



St. Benedict's High School

NEWSLETTER

December 2020



Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our Christmas 2020 edition of St. Benedict's News. This year has been different from previous years. Covid-19 has presented us with difficulties and challenges. However, thanks to the commitment of staff and the hard work of pupils we still have had a successful year with lots to be proud of.

I am delighted to be sharing with you a compilation of some of the many activities, successes and achievements of our young people this session.

Particular highlights include:

- The outstanding SQA exam results achieved by our senior pupils in their recent exams recognising the commitments and effort of our young people and school staff.
- Our increasing number of industry partnerships with employers providing a variety of exciting opportunities for our young people to engage in meaningful and relevant workplace learning opportunities.
- Our strong links with local parishes, including the outstanding charitable contributions made by our school community.
- Improvements in standards of uniform, further developing our sense of belonging and pride in our community.

These events and many others are captured in this newsletter.

I welcome your comments and any new information which we can share in future newsletters. I hope you enjoy!

Alan Taylor

Alan Taylor
Head Teacher





St. Benedict's Website and Twitter

I draw your attention to our school's website <http://www.oraetlabora.co.uk> as an interesting and ongoing source of valuable information on events and achievements at the school, including our calendar for this session.



Our Twitter feed is up and running again and is also a great source of information about the school. We now have around 1500 followers - you can follow us on [@stbenedictsren](https://twitter.com/stbenedictsren)





Pupil Leadership

Head Boy and Head Girl



Head Boy
Ben Wright



Head Girl
Katie Colligan

House Captains



St. Josephine Bakhita
Andrew Holgan and Alana Moody



St. Oscar Romero
Eilidh Miller and Kristin McCarroll



St. Teresa
Karris Todd and Aoife Strutt-Murdoch



St. Maximilian Kolbe
Kelechi Nwokeabia and Jack Phillips

School Captains



Ambition – Pupil Voice and Aspirations

Michael Amaeze

James Kelly

Megan Pollock

Holly Donnelly

Equality and Equity – Social Justice and Diversity

Sala Bamba

Suman Kandola

Daniel Moore

Partnerships – Catholic Ethos and Community

Kathryn Gardyne

Lexi McLaughlin

Luke Smith

Junior School Captains



St. Josephine Bakhita

Lucy Quinn

Eve Muir

St. Oscar Romero

Emma Irvine

Nikki Lavery

Conan Rooney

St. Teresa

Olivia Kinnear

Kaitlynn Moran

Murron McGuire

Karis Smith

St. Maximilian Kolbe

Abigail Coyne

Ben Templeton



School Uniform - Dressing for Excellence

Uniform is an important part of our school identity. It reinforces who we are as a community and allows students to feel pride in their school. It also helps prepare pupils for life after school where many will have to dress smartly for work.

Over the past two sessions, there has been a significant improvement in our standards of uniform. An increasing number of pupils are now wearing blazers and I am delighted to report that 94% of pupils are now wearing all black footwear.

Our main driving force for striving towards 100% of pupils wearing black shoes is to ensure equity for all : that no pupil or parent feel pressured to wear/buy an expensive pair of "converse style" trainers. This was highlighted by our pupils through our pupil voice. I feel it is my duty to act in this area.

Our improved standards of uniform is also coinciding with our increasing pattern of attainment, which I would suggest is partly connected.

The wearing of school uniform:

- Is invaluable in conveying a sense of community, wellbeing and purpose.
- Indicates a sense of pride in the school and helps pupils to form positive attitudes to the school and their school work.
- Protects children from the harmful effects of social distinction and competitive dressing.
- Promotes the school's identity in their community, with our immediate neighbours, local business and industry.
- Assists staff in the task of supervising pupils and keeping unwelcome visitors out of the school.

A reminder of our school uniform requirements. St. Benedict's High School's policy is that all of our pupils are required to wear the school uniform.

The School Uniform consists of :

- A white school shirt/blouse, and school tie which is visible at all times. S4, S5 and S6 will wear the Senior tie.
- Tailored black trousers or black skirt - leggings, jeans, denim and tracksuits, are not acceptable under any circumstances.
- A school blazer with badge.
- Comfortable footwear (black in colour).
- Plain black jumper or cardigan (optional). Black school jumpers should be of an unbranded style that allows the school tie to be clearly seen (v-neck).





Improvement Priorities

Our improvement priorities for 2020-21 are:

- To promote the positive health and well-being of pupils, parents/carers and staff
- To develop high quality learning and teaching and assessment
- To further develop our Catholic ethos across the contexts for learning
- To continue to close the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged learners to ensure equity for all.

Curriculum – Developing skills for life, learning and work.

At St. Benedict's we are committed to developing the full potential of every young person by offering a curriculum in the Senior Phase which meets all learners' needs. We have introduced a number of new courses to broaden the curriculum and widen opportunities for our young people. This has increased opportunities for success at SQCF levels 5 and 6.

New Courses

- National 5 Health Sector
- National 5 Practical Electronics,
- Higher Communication
- Higher Dance
- Higher Health, Food and Technology

We have also introduced a Level 6 First Aid qualification for our senior pupils. This is proving extremely popular.

In addition, we continue to work closely with partners including West College Scotland to provide a range of academic and vocational options for our young people to prepare them for the world of work.

Positive Destinations

As you can see our young people continue to move into positive destinations. This is a credit to our young people, their families and the hard work of school staff. This includes our strong partnership with Skills Development (SDS) and further and higher education institutions.

Session 2017/18	88.3%
Session 2018/19	95.9%
Session 2019/20	Projected figure 96%



Attendance and Timekeeping

We have been working hard this term to ensure that young people in St. Benedict's High School continue to achieve and attain to their highest level. Regular attendance and punctuality at school are essential for this. Your support here as a parent/carer is crucial.

Please ensure that your child is only absent from school if they are genuinely unwell or there is a valid reason. Absences must be reported to the school office by 8.45am. If young people are absent on a regular basis or if they are late to class, this is detrimental to their education and learning. Please be aware that if your child's attendance or timekeeping falls below the standards we expect, we have a duty of care to inform you and to follow Renfrewshire Council procedures.



Pupil Reports and Target Setting

Monitoring and tracking of your child's progress helps us to ensure your child can achieve their potential and is therefore a very important part of his/her education.

As part of our monitoring and tracking system, your child will be involved in regular discussions with staff to identify strengths, areas for development and next steps. Please also discuss these reports with your child.

In previous sessions the reporting of this would have been shared as follows:

1. A full written report detailing your child's strengths and areas for development within each subject of study.
2. Tracking reports detailing levels of achievement and ratings for effort, behaviour and homework.
3. A parent - teacher meeting with an opportunity for a verbal report.

Due to COVID, our approaches to reporting have had to be adapted. As a result of not being able to accommodate parents into the school building the parents' meetings will be replaced by a second full written report initially.

We are currently developing an online system which would enable a virtual parents' meeting.

I am hoping this could be in place for the second half of the session.

If you have any issues you wish to discuss further, please contact your child's pastoral care teacher or year group Depute Head Teacher.



Exam Success 2020

The school community recently celebrated some of its best levels of attainment since the school opened. Hard work has certainly paid off!

S4 Year Group

Percentage of pupils achieving five or more awards at National 5: 47% (45% in 2019).

Thirty-three pupils achieved seven National 5 awards. Ten pupils achieved all A grades passes.

S5 Year Group (based on S4 roll)

Percentage of pupils achieving three or more awards at Higher level: 35% (33% in 2019).

Percentage of pupils achieving one or more awards at Higher level: 57% (56% in 2019).

Twenty pupils achieved five Highers.

Eight pupils achieved five A awards at Higher level.

S6 Year Group (based on S4 roll)

Percentage of pupils achieving five or more awards at SCQF Level 6: 40% (27% in 2019).



Fourth Year Duxes
Abby McLaughlin and Gavin Stewart



Pupils who achieved
all A passes at National 5.



Parent Council

St. Benedict's High School has an active and thriving Parent Council which is here to represent the views of all parents/carers at the school. We support the work of the school by:

- **Providing a voice for parents on issues that are important to them and their children.**
- **Advising the school on its policies.**
- **Being involved in the appointment of senior staff.**
- **Organising social and fundraising events.**
- **Ensuring all parents are listened to and understand what the Parent Council does.**
- **Promoting contact between all parents and the rest of the school community.**
- **Discussing any key areas of interest to parents.**

Members

Stephen McGee (Chairperson), Clare Turley (Vice Chairperson), Alan Taylor (Head Teacher), Nicola Stewart, Fergus Phillips, Elizabeth McNally, Julie Hunter, Claire McLaren, Canon Michael McMahon, Anne Shaw, Councillor Bill Binks, Alma Strutt, Staff Representatives – Claire Howell, Colette McArthur

Despite the difficult times our group has continued to meet online. Meetings take place on the first Monday of the month. If you would like to join or have any points you would like raised please contact me stmcgee@sky.com or the school office.

Kind regards,
Stephen McGee



The Parent Council raised money this year to purchase outdoor benches for our pupils.

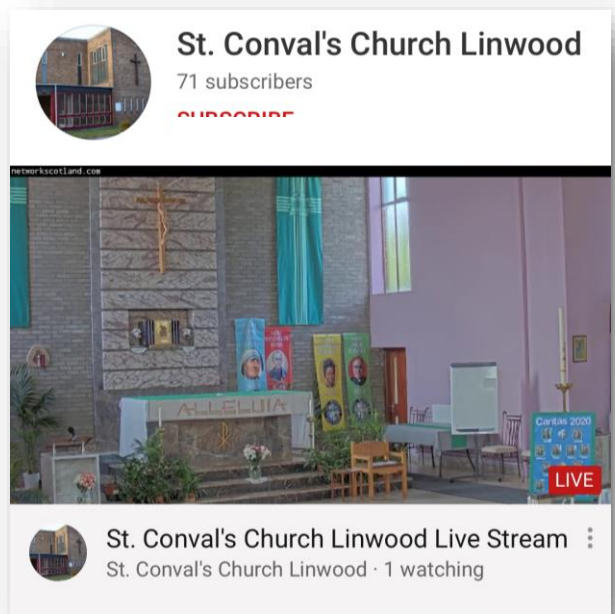


Chaplaincy

The Liturgical Life of the School

Current restrictions mean that we have had to adapt how we celebrate the liturgical life of the school. We are delighted that we are able to still have Mass celebrated weekly in the school, whilst adhering to all protective protocols, and are very thankful to our local clergy for their support.

For whole school Masses and services, we have been aided greatly by the availability of the [St. Conval's Church live-stream](#). We have been able to broadcast our liturgical celebrations via the St. Conval's YouTube channel, meaning that anyone can join us in prayer from wherever they are in the world! We are very grateful to the St. Conval's parish community and Canon McMahon for their help in this.



Caritas

The Caritas Award Programme looks a little different this year as we navigate uncertain times and the restrictions impacting our daily lives. Below is a reflection on the Caritas experience so far this year by some of our pupils.



This year, twenty-eight Sixth Year pupils are participating in the Caritas programme across our five parishes. Although the volunteering portion of Caritas has been difficult this year, every member of the Caritas Team has been striving to give back to the community.

We do this through stewarding and sanitising at the beginning and end of Mass, reading, greeting parishioners and ICT work. The response from the local parishioners has been so warm and friendly as they enjoy seeing the young members of the parish community being actively involved in the Church.

We've been helping in the parishes as they seek to support those in need of help this Christmas. For example, in St. Fillan's Parish a parcel appeal is being carried out where they hope to support those who are isolating or shielding this time of year. St. Conval's are carrying out an initiative where they hope to provide Christmas dinner to those struggling in the local community.

As well as volunteering in the community, we have been carrying out periods of reflection. This reflection is done during our Religious Education time. We discuss how this award has helped us to develop our Catholic faith and how we can model the values taught by Pope Benedict XVI in our everyday lives.

It has been such a rewarding programme to participate in as not only are we proud ambassadors of St. Benedict's High School, but we are also able to live out our school's strong Catholic Ethos in the wider community.

By Katie Colligan and Ben Wright



Canon McMahon blessing the Caritas badges at our Commissioning Mass.



Megan and Aoife helping with sanitising duties at St. Margaret's Church.



House System

Our House System has been up and running now since August last year.

Each House is competing for a reward day at the cinema followed by a Pizza Buffet in school come Easter Time.

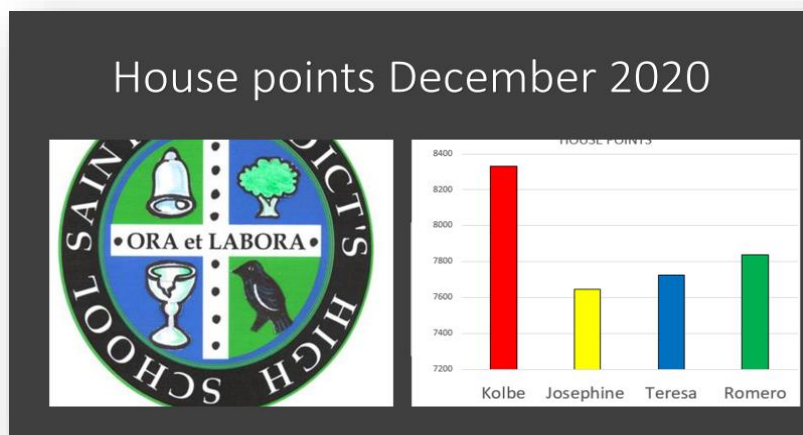
Pupils can win points for their House in the following ways:

- Health & Wellbeing points, walk or cycle to school
- Departmental Awards in each subject
- Monthly Tracking points through effort behaviour and homework
- Attendance points for 95% and above
- House Hero Points for exceptional contribution to the ethos of the school and the local community. Parents please email the school to nominate your child.

Each house group will also have a House Assembly in the New Year. Due to Covid restrictions this service will be done through the Social Education Programme. During this service classes will come together as a community and celebrate the positive impact all pupils have had on the school community. We will also aim to highlight particular pupils and the contribution they have made to their house through House Hero points. In addition to this, Senior House Captains will deliver motivational talks and Fr. Michael will have a religious and supportive input to all Houses.

Lastly, and possibly most importantly, please be aware that the House Points are updated each month and displayed in the Street Area of the school. Currently House Kolbe lead, with House Romero second, House Teresa third and House Bakhita in fourth place. The points are very close and there is plenty of time for it to change throughout the year!

Please see below for the official standings:





Some of Our New Staff

Hello, my name is Mr Allan, I am a probationer teacher within the Social Subjects department this year. I also teach Religious Education as well as run weekly Eco Club meetings.

It has certainly been an eventful start to my career as a teacher! However, I consider myself very fortunate to be placed at St. Benedict's High School for my probationary year. I do not think I could have asked for a more supportive school and department to aid me in my professional progression over the past four months. The staff and pupils have been extremely friendly and made me feel like a valued and respected addition to the school.



Everyone asks me how I have managed to cope with the challenges of teaching during such a difficult period. In all honesty, it is the strength and resolve of the pupils who help inspire me. Whether it be simple changes in their daily routine such as cleaning the desks and wearing face coverings, or more widespread changes to their examination diet and extra-curricular activities – the pupils have been a credit to both the school and local community in how they have faced these adjustments head on and maintained their levels of commitment to their learning.

I cannot say for certain what the remainder of the academic year will have in store for us all, but I am sure that the pupils and staff will continue to work together to ensure a safe, inclusive and productive learning environment.

Hi my name is Miss McMillan and I am a new teacher within the Physical Education department. This year I have started teaching Higher Dance within the curriculum which I love. In the future I hope to offer Dance at National 5 level and within S3 to offer variety and wider choices to those who enjoy dance!

During lunchtimes on a Tuesday I run the rugby club and Fridays I run the dance club.

Our dance team consists of 2 very talented teams who have been entered into the Renfrewshire School's Dance Competition which is being held virtually. It is my hope to host a St. Benedict's Dance Show next year to showcase the wonderful talent and effort that goes on within our Dance Club and Higher Dance.



In my spare time I enjoy gymnastics and trampolining and currently train at Sparta Trampolining club.

I am enjoying teaching at St. Benedict's and looking forward to the New Year!





Malawi Partnership

As I'm sure you are aware, our school's partnership with St. Patrick's Seminary is an unbreakable one. It provides endless opportunities and is the foundation of an abundance of friendships. I have been fortunate enough that a large portion of my school experience has involved this partnership, and this is something I will forever be grateful for.

In February 2018, seven boys from St. Patrick's Seminary travelled to Scotland along with Fr. Sam and Fr. Andrew. They stayed with host families within our school and countless bonds were built. A strong sense of attachment developed in such a short period of time which made saying goodbye extremely hard, however we all knew we had formed friendships for life.

Following this trip from the pupils of St. Patrick's in February, myself and several other host pupils were given the life-changing opportunity to travel to Malawi in June 2019. We visited the local primary schools, maternity wards and orphanages. A large portion of our time was spent in St. Magdalena's, a boarding school for disabled children, each child was so full of life and made us feel extremely welcome and participated in many activities with us. Over the course of the two weeks, we got to know each boy from St. Patrick's Seminary and developed endless friendships; each boy was so eager to share their own stories and find out everything about us.

As the trip progressed, we were hit by the immense cultural difference and the harsh reality of life in a rural area of a developing country and came to the realisation of how lucky we truly are. Laughs were shared, tears were shed, and memories were made, which I know we will cherish forever.

Our partnership with St. Patrick's remains a strong one despite the disappointment of the 2020 trip being cancelled due to COVID-19. However, we remain optimistic and hope that we are able to visit our friends again in 2021.

We continue to support St. Patrick's Seminary through many areas of fundraising. At the end of November, we managed to send a Christmas parcel to each pupil in St. Patrick's Seminary, as we do every year. Thank you to everyone who donated, it makes such a significant impact to our friends in Malawi.

Aoife Strutt-Murdoch S6



Digital Learning



When the school closed in March, we had to have a very quick reaction to the sudden change in the method of delivering lessons to pupils. We used various platforms to provide home learning: Show My Homework, Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom.

Since coming back to face-to-face learning and teaching, we have been focused on how to build digital learning into normal practice. The platforms that we are using as a school are:

- Satchel One (formerly Show My Homework)
- Microsoft Teams

We are currently working on a Learning at Home feature on the school website to provide support for pupils and parents. Content is being added to this regularly.

Pupils needing support with any aspect of digital learning can find help on the school website, speak to me in school or send an email to:

gw20digitallearning@glow.sch.uk

*Mrs J Tweed
Project Leader Digital Learning
Computing Science Teacher*

Literacy

Christmas isn't just about the presents – spending quality time as a family is important too! Here are some great ideas to bring the family together whilst developing key literacy skills. Some of these games can be played over FaceTime, Skype or Zoom, so even if you can't all get together physically there are ways to make memories as a family this Christmas!



Available on the App Store for FREE, Heads Up will challenge your ability to describe. Usually this game is acted out as charades, but it can also be adapted for players to shout out descriptive words.

An old family favourite, Stop the Bus is a competitive way to show off your world knowledge as well as refine your reaction times. Best of all? It's FREE! All you need is paper and pens or download free templates online.

Stop The Bus

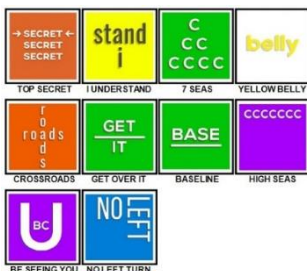
Play our fun game and see how high you can score! Remember the more unusual answers you pick the more likely you are to get full points.

Player	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Girl's name										
Boy's name										
Food/Drink										
Animal										
Place										
Colour										



Bananagrams is available to purchase as a Scrabble-like board game as well as from the App Store. There are loads of ways to play and the in-depth instructions can easily be found online.

Articulate is another old family favourite that tests your ability to describe things fast! It is available as a board game to purchase, or you can make this more cost-effective by taking words online and creating cards yourself!

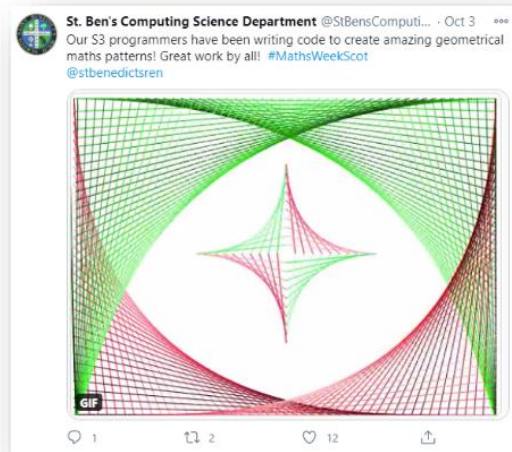
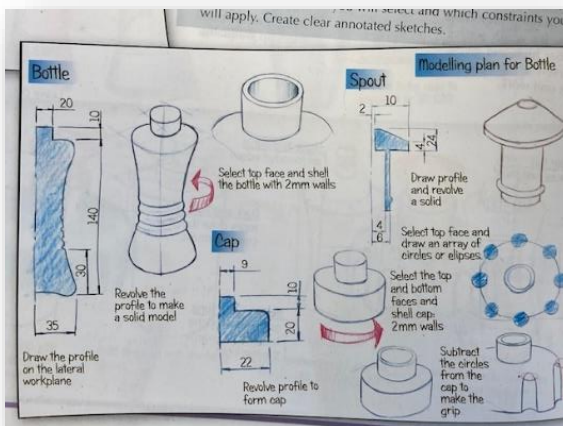


Dingbats are visual word puzzles of a famous phrase or saying. Identify all the phrases correctly to be the winner! Again, this is another cost-effective way to enhance literacy skills and spend quality time as a family.

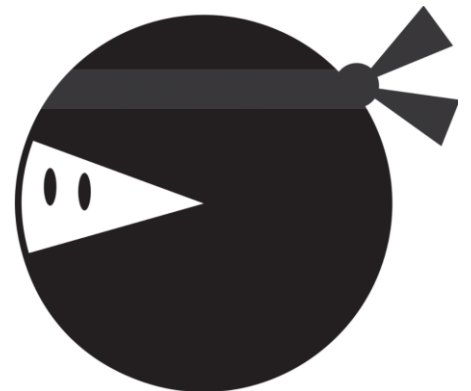
This year our pupils experienced a very successful Maths Week Scotland. They applied their Numeracy skills in a range of subjects including Computing, Technical, Science and more!



Numeracy



In the Maths department, many pupils are developing their key skills with the Numeracy Ninjas program that we run. This program is designed to fill gaps in students' basic mental calculation strategies and to empower them with the numeracy skills and fluency required to fully the Mathematics curriculum as they progress up the school. We have seen a huge improvement in performance with some pupils raising their average score by 7 marks over the 10 week program.



Well done!

Did you know that there is now a YouTube channel that is being regularly updated to support your child's learning S1 onwards?

Just search Mr Canning Maths on YouTube where you can access resources which can be used prior to assessments for revision or if something from class needs clarified. We hope you find it useful.

The Twelve Days of Christmas Puzzle

How many gifts did my true love send to me altogether?

First verse:

On the first day of Christmas,
my true love sent to me
A partridge in a pear tree.

Last verse:

On the twelfth day of Christmas,
my true love sent to me
Twelve lords a-leaping,
Eleven ladies dancing,
Ten pipers piping,
Nine drummers drumming,
Eight maids a-milking,
Seven swans a-swimming,
Six geese a-laying,
Five golden rings,
Four calling birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves,
And a partridge in a pear tree!

There are 12 verses altogether.





Health and Wellbeing

Outdoor Learning

When returning to school in August the Technical dept made the most of outdoor learning. The S4 Graphic Communication class participated in a National 5 Sketching preliminary 2D colour designs and illustrations for single-page promotional displays task outdoors. The pupils felt the positive benefits of the fresh air and it helped increase motivation levels.



House Groups

Pupils in each house group are encouraged to earn points for their house for being a Health and Wellbeing Hero. Kindness is at the heart of our school and we actively encourage our pupils to be kind to each other.



HWB Hero – worth 10 points for your house group
Staff and pupils can be nominated for HWB Hero points
This term our HWB focus is **Give to others**

Give...

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

If you give to others this term please tell a teacher and we will nominate you for HWB Hero Points !

Social Education Lessons For All Pupils

All pupils in St. Benedict's completed a six-week unit of work during Social Education. The resource had six weekly themes, with 'Week 1' starting at the return to school following the summer break.

The themes for the weeks were carefully considered to communicate what it is that we want children to hear and feel from their school environment in the weeks following their transition back from lockdown. These themes were developed based on psychological theory and logical sequences of learning. Each theme was linked to the [CfE Health and Wellbeing Experiences and Outcomes](#) and the lessons were very well received by our pupils.

Mental Health

Well done to some of our Sixth year Pupils who have just completed an eight-week programme to support our younger pupils with their mental health. Eighteen Senior pupils signed up to this programme with Mr Harvey and developed their skills in the following areas:

Peer Mentoring, Building Relationships with Mentees, Understanding Psychological Perspectives with Mentees; Understanding Psychological Perspectives of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Supporting Vulnerable Pupils; Problem Solving; Communication Skills; Teamwork & Confidentiality.



Nuffield Future Researchers

Congratulations to Alana Moody on the successful completion of a Nuffield Future Researcher placement. Alana participated in a research project from home over summer, completing research skills modules and interacting with a knowledge expert on a live research question. An amazing experience and achievement!



Young STEM Leaders

A large number of S6 pupils have volunteered to be Young STEM Leaders in St. Benedict's. These pupils will learn how to develop learning experiences to teach STEM to others. Pupils will produce resources to be used by pupils and staff alike.

STEM Week

This will take place from the 8th – 14th of March. Staff are developing a programme for S1 pupils to experience a range of STEM activities throughout the school.

#IAMSET Student Careers Development Programme

This enrichment programme will launch in the school during STEM Week. The aim of the programme is to develop STEM skills in pupils throughout their time in St. Benedict's by offering a range of activities and supporting pupils in applying for Arkwright Scholarships in the future. The first group involved will be from our current S2 cohort.




Extra-Curricular Clubs

In September, we launched our extra-curricular clubs for S1 and S2 pupils. These ranged from sports clubs, movie and debate clubs to homework support, languages and art club.

Many pupils have been enjoying these lunchtime activities and have become very involved in the wider life of the school.

For the first time, we have tied attendance at our extra-curricular clubs to the house system. Each pupil was issued with a score card, and each time they attended a club they received a stamp. Once their card was filled, they were entered into a prize draw for house points 🎉



Score Card

Each time you attend a club, the teacher will sign/stamp to acknowledge that you attended.

The more you go, the more you get!

Fill your score card = 50 house points!

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10

Also, once your card is filled, pass it to your Pastoral Care Teacher who will enter it into the monthly prize draw!! 🎉

Name: _____ Class: _____

House: _____

My Clubs:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



Language and Communication

Imagine Poetry Competition



Given the huge success of recent writing competitions, the department is providing another opportunity for any interested pupils to write a poem based on the theme of “imagine”. Further details of the competition, as well as advice on how to enter, can be found from Miss McFadyen.

Advanced Higher Young Writers

This year’s Advanced Higher English class are taking part in the Scottish Schools’ Young Writer of the Year Competition, using their argumentative essays to try to win the £600 prize. We wish them every success and look forward to hearing of their success.



School Library Services

Our school library has now re-opened and is available to students in all year-groups. Pupils in S1, S2 and S3 can order books via the forms in their English classrooms, while learners in S4, S5 and S6 can obtain books via the Click and Collect service. The click and collect service is available at <http://libcat.renfrewshire.gov.uk> More details of how to access this system can be found from Ms Bortolato, who is in school on Wednesdays, Thursdays and alternate Fridays.

Modern Languages House Points

Modern Languages staff have been busy closely monitoring the effort and application of pupils within classes in order that our month's allocation of 500 House Points can be fairly and evenly distributed to those pupils who have best exemplified our school values of trust, tolerance, integrity, love and respect. Those whose efforts in the subject have shown these qualities will be awarded with 25 points for their house – points that will, no doubt, make a significant difference to their house's chances of gaining the lead at whole-school level.



Language Ambassadors

Our Advanced Higher linguists have recently been busy recording materials to be shared with all of our cluster primary schools so that the younger children can learn a love of languages from those who, not so long ago, were in exactly the same schools as they were. We look forward to sharing these as we progress into 2021.

Primary And Secondary Languages Funding

We at St. Benedict's have recently been awarded additional funding to further enhance the cluster's approach to languages in primary and secondary. This funding will be used to upgrade and bring languages to the primary school estate, as well as for purchasing further resources to benefit all of our schools.



All that remains to be said is a huge thank-you to all of our pupils, parents and partners for your support and encouragement of all that we do within the faculty. Please have a peaceful and well-rested Christmas break.



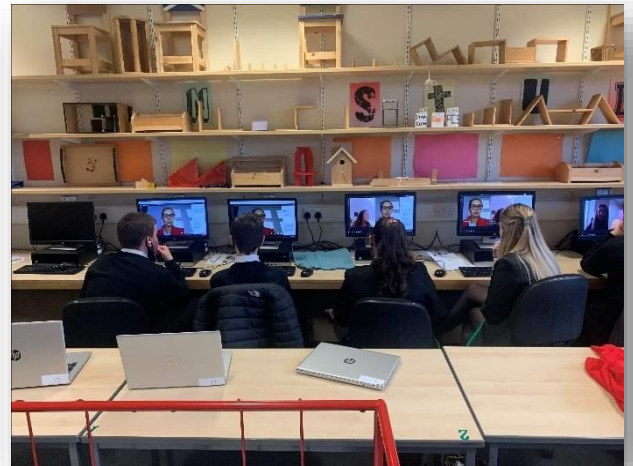
Employability

I was thrilled to see so many of our pupils commit to learning outside of the classroom during these unprecedented times. We have managed to form and keep external partnerships, most recently with Clearview Minds, and Law firm DWF.

Clearview minds has worked with 12 of our S4 pupils to engage in work-place skills and is a four-part series spread over four-day seminars. DWF law firm have kindly given 20 of our S4 pupils the opportunity to explore the workplace, develop personal goals and give them a taste of organisation, networking and what a career in Law make look like.

All our senior pupils have been encouraged to make use of online seminars that may prepare them for College, University or the workplace so keep an eye out on our Twitter for these opportunities! I am already looking forward to 2021 and the opportunities it will bring.

Jonathan Cook, Project Leader of Employability.



DWF is a highly acclaimed multinational law firm with thirty-one offices around the world.



Hearty Lives

Hearty Lives Pupils have had to adapt their plan for the current year and focus on classroom deliveries. Pupils have led sessions on topics such as “The Positives and Negatives of Social Media” and “Teenage Mental Health”; these have been delivered to S1 and S2 classes during SE time. Before Christmas, pupils will deliver an Active Girls event to encourage pupils to take part in physical activity and highlight the benefits of this to mental health. Active Boys will follow after Christmas.

Pupils will take part in training workshops in the new term on topics such as safetalk, autism awareness and coping mechanisms with the aim of using their knowledge to help others. All pupils have worked hard this year under the current circumstances and deserve credit for the standard of their classroom workshops!

Well done!



Raising Attainment

St. Benedict's Record Attainment

Over the past years a wide variety of strategies have been employed to raise the attainment of young people in the Senior Phase (S4-S6). By building on the excellent learning and teaching which takes place in St. Benedict's High School we have been able to make significant improvements in attainment. This has led to St. Benedict's recording our highest level of S4 and S6 attainment since the school opened.



BGE Homework Club

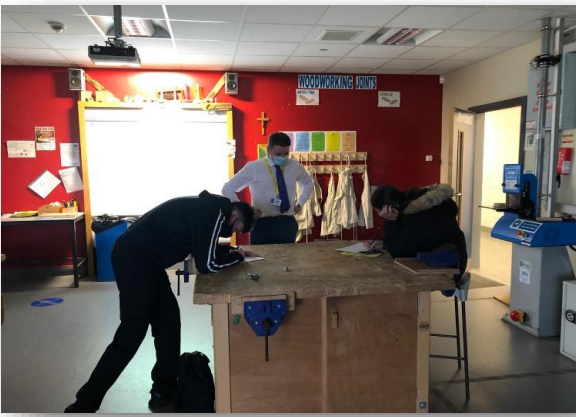


Our BGE Homework Club (S1-S3) takes place every Wednesday at lunchtime. Our P7/S1 Transition teacher, Mrs Gilmour, works alongside other staff volunteers to provide help and support to S1-S3 pupils in their learning. Numbers attending are steadily increasing and I would ask that you encourage your children to come along for a quiet place to work and access to ICT. You can check your child's homework through the Show My Homework app. Please contact the school if you have any difficulty using this and we will be happy to help.

Senior Phase Mentor Programme

Our Senior Phase Mentor Programme has been up and running even earlier this session to enable us to support students during these difficult times. Mentors are volunteer staff members who serve as an additional point of contact for Senior Phase students. This enhanced support builds on the work of Pastoral and Year Head and provides young people with the opportunity to discuss their achievements and concerns as they make progress throughout the year and for Higher students working towards the exam diet in May. Staff offer support and advice regarding study skills, wellbeing and target setting at regular points in the school year. We have already had meetings in October and November and mentor groups will meet again before the Christmas holidays to ensure that students have a clear study timetable, are focused and coping with the demands that prelim and the assessment diet will bring. All meetings are designed to support young people to achieve their full potential across all of their subjects.





This session we have extended the mentoring programme to include input from our Employability Project Leader, Mr Cook. This programme sees a group of S4 students working closely during mentor time to prepare personal statements for college and job applications. Students have also been learning how to prepare for interviews with opportunities to put these skills into action through mock interviews.

Wider Achievement Opportunities

In keeping with the ethos of our Catholic school we see attainment in its widest context and try to ensure all our young people have the chance to gain skills for life, learning and work. As in previous years we have made a commitment to ensuring all S6 students were provided with First Aid training to ensure they gain skills which are of value and relevant to the world of work. By working in partnership with recognised workplace trainers all S6 were provided with the opportunity to gain a qualification in “Emergency First Aid at Work”. This qualification not only enhances the CVs of our young people and makes them more attractive to prospective employers but it also provides them with opportunities to show their abilities to learn in a new and very different context from the traditional curriculum. This term we have also rolled out this opportunity to students in the S5 Health Sector class as this perfectly complimented their studies as allowing them to gain a level six award.

This is the ultimate aim of all raising attainment strategies employed here at Saint Benedict’s High School – we are constantly seeking new and exciting ways for young people to develop their gifts and talents. Yes, we want our young people to achieve their academic potential but we see this as just one aspect of our mission to allow them to become the best version of themselves. By offering new courses such as the first aid course above we are providing our young people with a rich learning experience which will provide them with the best opportunity to succeed in the years ahead.





Inclusion Support Assistant –ISA

It has been a delight working with the pupils of St. Benedict's in my role as Inclusion Support Assistant or ISA as the staff call me!

My goal is to help raise the attainment in school, engage with parents/carers and work with S1-S3 to encourage positive decision making, improve attendance and provide alternatives to exclusions. I may have spoken to some of you on the phone to check on your child's absence and I feel this is a great way of getting to have a chat and hopefully find out a bit more about any worries or concerns your child has about coming to school. So, if you see the school number pop up on your phone, don't panic, it will most likely be me phoning to check all is ok!

I work very closely with the Pastoral Care Team and Home Link Service in school and they will often ask me to support pupils who are having difficulties with a variety of different issues. My work is very much focussed around resilience, respect, emotional literacy and managing emotions in a healthy way. Working on nurturing our pupils in a calm, caring and consistent manner has made a big difference to our young people and they really appreciate having someone to come and talk to when they are going through hard times.

It has been a pleasure getting to know the pupils in St. Benedict's and supporting them to achieve their potential.

Mo McNamara



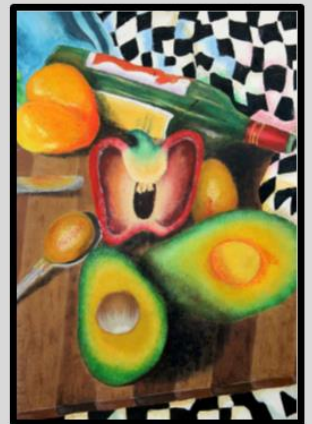
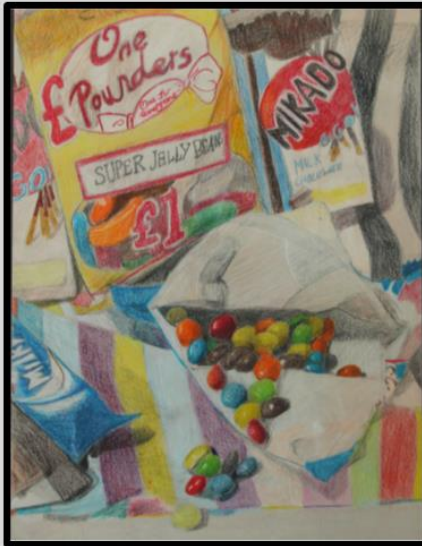


Art and Design

As ever, pupils in the Art and Design Department have produced some beautiful work. Some of the work displayed below shows great skill and attention to detail.

Well done National 5 and Higher, we look forward to seeing what amazing work you produce this year.

SQA Art Gallery

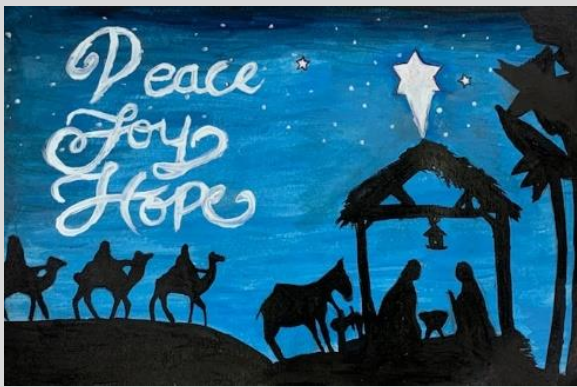



Supported Study is running again this year Tuesday to Thursday lunchtimes. Any pupil from any of the senior classes can attend these sessions. Students should look to take advantage of this extra time as these extra few hours can make a big difference in the preparation of a portfolio.

BGE Art Club will continue after the Christmas break. Pupils can get involved with some interesting pieces of work as well as have the opportunity to enter competitions. Pupils should bring their lunch and come to Miss Sweeney's room on Wednesdays.

S1 Christmas Card Competition

S1 have had the opportunity to enter our school Christmas Card Competition. They were asked to design a card which could be sent out as the official St. Benedict's High School Christmas Card 2020. Well Done Leona in 1D on your design, the quality of your submission is beautiful.




 **St Benedict's HS Art** @StBenedictsArt · 18 Sep
Beautiful drawings today by 1D. The hard work and concentration has paid off. #detail #texture #tone #hardwork #art #superstars can't wait to see what they produce next 😊 @stbenedictsren



@StBenedictsArt



 **St Benedict's HS Art** @StBenedictsArt · 3 Sep
Beautiful pen drawings by 1st year. Attention to detail is great! Well done 1A
👍 #line #art #detail #Hardwork @stbenedictsren

If you haven't already, you can follow the Art Department on Twitter @StBenedictsArt This is where we can share some of the amazing work by our talented pupils.



Finally, the Art Department would like to thank all staff, students and parents for their continued support throughout the past year and wish you a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.



Columba Base

Aye Aye, Captains!

We are delighted that two of the young men we support were chosen as whole-school captains. Daniel and James both gave fantastic interviews and will be an asset to the S6 Leadership Team. James (pictured) will be building on the leadership experience he gained last year by coming along to Departmental Meetings in his role as Columba Base reps. Big shoes to fill for our new reps but we have every faith in their abilities.



Columba Base Twitter

Our Twitter following continues to grow and we have a [Columba Calendar](#) for advent just now that has a different picture and accompanying audio clip for each of the days in the run up to Christmas.

Social Enterprise

Our Social Enterprise programme continues to go from strength to strength. Already this year, we've been featured in the Big Issue for our school magazine/breakfast club enterprise. Ethan and Lyall wrote the article and Daniel did the artwork that was then printed in the national publication, pictured. We were also hopeful that we would've reached the final of Renfrewshire Dragons' Den had it not been for the pandemic. This was related to our water-saving car washing service that we started. Both of these led to us being awarded a Social Enterprise award, presented (virtually) by John Swinney. To view our personalised 'award ceremony', follow <https://your.socialenterprise.academy/module/page/view.php?id=3089>



Out and About!

Although it's been more difficult to work in the community this year, our pupils are still achieving in various courses at various levels at West College Scotland. We also have 3 pupils working at the Maker Space at the YMCA.



"The Columba Base ... the place that gives YOU the space to be ace"

Things are so different this year during the pandemic and the usual kind of extra activities in the music dept have been put on pause! So, we thought we'd take this opportunity to ask some of our past Music and Expressive Arts Ambassadors for some input into what music at St. Benedict's offered them and tell us a bit about what they are doing now.

Hello, my name is Carla and I'm a former pupil of St. Benedict's after graduating in 2019 🙌

This year was my second year applying for drama schools, and after a bizarre audition experience which, like everything else, moved onto Zoom, I managed to get a place on the **BA Acting Course at 'The Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts.'** I made the move to the big smoke (London town!) and started this new chapter of my life in September. I am just coming up to finishing my first term on the course!

Of course, this first term has been a unique experience under current circumstances, with half the course being over zoom and half in the building, but that hasn't stopped it being such a brilliant experience! Our timetable is pretty packed, and we have different classes each day, ranging from *singing*, to *text work*, to *improv movement* to *devising*. We cover a lot of different things, which was super overwhelming at first, but I feel like I'm slowly finding my feet.

Looking back at my time at St. Benedict's, the experiences I had there have really propelled me through what has been an exciting but challenging first eleven weeks. The skills I developed through performing and helping lead the school shows have helped me get a fully rounded concept of putting on a production, which has come in really handy - especially in my devising project this term.

Even though I'm still only at the start of my 3 years of training, I feel like I came onto the course in a good place, and I owe a lot of this to the amazing times I had performing on the St. Benedict's stage. They helped my confidence grow, and so much of this was down to the belief of the Music teachers, whose encouragement and guidance I'll always be so grateful for 💖



Here's a snap of my year group on our first day at drama school!

Carla McPherson

Hello!

I'm Lara McGarry and I am a former pupil at St. Benedict's High School. I graduated in 2019 and I am now studying Music at university.

I got a place on the BA Commercial Music at the University of the West of Scotland and started there in September 2019. I then plan to do a post graduate degree in teaching. This will allow me to go down the path of Music teaching which is something I have wanted to do for many years. I have also started writing a blog called 'Take Note' all about music and I focus on music education and teaching.

I am now in my second year of the course and it has been very full on but I have loved every minute of it. I have experienced many different aspects of music but I know that without my time at St. Benedict's I wouldn't be where I am.

Throughout my time at high school I was always very involved in the Music Department; from choir and string group, to ceilidh band and school shows. I was also able to peer support in Music classes and lead the 'keyboard club' which helped me with leadership skills and how to act in a teaching environment.

Mrs Kerr and Miss Gillespie played a HUGE part in my music experience in school and I can't thank them enough for that. They inspired me every day and are the reason I want to teach Music; I want to pass on my love of music to kids just like they did for me. I am forever grateful for everything that both Mrs Kerr and Miss Gillespie did for me, they helped me grow as a person and have confidence in my own ability.

Lara McGarry



Our new First Years have settled in well. They have been learning about classroom instruments and will be moving onto performing skill and Scottish Music.



@stbensmusic





Name that Christmas Carol



Just for fun – can you name the Christmas Carol?

1. Quadruped with a crimson proboscis
2. 5pm to 6am without noise
3. Miniscule hamlet in the far east
4. Adorn the vestibule
5. Exuberance directed to the planet
6. Listen, aerial spirits harmonising
7. Monarchical trio
8. Yonder in the haystack
9. Assemble, everyone who believes
10. Hallowed post meridian
11. Fantasies of a colourless December 25th
12. A dozen 24-hour Yule periods
13. Befell during the transparent bewitching hour
14. I merely desire a pair of incisors
15. I spied my maternal parent osculating a fat man in red
16. Perambulating through a December solstice fantasy





P.E. and H.F.T.

Due to covid restrictions, a limited timetable of extracurricular sports activities has been running this year. These clubs have been well attended, improving pupil's health and wellbeing and include s1-3 lunchtime football on Mondays with Mr McGeady, Dance Club on Fridays with Miss McMillan and S1 football on Fridays with Lynsey from Active Schools.

Senior pupils including Ellie Smith, Holly David and Chloe Chambers have been volunteering to help out at the Dance Club and the team have entered Renfrewshire Active Schools Dance Competition. The team performed really well and won this competition last year!

Active Girls' Day is being planned and organised by Mr Hardie and the RSSE pupils and will run in December. The day is to encourage girls' activity in sport and will involve senior pupils leading sports lessons for BGE pupils.

Higher Dance and Higher Health and Food Technology are new courses that has been introduced to the faculty this year. Pupils are working hard in developing their knowledge and understanding in these courses and feedback from the pupils has been very positive.

The FHT department are running the Annual Rotary Competition for S1-3 pupils. Pupils in each year group will be competing against each other by cooking Christmas themed food and St. Benedict's staff will vote on the winners.





Religious Education

Mary's Meals

Inspired by the work of Mary's Meals which was detailed in the documentary 'Love Reaches Everywhere', R.E. classes undertook some fundraising activities to help fund children around the world to receive a daily meal in a place of education. Thanks to the hard work and generosity of our young people, we were able to send a cheque to the charity for around £270, which will be doubled under a UK Government scheme, meaning instead of feeding one child for £15.90 a year, we are feeding two children!



RMPS

We have our largest number of pupils ever studying Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies! So far this year pupils have deepened their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and have explored the contemporary moral issue of justice. Soon, the class will be considering different philosophical arguments for the existence of God.

Malawi Christmas Parcels

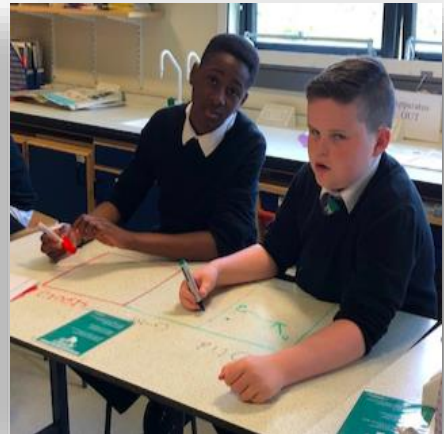
It has been a group effort to get the Malawi Christmas parcels organised, wrapped and posted to our friends in St. Patrick's Seminary. All year groups were involved in penning letters to the boys, and our Sixth Years undertook the massive logistical task of wrapping each individual parcel and getting them ready for their long journey to Malawi. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this appeal!





Science

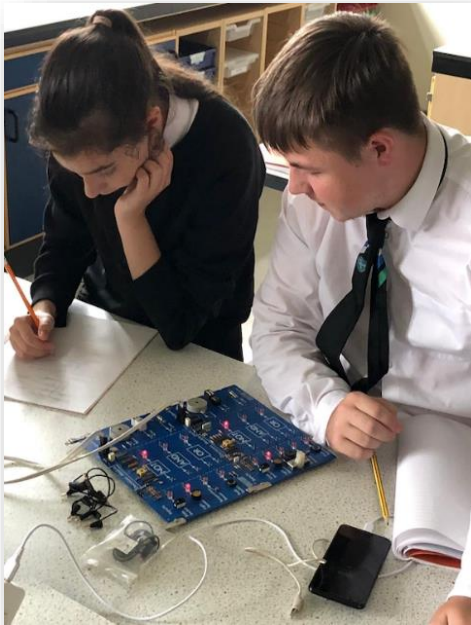
St. Benedict's new First Year pupils have been enjoying the Science Faculty's new S1 Science course this year. Pupils have been experiencing many exciting science outcomes and getting to grips with the practical aspects of the courses.



The faculty continues to celebrate the S1 and S2 Scientist of the Month, following on from our virtual Scientist of the Month during lockdown.



The Science Faculty is delighted to have over 40 senior pupils in our new National 5 Practical Electronics class, and our National 5 Health Sector classes; below is some of the examples of the excellent work they have been producing.



Scan for some interactive content.

Who does **depression** affect?

Depression can affect anyone, depression doesn't care about your background, your race, your religion or your sexuality depression doesn't discriminate if affects everyone and anyone.

The symptoms of **depression** are:

- Being very tearful
- Feeling continuously anxious
- Constantly tired / exhausted
- Sleeping badly / insomnia
- Loss of self – esteem
- Loss of motivation
- Difficulty making decisions
- Suicidal thoughts

What is **depression**?

Depression is a state of unhappiness or just feeling down. it has a lot of different symptoms it varies in each person but usually the main symptoms are you feel sad and unhappy you don't want to do anything ; you can also have very bad mood swings and also could be constantly exhausted. And a disregard for your life.

What causes **depression**?

There are several ideas about what causes depression. It can vary a lot between different people, and for some people a combination of different factors may cause their depression. Some find that they become depressed without any obvious reason.

NHS official website



Depression

Where to get **HELP**

Text support service: shout 85258.

Breathing space – 0800 838587

SAMH - 03448000550



Why you need to get **help**

Well Depression isn't something that just goes away overnight, it sticks with you all your life. it can control your life. If left untreated you can become suicidal and it can even lead you down a road of alcohol and drug abuse.

"I found that with depression, one of the most important things you can realize is that you're not alone. You're not the first to go through it, you're not going to be the last to go through it." Dwayne Johnson



Social Anxiety or Social Phobia is a very overwhelming and stressful fear of being in social situations.

This is pretty common for most shy people and can occur during teenage years

SOCIAL ANXIETY

SYMPTOMS OF SOCIAL ANXIETY

There are many symptoms for social anxiety !! These are just a few..

Always worrying about doing something you think is embarrassing like:

- 1.) blushing
- 2.) sweating
- 3.) appearing strange.

WHEN TO GET HELP

It's best to get help from a **GP** if you have social anxiety, especially if it's impact on your life is massive. It's a common problem and there are treatments that can help you.



TIPS !

- Understand more about your anxiety, write down what goes through your head each day
- Try focussing on what people are saying other than assuming the worst
- Try relaxation techniques, such as breathing exercises for stress.



The Science Faculty's brand new Advanced Higher Chemistry class has made a great start to the year, and we have been joined by some pupils from our consortium schools.



Our dedicated scientists have been attending the faculty's supported study sessions since returning from their October break.



Science Supported Study

Physics

National 5 – Tuesday
Higher – Tuesday



Biology

National 5 – Monday
Higher – Monday



Chemistry

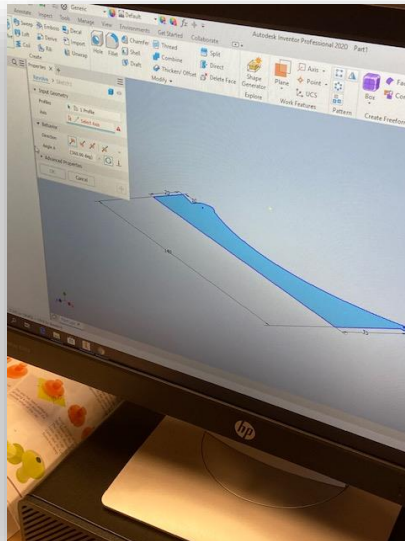
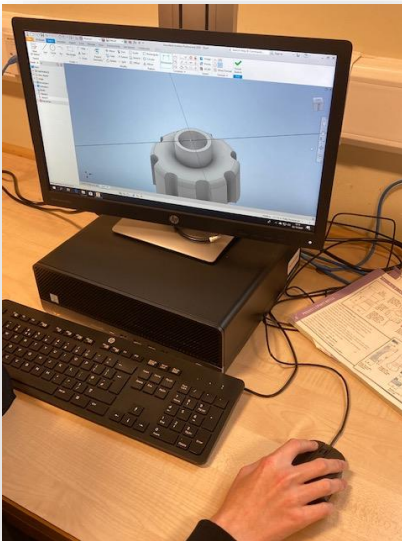
National 5 – Thursday
Higher – Thursday
A Higher – Thursday
Calculation Club – Monday lunchtime



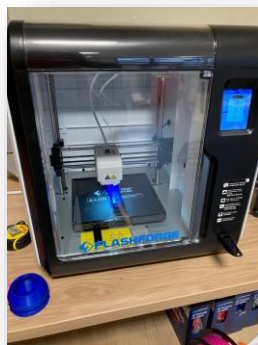


Technologies

Numeracy is a key skill used when in Technical. We were promoting Maths Week Scotland in the Technical Department when using our CAD software 'Autodesk Inventor'.



This term the Technical department invested in a DESKTOP 3D PRINTER - Flashforge Adventurer. It has many innovative features, including a removable and flexible print bed, an easy-to-change nozzle, cloud 3D print, and an integrated camera. The pupils have enjoyed exploring the possibilities for their designs.





Dates for Your Diary

Description	Date
Last day of the session	Friday 18 December 2020
Christmas and New Year break (schools closed)	Monday 21 December 2020 to Tuesday 5 January 2021 (inclusive)
Second Term	January – April 2021
Schools reopen	Wednesday 6 January 2021
February mid term break (schools closed)	Monday 8 February 2021 to Tuesday 9 February 2021 (inclusive)
In service day	Wednesday 10 February 2021
Schools reopen	Thursday 11 February 2021
Spring holiday (schools closed)	Friday 2 April 2021 to Friday 16 April 2021 (inclusive)
Third Term	April – June 2021
Schools reopen	Monday 19 April 2021
May Day (schools closed)	Monday 3 May 2021
In service day	Tuesday 4 May 2021
Schools reopen	Wednesday 05 May 2021
Local holiday (schools closed)	Monday 31 May 2021
Schools reopen	Tuesday 01 June 2021
Last day of session	Friday 25 June 2021





Feedback

We welcome any feedback on the content of the Winter Newsletter or indeed any other aspect of the work of the School. If you wish to make an electronic reply please do so through the school email address:

stbenedictshighenquiries@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Pupil's name:

Year group:

Comment:

Signature of parent/carer:

Name of parent/carer (please print):