do not appear to wear helmets. Helmets provide protection to the head in the case of an accident and I urge you to talk to your child if they ride a bike to school and ensure that they wear a helmet for their own protection.

As always, I wish you a very happy weekend.



Nicholas Simms
Head Teacher

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