

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Easter edition of our St John's Newsletter. We sincerely hope that this communication finds you and your loved ones safe and well, and that you were all able to enjoy a very restful Easter break.

It is particularly uplifting to read through this Newsletter and to take the time to reflect on just some of the wonderful activities that our students have experienced over these last few months, alongside all the fantastic learning opportunities that have taken place during their regular school lessons. Particular highlights for us include our recent Cultural Day and Colour Run, events that are now becoming annual fixtures on our school calendar - it is always very special when we have the opportunity to get together as a school community, as we get the chance to celebrate what it means to be a pupil of St John's and what a superb school community we are. Congratulations to all those students who are mentioned in this Newsletter and to everyone who plays an active role in our vibrant school; it is truly heartening to reflect upon just some of the wonderful experiences that you have enjoyed over these last few months.

As we begin Term 5 and we approach this summer's exam season, please spare a thought and a prayer for all those students who are about to embark on their public examinations. We are acutely aware that our pupils have worked tremendously hard all year, ably supported by their teachers and families, yet it is always a particularly challenging time for all those involved. We know that you will join us in wishing our examination students all the very best, safe in the knowledge that they will be doing themselves proud, their families proud and the school proud.

Thank you all so much for your ongoing support, it is very much appreciated, and we very much look forward to updating you later on this summer with more news on all of the enriching activities that our students are taking part in across Terms 5 and 6.

Mr Matt Barron  
Headteacher

Mr Dan Walton  
Associate Headteacher

## Colour Run



During the penultimate week of term the school held its first ever colour run event. The students taking part in the event had such an enjoyable and exciting experience. We were delighted that over 400 students either participated, spectated or supported at our Colour Run.

Through this event we have raised a significant amount of money for CAFOD and the Elliot Holmes Memorial Fund (c.£2,300). Huge congratulations and a massive thank you to all those students who were able to obtain sponsorship for taking part. Peter Scutts, director of the Elliot Holmes Memorial Fund, was in attendance at the event and wanted to pass on his thanks to the entire school community for the support we are providing to the Fund.

## Cultural Day

During Term 4 we also celebrated our Cultural Day and would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who got involved in this special occasion, raising a significant amount of money (over £1,700) for CAFOD and Equally Ours, a charity that champions diversity.

The day was a fantastic celebration of the rich cultural diversity at St John's and it wouldn't have been possible without the combined efforts of so many members of our school community. During the day, students were able to participate in lunch time activities; they also enjoyed musical and dance performances during our Whole School Celebration Assembly, as well as Art displays, our Cultural Fayre, flag displays, posters, quizzes in addition to a variety of cultural-themed activities during timetabled lessons.

One of the main highlights of the day was our Fashion Runway where the rich cultural diversity of our student body was celebrated in front of our whole school community.



We would also like to thank the Sodexo team for the international menu they kindly offered on the day.

## Sports News

### Rugby

The school's Rugby calendar has been busy with Mr Murray taking a Boys Year 7 team and a Girls Year 8 & 9 team to Canterbury to compete against a number of other schools. All of our students competed extremely well and gave an excellent account of themselves. A massive well done to all those pupils involved. These events were followed by St John's hosting the Colm Murphy Cup. This is a Kent Catholic Schools Rugby 7s competition in honour of Mr Murphy. Each of our three teams: Year 7 boys, Year 8 Boys and Year 8/9 Girls competed extremely well on what was a most enjoyable afternoon, and I am delighted to announce that our Year 8 Girls team won their knock-out competition by beating St John Fisher 4 tries to 2 in the final.



### Athletics

During Term 4, number of Year 7 and 8 students took part in an 8-school Indoor Athletics Competition. Our students performed extremely well with the Year 8 Boys team winning their respective event, the Year 7 Boys team finishing 2nd and the Year 7 Girls and Year 8 Girls teams both coming 4th in their respective events. Well done to all involved and a special mention for our KS4 Sports Leaders who helped run the event – their effort and conduct was excellent.

### Rowing

A number of our KS3 students went to London's Copper Box Arena for the National Rowing Finals. This was an incredible experience for the pupils and they performed extremely well. Congratulations to all involved.

### Gymnastics

On Friday 8<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March, St John's Gymnastics Squad competed at the National Finals of the BSGA Milano Team Trio event held in Stoke-on-Trent. They performed extremely well, and were up against some really tough competition; the results are below. All gymnasts should be extremely proud of themselves; to compete at a national level is a truly fantastic achievement.

		Team Place (as St. John's)	Regional Place (as the South East)
Under 13 Mixed	David, Imogen, Nadia	14 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Under 13 Boys	Raphael, Richard, George	5 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Under 16 Mixed	Fabio, Amelia, Diana	7 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Under 19 Mixed	Molly, Holly, Bruno	5 <sup>th</sup>	N/A
Under 19 Boys	Yuvraj, Diogo, Gustas, Erikas	4 <sup>th</sup>	N/A

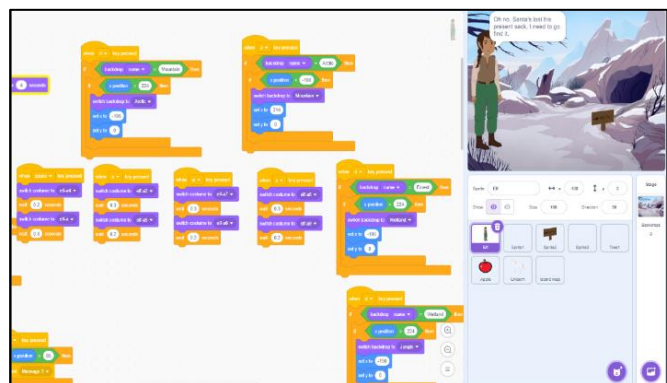
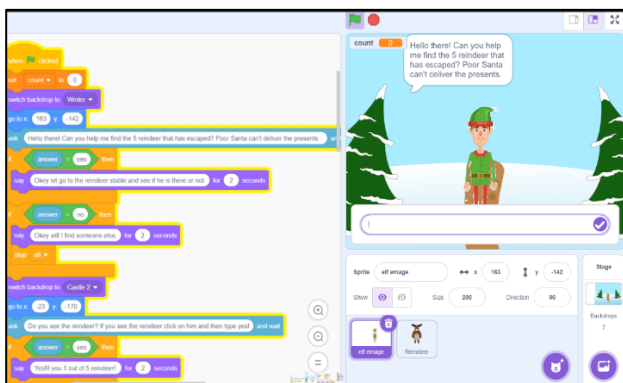


Their next competition is another National Finals, being held in Stoke-on-Trent on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April. Good luck for that event.

*Mrs L Weller. Assistant Headteacher (Teaching and Learning)*

## Computing Club

The computing department would like to recognise and celebrate the achievements of Julia P (Year 10) and Ella O (Year 7). Students were offered the opportunity to attend Computing Club to develop their Scratch programming skills. Their projects were then entered into a national coding competition and we were delighted to hear that Ella and Julia were both chosen as prize winners for their respective age groups. Both girls received a Tobbie self-guiding AI robot and should be incredibly proud of their achievements. Well done!



*Miss A Tough. Head of Computing.*





### Screen-printing Workshop

We were incredibly fortunate to have staff from the University of the Creative Arts (UCA) deliver a wonderful workshop on screen-printing to some of our Year 8 students. They also spoke to the pupils about the wide range of careers in the creative arts. Great fun was had by all!

*Mrs D Lal. Art and Design Technician.*

### Westminster Abbey Visit

On Wed 6<sup>th</sup> March, students studying A Level History in Years 12 and 13 participated in a visit to Westminster Abbey in central London. Students had a guided tour of the Abbey by Mr Smith, where pupils were able to revise knowledge gained in lessons, whilst enriching their knowledge of the religious changes made in the English Reformation by the Tudors. As a part of this, students were able to see the effects of the closure of the monasteries made in the reign of Henry VIII.

Students also visited the tombs of key Tudor monarchs including Queen Mary I, Queen Elizabeth I, Queen Anne of Cleves, and Mary Queen of Scots. Feedback from the students who participated on the trip was really positive, and they found it to be a thoroughly enjoyable experience which will undoubtedly enrich what they have learned in lessons.

*Mr B Smith. Assistant Headteacher (Data, Examinations & Assessment).*

### Food Technology

This term in Food Tech has seen a range of practical lessons, theory lessons and assessments take place. On Cultural Day, students were introduced to Turkish Cuisine where Year 9 pupils tasted a range of Turkish meze and Year 8 pupils made Chicken Shish Kebabs and Flatbreads.

Read on to find out what each year group/class has been up to this term:

- New Year 7 and Year 8 classes have begun their Technology rotation on Food. Classes have had their introductory hygiene and safety lessons and have begun their first practicals.
- Year 9 foundation groups have been exploring sustainability and how to make ethical food choices. This has included a fish filleting masterclass and using ethically sourced ingredients to make Thai Fish Cakes and Chocolate Brownies.
- BTEC Home Cooking Skills groups in their first year of study have been learning how wheat is processed to make flour and the role of ingredients in bread making. Focaccia, Pizza and Hot Cross Buns have been made in practical lessons.



- The final year BTEC Home Cooking Skills class have been undertaking their final assessment where they have planned and made a 2 course meal from their chosen cuisine.
- The first year GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition class have been exploring the chemical and functional properties of ingredients for their Food Science unit. A range of demonstrations and practical lessons have taken place including the making of Lemon Drizzle Cake, Focaccia, and Lemon Meringue Pie.
- The final year GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition students have been working on their NEA2 and have completed their final 3 dish practical assessment with some amazing dishes produced by all!
- Level 3 Food Science and Nutrition students have been working on a mock assessment where they have had to produce a 3 course meal for a set target group, demonstrating highly skilled practical techniques.



*Miss S Gosling. Food and Nutrition Department leader and Mrs S Matthews. Food and Nutrition Teacher.*



## London Dungeons Visit

A number of students who attend our Return to Learn provision have recently enjoyed a fun-packed trip to the London Dungeons and The London Eye. This was a wonderful way to say goodbye to some of our Year 11 students and also a huge well done to those who have made significant progress and have attained well this year. We are already looking forward to next year's trip!



*Miss S Munday and Miss A Thompson. Return to Learn/Care Plan Co-ordinators.*

## Duke of Edinburgh Expedition

A number of St John's students have successfully completed their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Practice Expedition. The students involved showed resilience and determination in all the activities they participated in and they also managed to complete these challenges against some rather adverse weather conditions.





The Duke of Edinburgh students will now go on to complete their assessed expedition after the Easter holidays.

*Miss H Thomson. Director of Alternative Provision.*



## **Ski Trip 2024 – Bardonecchia, Italy**

This February half term, St John's took 50 students and 7 staff to the sunny climbs of Bardonecchia Italy! The pupils made fantastic progress throughout the week in ski school, and attended après events such as the Alpine Coaster, Pizza Night, Bingo and a Big Quiz. All students and staff had a wonderful time, and are already looking forward to the next Ski Trip in 2026!

*Mrs C Bishop. Co-Head of English.*



## **Careers**

### **Year 9 Bristlebots - Canterbury Christ Church University:**

45 students had the exciting opportunity to learn about AI and robotics, questioning the concept of 'intelligent' robots and what would make AI count as intelligent, including learning about some of the EU's laws on becoming 'self-aware'. Students were then able to build, decorate and test their own miniature robots made from batteries, wires, and the end of a toothbrush (Bristlebots) and put them through a series of mini-tests. It was a really enjoyable session for the whole group! One question remains though - if they had kept on developing these robots, when would they become 'intelligent'?



## Year 7 - Student Finance - Canterbury Christ Church University:

The 25 students on our CCCU Programme had an opportunity to learn the basics of university student finance through an exciting board game, where they had to learn how to divide a student loan to cover essentials such as textbooks and food, housing, and the fun activities that reward experience (XP). The ultimate challenge was to gain the most XP while successfully balancing their limited finances. A great introduction to managing money and a fun insight into life post-St John's!

*Mr T Self. Careers Leader*

### **'Pedal Normandy Beaches'**

With

The Royal British Legion

Summer 2024



In Summer 2024, I will be riding the Royal British Legion's (RBL) 'Pedal Normandy Beaches' on the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the D-Day landings, raising funds to provide the lifelong support for the Veterans who have served the British Military Forces.

The challenge means riding 350km in three days. We will visit the Normandy Beaches used on D-Day, paying our respects to the fallen of WW II, but most importantly, we will visit the British Normandy Memorial and it is this that has inspired me to take on this challenge.

As you will know, Mr Murphy sadly passed away recently, having passed on his love and passion for History to so many young lives at St John's. It was working with Mr Murphy that stirred my interest and inspired me to look more closely at the service our many veterans have given, and the sacrifices made. I will be showing my respects when we reach the British Normandy Memorial. He played a significant part in helping to get this memorial built as a mark of his respect for the veterans of that campaign.

*"Colm was a stalwart friend of the Normandy Veteran community. His dedication and energy in ensuring their sacrifices and experiences would never be forgotten was evidenced by the numerous trips he arranged to Normandy for his history students at St John's Catholic Comprehensive School. He will always be remembered for*

*his unfailing dedication in supporting and enabling Normandy Memorial Veteran, George Batts, to help realise the dream of the creation of the British Normandy Memorial. He was a much-loved friend to Veterans across the country and a much valued friend to the Trust"*

*General Lord Dannat*

If you feel you can, I'd be grateful if you could donate to my page (however little that may be) and help the Royal British Legion continue to provide vital services and support for the Armed Forces community - serving and ex-serving personnel and their families. The link to my fund-raising page is below. I am meeting the cost of the ride myself so all monies raised will go to the RBL.

<https://royalbritishlegion.enthuse.com/pf/graham-sutton>



*Mr G Sutton. Science Teacher.*

## Wellbeing

Dear Parents and Carers,

Please find resources below that you may find useful both in terms of supporting young people emotionally, in exam time and online.

### **Staying mentally healthy during exam time (Young Minds)**

As we head towards the main exam time it's worth revisiting how we can support young people at what can be a very stressful time.

Young Minds have a series of support pages aimed to help with exam stress and anxiety. Their advice is available to help school staff, parents & carers and, of course, young people themselves. You can find this helpful advice at the links below:

Parents - <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/blog/how-to-help-your-child-manage-exam-stress/>

Young people - <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/exam-stress/>

The latest Sway for young people is now live and it explores exams; how students can make the most of their revision time, how they might be feeling, and it also provides tips for keeping calm and where to find support should they need it.

*Exam Support Guide for Young People* - <https://sway.cloud.microsoft/infOFFru929ZtLDr?ref=Link>

### **Emotionally Based School Avoidance behaviour:**

This is a recorded webinar facilitated by Kent Educational Psychology and working with Kent Parents and Carers Together (PACT) where the topic of 'what is anxiety' and emotion-based school avoidance are discussed alongside parents sharing their lived experience of how their children experienced these difficulties.

Practical strategies and suggestions are discussed, alongside various support available and how to work constructively with their child's school. You can watch the webinar on:

[KELSI](https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/educational-psychology/educational-psychology-interventions?fbclid=IwAR2pnoOtZKZJfBLMSmqBpm7eRIDfr_bhZwo1sjD8I2hP9U1XAdcj3WTMxco) - [https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/educational-psychology/educational-psychology-interventions?fbclid=IwAR2pnoOtZKZJfBLMSmqBpm7eRIDfr\\_bhZwo1sjD8I2hP9U1XAdcj3WTMxco](https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/educational-psychology/educational-psychology-interventions?fbclid=IwAR2pnoOtZKZJfBLMSmqBpm7eRIDfr_bhZwo1sjD8I2hP9U1XAdcj3WTMxco)

**Mind** are here to fight for mental health.

They have a **dedicated young person hub**, full of information and advice on how to help young people understand different types of mental health problems, how to cope with their feelings and guide them through getting the right support.

## **Explore Mind's information hub for young people**

Year 7 had a gaming bus on site on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March. Each class in Year 7 was given the opportunity to go onto the bus and game for 30 minutes. Kent and Medway PREVENT officers as well as our local school police officers were on the bus with the pupils and were educating them about keeping themselves safe online. The pupils had a great time and feedback was very positive regarding the lessons they learnt about keeping themselves safe.



For Parents and Carers - Supporting Children with SEND

Internet Matters have a great range of guides and advice hubs available for parents and Carers of neurodivergent children





including connecting and sharing online, online gaming and more.

You can access all the guides here - <https://www.internetmatters.org/inclusive-digital-safety/advice-for-parents-and-carers/supporting-children-with-send/>

For Parents and Carers - Second-Hand Devices

Parents and carers will often hand down out of contract devices to their children. This is great, it can save a lot of money, but there needs to be consideration before handing older devices to children. You can find lots of useful information, things to consider and guides to second-hand devices from Internet Matters here - <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/guide-to-hand-me-down-devices/>

For Parents and Carers - Interactive Stories

Internet Matters have put together some great interactive stories/lessons covering a range of issues from self-image and identity, online bullying, relationships and more. The interactive stories may prove to be really useful for parents to go through with their children.

More information can be found here - [https://www.internetmatters.org/digital-matters/modules/?user\\_type=parent](https://www.internetmatters.org/digital-matters/modules/?user_type=parent)

*Mrs O Kelham. Senior Assistant Headteacher (Safeguarding and Child Protection)*

### Chaplain's Corner

I can't imagine the sorrow, the pain and perhaps even anger that the followers of Jesus, along with His mother Mary endured as they watched their beloved son and friend die. A gruesome, cruel death. The trauma they experienced is incomprehensible. I dare say a handful of Jesus' followers felt disappointment. Let's face it, Jesus had promised so much in His preaching, teaching and miracles. Now He was gone, along with their hope. Every Good Friday, the day we commemorate the Crucifixion, my thoughts are always with Mary, mother of Christ. As a parent, I cannot conceive how she must have felt seeing her son suffer. Parents and carers, we have all withstood pain, anguish and helplessness when our children struggle or suffer problems that we are often unable to solve.

When we look at news reports on our televisions, devices and newspapers it is evident pain, cruelty, despair and hardship exists in abundance in our world today. There are painful reports and scenes of war, famine and violence everywhere we look. Even in our own country and communities there are senseless acts of violence. With my own children, I see danger everywhere. 244 people died in the England and Wales because of knife crime, 78 of those were under the age of 25. Such mindless acts of violence leave families with unending grief. How are we meant to celebrate Easter with so much sadness and disorder in the world?

In a world where there is the reality of suffering, violence, intolerance and injustice, we are called to be people of light and hope. I am not suggesting that this is something which I always find easy. There are times I am overwhelmed by the darkness some aspects of this world can present. However, Holy Week and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ shines light and hope through the darkness of life.

