

Newsletter

JANUARY 2026

A Moment of Reflection



As we begin a new year at Derby Cathedral School, we are reminded of the opportunity January brings to pause, reset, and look ahead with renewed purpose.

A fresh start allows us to reflect on our progress and refocus on what matters most: creating the best possible experience for every student in our community.

This term, we continue strengthening key areas of our work, improving routines, refining our pastoral and inclusion offer, and ensuring that the school day feels calm, purposeful, and centred on learning. Every step we take is designed to help students feel safe, supported, and inspired, and we remain committed to building a school environment that brings out their very best.

Our vision is to provide rigour and joy, and this guides us into the year ahead. Rigour shapes our high expectations and commitment to excellent teaching; joy reminds us that school should be a place of curiosity, pride, and positive relationships. Together, these principles will continue to shape the culture and ambition of Derby Cathedral School as we move forward.

Mr A. Brown
Headteacher

Student Voice in Action: DCS School Council

We're delighted to share that our new School Council is now fully in place, with Tutor Representatives and Year Representatives chosen from across the school. This marks an exciting step forward in strengthening student voice and leadership.

Tutor Representatives play a vital role within their tutor groups, gathering ideas, feedback and concerns from their peers. These views are then shared more widely, ensuring everyday student experiences help shape decisions and improvements across the school.

Alongside this, our Year Representatives take on a whole-school leadership role. They represent their year group, work closely with staff, and help drive events, initiatives and enrichment opportunities. The selection process was designed to be inclusive and thoughtful, giving a wide range of students the chance to step forward and lead in different ways.

A strong School Council helps students build confidence, responsibility and communication skills, but just as importantly, it shows them that their opinions matter. We're incredibly proud of the students who have stepped into these roles and look forward to seeing the positive impact they will make.



FAITH values in Action



Tenacity in the Ring: Cristian's Story



Year 11 student Cristian is a dedicated featherweight boxer who has trained at Derby City Boxing Academy since Year 6, giving his own time outside of school to develop his skills, discipline and mindset.

Recently, Cristian competed in a featherweight championship against boxers from across Derby. It was an incredibly close competition, with only a few points separating him from the winner. Although he didn't take first place on this occasion, his performance was outstanding and showed just how much hard work and commitment he has put into his sport.

Cristian looks up to Mike Tyson, particularly the idea behind one of his most well-known quotes: "Everyone has a plan until they're punched in the face." For Cristian, this has become a reminder that things don't always go as expected and that challenges are not setbacks, but opportunities to learn, adapt and improve.

When he first started boxing, he thought it would be easy. Instead, he's learnt that progress comes from perseverance and resilience.

Cristian's journey reflects so many of our school values, particularly tenacity, aspiration and integrity. He loves boxing and hopes to continue it throughout his life. Looking ahead, he is also considering a future in the Navy or the Police Academy, where his discipline, focus and determination will be real strengths.

We are incredibly proud of Cristian and the dedication he shows both inside and outside the ring. His story is a brilliant example of what it means to keep going, even when the challenge is tough.



Taking Aim: Elliotte's Javelin Journey

Year 8 student Elliotte has already shown huge promise in sport after an impressive first experience at the Derby City Sports competition over the summer.

Competing in the javelin event, Elliotte placed fourth, an incredible achievement for her first competition. Her journey into javelin began in PE lessons, where it quickly became clear that she was throwing further than anyone else in her year group at the time. She was encouraged to take part in the city competition, where she rose to the challenge and delivered a fantastic performance.

Alongside javelin, Elliotte has enjoyed and tried a wide range of sports over the years, including basketball, football, gymnastics and dance. She is already planning to compete in City Sports again this summer.

Away from sport, Elliotte is also highly creative. She enjoys journaling, playing the guitar and writing her own songs, showing a brilliant balance of athletic talent and creativity. With ambitions of taking javelin as far as possible, even to the Olympics one day, Elliotte is a student to watch.

We are incredibly proud of Elliotte and the confidence and determination she has shown so early in her sporting journey.



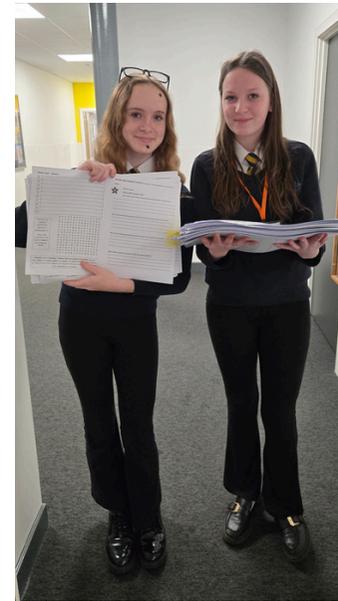
KS3 Reception Helpers Supporting DCS

Each day, two students in KS3 take on the role of Student Receptionist Helpers, working alongside staff in reception to support the smooth running of the school day.

In this role, students help with a range of admin tasks, such as organising resources, delivering messages, supporting visitors and assisting staff with day-to-day jobs that help keep reception running efficiently. Their support allows reception staff to focus on the many demands of a busy school environment.



For the students involved, the role offers valuable real-world experience. They develop confidence, communication skills and a strong sense of responsibility, while gaining an insight into how a professional workplace operates. The role also helps students to build organisational skills and understand the importance of teamwork, reliability and professionalism. The Student Receptionist Helper programme is a positive example of student leadership in action, giving students meaningful responsibility while supporting staff and contributing to the wider school community.



DCS School: KS3 and KS4

Y8 Rise to the Challenge



This month, our Year 8 students took part in two brilliant Army engagement events that really got them thinking about future pathways and personal skills.

On Wednesday 14th January, students attended a collective worship session across periods 1 and 2, led by a serving member of the British Army. The talk challenged lots of assumptions, including the surprising fact that being a soldier isn't even in the top ten most dangerous jobs (farming and firefighting take that honour!). Students were fascinated to learn that the Army offers over 200 different job roles and more than 43 apprenticeships, helping many to see how their own interests and strengths could fit into such a wide range of careers.

Following this, students took part in hands-on workshops that focused on teamwork, resilience, communication, and leadership. Activities included working in groups to build the tallest possible tower, following instructions from higher command, and taking part in energetic bleep-test style challenges (with a colourful twist!). The sessions were active, engaging, and very well received, with students throwing themselves into every challenge and clearly enjoying the experience. A fantastic opportunity that combined real-world insight with practical skill-building – and one our students won't forget in a hurry.

Sportshall Athletics Success for Years 7 & 8

Our Year 7 and Year 8 students recently competed in Sportshall Athletics events at Noel Baker School, representing Derby Cathedral School with pride across both track and field disciplines.

On 20th January, the Year 7 teams competed against nine schools, achieving strong performances throughout the day. The boys' team finished 7th overall and the girls' team finished an impressive 5th, with only a small number of points separating the top schools. Students including Sereita, Nova, Wendy, Favour, Abdulhazeem, Hanif and Rayan showed great determination and teamwork across all events.



On 27th January, the Year 8 teams competed against eight schools and delivered exceptional performances. The Year 8 girls' team finished 2nd overall, which automatically qualifies them for the County Sportshall Championships in March — a fantastic achievement. The boys' team also competed strongly, finishing 8th overall. Congratulations to students such as Amelia, Ebonii, Avery, Hawa, Levi and Remi, who all played a key role in the day's success.

A huge well done to all our athletes for demonstrating outstanding Tenacity, Aspiration, Fellowship and Integrity. We are incredibly proud of everyone involved — and especially our Year 8 girls 'dream team', who now begin preparations for the county finals.

Year 10 Visit to Loughborough University

Our Year 10 students recently took part in an exciting visit to Loughborough University, designed to broaden their understanding of higher education and future pathways. Students engaged in an inspiring talk with an Outreach Officer, who explained how GCSEs play a vital role in future progression, including meeting entry requirements for A Levels and beyond.

Students also heard about the Outreach Officer's own university and career journey, helping to make future pathways feel both achievable and relatable. The visit included a guided campus tour, followed by an interactive Materials Science and Engineering workshop led by course leaders and STEM student ambassadors.

The experience encouraged students to think ambitiously about their futures and explore the exciting possibilities ahead.



DCS Sixth Form

On Holocaust Memorial Day, Year 13 students Julia and Kali led a powerful collective worship, encouraging students to reflect on remembrance, responsibility and the importance of challenging prejudice. The assembly explored why the day is marked on 27 January, the date of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, and included reflections from the students' own visit to Auschwitz. Julia and Kali highlighted groups persecuted by the Nazis and shared individual stories, alongside reminders that genocide did not end with the Holocaust. The assembly explored later genocides, including Rwanda and Darfur, and introduced the ten stages of genocide to show how discrimination can develop if left unchallenged. The worship concluded with the film *Your Voice is Amazing*, reinforcing the message that speaking out against hatred and injustice matters.



Y12 Art Students Experimenting with Style!



Year 12 Art students are currently exploring a wide range of artists and artistic methods to help them discover what they enjoy, what they don't, and how their own creative style is developing. During a recent visit, Agnes and Eva shared how they are experimenting with different approaches, including artists such as Ian Murphy, Eric Gaskell, Emilia Milcheva and Elle Smallwood, as well as techniques like lino printing and ghost printing. This exploratory stage allows students to take creative risks and reflect on the processes that inspire them most. Agnes, one of the Y12 students taking the course, particularly enjoys Ian Murphy's biro drawings, linking closely to her ambition to become an architect. Eva has found Elle Smallwood's tonal, unfinished style most inspiring and is keen to develop work using paint, her preferred medium. This period of experimentation is vital preparation for Year 13, where students are required to produce an original and personal body of work, informed by the artists, methods and materials they have explored.



University of Derby Trip: A Historical Success!

Last week, Mr Adler and Ms Brown accompanied our Year 13 historians to the University of Derby for a bespoke workshop designed to support their coursework.

The session was led by Cath Feely, Senior Lecturer in 20th Century History, and gave students the opportunity to work closely with a rich range of primary sources from Thatcher's Britain. These included cabinet papers, memoirs, diary entries, and even a transcript of a telephone conversation between Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and US President Ronald Reagan.

The workshop was both engaging and intellectually challenging, encouraging students to think critically about how historians analyse and apply sources. It will undoubtedly make a significant contribution to the quality of their coursework submissions.

We are extremely grateful to the University of Derby, and especially to Cath Feely, for the time, expertise and care given to our students.



Notices and Reminders

Spring Term

- Monday 5th January 2026 to Friday 13th February 2026
- Monday 23rd February 2026 to Friday 27th March 2026

INSET Days

- Monday 2nd February 2026

Social Media:
Follow Us!



@DerbyCathSchool



Derby_Cathedral_School

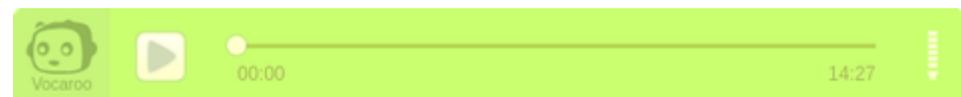


@Derby_Cathedral_School

Revision Podcast – Listen, Learn, Revise

Ms McGuinness and Year 11 students have launched a new revision podcast to support GCSE English. Each short episode focuses on key moments from texts and poems, including important extracts being read aloud and explained to help bring revision to life.

Scan the QR code or use the Vocaroo link to listen anytime — perfect for revising on the go, reinforcing key knowledge, or hearing the texts read clearly and confidently.



24/7 & Late Night Helplines

For young people



YoungMinds

Are you a young person in crisis?

Text the YoungMinds Crisis Messenger for free 24/7 support if you are experiencing a mental health crisis.

text YM to 85258

YOUNGMINDS

The Mix

Do you need help now?

Crisis messenger text service provides free, 24/7 crisis support

text THEMIX to 85258

THE MIX

Papyrus

If you are having thoughts of suicide or are concerned for a young person who might be you can contact HOPELINEUK for confidential support and advice.

Call 0800 068 4141

9am – midnight every day of the year

CALM

A helpline for people in the UK who are down or have hit a wall for any reason, who need to talk or find information and support.

Call 0800 58 58 58

5pm – midnight every day of the year

YOUTH INSPIRED



Samaritans

Whatever you're going through, you can call anytime from any phone for FREE.

Call 116 123



DCS Safeguarding

Use the QR Codes to direct you to helpful information about Safeguarding and Mental Health support on our school website.



DCS Mental Health

Safeguarding

January can feel like a fresh start, but it can also be a challenging time as routines return and expectations increase. It's important to look after yourself and be mindful of your wellbeing, both online and offline. If you're spending time online, remember to keep personal information private and think carefully before sharing images or messages. If you're meeting friends, let someone know where you're going and stay with people you trust.

Getting back into routines can feel overwhelming. Try to look after your physical and mental health by getting enough sleep, taking breaks from screens, eating regularly and giving yourself time to adjust. Small steps make a difference.

If you're feeling worried, anxious or overwhelmed, remember that you are not alone and support is available. You can speak to a trusted adult such as a parent, teacher or school counsellor. If you need someone to talk to, you can contact **Childline** at any time on **0800 1111** or visit **childline.org.uk** – the service is free, confidential and available 24/7. You can also text **SHOUT to 85258** for confidential support by text.

Your life is valuable, and asking for help is a sign of strength. If something doesn't feel right, trust your instincts and speak to someone you trust.

Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day takes place on Tuesday, 10 February and is a chance to focus on the the online safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We will be holding Collective Worship sessions all week with students in order to help support them with keeping safe online.



AI and nude images

Advice for Parents and Carers

AI is designed to complete tasks that, in the past, would have needed human thinking. Generative AI can be found on many different platforms and is used to create things, such as photos, music and text.

What has AI got to do with nude images?

Although AI is a useful tool and has many positive uses, it can also be misused, causing harm and upset to others.

One way in which generative AI can be misused is to edit or create a picture of someone so that they appear nude or naked. This is sometimes referred to as 'nudification', 'deepfakes', 'synthetic sexual content' or 'non-consensual intimate image abuse'. These images may then be shared further, for example using messaging apps or social media.

"Regardless of whether it's AI or whether it's real, it still has the same negative impact on the person, because they still feel the same things about the same image that's been shared. So it doesn't really matter whether it's real or fake, it still has that same impact on the person."

Young person, Childnet Focus Group.

Why might young people use AI to create nude images?

Some young people are using AI generated nude images to target each other, whilst others may use AI in this way because they do not realise it is harmful. Examples include:

- As a form of online bullying
- To get revenge on someone who has annoyed, upset or hurt them
- As a joke or because they think it's funny
- To blackmail someone
- Because of peer pressure to join in with this kind of behaviour
- Because they are attracted to someone
- Because they are curious.

What can I do to support my child with this issue?

Talk openly with your child about their understanding of what generative AI is, how it can be used safely and responsibly, and how it can be misused.

Make it clear that using AI to create nude images of anyone without their consent is never okay and that it can be especially serious if the person is under the age of 18.

Make sure your child knows they can come to you if anything online worries or upsets them, even if they find it embarrassing or are worried about getting in trouble. Some of the barriers to talking to a trusted adult can be guilt, shame, and even a fear of losing access to their life online.

"I feel like some young people would be too scared to go to their parents or a teacher."

Young person, Childnet Focus Group.

If your child comes to you about something that has happened to them online, do not deny access to their devices in response, and instead provide them with the support that they need.

Plan how you would respond if your child told you they have been a victim of this sort of abuse, for example by staying calm, offering support, assisting with reporting, and seeking further help.

Talking to a trusted adult will often provide young people with the correct help and support that they need. However, some young people may still feel unable to talk to a trusted adult for a number of reasons. As a result, it's also important to share the numbers and websites for child helplines with your family as an alternative if they would feel more comfortable speaking to someone else about a concern.

A note about the law

The law differs from country to country. However, a nude or sexualised image of someone under the age of 18, even if it has been created using AI, may be illegal.

What can I do if my child is targeted in this way?

If your child is targeted by AI-generated nude images, it is important to remember that it is not their fault.

They are likely to be feeling embarrassed, upset and alone, so reassure them that you are there to help and that you will work together to try help resolve the issue.

You should always report the image on the platforms where it has been shared. If you are not sure how to make a report, search the name of the platform and 'reporting' online. Many platforms may have a centralised portal for reporting concerns.

When making a report, you may be asked to choose a category for what you are reporting. Nude images created using AI can generally be categorised as "non-consensual intimate imagery". If your child is under 18, it can likely also be reported as "child sexual abuse material".

If your child has the nude image on their device, they can use services such as [Take It Down](#) (for global use) and [Report Remove](#) (UK only). These are free online services that can help a young person remove or stop the online sharing of nude, partially nude or sexually explicit images or videos of them before they are 18. They can be used for all nude images, including those created using AI.

If the incident involves other young people at your child's school, raise it with the teacher or other relevant staff so that they can help investigate and offer further support. It is important to know that a child's online life is not separate from their 'real' life – what happens online can have a direct impact on their life, and affect their mental health and schoolwork, which is why in-person and personal support is important.