

17th December 2020

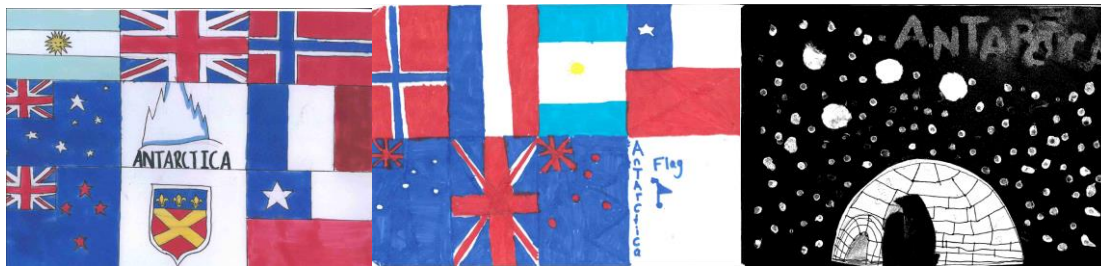
Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this letter finds you well during these difficult times. With Covid cases rising fast, and the area of Hertfordshire, Essex and London that we work in being on Tier 3, it is certainly a worrying time. Thank you for your ongoing support.

I have sent three important letters out today; two are related to Covid and one targeted at parents/carers who collect by car directly from the school site. I appreciate you are busy (and I don't like to bombard you with information) but it is important that you read both the Covid letters to understand how to fulfil your responsibilities over the first part of the Christmas holiday.

I am so proud of the students, their families and the staff for three significant acts of community kindness that have been organised over the last few weeks. Over 280 students (co-ordinated by Mrs Watts and Ms Hughes) wrote letters to residents of local care homes who have been very isolated since the start of lockdown; I know these were really well received and the residents enjoyed hearing the news from our teenagers. Ms Douglas and a team of students organised 'well-being' packs for some elderly residents in the community (including chocolate, quiz/Sudoku/crossword books, and 'mindfulness' colouring books). Mrs Watts and a team of staff also organised 12 Christmas hampers for local families who have had a particularly tough year. Many of you contributed to all of these and I thank you for your generosity.

Ms Douglas, Head of Geography, ran the Antarctic Flag competition again this year with Year 7. There were some amazing entries and these flags will be taken to the Antarctic. Amazing work from our young Geographers:



WE BELIEVE EVERYONE IS EQUAL: EVERYONE DESERVES THE BEST

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'Students feel happy and safe at school' OFSTED 2019

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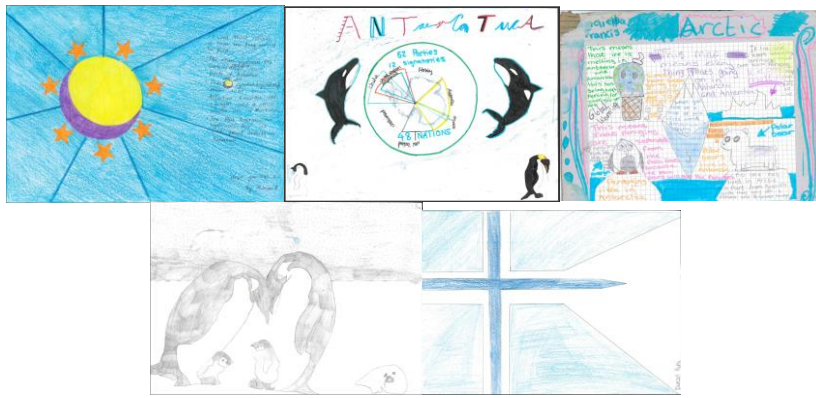


Fig 1: Antarctica Flags, Y7

It seems a very long time ago now, but we marked Remembrance Day as a community on 11 November as we always do, albeit in a different way. All of our students and staff paused for two minutes in silence and the event was supported digitally by our local clergy and a selection of students who marked the occasion with a pre-recorded, socially distanced service. Listening to the Last Post ring out around the corridors of St Mary's was a truly moving experience and a fitting way to remember those who gave us everything so that we might have freedom.

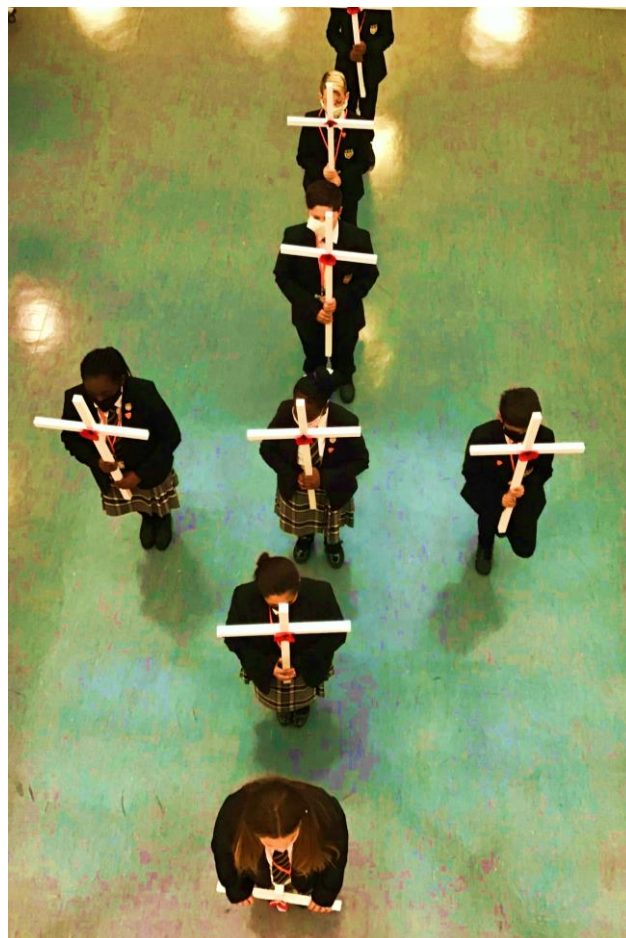
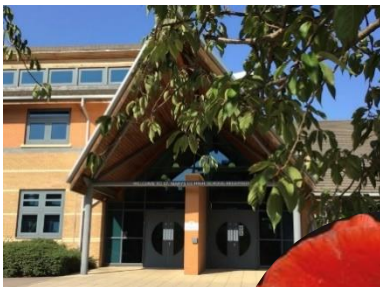


Fig 2: Remembrance Day Service

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Our Aspire Business and Enterprise Academy have a great team of Year 12 students representing us in this year's Young Enterprise programme. The enterprise they have created is called 'JACAR Inc.' and they are creating revision resources for students studying Enterprise and Business. As students themselves, they are using their own learning experiences to ensure the revision resources are relevant and effective to other students. They are currently finalising their products which will be available early next year to purchase.

Before I end, I would like to let all our families know that Father Eugene and all at St Mary's Church invite you to join them in the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ this Christmas. At 4pm on Christmas Eve they have a 'Pop Up' Nativity Service which is suitable for all ages. To maintain social distancing spaces at this service are limited, therefore it is essential that you book in advance for this service. You can book your place by emailing Rev Eugene, rev.eugene@outlook.com, or phoning 01992 635587. Also, on Christmas Eve the Church have a Midnight Mass at 11.30pm, and on Christmas Day a Christmas Morning Eucharist at 10am. There is no need to book for either of these services.

We have carried out a full risk assessment in church and all follow regulations to minimise the risk of transmission of Covid-19 in church.

Christmas is a time for reflection, peace and happiness; reflection on Christ's birth and His influence on our lives, including the encouragement to bring peace and happiness to the world we live in. If you would like to see the virtual collective worship that Mr Crosby, Mrs Peat and some students have organised and produced, please click the link [here](#). It is a beautiful telling of the Christmas story through word and song – perhaps you would save watching it until you are together one evening nearer Christmas Day.

When we started 2020 we had no idea what was going to happen during the year and what we would all be going through this year in our homes and in our work; it is so important that we hold our faith and know that things will get better next year and we know we will be there for one another when we need it.

I wish all people in our community the very best for Christmas – please look after yourselves and each other and I look forward to meeting up in the new year.

Yours faithfully



Nicholas Simms
Head Teacher

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