



Date: Monday 18th November 2024

Our ref: SBM/sjt

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Christmas Collections/Donations

As part of the Church's Jubilee Year, **Pilgrims of Hope**, at St Bernard's High School, we hope to be able to count on your generosity once again as we approach the Christmas season. We realise that not all our families are in a position to assist with our appeals, but we hope those who can, will contribute with open hearts for those in our community who need a helping hand towards a happy and fulfilling Christmas. We are planning three appeals which are detailed below.

Christmas Hampers – St Vincent DePaul Society (SVP)

Each year SVP collects the contents for much needed items for Christmas Hampers which are delivered to those in the greater Southend Community, who without the help of those who can make generous donations, will not be able to enjoy Christmas as we do in our homes. To that end, we are attaching a flyer received from SVP, which details the items they have requested to fill the hampers. This request is time sensitive as all donations are due by the **19th December** to **SVP, Unit 9, Southend Business Park, Southend on Sea**, so that hampers can be assembled and delivered before Christmas. The school will not be collecting these items but would ask that your donations are delivered directly to the address noted on the flyer. Please let the staff there know that you are responding to an appeal from St Bernard's High School.

In addition, you can also donate funds in Parent Pay for the purchase of grocery vouchers for food purchases at Sainsbury's, Asda and Tesco, so that families receiving Hampers can augment their Christmas festive table. The portal for this is '**SVP Christmas Hamper Fund**' in Parent Pay. ***This portal will close on the 16th December.***

Donations of Non-Perishable Food

Secondly, we are collecting the usual non-perishable food for **St Vincent's Kindness Kitchen** for rough-sleepers and those in need of a good hot meal. We hope we can count on you to support our student endeavours by donating much needed items such as pasta, tin food, rice and any other food items that are within date and are languishing in your larder.



Christmas Toy Appeal for Safe Steps – Dover Project

This outstanding Charity which has a facility in Westcliff-on-Sea is for survivors of domestic abuse. Christmas is a particularly difficult time in families that are caught up in the cycle of domestic abuse, and it is not unusual for abused mothers to leave their homes with their children without much more than the clothes they are wearing.

St Bernard's students have for many years donated toys and other items for Mums and their children, so at the very least there is some excitement for them to look forward to on Christmas day. To ensure that all children and their mothers receive a gift for Christmas, our students by year group donate for particular age groups for residents at Safe Steps. We are noting below how this is organised.

- Year 7- Babies
- Year 8- Toddlers
- Year 9- Adolescents
- Years 10 & 11- Early Teens
- Years 12 & 13- Mums (body lotion, make-up, perfume, shampoo, conditioner, toiletry gift bags are much appreciated).

These gifts are donated in boxes decorated by the Forms with Christmas wrapping, and we would request that the gifts are not wrapped, so that the staff at Safe Steps can ensure that duplicates are not distributed to the Mums and children. These decorated boxes are brought up by the students during the Christmas Carol service to the Altar, and it is a sight to behold.

We thank you in advance for your kind generosity. Charitable giving is one of the cornerstones of a St Bernard's education and it seems to be with great joy our students decorate and fill their donation boxes.

With kind regards,

Mrs S McCurdy
Lay Chaplain