

28<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

During the recent Parent/Carer Survey, one of you made the comment that it was a shame we did not have a Twitter Account. We do have one (in fact, we have quite a few), and we are on other social media as well. Please click the links below and follow us:

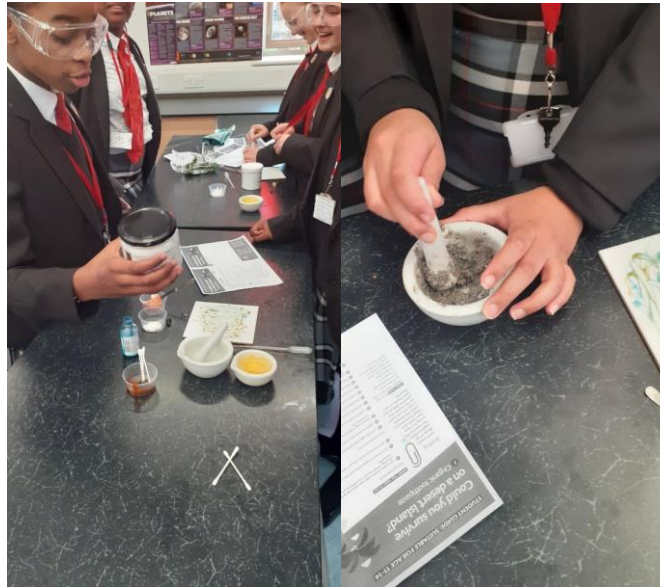
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stmaryscehighschool/>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SMHSch> as well as
  - <https://twitter.com/HeadSMHSch1>
  - [https://twitter.com/SMHSch\\_Geog](https://twitter.com/SMHSch_Geog)
  - <https://twitter.com/stmarysart>
  - [https://twitter.com/SMHSch\\_Careers](https://twitter.com/SMHSch_Careers)
  - [https://twitter.com/SMHSch\\_PE](https://twitter.com/SMHSch_PE)
  - [https://twitter.com/SMHSch\\_Txt](https://twitter.com/SMHSch_Txt)
  - [https://twitter.com/SMHSch\\_Geog](https://twitter.com/SMHSch_Geog)
  - [https://twitter.com/SMHSch\\_RS](https://twitter.com/SMHSch_RS)
  - <https://twitter.com/SMHSixth>
- Instagram: [stmarys\\_ce\\_high\\_school](#) and for Technology on Instagram, [smhs\\_sciencetechnology](#)

Our Instagram account is not much used at the moment but we have plans to change that over the coming months.

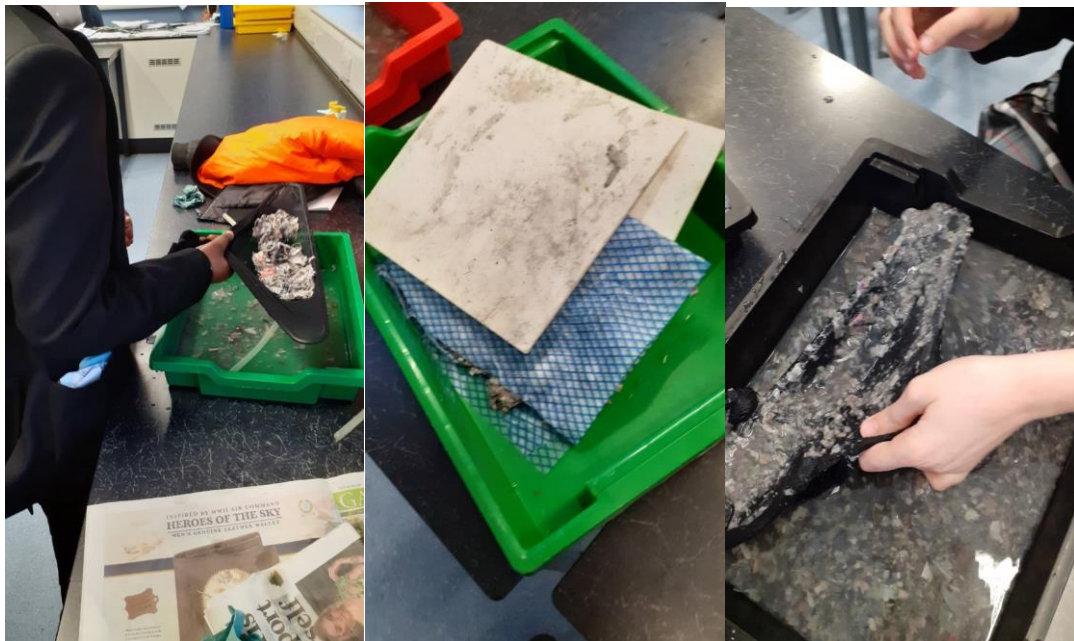
Whilst we are on the subject of the Parent/Carer Survey, I am organising an evening event to present the findings to you, to hear any verbal feedback and to share with you ideas for the way forward. There will also be a representative from the [Love Your Doorstep](#) organisation who I want to work closely with to improve the safety of our students/your children on their walk home from school. We will discuss how we can become involved in this project and how you, as parents, can help.

In one of our clubs (STEM: *Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths*), students have been doing different activities: the Iodine clock, pond water organisms, chemistry in the kitchen, making windmills, recycling paper, making ropes and making organic toothpaste.





*Fig 1: STEM Club Organic toothpaste*



*Fig 2: STEM Club Recycling Paper*

Parallel to the STEM club, students are engaged in CREST awards. We are starting with Bronze awards but aim to be doing silver by the end of year. At the moment, most of students have finished the first step of their projects (that is the planning) and they were submitted earlier this month. Some students are working in groups, whilst others are working independently. Some projects that students are working are: Power helicopter, Building a control for Play Station 4, a Lava lamp, Model of DNA and a Model of the coronavirus. Successful students will receive a bronze award if they meet at least 11 of the 15 criteria of the “CREST Bronze Award checklist”.

Recently we have had two students selected to have their short stories published with the 'Young Writers'. Mrs Attard started coordinating writing competitions a couple of years ago (with the help of Mrs Evans in the LRC) and we have had quite a few published over the years. Parents/Carers have the chance to buy the books and we are aiming for the big £500 prize for the school. Students should look out for the next competition - 'Missing'; details of which can be found on the LRC competitions notice board. It is really something to be celebrated when the students are published - and an inspiration to others about what is possible. Also, congratulations to Gia S. in Year7 for being our first Read Around the World winner. Gia has won a 'front of line' lunchtime pass for herself and a friend for one week. I am, as always, grateful for the hard work and support of colleagues, and I am so proud of what our students have achieved.

It has been a busy few weeks for students who study Geography. Year 9 students have had a couple of opportunities to expand their geographical experiences through the Geography club and students in Year 7 to Year 10 were invited to join in with making geographical models of earthquakes and volcanoes. They really enjoyed being creative whilst thinking through geographical concepts. On 11 February, students in Years 7, 8 and 9 had the opportunity to hear from a representative from the Royal Geographical Society, an ex-St. Mary's student who is currently studying for a geography degree. At this event, students were introduced to ideas of how geography can be useful in the workplace and thought about geography stories in the news currently. Both sessions were well received by the students who attended.

A group of 40 students and five staff spent the week of half term in the Austrian mountains. The group consisted of a large number of first time skiers and boarders plus a few who were more experienced. All students made excellent progress throughout the week with the majority of the first timer skiers making it to the top of the mountain by the end of the week. The group enjoyed excellent weather on the mountains with lots of blue sky skiing and one day skiing in the falling snow all amongst the beautiful back drop of mountains. The students also enjoyed evening activities which included watching a game of ice-hockey in Zell Am See and swimming. The students represented the school incredibly well with the ski school, hotel and coach drivers all commenting on the positive attitude and resilience shown. The accompanying staff commented on how supportive the students were to each other on the slopes and how much fun it was to spend with the group.



*Fig 3 – 2020 Ski Trip*

The Year 10's had a busy end to the term. Preparations started for Work Experience with WEX Ability Day, a day devoted to preparing students for "Working Life". Run by the Year 10 form tutors, activities included learning about employability skills, setting personal goals, team work, safety in the workplace and interviewing skills. The students demonstrated great maturity and the form tutors and students fed back that the day was enjoyable and valuable lessons were learnt. The following week was Work Experience week with our largest year group ever, taking up their work placements. Feedback from employers was fantastic with many commenting that students were "A credit to St Mary's". Many of our students found work experience invaluable and commented that it really helped their confidence and self-esteem.



It also reaffirmed career aspirations for some and cemented what careers others definitely did not want to follow and how hard they needed to work at their studies.

Other comments from employers included:

*"The student was inquisitive and keen to grow his knowledge, always showing interest and understanding."*

*"The student has been an absolute pleasure; punctual, very hard working and always looking for things to do. Students from other schools previously have just seemed to be there to pass the time but he has been a real asset and is welcome back any time!"*

*"I had several students and they all behaved impeccably and worked really hard."*

*"Both students have been outstanding and I would happily take them on if they were applying for job."*

Year Lead, Mr Flores and Student Manager, Mrs Gunning have said that they are extremely proud of the year group.



Fig 4: WEX Ability Day

In Performing Arts (Music, specifically) KS3 students have been listening to a wide range of styles as part of the 'do now' tasks including works from the 'Great Composers'. Year 7 have had a spotlight focus on Beethoven leading to some fantastic written reports. Students were asked to listen to and write a review about Beethoven's 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony, perhaps the most well-known piece of all time?



Fig 5: KS3 Music Work

Whilst in KS4, students have been working on 'Managing a Music Product'. This unit started with the planning of and delivery of the Music Festival. The winners from each category and a selection of performers were then asked to record on a final CD product that celebrated the diversity of the event. Students in Year 11 have been working as a team from the initial planning, forming sub-groups and leading on Design, Production, Recording, Performance, Media and Distribution. The final CD has been pressed and we are excitedly awaiting the final delivery!



*Fig 6: KS4 Music*

### News from the Sports Desk

The Year 9 girls played in their 3rd Rugby Festival on just before half term and once again demonstrated excellent skills and teamwork. Their skills saw them win 2, lose one and a very tightly contested draw against Robert Clack Rugby Academy. The team, made up of Samara, Sylvia, J'nade, Emily, Charis, Rhianna and Senel, were a credit to the school and to each other. They are improving with every festival and we look forward to the final in March.



*Fig 7: Girls' Rugby*

Congratulations to the Year 7 girls football team who won the District 6-a-side football tournament before half term beating teams from Goffs, John Warner and Chauncy. The girls showed some excellent team work and play throughout the tournament only conceding one goal. Well done again to the team: Emilia, Scarlet S, Olive, Amy, Lena, Leah, Maisy, Emily.



*Fi 8: Girls' Football Team*

Have a lovely weekend.

Nicholas Simms  
Headteacher