



Diocese of St. Albans



ST MARY'S  
CE HIGH SCHOOL

11<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this letter finds you well. It has been a very busy fortnight at St Mary's with lots of exciting events and activities in school. We have now launched this year's curriculum booklets and I'd like you to spend some time looking at the relevant ones for your child/children. Click on one of the following hyperlinks, depending on which year your child is in: [KS3](#) (for Y7, Y8 and Y9) or [KS4](#) (for Y10 and Y11). You then need to scroll down to find the specific year group.

The Art Department launched the competition for students to design the art that will go on the Christmas Cards I send out to our community (local schools and politicians, the Diocese, the Local Authority etc.). There will be one winner from each year, making six different designs – please encourage your child to get involved, who knows, their name may be on Christmas cards all over Hertfordshire!

I was delighted that the sixth form students and staff supported the Macmillan Bake sale recently: we raised £242.67 through selling cakes at break and lunchtime on Friday 27 September. I was particularly delighted that the sixth form students played such a key role in organising and selling cakes to the students – they are a real asset to the school. Student Leadership is very close to my heart and I want to involve them in our school life much more. I was delighted, therefore, to hear from Mrs Mathews that we have appointed a new group of seven prefects. We already had Head Prefect Mentes, Deputy Head Prefect Libby and Senior Prefect Clarette and joining them as prefects are Abu, Hakeem, Kenzie, Daniel, Tolani, Rojin and Gloria. These students will be available to support at school events and will be heading up a number of different schemes. In addition to the organisation of a successful Macmillan Coffee morning they are supporting the Mental Health Awareness day and have organised a subject-mentoring scheme within the sixth form and are in the process of organising a number of other events, rotas and events.

In the Technology Department, our new sixth formers have made an excellent start to developing their practical skills with a collaborative piece of work. Four students (Austin, Kai, Frank and Abu) were inspired by Dieter Rams' "Good design" principles, and each one designed their own chair, creating a small-scale model. They then evaluated each other's models and, unanimously, chose one student's design, Frank, to create in life size. The next time you visit school you will see the chair in reception – test it out for comfort!

The Geography Department have submitted three entries to the Royal Geographical Society Young Geographer competition. This is a national schools' event and so competition is very stiff: we wait to see if our three students have won, but I will say "Congratulations" to William (Y10), Lola (Y8) and Sheri (Y8) for their brilliant entries that got them entered!

Our Y11 and Y13 drama students went to see 'Come From Away' at the Phoenix Theatre. This musical explores the true story of the residents of Gander, a small town community who came together to support others when they took in the aeroplanes diverted after the 9/11 attacks in 2001. Y11 are required to see a live theatre performance for their GCSE Drama exam and will be writing about this performance in their final written exam. As for the A Level students, this was the third production they have seen; each one exposing them to a different genre and style of theatre. It was an excellent play that made the students laugh and cry.

Our Y12 and Y13 Fine Art students had their learning enriched this week with a motivating talk on studying Art at UAL, (University of Arts London <https://www.arts.ac.uk/>). The Insight team from Central St Martins & Camberwell College of Art gave our students the opportunity to discuss how to devise a successful art portfolio and application for undergraduate courses in Art and Design. Ella Pavlides, an artist and former graduate of UAL inspired our students with a digital display of her wonderful portfolio of dynamic art work including her photographs and instillation art from her 3 year undergraduate course at Camberwell UAL.

I understand that they offer courses for other students and our Head of Art, Ms Papadopoullos, is investigating how we can best use these to support students to inspire their passion in this subject.

Preparation for the Summer 2020 exams is well under way. We held the Positively Mad revision event on 1st October. Positively Mad delivered an inspiring and interactive Exam Buster workshop to our Year 11 students. This gave them an insight into exam preparation, revision tools and stress management techniques. The aim of the event was to encourage students to have a positive attitude towards revision and to promote revision techniques that are supported through educational research. The students enjoyed the two hour workshops where they learnt simple but effective memory techniques and creative approaches towards revising, as well as some time management tips, stress management advice and help on how to build focus and be motivated in preparation for a busy and important year ahead. Most students felt more confident with beginning revision; the skills they were shown built upon the more traditional techniques they have been actively using during tutorials. With our practice public exams in December, this event has given many students a more focused and creative outlook to revision. Thank you to parents/carers who were able to attend the session following the event, we understand that many of you have expressed an interest in the session but were unable to attend. Therefore, the Year 11 team are putting together some information from the session to send out to all parents shortly.

On Tuesday this week, thirteen Y10 students had the fantastic opportunity to visit Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge University. Students experienced a presentation on topics including: How 31 Colleges Make Up The University, Celebrity Alumni, Available Courses and Why Cambridge and Oxford Universities Are Held In Such High Regard. The students had a tour of the impressive buildings that form the College and envisaged life as a Cambridge University student, as well as learning about the traditions of the University. They also looked at a typical student's timetable and analysed how they would manage their study and all-important social times! The students were a credit to us all and represented the school impeccably in this aspirational educational setting.

Some of our Y12 students took part in the National Skills challenge this week. Their challenge was 'How can you extend the appeal of football manager to an audience of 13 – 21 year olds?'. The students had to plan, design and pitch a marketing strategy to the judges. They worked in teams and came up with a viable pitch that demonstrated understanding of the challenge, market research, costs and profit margins, target audience and clear strategy showing how the appeal could be extended to a specific target audience. The event during the day went very well with students working together, sharing ideas and researching using the laptops. The students had a great day, making comments such as "I have learnt loads" and "I can't believe I stood in front of everyone and presented". What was really nice was to see the students really eager to win the competition at the end of the day and wanting to have the opportunity to go to the National Skills final. The organisers delighted with our students. The team leader really enjoyed the day and said students have done "remarkably well", and have "presented a complete marketing pitch in less than a day". He really liked the posters and the way the students conducted themselves all day, he said the "behaviour was great and students showed real enthusiasm".

News from the Sports' Desk:

The Y11 girls played their first netball fixture against Haileybury Turnford and won. I was not there to see the match but I am told they played really well. The girls on the team, Charlotte, Ciara, Becky, Becki, Daisy and Charlotte should all be commended for their team spirit and their success.

The Y10 boys Rugby team competed in a tournament at Cheshunt Rugby club on Thursday. Despite coming up against some very strong teams, the boys won 3 of their 5 games and played some excellent Rugby. Well played, gents!

Well done to the Y10 girls football team who competed in the District tournament at Haileybury Turnford school on Thursday. We only had 5 girls for the 6-a-side competition, and we lost 1-0 to Presdales School and 2-1 to John Warner School, but great team work by all players: Louise, Robyn, Moyo, Maliyah as well some great saves made by Claudia in goal.

We marked Mental Health awareness day this week and it seems right to end with the news that we recently achieved the Healthy Minds Kitemark – our award came through this week. It is a strong indicator that we take mental health seriously and recognise its importance to young people and adults in contributing to a healthy and successful life. You can find the link to it on our website [here](#) and I can assure you I want to see us maintain this focus and build on it in the coming years.

Have a great weekend,



Nicholas Simms  
Head Teacher