



15<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this letter finds you well. We marked Remembrance Day on 11 November this week, along with the rest of the nation and other countries across the world. It was a very moving service, with students reading out letters from soldiers at the front, in World War One, to their wives or girlfriends back home. These soldiers died days after their letters were written, and 6<sup>th</sup> form students carried crosses to remember each of them. After this, we laid a wreath in our own memorial garden, and prayed for those people from our own community who have passed away over the years. I am grateful to Mr Crosby, Mrs Peat and Fr. Eugene (the rector at St Mary's Church) for their work in making this happen, but as always the stars were the students who took part in the service with such skill and dignity, and the rest who watched with such respect.



*Fig 1: Remembrance Day 2019*

We have just finished the Year 10 Mock Exams and the students behaved very well indeed. We run them like the external exams to train students to follow the exam board regulations (which are very strict). I was delighted with the behaviour and conduct of the students who took the process really seriously.

Mr Warner and I attended the School Council Meeting on Friday 8 November. We were really impressed at the thoughtfulness and passion of the students involved. Mr Warner listed the improvements that they requested last time that we have already acted on (including replacement basket-ball nets on the courts and monitoring of toilets after break and lunch to check cleanliness). This time the students raised the issue of plastic waste and recycling. They have asked if we can reduce our waste and recycle more and as a result over the coming months we aim to replace any plastic cutlery and bowls that we currently use and, in the longer term, reduce the plastic bottles with drinks we sell. This will take a little longer to sort, but I think it is an excellent idea and I am happy to support the Student Council on this.

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

*'Students feel happy and safe at school' OFSTED 2019*

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At the Student Council meeting the Eco-Action team were also in attendance; they were delighted about the Student Council's suggestions. The Eco Action Team is a new initiative at St Mary's. With recent highlights in the media of the urgent message to act now on climate change, from people such as Sir David Attenborough and Greta Thunberg, we felt it important that we took action in our school community. Students from all year groups were asked to complete an application to be a part of the Eco Action Team. We had an incredible 126 applications; Mrs McKinney and Miss Douglas had quite the job of sifting through the passionate and thoughtful suggestions written in the submissions. The original aim was to have a small group of 20 students but due to the calibre of application, we had to form 2 teams; the junior team and the senior team. Mrs McKinney said "The first meeting was incredibly productive with the group showing so much awareness of climate change. Our first challenge is to create an action plan and to start making effective impact within the school. If anything was to go by this first meeting, there will be a lot of change to come". I look forward to reading the plan and being able to support it.

The Year 12 & 13 Art & Design students last week were incredibly fortunate to attend an Art workshop at the Tate Modern on London's Southbank. The workshop was delivered by an artist in residence and focussed primarily on Communication and Analytical discussion. Our students were challenged to discuss their feelings and views using a dictaphone and microphone, a completely new concept for them and one which took them out of their comfort zone. I was incredibly proud of their maturity and willingness to participate in something new. They showed great resilience and determination and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.



*Fig. 2: Students at Tate Modern*



*Fig 3: students on the Southbank*

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Congratulations to Tanisha in Year 9 who is our worthy 'Art Student of The Week'. Tanisha showed excellent presentation skills throughout her sketchbook and her work can be seen on exhibition, in the Art corridor.



Fig 4: Tanisha's art

It won't be long before Advent, the preparation for Christmas, is on us. Whilst many of the shops are full of the commercial aspect of Christmas, we will be spending some time focusing on those who are not as fortunate as we are and so, this Christmas we would like you to join us in our Reverse Advent. During December we will be collecting items which will form a Christmas present for children living in rural Sierra Leone. These will be shipped out to Sierra Leone by a charity that supports 26 schools. These children struggle to find the basics to allow them to attend school and we would love to help them. Have a look at the advent calendar (below) and decide what you would like to give. From the start of December, please bring any items to Hu7 to add to the collection boxes. Let's give someone else a treat this Christmas:

Reverse Advent Calendar				
2 <sup>nd</sup> Toothpaste	3 <sup>rd</sup> Toothbrush	4 <sup>th</sup> Flannel	5 <sup>th</sup> Soap bars	6 <sup>th</sup> Pencils
9 <sup>th</sup> White socks	10 <sup>th</sup> A4 notepads	11 <sup>th</sup> A5 exercise book	12 <sup>th</sup> Children's vest	13 <sup>th</sup> Small toy
14 <sup>th</sup> Children's underwear	15 <sup>th</sup> Shoebag (homemade?)	16 <sup>th</sup> Children's story book	17 <sup>th</sup> Pencil sharpener / rubber	18 <sup>th</sup> Drink bottle

Bring items to Hu7 at any point during December.

Fig 5: Reverse Advent Calendar plan

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Along with other school leaders in the area, I received an email about a Youth Survey conducted by the County Council. Please read below and encourage your children to take part:

*YC Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire County Council's targeted youth service, has developed a survey for all young people aged between 11-17, and up to the age of 25 for those with special educational needs. The aim of the survey is to capture the voices of young people across Hertfordshire to help us ensure that we are delivering valuable, inclusive and relevant services and activities for young people. We want to find out more from young people about what they want from out-of-school activities, the issues of greatest concern to them, and what we can do better. This survey has been circulated and marketed to all participating secondary and middle schools and colleges across the county and is also available on all YC Hertfordshire's social media platforms. This survey opened on Friday 1st November 2019 for four weeks. If you know a young person aged 11-17, or up to 25 if they have a special education need, please encourage them to complete the survey through their school, local youth project / group or access the link through YC Hertfordshire's social media platforms or by emailing [yc@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:yc@hertfordshire.gov.uk). Please find the link below to access the survey: <https://surveys.hertfordshire.gov.uk/s/YoungPeopleSurvey2019/>*

News from the Sports Desk: a number of our students were involved in the Cheshunt FRC schools' rugby tournament, at their club on Andrews Lane, Cheshunt. The students enjoyed the tournament (which took boys and girls from 11-18), and their coaches have worked with our students during PE lessons. If your son or daughter is interested in taking up rugby, then the club would be worth looking in to and seeing for yourself if your child would like to join.

The girls' Year v 9 football team participated in the District 6-a-side tournament at Haileybury Turnford School against Presdales, John Warner and Haileybury Turnford schools, yesterday. Well done and excellent team work by all the players; Rhianna, Nikola, Emily, Samara and some great saves made by Senel in goal.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first weeks at St Mary's and I have learned a lot about the community. I still maintain that the students are an asset to us and a credit to you. During my time here I have become concerned about some behaviour in lessons and in the corridors, and this week I have shared with staff and governors my plans for changing the behaviour policy to improve standards in this area. I will be writing to you in detail at the end of the month, and I will be making things stricter. There will be a tightening up of sanctions linked to low-level disruption in class, rudeness/defiance to staff, lateness to school and incorrect uniform. This will not affect the vast majority of students who conduct themselves well, but if a student shows disrespect to adults, other students, learning or the uniform, the behaviour will be dealt with and the student expected to improve their standards. As always, I thank you in advance for your complete support of these changes to make our community better, and focus on the core purpose of effective teaching and learning, and a calm safe environment for us all to enjoy.

Yours faithfully



Nicholas Simms  
Headteacher

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