



weekly news

Stagslink



From the Head Teacher

Congratulations to Year 11 who presented themselves so superbly yesterday afternoon in our final Celebration Assembly. My thanks go to Mr Kershaw and Mrs Choudhury for organising the day and supporting the students so admirably, to the form tutors and pastoral support colleagues and also to you as parents for your continued support, without which our students could not thrive and develop into the wonderful young ladies that we saw in front of us.

Monday sees the start of our intensive examination period and I am sure that the perseverance and focus on studies of all of our students will see superb and very well deserved results.

Parents/carers who drive into school, please drive with care and attention around the school vicinity, be cautious of pedestrians, cyclists and aware of local residents. We had another incident yesterday which involved a cyclist coming off their bike – the accident resulted in a broken wrist but could so easily have been much worse. We are in contact with councillors, local police and Highways to add traffic calming, but in this instance, it would not have prevented this accident.

Your support in this matter is very much appreciated.

Ramadan and Examinations

As you will be aware, the holy month of Ramadan is due to commence for our Muslim students from around 15th May 2018 until Eid al-Fitr, around 14th June 2018. This year, Ramadan has longer hours of daylight in Britain, and also coincides with the national public KS4 and KS5 Summer examinations.

Over the weeks leading up to the examinations, students have been receiving advice to help them cope with the pressures to which they will undoubtedly be subjected. These include revision strategies, advice on healthy eating and getting the balance between study and relaxation.

For our Muslim community, there is the additional pressure of managing the period of Ramadan. Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar and lasts between 29-30 days. It is a period of fasting, prayer, self-control, charity-giving and goodwill to others.

We are aware within our own local community of the wide range and diversity of opinions on how to observe the holy month of Ramadan and this range and diversity is reflected nationally. Whilst the period of fasting provides possible benefits such as feeling closer to God and establishing a healthier life style and better habits, there can be less desirable consequences for some people. The consequences may be tiredness, low energy, dehydration, reduced focus, memory and concentration issues.

From St Albans Girls' School's perspective, we welcome the work and advice of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) in conjunction with a number of Imams, Islamic scholars, experts and Muslim chaplains working with the educational sector published in April 2016.



11 May 2018

EVENTS NEXT WEEK

Monday 14 May

Year 7 exams begin this week

Public Exams begin

GCSE Art Moderation/
Standardisation this week

Friday 18 May

Year 12 Geography
Fieldwork trip to Swanage
returning Sunday 20 May

Year 10 reports to parents

Saturday 19 May

PTA Nearly New uniform
sale - 10.00am

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday 21 May

Public Exams continue

Tuesday 22 May

Year 12 Geography
Fieldwork—London

Wednesday 23 May

Spring House Event 4.00pm

Thursday 24 May

Year 12 Geography
Fieldwork—London

Friday 25 May

Year 13 Study Leave

Please park in the tennis
courts through the blue
gates for all evening
events

From the Head Teacher continued

Listed below are some of the comments and advice which we would request parents and students to consider in their approach to managing the demands of external examinations with those of observing Ramadan.

1. Safeguarding issues – St Albans Girls' School has an overriding safeguarding duty which applies to all students. Therefore if the School notices signs of dehydration and/or exhaustion which gives cause for concern, then the School will ask the child whether they are fasting and advise them to terminate the fast immediately by drinking some water; this action is accommodated with Islamic rulings around fasting. Additionally, the parents of the students will be contacted and advised of the School's actions.
2. For Muslims the ultimate is to seek God through knowledge, including learning how to deal effectively and knowledgably with this world. Muslim students, like all students, will want to do as well as they possibly can in their examinations (ASCL).
3. Grades attained at GCSE and A Level are critical to the further education and career prospects of young people (ASCL).
4. Students who have important exams should be advised not to spend all night praying to avoid tiredness (ASCL).
5. We would advise parents to consider the potential impact of family gatherings for evening meals on nights prior to examinations.
6. Some Muslim jurists allow students who are experiencing hardship to break their fast during Ramadan (and make up the dates later), if it affects their ability to revise and study for important examinations. The Imams, Islamic scholars, experts, chaplains and leaders we consulted thought the sitting of important examinations can be an exemption from fasting if a student fears fasting will affect his/her performance adversely (ASCL).

We would ask parents and students to give this advice careful consideration.

During the exam period, all our usual guidance and practices are in place, however, some may be of particular relevance to our Muslim students. This includes:

1. Provision of water beforehand for during exams – for those students not fasting, or those who need to break their fast due to dehydration.
2. Lunch and free school meals are still available for those wishing to take it and who are eligible; for example students may wish to take a cold lunch home.
3. Invigilators are trained to keep a close eye on students and to recognise dehydration/ drowsiness and will deal sensitively regarding advice around breaking a fast with water.
4. Our quiet reflection room is available for prayer or contemplation during lunchtime in the usual way.

At STAGS, we are an inclusive school, embracing all aspects of the diversity of the community it serves and our aim is raising the achievement of all.

If there are any further queries or you would like to discuss further any aspects of this letter and advice, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Important/useful reference documents:

[NHS, Healthy Ramadan <http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/healthylamadan/Pages/healthylamadhanhome.aspx>](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/healthylamadan/Pages/healthylamadhanhome.aspx)

ASCL, Ramadan and Exams, 2016: information for schools and colleges

<http://www.ascl.org.uk/download.E0E2BFF2-0DF2-4DF2-B89F7F4A4DF11D3B.htm>

With all good wishes

Margaret Chapman

Word of the Week



Every week we promote the use of an unusual word across the school.

This week's word is:

Numinous

Definition

Having a strong religious or spiritual quality; Indicating or suggesting the presence of a divinity

English Department

Try to use it as much as possible this week!



Year 11 students Inspire Year 8 Readers to Escape to Another world



Every Monday lunchtime at STAGS, Year 8 students enjoy reading together in the Library with a volunteer Year 11 mentor. The aim of the club is to encourage students to study characters in a book and to pause and discuss word meanings. In addition, Year 11 mentors help students to look forward into the future and begin to anticipate and predict possible future events that may happen in the story.

Year 8 student Minhhah Naveed said 'I like reading with my mentor because I feel when we are reading a book together it is like entering into another world!'

Year 11 student Hafsa Zafar who is a volunteer mentor for Minhhah said 'I find being a mentor is a very rewarding experience. To be able to successfully encourage and follow the progress of those who don't read regularly, get to a point where they enjoy it is very satisfying. This volunteer project also helps me to fulfil a valuable requirement of my current Duke of Edinburgh award.'

STAGS Library also has a Year 7 Reading Club which runs on Wednesday and Friday each week. These successful clubs, increase literacy levels and boost the reading confidence of students. Well done to all Year 11 mentors – keep up the good work!

Sustainability Theme Inspires Next Generation of Photographers In Local Competition



On Sunday 29 April, the Mayor of St Albans Councillor Mohammad Iqbal Zia proudly presented prizes to the winners of the Living in St Albans photography competition at the successful 'Know how' sustainability festival held at Fleetville Junior School on Hatfield Road. Local school children under 18 were asked to compose an inspiring photographic image to reflect what living sustainably in St Albans meant to them along with a short description (25 words max) explaining their work. This was open to anyone at Infant, Junior or Secondary School and prizes included £100 for the winner of each age category. There were also prizes for the best combined entry (e.g. a photo montage) from a school, year, class, or youth group.

Caroline Wilkins, Competition Organiser said "We were impressed by the incredible response to the competition. There were over 100 entries and they illustrated a very wide variety of themes on the subject of sustainability." The difficult task of deciding the winning entrants fell to the

expert eyes of the judging panel of Danny Loo, photographer for the Herts Advertiser, Emma Collins, a local lifestyle documentary photographer, and Sandy Adams from Plastic Free St Albans. They focused hard on every entry, searching for quality images that showed evidence of artistic skill and original inspiring ideas. In the secondary school under 18 age band of the competition, Daniela Trhacova from Oaklands College won first prize and received £100, in 2nd place STAGS Year 7 student Nixie Kibbey was awarded £50 and 3rd came Sandringham school student Holly Cutler who received a cheque for £25. Nixie said 'I am very excited and happy to have won and I plan to save my prize money'.

Finalists and shortlisted photos will now be displayed during Sustainable St Albans Week on the children's display board in Harpenden library until Saturday 5th May and in the Courtyard Cafe, Hatfield Road, St Albans. At the conclusion of the week, 'Living St Albans Photography Exhibition' will be on show at Verulamium Museum from Monday 30 April to Sunday 3 June.

PTA Nearly New Uniform Sale 19th May, 10.00am — 11.30am STAGS Restaurant



GCSE Mathematics Saturday morning revision

Our GCSE Mathematics workshops are designed to cater for your child's individual needs in an engaging, focused and active learning environment.

Experts in Mathematics provide additional tuition with a sole aim – to support your child in earning Grade 4 or 5 across the three exam papers.

£45.00
per workshop*
£100.00
for all three



There are three workshops,
on the Saturdays before each of the three papers:

Sat 19th May **Sat 2nd June** **Sat 9th June**
9.30 to 12.00, Samuel Ryder Academy, St Albans

These revision workshops will:

- be delivered by subject experts, one of whom is a senior GCSE examiner
- cover content from Foundation and Higher Tier, but aiming at Grades 4 and 5
 - include a range of activities and exam-style questions
 - enable your child to feel 'exam-ready'

In addition, your child will be given

- targeted revision resources (*included in price of sessions) to take away to support their independent study

To book places, please e-mail: training@hertsforlearning.co.uk

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