

St. Joseph's Newsletter



Dear Parents and Carers,

A belated Happy Easter to all of you and your families. Due to the dates of the school holiday this year, this week is actually the closest school week to Holy Week, and so the students are now attending their Easter Services in school, and once again our Chaplaincy Team have done a great job in organising and delivering these. Some of the other school activities from last term and plans for the coming term are highlighted below and I hope you enjoy reading about the successes and experiences of our students. Clearly, a great deal is going on and sincere thanks to all the staff for the work they put in to these events. Furthermore, it is great to see that we have a world record holder in our school!

In the last newsletter, a number of points that have been raised by the Year 7 Parents' Forum were raised. One of these was about communication, and while the most recent minutes of this group indicate that we still have some way to go, I hope that parents are now finding the regular bulletins helpful and informative – as always, though, any feedback about this is welcome.

As we now progress towards the GCSE exams, our thoughts and prayers are inevitably with our Year 11 students. They are, quite simply, a fantastic group of students and it is a pleasure to have them in school. I know how hard they are working, and how much they want to achieve – a key role for all the adults in their lives is to be as supportive as possible and as tolerant as necessary!

Finally, as well as focusing on our own community, our thoughts and prayers are with all the victims of the Easter Sunday bombings in Sri Lanka. In the words of Pope Francis, "We entrust to the Lord those who have tragically died and we pray for the wounded and for all those who are suffering as a result of this dramatic event."

Jerry Giles

Head of School

Ash Wednesday Services

On the 6th March, each student in Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 attended Ash Wednesday services and received ashes to mark the start of Lent. Year 11 visited the chapel to receive ashes at lunchtime. We would like to thank our students for their impeccable behaviour and prayerful reflections during the services. A special thank you to our Youth Chaplaincy Team and readers who helped organise and plan the services.

Reconciliation Services

During term 4, the Chaplaincy Team arranged Reconciliation services for our students to attend on the 8th and 22nd March. Father Richard, Canon John and the Chaplaincy Team would like to thank the vast number of students that attended.

CAFOD Activities Day at St. Joseph's

“What kind of world do you want to leave for others?”
- Pope Francis

Focus of the day was climate change – how it is a global issue, and one that effects the disadvantaged and the young more than any others. The session started with icebreakers and then some whole group debates about values. Students were offered the chance to personally reflect and challenge their own behaviours and attitudes to climate change. An A to Z of practical innovations were compiled and there were many inspirational ideas from the young volunteers around the room.

After lunch there was a chance for groups to feedback on what they had done between the two activity days in their respective schools. There was also a chance to pass on personal wisdom about what was learnt and what may yet be improved.

There were examples of case studies and statistics backed up with human stories to emphasis the nature and scale of how climate change is effecting all of God's world. Students were encouraged to mix with other schools and to reflect amongst themselves on what practical changes could be implemented both at local and national level.

Credit must go to the following students in Year 10, that represented the College really well: Sarah B, Sofia B, Melissa C, Ninoshca C, Merle F, Hamilton G, Cindy K, Shannon N, Marushka R.

A really practical and fun filled session that left staff and students with plenty to reflect on.

60th Celebration Mass

On Tuesday 14th May, St. Joseph's are commemorating sixty years of Secondary Catholic Education with a Mass at the College, starting at 6.30pm.

Bishop Declan will be the celebrant and guests are welcome to stay for some light refreshments after the Mass.

If you are a previous member of staff or Governor of St. Joseph's and would like to attend, please reserve a space by contacting Chloe Wilkinson (cwilkinson@romeroservices.co.uk or 01793 236037).

P.E. Enrichment

Term 4 saw a fantastic start to enrichment across the school, with numerous activities being offered each day after-school. Tuesday's have offered gymnastics and volleyball. Gymnastics club has had fantastic participation and has been a real exhibit of the talent and skill held by our students across a range of disciplines and allowed the gymnasts to explore movement and travel across a variety of different apparatus. Some real progression was shown from our gymnasts across the six week period, mastering complex skills such as aerials and flicks!

The boys that came to volleyball enrichment had a great time learning a new sport and thoroughly enjoyed having input from a member of our support staff who has played a high standard of volleyball in the past. Volleyball is a difficult sport to start with but as soon as you master the basic shots it becomes a really fun, exciting game.

The introduction of Boxercise on a Wednesday was fantastically attended. We saw the participants grow in confidence; trying new skills and working hard to master new combinations and sequence of movement. From circuits to partner work and mini-games, the pupils displayed a tireless work ethic that they should all be proud of. Badminton Club on a Thursday has seen a number of dedicated KS3 students show real advancements in their tactical play on court, gaining valuable experience through tournament style games.

It has also been another great term for KS3 football with over 40 boys in regular attendance. This has been made up of mostly Year 8 boys who have certainly enjoyed soaking up the spring sunshine with some very competitive games! Overall it has been a really strong term for enrichment at St Joseph's and we look forward to seeing more of the same as we enter Term 5 and move onto our Summer sports and activities!

World Record Holder!



Huge congratulations to Holly Sullivan (10B) who, on the 23rd March 2019, went to Southampton and broke the 100m freestyle world record - T21 with an impressive time of 1.32.80!

Holly started to swim when she was 4 years old at Learn to Swim lessons at the Swindon Oasis. With the help of her instructors and her own determination she was able to make progress over several years until she reached Stage 10. At this point Holly transferred to Swindon ASC (a mainstream competitive swimming club) where she now trains three times a week.

Holly is also a member of Reading Cygnets (a swimming club specifically for swimmers with learning difficulties) who provide additional training, support and access to competitions across the UK. Holly is an S14 swimmer, the para class for athletes with intellectual impairments, and has qualified to swim at county and regional level. However, because S14 is a very broad category, swimmers with Down Syndrome are unable to access the elite end of this category because of a number of physical

impairments, which run alongside the Intellectual Impairment.

To support these athletes DSISO (Down Syndrome International Swimming Organisation) was established and provide competitive swimming for Down Syndrome Athletes at national and international level. As part of DSISO, Holly has been selected to swim internationally in Paris, France; Pristina, Kosovo; Truro, Canada - and is now hoping for selection for GB team at the European championships being held in Sardinia during September 2019.

P.E. Trip - Netball Super League

On 22nd March a group of students visited Bath University for a netball Super League fixture where Team Bath were playing against Strathclyde Sirens.

The visit was a wonderful opportunity for the girls to sharpen up on their tactical knowledge of the game and see how advanced skills can be applied effectively in a match situation.

There were many international players on show with some of the England players who won Gold in Australia last year! The score finished at 51 – 47, with Team Bath winning the game.

The girls had a fantastic time and thoroughly enjoyed meeting the players, getting their signatures and taking some photos with them at the end of the game. Overall, the girls were a pleasure to take to the game and all came back with new ideas and skills to put into their own netball practice.



Basketball Club – off to a Jump Start! (KS3 Basketball Tournament)

Basketball was such a popular enrichment activity for Term 3, attracting over 50+ students across all age ranges, we decided to offer a Key Stage 3 inter-school basketball tournament at the start of this term. The competition was open to students from Year 7, 8 and 9 and the stipulation was teams must have four players. We played a round robin tournament and points were awarded for wins, draws and losses. After some excellent on-court play; demonstrating slick passing, skilled footwork, daring dribbling and some sharp shooting, we are pleased to announce the results as follows (the final 3 placings were won by Year 8 Teams):

1st Place (Champions!): Shayne A, Joshua F, Oliver M, Jeremy W

2nd Place: Noel A, Anton D, Ryan M, William M

3rd Place: Ahswin R, Oskar T, Oliver W, Cameron Y

Well done to all. On the strength of our improving skills and numbers in Basketball we do intend to enter inter-school fixtures next year. On a separate note... as good as it's been... it's still the PE Staff who come out trumps when playing Killer! Practise those free-throws B-ballers!

P.E. Enrichment for Term 5

Day	Activity	Gender	Year	Staff
Tues	Rounders	Girls	All years	TF, AYJ, GW, ACN
Wed	Athletics	Mixed	All years	AI, ACS, AYJ, ACN
	Cricket	Girls	All years	Coach + 1
	BTEC Sport (S20)	Mixed	Yr 10 & 11	TF
Thurs	Cricket	Boys	All years	AI, ACS, Coach
	Netball (Tour practice)	Girls	All years	AYJ

Sport England Active Lives Survey 2019

Many thanks to the students who have taken part in the Sport England Survey this term. The children's survey is a school-based survey measuring participation in sport and physical activity among children in school Years 1-11 (roughly children aged 5-16) across England. This national research began in 2015 and are Official Government Statistics.

Although anonymous, they are used to shape and influence local decision-making as well as informing government policy on the Primary PE and Sports Premium, Childhood Obesity Plan and other cross-departmental programs.

At a school level, the results will provide greater insight into pupils' attitudes and behaviours towards the current PE provision which can help inform future spending and highlight areas for development.

Student Leadership

Students: Are you ready to make a difference? If so, St. Joseph's needs YOU!

We want you to help us make the College even better, with the Student Advisory Group! This group is a number of students from Years 7 to 10, who meet after College about once a term (or more depending on the issues) to discuss key problems facing the College. The group make decisions and provide solutions that will help the College move forward. Potential solutions are first put forward to the Executive Committee of Students.

Executive Committee of Students

This group is open just to Year 10 Students, who meet once a term to discuss issues raised from the Student Advisory Group. This group decides on the actions to address the issues that have been raised. The Executive Committee also have a budget to be able to fund changes, then can organise initiatives and publicise events if they wish.

If you would like to join either group, or would like to find out more, please speak to Mr Matyla who will be able to provide you with more information!

College Library

The library continues to be very well used, especially during social times. We have recently acquired numerous games and challenges, that are available to be used at these times. They are all very popular, especially the JENGA! Breakfast Club on a Monday and Friday which has really taken off, and Afterschool Club on a Monday is always well attended. During these times we set the students literacy challenges and mindbenders which the students are certainly enjoying.

We have significantly increased our stock with donations from other schools and staff, of which we are very grateful.

The reading leaders programme is running smoothly, and all concerned are starting to benefit. We have a great team of student volunteers and also DofE helpers who really make a difference. They have been a great help, especially at busy break and lunch times. They have also helped with the processing of books- which has enabled us to get them out of the shelves a lot quicker.

By next term we hope to have home connect up and running. This will enable students and parents/carers to access their Accelerated Reader accounts at home.

Please continue to come and visit us and make use of this welcoming space.

UKMT Maths Challenge

Linus, Daniel, Max and Noel

The group who participated in the UKMT junior maths team challenge held in Royal Wootton Bassett School on 20th March. They came 2nd out of 21 schools - a very well done!

Dauntsey's School in Devizes won first place. Schools came from as far as Oxford to take part in the challenge.



CAFOD Activities Day at All Saints in Cheltenham

The theme for the day was Refugees.

After some initial fun icebreakers, the various schools attending were offered the chance to feedback developments since the last CAFOD Activity Day. St. Joseph's gave a great account of themselves highlighting strategic meetings, fund raising through street sales and raising awareness of issues through whole year assemblies.

There then followed small group work with schools mixed together to evaluate the considerable differences made by CAFOD, working in conjunction with other aid agencies in the developing world.

To develop some degree of empathy with refugee plights, a guided fantasy was conducted and an awareness of the horrors of abandoning homes in a violent and unpredictable environment. This powerful group activity must have impacted judging by the responses taken up in deciding what direction St. Joseph's are considering going in their next fund raising scheme. It was decided that focussing on not taking even the basic requirements for life for granted, would be a crucial message to get across in any future CAFOD activity.

The final activities were based around a geographical theme. Countries across the globe were randomly selected and the - at time immense - challenges associated with economies that may be traditionally considered affluent were highlighted. Again, these powerful stimuli were a focus point for planning for future areas and for shaping the content and tone of what St. Joseph's would take home with them after such a full day of activities.

Change of Contact Details

If you move house or update your telephone number, please ensure you notify the College of your new details as soon as possible.