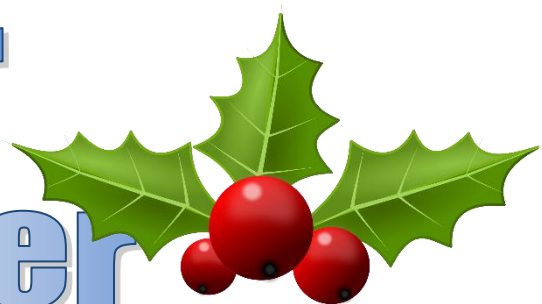




# Balfour Newsletter



## Christmas 2020

**Dear Parents, Carers, Students, Grandparents and all other members of our Community**

I hope, as ever, that this newsletter finds you all safe and well. Parents, your children have done you proud this term. I never grow tired of saying how proud I am of them all, but this term has shown them to be truly wonderful members of the community. They have followed all the rules we put in place to keep them safe, they have worked hard for their teachers in class and they have continued to live up to our school values. I have seen so much kindness this term, that I feel absolutely privileged to be part of this school. Just today, we have raised more than £700 for Sir Graham Balfour School, Cambodia in response to our 'Put the sparkle back into 2020' non-uniform day. On top of that is the outstanding response we have had to putting together food hampers for the House of Bread. So generous have families been that Miss Marshall could not get into her office, for the huge piles of food which you have so kindly contributed. Thank you all so much. I know that your donations will be well received within Stafford's community.

Before you read the rest of this newsletter, I want to draw your attention to the key message I sent you in my update last week:

**If your child tests positive for Covid up until 24<sup>th</sup> December....**

In line with Government instruction we received on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December, **we will be contactable until the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, if your child tests positive for Covid-19:**

So, if your child tests positive for Covid-19 in the days immediately following the end of term, please email us at: [office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk) with the following details:

1. Your child's full name and Form Group
2. Your name and contact number
3. The date their symptoms commenced (if they had any)
4. The date of the confirmed positive test

Please **do not** phone the school after the 18<sup>th</sup> December until the 4<sup>th</sup> January as there will be no-one in school to check the answerphone.

We will check this email inbox **at 11am each day**, up to and including the 24<sup>th</sup> December, after which positive cases will be dealt with via the NHS Test and Trace Service.

Where we are made aware of a positive case, our Covid response procedures will kick into place. If your child is identified as a close contact of an infected child, **we will contact you via text and email**, advising

your child to self-isolate for the requisite number of days. Please do follow this guidance in line with the instructions under which we must all live at present.

Clearly we recognise that if we contact you, the news is likely to be unwelcome, but it is our responsibility to do as the Government requests in these circumstances in order to keep everyone safe and reduce the transmission of the virus.

If your child goes on to test positive at any other point during the holiday, or has to self-isolate due to someone in the family testing positive, you will not need to email us until Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January, when we will next check the [office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:office@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk) inbox. At that point, please let us know the date their self-isolation will end. If well enough to work, they will be able to access work from school.

**And finally,...**

At the end of a year which has certainly been the most challenging of my professional career, I want to thank every one of you for your support of the school and the ways in which we have navigated a pathway to now. Like you, I hope that the prospect of a vaccine will enable us to look forward to safer times next year, when we can, without fear, meet up with our families and friends. I wish you all a peaceful, merry Christmas and a healthy, happy New Year.

Lesley Beck 😊

Exhausted but very proud Headteacher of Sir Graham Balfour School

# A note from Mrs Gannon...

As part of my role as School and Community Liaison, I have the enjoyable task of producing the termly Balfour News which showcases the work and successes of our students, along with giving an insight of enrichment activities that take place in school, alongside our Teaching and Learning.

This year, obviously, has been very different, but having returned to school in September our students have adapted amazingly to change and despite not being able to undertake all of the usual community activities we would normally undertake this term, have still shown extreme maturity and kindness, care and compassion to others during these very unusual times.

So, despite not being able to visit our wider community this term, our students have still been very busy in school celebrating the festive season and adapting to a new way of learning. Let me begin...

## Remembrance Day

For Remembrance Day on 11<sup>th</sup> November the students of Sir Graham Balfour paid tribute to those who fought for our country by creating their own House Group displays and wreaths and respecting the 2 minute silence.

It was lovely to see the amazing effort from the students and the numerous displays around the school.



# Fundraising

## Children in Need and Katharine House Hospice - Non Uniform Day

Our annual fundraiser for Children in Need and Katharine House Hospice took place on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November. Students were asked to wear non-uniform for a £1.00 donation.

In total, we raised £914.54 which will be shared between this very worthy charity and our own sister school in Camdodia.



# Christmas 2020



Thank you to Amelia and Eve (Year 8) who volunteered to decorate our Reception Christmas Tree this year. Thank you girls, it looks lovely.

## St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival

The St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival this year has gone virtual. It is a shame so many people will miss their annual visit to the festival but instead organisations have been asked to send in a photograph of their decorated tree

which will be shared on St Mary's Church social media channels. <https://youtu.be/cqYvTEpEVuQ>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1012872415789460>



This is our contribution to the festival this year:



### The SGB Christmas Challenge ... *putting some sparkle back into 2020!*

2020 has been a very challenging year for everyone, as we fast approach 2021 we decided to set our staff and students a Christmas Challenge to put some sparkle back into 2020 and finish the year on a positive note!

Our SGB Christmas Challenge involves doing what we do best... supporting our local community with acts of kindness, which ties in with our School Values: 'Respect, kindness and compassion for ourselves and others' and 'Care for the local and wider community'. Here are some of the challenges...

#### Challenge 1

Hamper for a Home

(In support of House of Bread)



From Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December each house group was asked to produce a food hamper as a donation to The House of Bread. They needed to source/decorate a box on a Christmas theme and then students and staff were asked to donate at least one item of non-perishable food, for example; pasta, chocolate, a tin of beans/peas, shampoo/soap etc. The plan was to have 35 hampers ready for collection by Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December. The response has been amazing.





Will from House of Bread collecting our very generous donations.





## Challenge 2

### **The House Group Christmas Bauble Challenge (Supporting each other in our school community)**

During the month of December, we asked every student and staff member in the school to write on and decorate 2 cardboard baubles.

One to reflect on 2020 and try to look at positives within themselves, their resilience during the past year or think of something they did well or helped other people during these uncertain times.

The second bauble was to think of something positive for 2021, something they are looking forward to doing in the New Year, that might not have been possible in 2020. Perhaps having friends round for a sleepover, or a new year's resolution. To think happy thoughts, something that makes them smile.

We asked all house groups to display these in their rooms in a design of their choice.





### Challenge 3

#### Putting Some Sparkle Back Into 2020

Firstly, we asked to see some sparkle added to everyone's house groups rooms to welcome in Christmas 2020! Bring on the tinsel and maybe some baubles to make a festive display.

To bring the term to an end we decided to hold a non-uniform day in aid of Sir Graham Balfour, Cambodia on Thursday 17th December, which raised over £700. The theme was 'Christmas Sparkle'. So, we asked everyone to bring on the sequins, put on their fabulous Christmas jumpers or maybe a Santa hat. We wanted to see lots of bling in aid of this very worthy cause.



Some of our Year 7 bubble students showcasing their Christmas jumpers on non-uniform day.



# Celebrating Success

Our programme of celebrating the success of our students continues, albeit not with our usual gatherings. Numerous certificates have been awarded throughout lockdown to reward students for their hard work. The introduction of The House point Achievement Awards, give students the opportunity to gain awards for Bronze (50 Hps), Silver (75 Hps), Gold (100 Hps), Platinum (150 Hps) and then Ruby, Emerald and Diamond, with a text message being sent home to parents and a certificate to keep.

There has also been a KS3 School Values Challenge and the introduction of The Scholars Award last year has resulted in some fantastic pieces of work being completed by our students. We continue to be optimistic that in the future, we will return to our programme of Celebration Assemblies and Celebration Evenings so students can showcase their achievements in front of friends and family.

## 100% Attendance and No BCs reward

As a reward for any students who have no time off school since the start of September (Covid related is not counted as an absence) and also have received no BC's, Heads of Year treated the students to donuts and hot chocolate. Students met in their outdoor bubble areas to receive their termly treat.



# The Balfour Scholars' Award 2020

The Balfour Scholars' Award was launched in September 2019. The aim of the award is to encourage students to undertake additional, optional, educational tasks in their own time to strengthen their love for various subjects. The award ran from October to June and in the end, fifty students from Sir Graham Balfour had completed the award.

When it was first launched the idea was for students to complete four optional tasks across the school year to gain the award. However, due to the commitment and dedication shown by students throughout our period of lockdown the award was adapted and extended. All of the tasks carried out were in addition to their set school work.

The following levels of award were introduced; five completed tasks would secure a bronze level award, ten tasks a silver award, fifteen tasks a gold award and twenty tasks would gain a student the platinum award. By the beginning of June, an amazing nineteen students had completed additional 20 tasks over the school year and therefore gained the platinum award. Two of our students gained the gold award, seven achieved the silver award and twenty-two, the bronze award. The effort put in by these students was exceptional and all were invited to receive their certificates from Mrs Beck earlier in the term.

There is no doubt that the best universities in the country give their places to students who are truly passionate about learning and these students are well on their way to success!

The Balfour Scholars' Award 2021 is up and running and some students already have three tasks under their belt!

All of the tasks can be found on Office 365 on the school website under the Balfour Scholars' Award tab on the left and then in the specific year group folder.

Sam M – Year 9  
collecting his award





# Department News

## Food Technology – Mrs Hales

I am pleased to say it has been lovely to smell the aroma of cooking again in school. Despite not being able to accommodate all academic years in our Food Technology room due to the coronavirus, our Year 10 and Year 11 GCSE students have been able to undertake some practical lessons over the last few weeks. Food Technology is one of the GCSEs that relies heavily on practical assessment and with social distancing in place, students have been very fortunate to be able to continue with some fabulous creations.



Year 10 – Goats Cheese and Vegetable Plait  
& Phoebe R

## Year 10 – Christmas Chocolate Yule Logs



### English Department – Mrs Giles

Mrs Giles has asked for the below reading link to be included in this addition of the Balfour News, so if you would like to discover '7 books you'll love this Winter – and one you'll love next Spring', please 'control and click' below:

[https://www.worldreader.org/now/7-books-youll-love-this-winter-and-one-youll-love-next-spring/?keyword=winter%20book%20list&gclid=EAlaIQobChMI5pSZvMGx7QIVCOvtCh2EGQOnEAAYAiAAEgKmUPD\\_BwE](https://www.worldreader.org/now/7-books-youll-love-this-winter-and-one-youll-love-next-spring/?keyword=winter%20book%20list&gclid=EAlaIQobChMI5pSZvMGx7QIVCOvtCh2EGQOnEAAYAiAAEgKmUPD_BwE)





## Katharine House Hospice – Christmas Tree Collection

We have been asked by Katharine House Hospice to promote their Christmas Tree Collection Campaign. Please book your collection online at [www.charityxmastreecollection.com](http://www.charityxmastreecollection.com)

# DON'T Let your real Christmas tree GIVE YOU THE NEEDLE



**For a small donation  
we will take it away  
for you and help  
to fund free care**

We are collecting week commencing  
11th January in postcodes:

**ST14, ST15, ST16, ST17, ST18  
ST19, ST20, ST21, WS11, WS12, WS15**

Your collection day will be confirmed nearer to the time

Book Now before 5th January at:  
**[www.charityxmastreecollection.com](http://www.charityxmastreecollection.com)**

**JUSTHELPING**  
Registered Charity No. 104980

katharine  
house  
hospice

embracing life and living  
together we can continue to care

**SAVE  
YOUR  
HOSPICE**

**Say goodbye to your  
Christmas tree and...**

# SAVE YOUR HOSPICE



Our care is in crisis due to Covid 19.  
By making a donation to recycle your tree  
you will be directly supporting the £1m  
**Katharine House Hospice Emergency Appeal**

Please visit the tree collection website to donate  
and have your tree collected and recycled.

**[www.charityxmastreecollection.com](http://www.charityxmastreecollection.com)**

in partnership with **VEOLIA**

**After costs, 90% of monies raised will go directly  
to the hospice - 10% to another local charity**

**Have a fabulous Christmas break  
and we look forward to  
welcoming students back in  
school on  
Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021!**

