



Government Announcements

I was dismayed to hear that the government sneaked out a decision about a change to an examination course under cover of the Brexit Letter publicity. It appears that the guidance for 'Courses to be taught from September 2016' was amended on Wednesday 29 March to remove the ICT course that many students take, despite the fact that students in Year 10 may have been studying the course for the last two terms. The course still exists but the results will not be recognised in performance tables and so schools where students take this exam will be penalised. I had hoped that we had seen an end to this gaming with our examination system, but seemingly not. If parents are as angry by this as headteachers are I would urge you to write to your MP.

We will be looking at alternative courses for our students and make a decision as soon as possible. [Please note that this applies to Core ICT lessons and not the optional courses students have chosen.]

The same week a confusing 'clarification' was issued concerning the grades for the new GCSEs. You will be aware that the new GCSEs are to be graded from 9 to 1, starting with Maths and English this summer. With the old system, a Grade C or above was often referred to as a "Good Pass". The DfE has now decided that with the new system a Grade 4 (the equivalent of a C) will be referred to as a "Standard Pass" and a Grade 5 or above as a "Strong Pass". Grades 1 to 3 will simply remain as "Pass" grades. We are told that this will make it easier to understand and avoid any confusion. However, for the so-called English Baccalaureate, a student will need to achieve a 4 in each subject, but it will only count in the performance tables for a school if they achieve a 5 in each subject. Perhaps as this is a virtual qualification that has no value to students this will not be of concern.

Education and the General Election

The surprise announcement of an election in June comes at a time when funding for education is a major concern. It is therefore likely that this time education will figure more prominently in the election and there will be much interest in what the various party manifestos say about funding for schools. The current government maintains that funding has been protected but we know that the reality is that less money is available to schools, so it will be necessary to read between the lines when details emerge.

Another issue of concern is the threat to reintroduce selective education. This was not in any party's manifesto in 2015, but this time it could be very different. Between now and the election on June 8 we will monitor progress on these issues and flag up concerns via the newsletter.

Student Generosity

I was delighted to receive letters of thanks from Cambridge Nazareth Trust for £653.88 and from Water Aid for £563.89, the latter being used to install a water point in a village to stop a one hour trek to collect fresh water. There was a third letter from North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust following a further donation to the gynaecological unit who will use the money towards a 'memory box' for patients who are going through a miscarriage. All of these are in addition to the response to the Famine Crisis Appeal which Mr Reilly writes below. This is amazingly generous of our students who continue to enthusiastically support good causes. The next opportunity to do so will be next week when Cambridge House have their Blue Day.

Sean Hayes

East Africa Famine Crisis Appeal

In East Africa there has been a 3 year drought which has meant that 16 million people are on the brink of death and starvation. In light of this disaster, the worst since 1945 we held a bucket collection every break and lunchtime to raise funds for this emergency.

Mrs Reid made a large contribution from the Year 11 Tuck Shop fund and Westminster House kindly donated all their money raised from Green Day last term.

In total we raised over £1000!

My thanks to all the students and staff who contributed to the appeal. Also to the Year 13 Religious Studies students who collected every day at break and lunchtime.

Finally to Mrs Reid, Westminster House and individual students who contributed their lunch money or even emptied their coin boxes to support this appeal.

This is a magnificent effort and demonstrates the caring and socially responsible nature of our school.

Well done everyone!

Mr Reilly

May Day Holiday

Please note that as Monday is a Bank Holiday school is closed. We resume on Tuesday at the usual time and it will be Week 1 of the timetable.

London Theatre Trip

The Year 10 GCSE Drama and Year 9 Arts Award Students had a fantastic day in London at the end of last term.

We spent the morning at *Ripley's Believe It Or Not!* and then, after lunch

at the Rainforest Café, we watched an amazing performance of *Wicked* at the Apollo Victoria Theatre.



Year 11 English and Maths Results

I wrote previously about the issue we face this year with grade predictions for the new GCSEs, and that we had taken part in a national exercise to model how students might perform in the summer. The results of this are now in and are being shared with students. They have to be very much taken with a large pinch of salt as this is only a modelling exercise, but I hope that the students find the grades more reassuring than the raw marks they achieved. It is all new territory for the teachers too but the one thing that is always true, is that there is still time to do more work and improve your result in the final exam.

Practical exams start today with Drama GCSE, and continue next week with Art GCSE, Drama A level and Business AS. Full attendance is vital from now on, and please remember that absence from exams cannot be made up later.

Maximising Progress in Geography – What Can You Do?

Homework Activities for Years 7, 8 and 9

In order to supplement work covered in Geography lessons and offer opportunities for increased independent learning, I have made available a number of homework tasks which students can access through the schools Doodle Portal. These homework tasks are a series of revision quizzes and tests based around subject content covered in lessons and have been selected to challenge students of all abilities.

- Year 7 have access to 25 activities; themed around Place Geography, Map Skills and the Weather.
- Year 8 have access to 25 activities; themed around Earthquakes and Volcanoes, Environmental Issues and Coasts.
- Year 9 have access to 37 activities; themed around Population, Development, Settlement, Rivers and Numeracy and Graphicacy in Geography.

Quizzes are best attempted as the relevant content is covered in school, and all activities are self-marked to give students instant feedback.

Although I strongly recommend students complete these online activities, and I believe it would be wonderful for parents to offer support in the completion of more difficult exercises, students should be aware that they will not replace the traditional written homework tasks which will remain to be set and assessed by their teacher, as part of the geography curricula.

Instructions on how to use Doodle (which I promise are straightforward and easy to follow), are accessible in the Geography Doodle area which students can access by entering their username and password at www.doodlelearn.co.uk/app/login
Dr Bottrill, Head of Humanities Faculty

Email Competition

The e-mail competition to win an iPad Mini closes next Wednesday 3 May at 4pm. To enter send an email to attendance@stjohnfishersschool.org.uk with your child's name and form in the email. The subject should be: Email competition. The draw will take place in the hall at lunchtime on Friday 5 May.

Football apprenticeship with Liverpool FC

In March Ged O'Sullivan in Westminster house went for a 2 day trial at Liverpool's football academy opposite Anfield. There were only 4 places available to gain a 2 year apprenticeship with Liverpool, but Ged clearly impressed with his attitude and ability as he gained a guaranteed place starting in September 2017.

He still needs to achieve good results in his GCSE's to confirm his final place, but he is working hard to do so.

Congratulations to Ged on this fantastic opportunity and experience and who knows a future Premier League Star may have started his career here at St John Fisher School.

Standards Reminder

Just a reminder at the start of term about standards across the school. We have had a few students come into school with inappropriate haircuts such as lines in hair, braided hair of different colours and hair that is not of the student's natural colour. We encourage parents to ensure that their sons and daughters are in the right uniform each day too.

The front gate is now shutting at 8.35am each day and from Monday any student arriving after this time will be given a detention for lateness.

Mr Karia

Year 11 Revision Sessions

Media: Exam revision sessions are on Saturday 6 May and Saturday 20 May, both run from 11-3pm. All students are welcome/expected.

Science: Please find below details of upcoming Year 11 revision sessions:

	w/c 1 May	w/c 8 May
Thursday P5 Mrs Udeaja	B5 Foundation	B6 Foundation
Thursday P5 Mrs Elliott	B5 Higher	B6 Higher
Tuesday P5 Mrs Drummond	C5 Foundation	C6 Foundation
Tuesday P5 Mrs Shaw	C5 Higher	C6 Higher
Weds/Thurs Lunch Mr Davis	P5 Foundation	P6 Foundation
Mon/Tues Lunch Miss Hayes	P5 Higher	P6 Higher

Walsingham Pilgrimage

An Inter Faith pilgrimage took place at Walsingham on Saturday 1 April, involving Catholics, other Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jews and those of no faith visiting both the Catholic and Anglican Shrines in Walsingham. We had parents of ex SJF staff and students attending as well.



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Academic Tutoring
Year 13
24 April – 5 May