

Further to my email last week, this has been a bumper Advent week and the school looks lovely and has been joyful. There have been challenges this week, particularly with the weather but our students have responded amazingly. Our tree looks beautiful and our Advent events have been taking place throughout the school. There are some particularly lovely Advent stars where students and staff have nominated each other and staff as people who 'make the school brighter' and these are displayed in the canteen and nominations will be taken all through Advent. I am really grateful to the senior staff who came into school on Saturday to help decorate the school so that it was a lovely surprise for the students. This term has been tough, but we are continuing to work hard and our students are continuing to learn, make progress and be part of a community. I am incredibly grateful to all those to staff helping to make this happen and make the abnormal actually function. As always I thank our families and students for all their kindness commitment and support. May this special time of Advent help us all to see the light ahead.

*Yours in Christ,
Imogen Senior*

Advent Display

This excellent display about Advent has been produced by year 12 and 13 students for the benefit of all. It is in one of the RE rooms H4. May the light of Christ strengthen us in our Advent journey. CAFOD has some excellent prayers and resources for families to use during their time together.



Senior Maths Challenge Success 2020

The SMC is a 90-minute, multiple-choice competition aimed at high ability Maths students across the UK. It encourages mathematical reasoning, precision of thought, and fluency in using basic mathematical techniques to solve interesting problems.

We are delighted to announce that students at St Benedict's achieved 6 golds, 6 silvers and 17 bronzes in this year's SMC! To recognise the highest performers in the Challenge, UKMT awarded the top-scoring 60% of participants Bronze, Silver and Gold certificates in the ratio 3:2:1. Please see below for those who secured certificates!

Gold—Theo Burnett Wells, Euan Dance, Alan John, Leo Saiubell, George Strugnell, Joe Leacy

Silver— Milosz Boufal, Thomas Lenane, Tay Lennox, Blake Mcadam, Alex Swarbrick, Dylan Wilks

Bronze—Nathan Castle, Nikolaus Ehall, Pierre Hornsblow, Alwin Jose, Ralph Martin, Aidan Mayall, Thomas Poulson, Ebony Smith, Hugo Whalley, William Barrett, Andrea Booth, Neve Conway, Matthew Duke, Malcolm Easton, Rohan Firat, Robin Tuli, Jakub Wiewiora

Following this challenge, UKMT invited around 1000 of the highest performers to take part in the British Mathematical Olympiad Round 1 and around 6000 to take part in the Senior Kangaroo. Six of our outstanding mathematicians qualified and sat these exams this week. We await the results and are proud of the achievements of all the above pupils.

Mr Jogee

Children in Need

A massive thank you to everyone who donated to our children in need non uniform day last week we raised an amazing £1200.

Christmas Jumper Day—Friday 11 December

Fancy Friday— Friday 18 December

End of Term— Friday 18 December

Students return to school—Tuesday 5 January

Reverse Advent Calendar

If you were part of our school community last year, you may remember that we ran a 'Reverse Advent Calendar' in which collected food for Gatehouse, our local foodbank. It was hugely successful, creating a larger offering than we'd ever managed before!

Well, it's that time again - we're just about to begin Advent together. My children are very excited to be getting their advent calendars ready!

The idea of a 'Reverse Advent Calendar' is simple: instead of receiving something each day, you give something. Coronavirus has increased the demand on foodbanks by around 50% and has also made some volunteers, who are often from vulnerable groups, choose to step down for their own safety.

The result is that our local foodbanks are more in need of our support than ever. Equally though, because times are hard, we ask you to be wise and sensible in your giving, if you are facing financial difficulties then it's ok to recognise that and reduce the amount that you participate in giving.

In every form room is a calendar, suggesting what items we will be collecting that day (we asked Gatehouse what 15 items they would like us to collect and have used their response). Please don't feel that you have to take part every day, but perhaps you can choose how much would be appropriate for your family.

For the sake of simplicity, I've written the list out here if you want to refer to it while shopping. If people bring food that isn't on the list or that is not the 'right one' for the day, then these offerings will still be gratefully received.

30th - Tinned soup

1st - Tinned fruit

2nd - Baked Beans

3rd - Tins of vegetables

4th - Tins of tomatoes

7th - Chocolates

8th - Jams

9th - Biscuits

10th - Tinned Meat

11th - Tinned Fish

14th - CAKES!!!

15th - Tins of custard and rice pudding

16th - Orange / Apple juice

17th - Mince Pies

18th - Condiments eg Cranberry sauce?

We will send reminders to student's Edulink accounts and via our Twitter feed throughout December, please give generously and sensibly.

With every blessing, Matt Spiller

Duke of Edinburgh Award in Lockdown

Just a reminder that if D of E participants are struggling to complete their planned activities for the skill, physical & volunteering sections, that the D of E requirements have changed to adapt to the current situation. Participants can now change section activities more than once. Previous activities will still count towards completion. Participants can now volunteer for family members e.g. by mentoring a younger sibling, helping them with homework or learning an instrument.

For the physical section, participants could complete the NHS Couch To 5K challenge or go out on their bike/walk in their local area - if an app is used to track routes, this data can be uploaded on D of E as evidence.

For the skill section, taking part in online music lessons, an online typing or cookery course can all be counted.

Participants who complete their skill, physical & volunteering sections will be awarded a Duke of Edinburgh Certificate of Achievement, which will enable them to progress to Silver or Gold as if they had completed the previous Award level, even if the expedition section is not possible.

Just a final reminder that when obtaining the assessors report, please ensure the report has the assessors name, contact details, the start and end dates of the activity, how long each week was spent on the activity as well as a description of the aims of the activity.

For further ideas or to check that your activity would fulfil the requirements, please speak to Mrs Reeman or Mrs Macey, or go to <https://www.dofe.org/dofewithadifference/>

Christmas Card Competition



CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION - RESULTS

A very big Thank you and well done to all our entrants of the Christmas Card Competition this year - Kaytrina Babboo, Helena Bulacz, Rowen Draper, Elisha Gamboa, Zuzanna Labojcz, Claudia Scott, Finn Senior and Lola Williams. Our winner is Helena Bulacz for creating a beautiful nativity scene - Congratulations Helena! Helena's card will be printed and sent out on behalf of the school. Elisha was the very close runner up, with a commendation for Kaytrina.

6th Form Astronomy Evening

Although public events are not possible, the school's 12" Langley Newtonian telescope was put to good use on Thursday 19th November as the centrepiece of an educational session for the 6th Form physics students. Miss Cleaver (Teacher of Physics) galvanised her students and 8 6th formers, all keen astronomers, braved the cold at sunset after school.

The clear sky after sunset gave us the opportunity to observe the planets Jupiter and Saturn, accompanied by a first quarter, waxing crescent Moon, all together in a small region of sky. Although a Full Moon appears spectacular, for observational astronomers a less than Full Moon is ideal as the mountains and craters near the dividing line between Moon's night and day (the 'terminator') show up in greater shadow and therefore more detail. One of the students, Anna, captured the telescope image of the Moon shown here.



Jupiter revealed two of its four Galilean moons, Ganymede and Europa (Callisto and Io were eclipsed at the time), and we had a brief view of Saturn's rings before an annoying bank of cloud rolled in.

We adjourned to the Drama Studio to warm up with coffee and biscuits (courtesy of Miss Cleaver) and were given a presentation entitled 'What is Gravity?' Gravity is dealt with in some detail in the A level astrophysics module, but exactly what it is comes as a surprise to many. Although Isaac Newton is famous for his Universal Law of Gravitation that we still use today, it was Albert Einstein who produced, in his General Theory of Relativity, a true explanation of what gravity really is and how it works – it 'bends' the space around us! It has led to huge leaps of imagination, the best known being the concept of 'wormholes' through space-time and the possibility of being able to travel to anywhere in the Universe in a matter of minutes. No more queuing at the Dartford Crossing!

See a fuller account of the 6th Form Astronomy Evening on the school's Facebook and Twitter.

Computing Club @ Home



Play the Winter Cyber Challenge, brought to you by the National Crime Agency, each week throughout December for a chance to win an iPad. Hurry the week 1 challenge ends at 11:59pm on Monday 7th December!

<https://www.cybersecuritychallenge.org.uk/home-page/winter-cyber-challenge>

Good luck! Mr Beaumont

PE Announcements

Year 7

Just a reminder that year 7's should come into school in their PE kit and have their school uniform to change into after their lesson. This is with the exception of those who have PE on a Friday leading up to Christmas as these are non-uniform day (an email was sent regarding this, pupils will still need their PE kit for their lesson) or if they have PE during period 5. I would also like to take this opportunity to remind pupils that they must be wearing full St Benedict's PE kit. If they are wearing extra layers due to the cold weather then they need to be dark in colour. If they only have light coloured joggers to wear at the moment then pupils must have a note from parents to say that these are being worn until a dark coloured pair can be bought. In terms of a jumper or hoodie, pupils need to have the St Benedict's PE hoodie and in the meantime of waiting for their order they can wear something else but they must have a note from parents to state that they are waiting for their PE hoodie to arrive. They can also wear as many dark coloured layers underneath their PE kit to stay warm.

In addition to this, we are currently teaching football in PE, so please make sure that year 7 pupils come into school in trainers or their school shoes and change into their boots at the start of the lesson. Pupils should not be coming to school in boots!

School Games Virtual Cross Country Results

The results for this have been delayed due to a technical issue. We will send these out as soon as we have them! I look forward to seeing how our students have got on.

Thanks

Mrs Wright

What's New in RE

Last week some Year 7 RE classes had a live lesson on Zoom with our Diocesan Youth team, Ignite. It brought together what they had learnt about the Fundamentals of the Catholic faith. The students learnt about being enthusiastic about faith, heard the teams' testimonies, joined in with a song and asked challenging faith questions.

Mrs Cobbold

