



## JUNE 2020 NEWSLETTER



Thank you to everyone who took part in our #ThankYouNHS video. If you haven't already seen it, take a look at our youtube channel [youtube.com/c/stmartinsschooltv](https://www.youtube.com/c/stmartinsschooltv)

# THANK YOU NHS



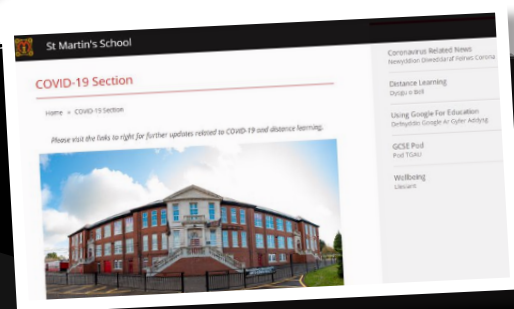
Thank you to Mrs Jones (and family) for making 50 laundry bags that we will pass onto NHS / Key Workers. (Mrs Davies)



Over 1000 visors made - amazing work by Mr Brookman. #NHSheroes #keyworkers

## Communications Reminder

Since the school closure we have made sure we have strengthened the forms of communication that we have in place as well as introducing new ways to communicate with you.



### Website:

[stmartins.caerphilly.sch.uk](https://stmartins.caerphilly.sch.uk)

Our school website has an ongoing COVID-19 section which includes news, distance learning documents that support families with resources and google classroom codes and also wellbeing.



### Twitter:

[@StMartinsInfo](https://twitter.com/StMartinsInfo)

Our twitter account has been a hub of information, more than ever. We enjoy seeing your pictures and videos of home activities that are taking place as well as sharing important information that we feel is crucial to you during this difficult time.



### Youtube:

[bit.ly/startinsschooltv](https://bit.ly/startinsschooltv)

This year we introduced our very own youtube channel. The current circumstances have meant the use of our channel has rapidly increased to allow us to share fitness videos from the Health and Wellbeing Faculty, baking tutorials from Mrs Shopland, weekly assemblies, A Level ICT tutorials and Spanish lessons with Mr Lopez.



### Radio:

[bit.ly/stmartinsradio](https://bit.ly/stmartinsradio) & Podcasts: [anchor.fm/stmartinsschoolpodcast](https://anchor.fm/stmartinsschoolpodcast)

Mr Lopez recently relaunched the school radio station. His weekly shows air every Tuesday from 9am and can be listened to after the show on our anchor podcast channel.



## Staff Professional Learning

It's not just our students who have rapidly adjusted to the significant way in which they learn, staff have too! As you can imagine, we have transformed the way in which we work for two main reasons.

1. To develop staff's skill sets so that everyone is able to use technology sufficiently to carry out their roles remotely
2. To continue to operate school as normal as possible (virtually), which includes continuing with our staff professional development programme.

Here are just some of the ways that we have strived to meet these two objectives above:

### Twitter

As you know our Twitter platform is a key tool for us to cascade information to our community, but now we are currently working from home we have created a staff professional learning account for us to share ideas, resources and much more. There is a wealth of information on twitter for educators and tapping into that network is already proving to be invaluable to us. Many staff are sharing online courses that they have completed and recommending them to others to complete too!

### Professional Learning Hub

After researching how schools across the world have responded to distance learning for both students and staff, we have developed a staff online hub website which includes training resources, recorded meetings for later viewing, online courses for staff to complete, a library of research books to explore and so much more!

### Professional Learning Activity

It's not just our students who have been set a home learning task - our school staff have too. We have put in place a professional learning activity that informally allows staff to explore one tool or feature to enhance the home learning of their students. Staff are exploring a range of ideas from flipgrid to loom videos. Staff will then review the impact and share their findings with other colleagues so we are able to learn from one another.

### Podcasts

When we first closed and were in the early stages of lock down, we decided to record our very first podcast that allowed staff, pupils and parents to have an open and honest discussion around distance learning. This conversational podcast was then shared online for our school community to listen to and reflect on our thoughts. We hope to record more podcasts in the very near future for professional learning purposes, where we would like to interview educators from across the world or educational authors. To hear our first podcast (and catch up with recorded radio station episodes) please visit [anchor.fm/stmartinsschoolpodcast](https://anchor.fm/stmartinsschoolpodcast)

### Training sessions

To support the development of online learning, staff training sessions 'Tea and Tech' have taken place every Tuesday and Thursday since lock down and have focused on a different element of online learning each time. Staff make themselves a cuppa, log into google hangouts meet and watch a 10 to 15 minute demonstration on the chosen topic whilst having the opportunity to see examples and answer questions. Videos are then recorded and posted on the staff learning hub website for any one who wants to rewatch or catch up. It has also been our goal as a school to pursue all scheduled meetings as normal along with our weekly teach meets, despite school being closed. Mrs Avery recently shared with staff research around formative assessment and asked for all faculties to reflect and discuss in their next meeting what this may look like whilst distance learning and when we return to our 'new normal'.



## FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT

Refurbished drama facility completed awaiting the arrival of our drama and English teacher in September.

Looking forward to the impact of her expertise in musical theatre upon our future performers. New flooring fully replastered and rewired!





ENTERPRISE  
CHALLENGE



29/06/20

Year 7

Entries must include:

## Enterprise Challenge

We are excited to announce Year 7 Enterprise Challenge whereby students are encouraged to invent something unique with specific purpose. Students will need to create the item, develop a spreadsheet of profit and loss and record a pitch. The entries will be judged virtually by some local entrepreneurs and winners will be announced on twitter 3rd July.

## The Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award, known as iDEA, challenge our Year 9 WBQ pupils

The Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award, known as iDEA is an international programme that helps participants develop their digital, enterprise and employability skills. The added bonus being that our pupils would also be able to play and learn with iDEA digital badges for free! Through their series of online challenges, our Year 9's have been busy attaining career-enhancing badges, unlocking new opportunities and, ultimately, gaining industry recognised Awards that may just help them stand out from the crowd!

Aside from attaining Badges - interactive online modules varying in both length and difficulty, our pupils have also been challenged to attain the Bronze and Silver Awards which are the digital and enterprise equivalent of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award! Bronze is beginner and Silver is intermediate.... and in the space of just a few weeks we have already seen these being successfully achieved by many of our pupils, and copies of their progress and certificates have been received in abundance! Absolutely phenomenal and a true testament to their perseverance; resilience and pure dedication. Well done, Year 9! I for one am truly proud of you all!.. We are all now eagerly awaiting the release of the Gold Advanced Award! Bring it on!

## MADISON JONES GETS CREATIVE IN THE BAT Design-a-Stamp National Competition

2020 marks 200 years since the discovery of the Antarctic continent. To celebrate, The British Antarctic Territory (BAT) ran a competition for children aged 4 - 17 years old to design an official postage stamp with the design theme being "Discovering Antarctica".



Did you know, HM The Queen approves all stamp designs for BAT ahead of them being issued?

Four lucky national winners would have their very own drawings featured on official stamps!!! In addition to this, The prize-winners were advised that they would have their design featured in the "Discovering Antarctica" issue of stamps for the British Antarctic Territory, and each winner would also be presented with a framed copy of the First Day Cover (featuring all of the winning stamps) together with two unframed First Day Covers and a certificate from the Commissioner of the British Antarctic Territory! Winners and runners up would also have their designs put on display. Inspired by this challenge, our very own Madison Jones entered the age category 10-13 years with a very creative design indeed!

The closing date was 12 May so we are keeping everything crossed for Madison!

If anyone else is inspired to take on some authentic learning challenges, check out our google classrooms full to the brim of both fun, educational and entrepreneurial opportunities. KS3 challenges can be found using class code hxqir32; while KS4 and 5 can participate using class code bmyufmg. Apply your skills or learn new ones! Just get involved and have fun!

St. Martin's School  
@StMartinsInfo

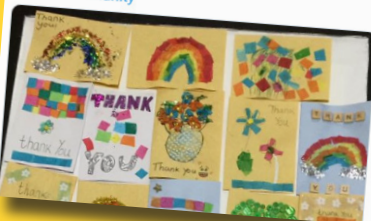
Following #EarthDay2020 🌍, we checked on our own amazing 🐝 and gave them all a refreshing glucose solution to pick them up after the cold winter! Everyone and everything needs a little help from time to time! Ms Joyce 🐝❤️



Hafod Care  
@HafodCare

Incredible scenes at our Tŷ Penrhos Care Home in #Caerphilly as letters and cards from @Plasfelin, @HendreJnrNews, @StMartinsInfo and the public have arrived for our residents! Letters like this do make a big difference so we can't thank you enough.

#care #community







## GCSE POD



A brand new app has been launched at St Martin's to support students from Year 7 to 11 with distance learning. Access the platform here [www.gcsepod.com](http://www.gcsepod.com). For more information including how to sign up, please visit our school website.

There are parent webinars available here: [gcsepod.com/news-gcse-learning-revision/podup-presents-webinars/](http://gcsepod.com/news-gcse-learning-revision/podup-presents-webinars/)



## JUST LAUNCHED

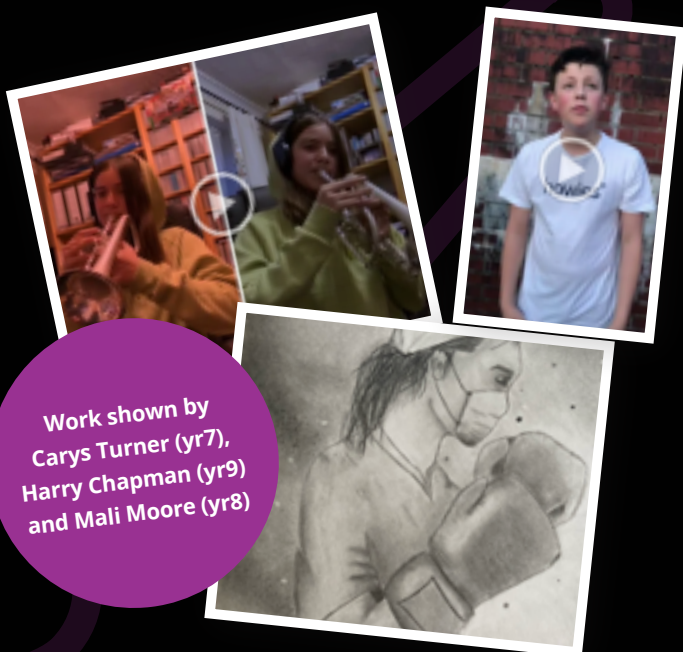
An exciting new e-learning platform



## Expressive Arts



Pupils have been getting creative for the expressive arts during the lockdown with performances recorded at home, creating works of art to celebrate our NHS heroes and producing monologues based on famous texts. Each week pupils have been set a task on a given theme such as nature, being a teenager, survival and responsibility. We have been so impressed with the incredible work our pupils have produced in these challenging circumstances. Below is just a snapshot of some of the work going on.



Work shown by  
Carys Turner (yr7),  
Harry Chapman (yr9)  
and Mali Moore (yr8)

## St Martin's Radio Station

During the lockdown period we at St. Martin's School have utilised this time to up skill both students and staff and have recently launched our brand new online radio station. We are currently three episodes in and have addressed many important issues for our school community. We have used this as one such method to maintain communication with pupils and parents. One of our recent episodes focused on the health and wellbeing of staff, students and parents, speaking with special guest Dr Brian O'Ceallaigh, from St. David's Hospital, Cardiff.

On Wednesday, our school radio, which included two year 8 pupils, Daisy and Meghan, had the opportunity of pre-recording an interview with the Welsh Education Minister, Kirsty Williams. She spoke with the team for 30 minutes via video call discussing the current pandemic, the new curriculum for Wales, home schooling and much more.

It was a fantastic opportunity for our pupils to be able to undertake 'authentic learning' and conduct a live interview and assume the role of real-life reporters. We are optimistic about the future of our budding stars.

The broadcast aired on 12th May but the episode is available to hear here: [anchor.fm/stmartinsschoolpodcast](http://anchor.fm/stmartinsschoolpodcast).

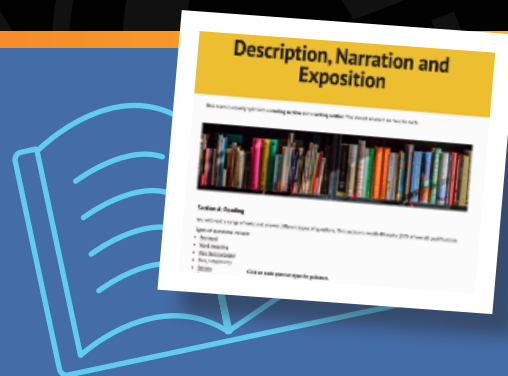




## GCSE English Website

As we are living through unprecedented times, teachers have had to adapt to a new approach to teaching and learning. As a result, the English Department has launched its own website, tailored to support students with their GCSE English revision while we are away from our classrooms. This will also pave the way for a more technological approach to teaching in the current digital age when we eventually return to normality. The website covers content from WJEC GCSE English Language and Literature.

You can view the website using the link [bit.ly/stmartinsgcseenglish](https://bit.ly/stmartinsgcseenglish)



## Eton X Course

Students in Years 11 and 12 are lucky enough to have been offered access to an online course developing their interview skills. The course was created by Eton X, a British education technology company of the prestigious Eton College. Access usually comes at a cost, but St. Martin's School was successful in their application for free enrollment. The course takes place over a number of weeks and graduates will receive a certificate and signed transcript upon completion. Its content is broken down into different units such as answering common questions; body language and pitching yourself. There's still time for Year 11 and 12 students to enrol in this incredible opportunity.

## LET READING BE YOUR ESCAPE...

**We are all living through a period in history that will be remembered for many things, one of which being the way Welsh citizens helped save lives by staying home.**

For many of us, this is a chance to embark up on DIY or craft projects. For others, baking has become a regular occurrence. Some have enjoyed catching up on Netflix or playing on FIFA. Yet, at some point during our 'lockdown' experience, the feeling of claustrophobia (or something like it) will creep up on us. How can we move beyond the confines of our homes safely? Books. Books can take us anywhere. As Dr Seuss said, "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

So, which books are entertaining the English team at the moment? Mrs Jones is working her way through Phillip Pullman's Sally Lockhart Mysteries. Choosing classics, Miss Hill has finished Emma by Jane Austen and is moving onto Little Women by Louisa May Alcott. Mrs Avery is reading the highly-anticipated follow-up to The Handmaid's Tale, The Testaments by Margaret Atwood. Mrs Henry has finished The Help by Kathryn Stockett and is now reading The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd. Miss Gooding is enjoying George Orwell's political allegory, Animal Farm. Miss Banks took ages to read The Terror by Dan Simmons and is now loving Lovecraft Country by Matt Ruff (and eagerly waiting for the TV series to start!). Miss Persaud is reading The Devil's Star by Jo Nesbo. Also, she's rereading the Harry Potter series...in French! C'est impressionnant!

Mrs Manson is reading Kate Morton's The Clockmaker's Daughter. Mrs Richards is rereading Bill Bryson's Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid alongside The Testaments...that's quite a difference in texts!

If you would like to browse books to read from home, try Caerphilly Library: If you are a current member of the library service, you will need your library card and/or your library PIN number to access these services. However if you are not currently a member and wish to enquire about how you can access eBooks, eAudiobooks and other online library resources, contact [libadmin@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:libadmin@caerphilly.gov.uk). Additionally, <https://manybooks.net/> has thousands of classics for free.

Moreover, the Literacy Trust has published The Book of Hopes: Words and Pictures to Comfort, Inspire and Entertain Children in Lockdown. Edited by award-winning children's author, Katherine Rundell, it's completely free for all children and families. The extraordinary collection of short stories, poems, essays and pictures has contributions from more than 110 children's writers and illustrators, including Lauren Child, Anthony Horowitz, Greg James and Chris Smith, Michael Morpurgo, Liz Pichon, Axel Scheffler, Francesca Simon, Jacqueline Wilson – and Katherine herself.

Finally, Hay Festival's school programme is online for all to view here. What is usually a fantastic experience reserved for ticket holders is now available to all... virtually. Happy reading!



## YEAR 10

Being able to lead and speak to a whole year group on a regular basis is a real privilege. Not being in school has made this slightly more challenging but sending out regular letters and being able to present Head of Learning led assemblies has meant that I am able to stay in contact with the year group and hopefully keep the community feeling that we have fostered across the school.

Year 10 pupils will have a huge challenge in front of them when we return to school and we will do everything we can to minimise the disruption as they continue to prepare for their GCSEs.

It has been a pleasure to see how Year 10 pupils are engaging in their online work and continuing to have a positive impact on our school community. Patrick Farmer, Seren Fletcher, Carla Smith and Holly Brown have all been heavily praised by Miss Gibbard for their History work and responses to teacher feedback. Phoebe Evans and Oliver Skinner are impressing with their Geography work and completing all tasks being set for them to a very high standard.

Miss Banks forwarded me a piece of work from Kielyn Turner who had written an outstanding response to an A level style question, over a year before needing to do this formally. I can only name a few here however there are many many more positive comments being sent to me from teachers across the school. It is a credit to pupils in year 10 that so many of them are willing to push themselves to complete work to such high standards during these difficult times.

Alongside the academic work being completed, Year 10 pupils are contributing to the extracurricular aspects of our school community. Mair Stiling, Carys- lily Chard, Amy Ulett- Proctor and Rebecca Holley have all taken part in radio shows discussing how they are dealing with not being in school and how their lives have changed. I am sure that lots of our pupils have similar concerns so hearing their peers speak so openly will have positive impacts on everyone's physical and mental health, and overall well-being.

## CELEBRATING 75 YEARS SINCE VICTORY IN EUROPE!

BY MISS WALTERS

On Friday 8th May 2020, thousands of people across the country celebrated 75 years since the official end of World War Two. Despite the horrors and casualties of war, people were determined to make the most of this huge victory. The end of the war saw people out in the streets hosting parties, dancing and celebrating the huge triumph achieved by the Allied forces. However, the 75th anniversary in 2020 saw a very different scene to the one pictured below in 1945. Many people celebrated (socially distanced, of course!) by hanging the Union Jack in their windows, decorating their streets and gardens, and making the most of the day with their families in the sunshine.

Ms Gibbard recorded a special edition of the St Martin's School Radio show to talk about the stories of her grandad through the war, and also featured the stories of pupils' family members who fought and lived to tell their tales. If you missed the episode, you can find it using the link below and enjoy the re-told stories of our heroes:

<https://anchor.fm/stmartinsschoolpodcast/episodes/St-Martins-Radio---VE-Day-Special-edpcvu>

It is so important for us to reflect on and remember the sacrifices made by people in the past. We can very easily forget that millions of British people had to ration their food until 1954 (9 years after WW2 ended!) so that there was enough to go around for everyone. It is easy to forget that over 67,000 British civilians lost their lives and thousands, maybe even millions more, lost their homes, jobs and livelihoods because of the destruction. It is staggering to think that over 382,000 British military troops lost their lives to defend us and our country.

People in the future will be remembering this strange period we are currently living through, and the sacrifices we are making to protect others. Let's not forget about the millions who have come before us, and also made sacrifices for the very same reasons.



AN IMAGE FROM A 1945  
VE DAY STREET PARTY





## Science

### Learning about Acids and Alkalis

Just before we left school, 7S were learning about acids and alkalis. They were set a project to create their own model pH Scale. Unfortunately, the class never had the opportunity to bring in their pH scale models but did complete them at home and they sent in some lovely photos. The pupils definitely thought outside of the box when creating their models.



Very  
creative, da  
iawn 7S!

## Bake Off Challenge

Such a fantastic competition! 59 pupils and staff took part in an 8 week bake off. They were challenged to make pizzas, bread, pastry, biscuits, use up leftovers and the traditional afternoon tea! So many delicious looking entries! Well done to everyone who baked !

Our winners  
were Mrs  
Manson and Isabel  
Rees year 8!



## VE day DT

Well done to year 7 and 8 who produced some fantastic Design Technology VE Day activities. Such bright and attractive posters and bunting with mouthwatering war time treats created.



Who knew  
you could  
make scones  
from potatoes?

## Maths department

The maths department would like to wish all of our year 11 and 13 students who should have been sitting exams this term the very best for the future. We look forward to seeing those of you returning to school in September. Well done to all of those students who have just completed the whole of their maths A level at the end of year 12, these students have worked particularly hard a phenomenal achievement. We hope that all students are engaging with the work being set by your teachers. We have received some fantastic projects during the lockdown period.

Year 7 and 8 were given an open ended task to design their own garden. They were encouraged to let their imaginations run riot. There were many very good projects submitted from both year groups. An example of this good work is displayed below. I chose to share this project by Morgan Rundle because it was one of many that impressed me. He explained his design clearly, included scale drawings showing a good visual representation, accurate calculations to support overall cost, evidence of research through links to websites through a good understanding of power-point.





## Tassomai

At St Martin's school, we are lucky enough to have a subscription to the Tassomai learning programme. This is an intelligent online learning program helping all learners at all levels to achieve outstanding results in science.

Your child should be aiming to complete their daily goal of approximately 20 questions, 4 times a week taking approximately 10 minutes. This will ensure that they keep developing and retaining their scientific subject knowledge, despite not being in school at the moment. Learners at KS3 also have the option to develop their English and numeracy skills and knowledge.

The enthusiasm and dedication the learners have demonstrated using this programme so far have been incredible, with 800,000 questions attempted since September. I would also like to give the following students a special mention as they are the Whitsun half-term Tassomai champions.

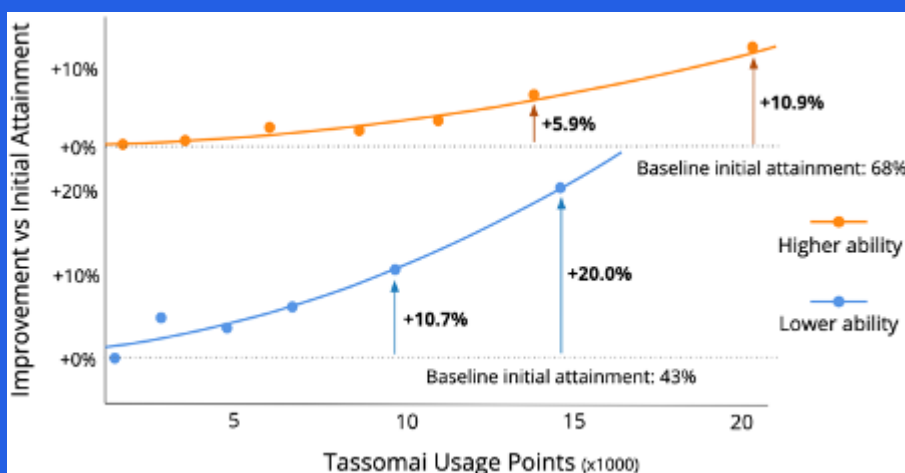
Name of Student	Year	Number of Tassomai questions attempted
Madison Jones	7	4000
Caitlyn Williams	8	5500
Gemma Read-Mayer	9	10000
Elin Tiltman	10	7500

They will have to wait until we return to school to collect their prizes but I will keep them safe!

If your son or daughter has forgotten their Tassomai log in or password, please email Mr Castle at [castlem@stmartins.caerphilly.sch.uk](mailto:castlem@stmartins.caerphilly.sch.uk)  
If you would like to know more about how Tassomai works click on the link [How Tassomai works](#).



## Evidence showing how Tassomai improves students' performance







## #GetTalkingAtHome

As we continue to adapt to our new ways of working, we still want to provide as many opportunities for students to develop their oracy skills at home. Oracy skills are not just important to a person's academic achievement - these skills go far beyond that. They boost a student's interpersonal skills, self confidence, resilience and most importantly wellbeing.

One of the ways that we will be supporting oracy opportunities at home will be by taking part in the growing twitter trend of #gettalkingathome in line with Voice 21. We, too, will be sharing oracy ideas to get students and families talking at home.

Recent posts include 'How to be a good listener' from Young Minds, a 'conversation calendar' with different topics of conversation for the month of May as well as reflection questions to discuss when watching TV.

**Remember to search for the hashtag #gettalkingathome on twitter and keep an eye on our page too!**



## Virtual Iron Man!

Well done to Mrs Shopland who recently completed the virtual iron man challenge to raise money for the NHS.

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/hxd9xz-help-our-nhs-prince-charles-hospital?utm\\_source=customer&utm\\_medium=copy\\_link&utm\\_campaign=p\\_cf+share-flow-1](https://www.gofundme.com/f/hxd9xz-help-our-nhs-prince-charles-hospital?utm_source=customer&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_campaign=p_cf+share-flow-1)



St. Martin's School  
@StMartinsInfo

Well just like that I am a 'virtual Ironman'... by far the hardest bit was the rowing on our 20 year old rusty rowing machine!! Great sense of achievement all the same! Here's the link to donate if you would like to support. Best Wishes, Mrs. Shopland

[gofundme.com/f/hxd9xz-help-our-nhs-prince-charles-hospital](https://www.gofundme.com/f/hxd9xz-help-our-nhs-prince-charles-hospital)



## St Martin's School Donate Science Goggles Caerphilly Observer article

The science department at St Martin's Comprehensive School in Caerphilly has donated its lab goggles to NHS workers on the frontline in the battle against coronavirus.

Staff nurse Jo Edwards said she emailed the school to see if the science department would be happy to donate the goggles.

<https://caerphilly.observer/news/990510/school-donates-science-goggles-to-nhs/>





## Dalian Royal School, China and St Martin's School, Caerphilly share classroom teaching experience

**As a world fighting the pandemic of the COVID19, Dalian Royal School continues to share its practice and learning about how China, its teachers and students have adapted to the challenges of continuing education online.**

Senior High School students have continued to work on their AS and AL courses using distance and online learning for the last 10 weeks. Teachers have worked hard to ensure the disruption to learning has been minimal, showing their professionalism and care for the students at DRS.

Academic Principal May received a request from a school in her hometown in the UK to lead a discussion session with the Senior Leadership team of St Martins School. Headteacher, Lee Jarvis, led the questioning, with the whole team asking Principal May about her experiences in China and how teachers and students were managing.

Principal May shared the school's journey to online teaching, the training received by teachers and the involvement of parents and students in the organisation of the schools structure. The UK team found the approach fascinating and compared it very openly to their current experiences. Live teaching, training teachers in the use of technology, attendance of students, engagement and wellbeing were all areas discussed.

Mr Jarvis, who will be responsible for the schools re-opening plan was interested in the work that the Education Bureau and school teams were undertaking to ensure the safety of teachers and students.

On Wednesday and Thursday, Ms Claire Manson, St Martins Assistant Headteacher in charge of learning and teaching, joined some of the online classes the gain an experience of life for our students and teachers. Firstly, Ms Manson joined the AS Grade 11 Economics class with Jennifer Yuan, where the students explained in depth how to develop essay writing and the use of diagrams within AS level.

Ms Manson was impressed with their English fluency, their knowledge and ability to explain and apply their Economics learning.

Ms Manson then visited a Psychology class with G10 students and teacher Mark Roberts. Students were considering Learning Theory as an explanation of addiction. The group were fully engaged in a discussion about conditioning. Students debated around different types of addiction and why these occurs. They used subject specific terminology well, showing their knowledge and understanding. Through Mark's guidance, students were able to apply these to theories to practical and real life examples, which supported the students in mastering the knowledge and making it stick.

In a Biology lesson with John Hamhill, Ms Manson saw students engaged in discussions on their research topics, with John using a 'critical friend' approach in breakout rooms, allowing students to learn from each other. She also observed one to one sessions where John gave feedback and advice to students.

Following the lesson, Principal May and ESC led Yolanda Zhao met with Ms Manson to discuss her learning. She was very impressed with the students knowledge and the questioning used by teachers to make students think deeper. She also liked the way sessions were structured and commented on the positive engagement of students in their own learning and their willingness to learn from each other. The schools discussed the possibility of further connections, with the opportunity to join 'Teach Meets' used for professional learning of teachers.