

We are as always overwhelmed by the generosity of our families. We have been busy packing up what we have received so far for the reverse advent calendar and will be sending a staggering 38 crates to Gatehouse this week. Please keep donations rolling in it's going to make a real difference.



Thank you all so much.



During this time of Advent and in light of the current news, we have made contact with Suffolk Refugee Support (SRS) to see how we can offer assistance.

One of the ways SRS identified that we could help is finding one-day-a-week volunteering opportunities for refugees, particularly those aged 16-19.

Suffolk Refugee Support was established in 1999 to help refugees / asylum seekers by offering advice and support to facilitate better access to education and employment among other things.

In 2019 there were 2 million asylum claims globally and the UK received 35,566 asylum claims. Whilst asylum seekers wait to be granted 'Leave to Remain', they are not allowed to work or claim mainstream benefits, but they are permitted to apply for housing and receive £39.60 per week to live on.

In the coming months we will continue to explore a number of ways to help SRS.

To begin with please look at your workplace and consider whether it might be a suitable environment for a one-day-a-week volunteer. This kind of opportunity will be vital for any asylum seekers to be taken seriously in the job market.

If this is something that you'd like to discuss further, please contact Matt Spiller at mspiller@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

Poetry Competition



On Tuesday 7th December, a group of eight sixth form students went to Friends' House in Euston Road, London, to participate in the English Media Centre's "Poems of the Decade 2021 – emagazine Student Conference Poems of the Decade 2021".

This event had poets address a large audience of keen listeners, reading, analysing and discussing their own and other poems from the A Level literature anthology. Not least, the current Poet Laureate Simon Armitage talked about poetry and how to approach it. As a whole, it was a fascinating contemplation of an important element of the exam, as well as a varied exploration of how ideas can be expressed in written form. St Benedict's looks forward to more events of this type in the future.

Mrs James

Public Speaking

It was with true Bennies' resilience that Elinor Hurry of year 12 dealt with the huge technical difficulties which marred her experience in the final of the online Sixth Form Public Speaking Competition on the evening of Monday 6th December. Despite having to speak with her web-camera off, and sometimes being inaudible too, due to a low bandwidth, Elinor showed great perseverance and fortitude as she battled through where many would have capitulated. Sadly, the judges were not able to appreciate the brilliance of her speech and therefore awarded the title elsewhere. Nevertheless, we applaud the high quality of Elinor's work, as well as her determination and good humour.

Later, on Wednesday 8th December, Will Blewitt and Catherine Dunn from year 11 and Helena Peachey from year 10 won through to the second round from the first heat of the ESU Churchill Public Speaking Competition, also conducted on Zoom. They prepared diligently and worked smoothly as a team, with Will talking about the idea that the media manufacture public opinion, questioned by Chantry School, whilst the girls chaired and questioned a speech from Ipswich School in favour of uniform in schools.

We have a short break over Christmas before the second rounds of both Churchill public speaking and the Mace debate in January. All our speakers deserve our congratulations and best wishes for a peaceful holiday.

Mrs James

Cross Country

On Saturday 27th November 18 St Benedict's students ran in the Suffolk Schools A Race, having qualified by finishing in the top 50 at the area championships at the Royal Hospital School in October. This meant that they were running against the top 100 - 150 runners in the county in their age groups.



The weather reports were for snow and high winds but thankfully the weather held, which enabled the athletes and spectators were able to enjoy the wonderful setting of the course within the grounds of Woolverstone Hall - a magnificent Grade I listed building in the English Palladian style with commanding views over the River Orwell.

All of our students ran superbly and showed their resilience by trying as hard as they could to fulfil their potential. Fourteen students finished in the top 50 of their races which means that they have qualified for the Suffolk Schools B race at Woodbridge School on 13th January.

Charlie (8C) ran superbly to finish 5th in the Junior Boys race, which was particularly impressive as he is in the bottom of his age group.

We also had several runners place in the twenties. George Wightman finished 21st in the Minor boys race, narrowly finishing in front of Archie Coogan in 22nd. Inspired by their success, Eva Torfinn (Junior Girl - also bottom of her age group), Kuba (9C) and Nathan (11X) (Inter Boy) also finished 22nd in their races.

In addition, we had several athletes place in the thirties and forties: **Minor Girls** Eleanor (7C) 33rd and Violette (8L) 42nd; **Junior Boys** - Thady (9S) 39th, Giles (9C) 46th; **Junior Girls** - Ciara (8A) 46th; Inter Boys, **Inter Girls** Hannah (10L) 43rd.

The following athletes also ran extremely well and should be proud of their achievement in reaching this stage:

Minor Girls - Molly (7C) 61st and Eliza (7C) 91st; **Junior Girls** - Nancy (9C) 78th. Unfortunately, Emma (8A) twisted her knee during the Junior Girls race and was forced to pull out, but as her race was curtailed she has also been selected to run at Woodbridge.



It was a really enjoyable morning and we are looking forward to seeing our athletes continue to excel in the next race, in which a top 16 placing could result in a county vest!

Mr Murphy

Year 11 Physics Challenge

On Wednesday the 8th December Adam John, Ailish Kemble and Beatrice Widmer took up the challenge of representing St Benedict's in the fourth Ogden Trust Year 11 Physics Challenge. The students pitted their skills against two strong teams from Culford School and County Upper School. The competition involved a variety of skills and included rounds on practical work, a timeline of physics discoveries, some physics dingbats and some challenging physics exam questions. The students performed well and found themselves in second place as they came to the final open-ended quick-fire quiz round. A last-minute flourish in the final ten questions saw the team overtake County Upper to pinch the prize and the team will soon receive the trophy.

The results were close among the three teams and these three teams were particularly strong. A huge well done to our three students.

The Ogden Trust is a charity whose aim is to promote the study of physics at primary and secondary school. Our local partnership is coming to the end of its funding, but we hope that this Year 11 challenge will continue to be an annual event. We hope that Year 10 will be up to defending our title next year.



Mr D'Mello

From Exams Office

Students wishing to sit a GCSE Exam in German, Italian, Polish or Portuguese, in June 2022, please email me (daliaga@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk) before 15 January 2022.

Debbie Aliaga

Bowling Tournament

On Monday 6 December a group of students at St Benedict's were invited to take part in a local schools Ten Pin Bowling event at Bury Bowl. The tournament was organised by Youth Sports Trust Lead Inclusion School for Suffolk and two games were played with highest scores taken from each team. With bumpers up and ramps at the ready, enthusiasm and team work, we gained third place and had enough energy to stay and play a second game for fun!



All students thoroughly enjoyed the experience and ready for the next tournament in the Summer term!

Mrs Cooper

Year 11 into Sixth Form & College Day

On Thursday 9th December, our Year 11 students participated in our sixth form taster and college day. This was a wonderful opportunity to experience what it is like to be in our lovely sixth form, and for those who took part in the college day, to hone their study skills and have a better understanding of college life.

At St Benedict's, our sixth form offers 22 A level courses, and all sessions were delivered by specialist teachers. Our Year 11 students gained an insight into the joys and demands of A level courses, and hopefully they were inspired by their experience to continue their education at St Benedict's Sixth Form.

A huge thank you to all members of staff who helped with the day, and a huge thank you to the Year 11s who conducted themselves like true future sixth formers!

Please note that sixth form applications need to be in by Friday 17th December. Thank you to all those who have already submitted their application. Should you have any questions about applying or any matter concerning sixth form, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Mr Richmond

Future college students enjoying a virtual tour of West Suffolk



Mr Drugan explaining to students how to make switches more 'attractive' in Product Design



Some beautiful etchings created in A level Art with Ms Chacksfield.



Ms Titcombe Government and Politics session discussing the merits and pitfalls of proportional representation. Please focus, Ben!

Enrichment Project in A Level Chemistry

Over the last half term our A Level Chemistry students have been expanding their practical skills and investigating the world of perfumery. We started the term by learning how essential oils are extracted by steam distillation and over a number of lunchtimes we extracted and purified orange oil from oranges, eugenol (a local anaesthetic) from cloves, lavender oil from lavender flowers and rosemary oil. Later in the year we will be visiting a perfumery laboratory where we will be able to use their mass spectrometry equipment to analyse the purity of the samples we extracted.



From this we decided that it would be interesting to see if we could design and manufacture our own St Benedict's Christmas fragrance. The students researched the chemicals that are used in common Christmas fragrances, such as Cinnamal (the aldehyde that gives cinnamon its distinctive scent) and we then sourced the raw materials needed to design our own fragrance.

This involved the students making up many different samples varying the composition, deciding upon a shortlist and then using homemade fragrance testers (wooden spills used for lighting bunsen burners) to survey students and staff to come up with a final scent.

For the past week our students have been manufacturing ethical scented candles which would make an ideal stocking filler this Christmas using 100% plant based wax and wicks, our homemade St Benedict's fragrance and repurposed glass jars and labelling designed by our art students, ensuring that the carbon footprint of these candles is as close to zero as possible.



The candles will be on sale as of next week and 100% of the proceeds will go to DePaul <https://uk.depaulcharity.org/> to help young people who find themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness.