



THIS IS HOW WE DO IT HERE

14th Feb 2025/
Vol. 007

WELCOME FROM HEAD



Welcome to this edition of our newsletter.

The purpose of this series of communications is to introduce and feature key school staff, share successes and good news stories, and give more in-depth information about what and how your child learns in Our Lady and St Bede Catholic Academy.

I hope you continue to find it informative and supportive and I thank you for your continued support.

Mrs M. Wilkinson

MR HUGHES

THE SEASON OF LENT



In three weeks, we begin Lent—a time in the Christian calendar to pause, reflect, and grow. It's a season of preparation leading up to Easter, where many choose to pray more, give to others, or give something up as a way of resetting their focus. But Lent isn't just for Christians; it's a chance for anyone, whatever their faith, to think about how we can be kinder, more generous, and more mindful of others.

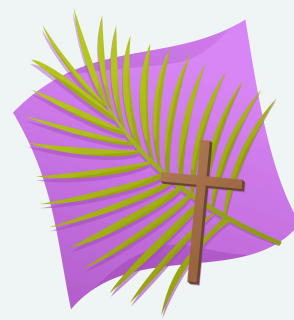
At school, we'll encourage pupils to take small steps to make a difference—whether that's helping at home, supporting a charity, or simply being more thoughtful towards friends and classmates.

Our theme for the year, 'We Are One', reminds us that we're all connected and that by looking out for each other, we build a stronger, kinder community.

Parents can support this at home by talking about what Lent means, encouraging acts of kindness, or even making a small family commitment together—like sharing a meal without distractions or setting aside time to help others.

Lent is a reminder that small actions, done together, can make a big difference. Let's use this time to reflect, support one another, and grow in unity.

LENT



LITERACY AND READING



LIBRARY

Library Opening Hours:

- Before school: 8:00 – 8:15
- Break: 10:05 – 10:20
- Lunch: 12:20 – 1:20
- After school: 3:20 – 4:00
(Fridays until 3:30)

**Our library offers a calm space
for reading, studying, and joining
fun clubs including:**

- Monday: Multicultural Club
- Tuesday: Dungeons & Dragons
- Wednesday: Pokémon Club
- Thursday: Student Librarians
- Friday: First Chapter Fridays



This Week



Word of the

compare

Week

NEXT WEEK

justify

Show or prove to be right or reasonable.



This is how we do it here

PASTORAL

UPDATES



NSPCC Presentations to Y7 and Y8

Last week, our school took part in Take Notice, an immersive play and workshop helping young people recognise unhealthy relationships and make safe choices.

Commissioned by the NSPCC and created by York St John University, It's Not OK engaged students in real-life scenarios, sparking vital discussions on safety, empathy, and decision-making.

Huge thanks to Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees Partnership, Corner House Youth Project, Barnardo's, the Police, and the NSPCC for bringing this impactful experience to our school!

Wellbeing Buddies Launch

We're thrilled to introduce the **Wellbeing Buddies Scheme** – a brand-new peer support system run by our amazing pupil leadership team!

Sometimes we all need a listening ear, a bit of advice, or just someone to sit with during breaks. That's where our Wellbeing Buddies come in! Whether you're feeling stressed about schoolwork, dealing with friendship worries, or just want a space to relax, our Buddies are here for YOU.

What's on offer?

- A safe, welcoming space
- Mindfulness activities to ease your mind
- Friendly chats to help you feel supported

When & Where?

- RE Meeting Room (RE Corridor)
- Monday, Wednesday & Friday
- Break & Lunchtime

Let's look out for each other, OLSB!



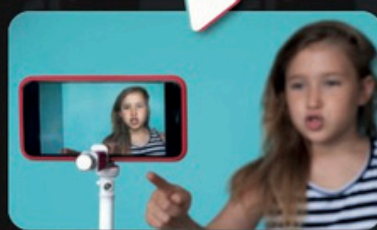


TikTok is a video-sharing social media app available on iOS and Android which lets users create, share, and view user created videos much in a similar manner to Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. It's main draw, however, is that users can record and upload bite-sized looping videos of themselves lip-syncing and dancing to popular music or soundbites, often for comedic effect, which can then be further enhanced with filters, emojis and stickers. TikTok has been designed with the young user in mind and has a very addictive appeal. At the beginning of 2019 it skyrocketed in popularity to become the iOS store's most downloaded app with over 33 million downloads. Estimates suggest that it now has anything between 500 million and over 1 billion monthly active users worldwide.



What parents need to know about

TIKTOK



MATURE CONTENT

On the iOS store, TikTok is listed as 12+. On the Google Play Store it is rated as 'Parental guidance recommended'. When signing up for the app, it's possible to lie about your age without any form of verification. As children scroll through their feed, most of the videos they're likely to come across are lighthearted or funny takes on dance routines which are designed to make people laugh. However there has been a slew of videos which have been reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm and sexual content, including young teens dressing overtly sexually and behaving suggestively. Given the deluge of material uploaded to TikTok every day, it's impossible to moderate everything and it can be quite common to come across explicit content on the 'for you' feed when logging into the platform.



INAPPROPRIATE MUSIC

TikTok revolves around creating music videos through lip-syncing and dancing. Inevitably, some of the music featured by users will contain explicit or suggestive lyrics. Given the undeniably young user base, there is a risk that children may look to imitate the explicit language they hear or the suggestive actions they see when viewing others user's videos on the app.



TIKTOK FAME

TikTok is very image focused and there is a notable preoccupation with appearing cool and attractive. Many teenagers now attempt to go viral and become what's known in-app as 'TikTok famous'. TikTok (and its predecessor Musical.ly) has spawned its own celebrities – social media stars Loren Gray and Jacob Sartorius have been catapulted to fame through their initial exposure on the app. Obviously, most budding influencers looking to become the next big thing will be disappointed, but this may have the knock-on effect of making them go to more and more drastic lengths to get noticed.



ONLINE PREDATORS

As a social network, TikTok makes it easy to connect with other users. This includes the ability to comment on and react to other user's videos, follow their profile and download their content. Be aware that by default, any user can comment on your child's video if their account is set to public. Most interactions are harmless enough but as an app, TikTok is prone to predators because of the abundance of younger users.



ADDICTIVE NATURE

Social media is designed to be addictive and TikTok is no different. It can be fun and hugely entertaining. However, it is also because of this that it can be hard to put down. In addition to the short, punchy nature of the looping video format, the app's ability to keep you guessing what will come on screen next makes it easy to turn a five-minute visit into 45-minute visit.



IN-APP PURCHASES

Aside from the content, there's also the option to purchase in-app extras called 'TikTok coins'. Prices range from £0.99 for 100 coins to an eye-watering £93.99 for 10,000 coins. TikTok coins are used to purchase different emojis to reward content creators that a user finds funny or entertaining. In the iOS version of the app you can disable the option to buy TikTok coins but this sadly doesn't seem to be a feature in the Android version.



Safety Tips For Parents



TALK ABOUT ONLINE DANGERS

Assuming your child is above the age limit to use the app, make sure you also take the time to talk to them about what they are seeing on the app. Have a dialogue, get them to give you their opinion on what is appropriate and model the correct behaviour for them. Go over why they shouldn't give out private information or identifiable photos and be positive and understanding of them. In the long run, getting them to think critically about what they're seeing goes a long way to keeping them social media savvy.



EXPLORE AND LEARN YOURSELF

Understanding and learning the app yourself is a great way to get to grips with TikTok. You could then even use the app with your child and watch some videos with them. If you are the parent of a teen, even if it does not make you popular, keep a close eye on what they're viewing and sharing. That said, it's a brilliant chance to turn it into a bonding opportunity with your child also. You could even unleash your inner performer and make videos with them while (more importantly) keeping them safe online.



Meet our expert

Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.



SOURCES: www.tiktok.com

USE PRIVACY SETTINGS

Undoubtedly, the easiest way to safeguard your child on TikTok is to make sure their account is set to private. This means only those users your child approves can view, like, and follow their content. Setting the account to private may clash with your child's goal of social media stardom, but it will keep their account secure from strangers. This setting can be enabled under the privacy and safety menu by pressing the ellipsis in the 'me' tab of the app. To be extra safe, there are additional controls available to toggle such as who can send comments and messages, among other options.



LEARN HOW TO REPORT AND BLOCK INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

With the proper privacy settings in place, TikTok can be a safe space for your child to express themselves. However, just in case something does manage to slip through, make sure your child knows how to recognise and report content that isn't appropriate and get them to come to you about what they have seen. TikTok allows users to report offenders and comments within the app. You can also block individual users by going on their profile.



ENABLE RESTRICTED MODE

In the digital wellbeing section there's the ability to turn on restricted mode using a PIN. Restricted mode filters out content that is not age appropriate although it should be noted that this isn't always 100% fool proof. When enabling restricted mode, parents should still be vigilant to what their child is watching and take note that the algorithm moderating content is not infallible.



MODERATE SCREEN TIME

As entertaining as TikTok is, you can help your child moderate their time on the app by making use of the digital wellbeing section. Under the screen time management option, you can limit the daily allotted time allowed on the app in increments ranging from 40 to 120 minutes. You can also lock this preference behind a PIN number which has to be inputted in order to then exceed the daily time limit. This way your child can get their daily dose of memes without wasting away the day.



NEW FOR 2020 FAMILY SAFETY MODE

TikTok Family Safety Mode allows parents to link their own TikTok account to their child's. It's a great way to oversee your child's digital wellbeing by giving you direct control over their safety settings and being able to remotely turn features on and off. This includes managing screen time, the ability to send and receive direct messages (and with whom) and the ability to restrict the appearance of content that might not be age appropriate.





A Member Of
**Bishop
Hogarth**
Catholic Education Trust

ATTENDANCE

Every School Day Counts!



365 days in a calendar year

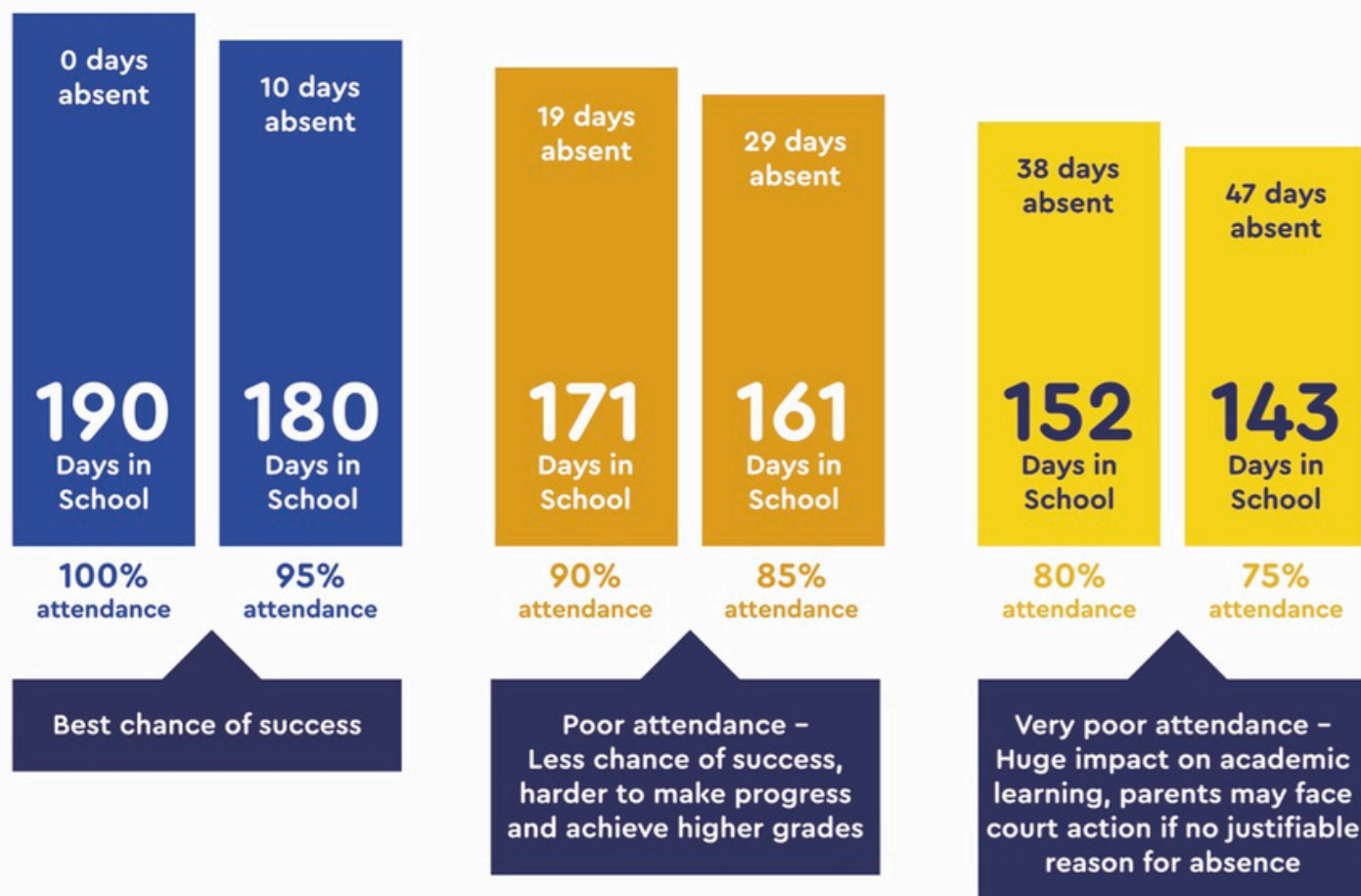
190 school days each year

175 non-term days each year

(All the time you need for shopping, holidays and appointments)

Good attendance means being in school at least 95% of the time or 180 to 190 days

Please don't let your child miss out on the education they deserve



Attend **Today** = Achieve **Tomorrow!**

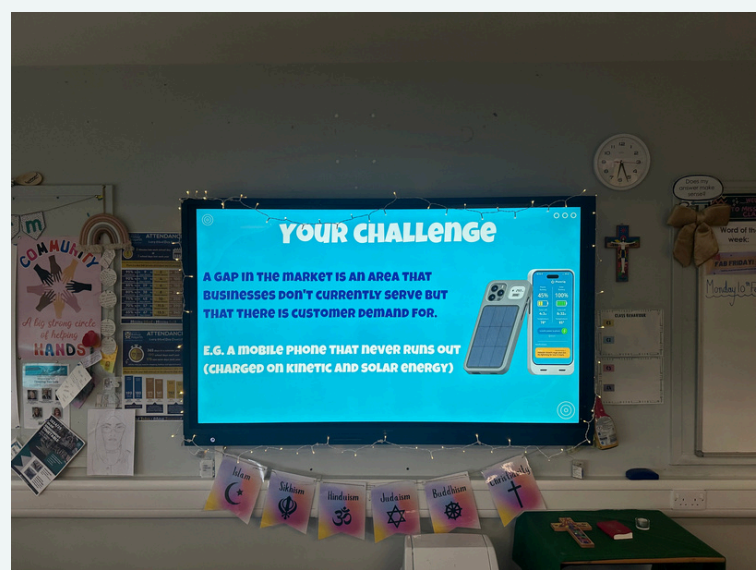
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Personal Development Day – Living in the Wider World

What a fantastic day of learning, growth, and opportunity for all our pupils! This term, our Personal Development Day was all about equipping our students with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate the wider world with confidence.

- **Careers Fayre** – 32 incredible providers, including employers, colleges, universities, and apprenticeship schemes, inspiring students about their future pathways!
- **WizeUp Financial Education** – A deep dive into the value of money, savings, and even crypto!
- **Knife Crime Awareness** – A crucial session addressing local crime statistics and raising awareness to help keep our pupils safe.
- **Entrepreneurship Challenge** – Pupils designed and pitched their own products, sharpening their teamwork and communication skills!

Our three annual Personal Development Days tackle local, national, and global issues, ensuring our pupils are prepared for the challenges and opportunities ahead. We are fully committed to preparing our young people for living in society and exploring the wider world.



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Love Knows No Borders at Our Multicultural Club!

Every week, over 50 amazing students gather in our Library's Multicultural Club, celebrating diversity, creativity, and unity!

This week, in honour of Valentine's Day, we explored how different cultures around the world express love and friendship. From heartfelt traditions in Japan to symbolic gestures in Mexico, our students researched their heritage and created beautiful, meaningful valentines inspired by global customs.

It was a heartwarming session filled with learning, laughter, and cultural appreciation!



Year 8 Takes the Stage with the NHS!

Today, our Year 8 pupils were treated to an exciting theatrical experience designed to inspire the next generation of NHS heroes! Through powerful storytelling, real-life scenarios, and engaging performances, they explored the endless career opportunities in healthcare—from doctors and nurses to paramedics and lab scientists!

A huge thank you to the performers for bringing the world of the NHS to life in such a fun and thought-provoking way. Who knows? We may have just sparked the dreams of future medical professionals!



CATHOLIC LIFE



Jubilee Year 2025 – A Year of Hope

This year, the Catholic Church is celebrating a Jubilee Year, a special time of renewal, mercy, and hope. The theme, "Pilgrims of Hope", reminds us to walk together in faith, supporting and uplifting one another.

At school, we'll mark this through reflection, prayer, and action. A key moment comes next Sunday, as 50 Year 10 pupils travel to Rome with Mr. Hughes and other staff, experiencing the heart of the Catholic faith.

This Jubilee invites us all to bring hope into our families, friendships, and community—through kindness, forgiveness, and unity. Let's make this year truly meaningful together.

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What is my child currently studying in RE?

Year 7: Galilee to Jerusalem

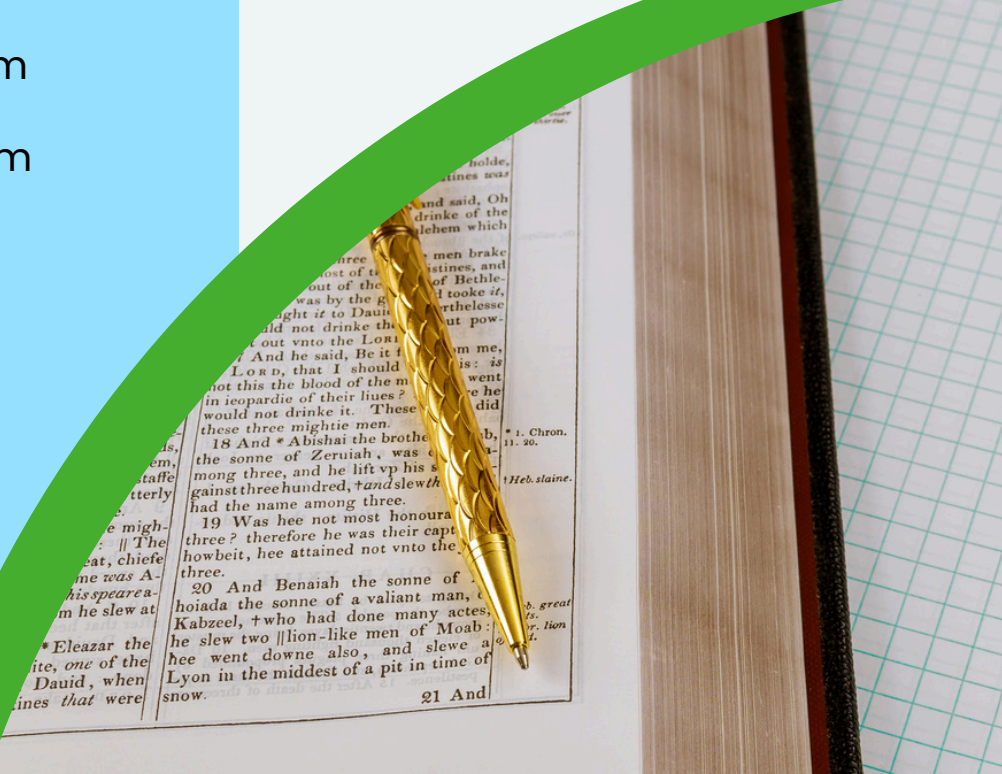
Year 8: Galilee to Jerusalem

Year 9: *Philosophy*

Year 10: *Life and Death*

Year 11: *GCSE Revision*

More info here





Congratulations to
Year 7 for achieving **291,969**
house points in total this
academic
year so far! **AMAZING!**

Big shout out to Emily (7SPP),
Peace (7SPP) and Nathaniel
(7SPP) for being top of the
house points leaderboard!



Our Summer Show: *Beauty and the Beast*

A huge WELL DONE to everyone who auditioned for *Beauty & the Beast*!

We saw just over 100 auditionees who put so much work and effort into their performance.

The cast has now been chosen and shared and will take place in the summer! A huge thank you to our performing arts team who inspire our pupils everyday!





OUR FAITH

OUR CURRICULUM

OUR POLICIES

This is how we do it here