

6th June 2024

Dear Parent / Carer,

Refugee Week (17th- 21st June 2024) is the world's largest arts & culture festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary. Established in 1998 in the UK, this annual festival aligns with World Refugee Day, celebrated globally on June 20th.

The theme for Refugee week this year is "Home" and in school we are going to link this celebration to the Scripture reading "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35). Home can be more than one place and finding it can be a journey, as it is for so many of us who have to leave our countries and rebuild our lives. Sometimes we can find home in a single person. Other times it's in a whole community. And often, it's in a single gesture of care and welcome.

Last year was our first celebration of Refugee week in school, and this year we plan to offer students a similar programme of events. Throughout the week there will be opportunities during form time and in English, RE, History and Maths lessons for the children to engage with a difficult, emotive, but intrinsic issue which defines British landscape, politics, and local communities every day. There will also be a timetable for extracurricular events throughout the week, culminating in a Staff Versus Students rounders match on Friday 21st. The full timetable of events is attached to the reverse of this letter, and more information can be found below.

This celebration provides us a way to engage with our Catholic Social Teachings surrounding Dignity, Peace and Solidarity. It gives us a chance to embrace diversity, recognise the importance of cultural heritage, and tackle discrimination. It encompasses the British Values of Respect, Tolerance, and Individual Liberty. It allows children an opportunity to safely discuss and develop their own responses to a global issue which underpins so much of our worldwide community.

There are more specific details below outlining the opportunities offered to our children. At the end of the week I shall be choosing one child from each year group who I believe has engaged most thoughtfully, maturely, and enthusiastically in the celebration. These students will receive a copy of Micheal Rosen's book of poems about Migration called "On the Move."

Mini Film Festival - This year, Counterpoints Arts and Other Cinemas – two organisations who work across intersections of racial justice, migration, and climate – have collaborated on a film programme taking place throughout Refugee week. The programme, curated by Other Cinemas, consists of a selection of films that explore the theme of "Our Home." Mr Ronson has offered to screen some of these short films during lunchtime. We have chosen to screen, "Motherland", "Little Pyongyang" and "A swing in Atayfiah". More details on these films can be found here: <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/announcing-other-cinemas-free-refugee-week-film-programme/#>



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**St Ralph
Sherwin**
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

The Swimmers (2022) – Netflix Film – As part of our mini film festival we will be offering Year 10 students only, the opportunity to watch the film “The Swimmers”. This is a challenging film released in 2022 which tells the story of two girls with bright futures as professional swimmers, forced to flee Damascus and travel to Europe to find sanctuary when war breaks out in Syria. This is a very powerful film, and I believe students will find it moving and thought provoking. However, given the difficult subject matter, the film is rated 15, and as such any child who would like to stay afterschool to watch this film will need to ensure they have parental consent. I will be sending a separate letter to Year 10 parents with further information and a consent form to sign if they would like their child to take part in this activity.

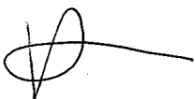
Creative activities: Students will have a chance to apply themselves creatively throughout the week with a challenge to design cost effective but safe shelters for refugees in DT, and to engage with the theme of Home by building the place they call home in Lego club. We will also have a colouring in banner displaying our gospel reference, that we will encourage all children to contribute to throughout the week.

Anyrefugee postcards: The Chapel will be open for students and staff on Tuesday and Friday at break time to write a postcard for a refugee. Participants are encouraged to write messages of hope and love, as everyone needs to know that others are thinking well of them and wishing them a better future. These postcards will then be sent to a charity called Anyrefugee, and distributed by Jesuit Refugee Services, to child refugees globally. Many of these children will be travelling totally alone, and this is an opportunity to provide them some love and comfort.

Staff Vs Students Rounders Match; On Friday 21st June, the PE department will host a staff vs students rounders match as a fundraiser. The event will take place on the field from 3:30 on Friday, and will be ticketed. Tickets will cost £1, available to purchase on the gate at the field, and parents, siblings and carers are invited to attend. There will be refreshments available to buy and all proceeds will be donated to registered charity Freedom From Torture, who provide emotional, psychological and welfare support to survivors of torture in the UK.

I believe this will be a fantastic week, I look forward to seeing many of you at the rounders match, and keep an eye out on our Facebook page where we will post many updates throughout the week.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs H Scampion
Head of Learning for Years 9 and 10

