



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



St. Aidan's Catholic Academy

Family Handbook

2026-27



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



Headteacher Welcome

I feel immensely proud to welcome you to St Aidan's Catholic Academy, a school within the Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust.

Our school has a rich history and like all Catholic schools we provide a nurturing, caring and loving environment where spirituality, Catholic ethos and faith permeate everything we do.

As a learning community we provide all individuals with the opportunity to flourish in a way that is rooted firmly in the values of the Gospel. By placing Christ at the centre of all that we do and recognising learning as the fundamental focus of all our work we are achieving our mission objective to ensure that each child can 'Celebrate life to the full', opening as many doors as possible to allow our pupils to reach the top of their respective mountains.

As a Catholic school we are proud to worship, and follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. Walking around our school you will 'feel' our Catholic ethos in the air – the way we talk to one another, the way we support and trust each other and the way we are driven to succeed in our mission.

The staff of St Aidan's promote a dedication to excellence which empowers our pupils to excel and achieve whilst expanding their horizons in a nurturing environment. Our commitment to high-quality teaching, focus on mastery of knowledge and partnerships with parents and the local community provides a richness of experience that enables all to develop their God given talents.

Our ethos and practice are proudly rooted in these beliefs and in the core values: Hard work, Trust and Fairness:

Hard Work

We never give up. We remain positive so that we have the strength to persevere with even the hardest work. We do whatever it takes for as long as it takes.

Trust

We are honest. We do what we say we will do and do not make excuses. We are loyal and have the courage to do the right thing.

Fairness

We play by the rules. We are respectful, polite and courteous at all times. We don't take advantage of others and helping a member of our community is helping ourselves.

From the moment a pupil arrives at St Aidan's Catholic Academy we expect them to live by these values.

Our total love for the child ensures that all individuals are given the opportunity to succeed; a 'no excuses', 'no shortcuts' approach provides clarity for all pupils and instils strong lifelong learning habits, thus, aiding every pupil to become better qualified, more successful and happier. We have the highest expectations for all.

This means that we will do whatever it takes to ensure that every pupil at St Aidan's Catholic Academy achieves their full potential both academically and personally. We aim to develop young people who treat others with dignity and respect and have high expectations of themselves and others, encouraging each other to succeed.



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



St Aidan's has an outstanding reputation for academic achievement based on a consistent record of excellent examination results which continue to improve year on year. Our values driven policies, clear vision and consistent routines demand and nurture a strong sense of moral purpose, personal responsibility, integrity, honesty and respect for others within our pupils. These qualities enable each of our young people to reach the top of their mountain, fulfilling their potential and to ultimately afford them the choice of either studying at university or embarking upon a high-quality career.

We look forward to working with parents and enabling our pupils to lead full, active, vibrant lives where every child thrives and makes tangible contributions by serving others and their community; ensuring the journey to adulthood is a journey of faith.

Mrs Whitten
Headteacher

Term Dates

Autumn Term

Tuesday 1st September 2026 – Friday 18th December 2026

Half Term: Monday 26th October 2026– Friday 30th October 2026

Year 7 return on Wednesday 2nd September 2026

Year 8 – 11 return on Thursday 3rd September 2026

Spring Term

Monday 4th January 2027 – Thursday 25th March 2027

Half Term: Monday 15th February 2027 – Friday 19th February 2027

Summer Term

Monday 12th April 2027 – Friday 16th July 2027

Half Term: Monday 31st May 2027 – Friday 4th June 2027

Bank Holiday (outside of school holidays) – Monday 3rd May 2027

Pupils are not in school on the following dates:

Tuesday 1st September 2026

Friday 23rd October 2026

*Please note that these dates are subject to change. The DFE may request training dates to be altered to support the new school building implementation. We will keep parents updated on this. **One further INSET day needs to be allocated dependent on the progress of the school build.***

Academy Contact Details

St Aidan's Catholic Academy
Willowbank Road
Sunderland
SR2 7HJ

Telephone: 0191 5200333

Email: contactus@staca.co.uk

Instagram: [@sacatholicacademy](https://www.instagram.com/sacatholicacademy)

Website: www.staidanscatholicacademy.co.uk



The School Day

P	Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	7.45 – 8.15am	Breakfast				
	8.25 – 8.50am	Y7 – Y11 Morning Meeting				
1	8.50 - 9.45am	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons
2	9.45 -10.40am	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons
	10:40 -11:00am	BREAK				
	11.00 -11.30am	Reading Canon/DEAR/Literacy and Numeracy Support/Assembly/Ascent				
3	11.30 -12.25pm	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons
4	12.25 -12.55pm	Lunch: 8TA, 8IN, 8CL, 8IM and Y11, Y13 (all other year groups in lesson)				
	12.55 – 1.25pm	Lunch: Y7 + 8MO, 8UN and 8BE (all other year groups in lesson)				
	1.25 – 1.55pm	Lunch: Y9 and Y10 (all other year groups in lesson)				
5	1.55 – 2.50pm	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons
6	2.50 – 3.50pm	Y7-13 Enrichment and Extended Schools Curriculum				

1. All pupils must arrive at the Academy by 8.15am.
2. Breakfast is served between 7.45am and 8.15am and is free to all pupils.
3. All pupils begin their day with Prayer/Reflection followed by Morning Meeting.
4. During examination periods Year 11 and Year 13 will have 6 periods per day finishing at 3.50pm and 4.00pm respectively.
5. For Year 7 - Year 11, same day corrections start at 2.50pm and finish at 3.20pm / 3.50pm.
6. Base Camp for pupils commences at 8.25am and finishes at 3.50pm.
7. For Year 7 – Year 11, Drop everything and Reason occurs every alternate Thursday at 11.00am.
8. Reading Canon, literacy and numeracy support occurs every other day at 11.00am for all pupils.



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



Lunchtime

Family Dining is a crucial part of Academy life. We expect pupils to eat a healthy meal. Pupils may bring a packed lunch which should be eaten in the designated areas.

However, pupils are not allowed to bring in energy/fizzy drinks. If a pupil brings in anything deemed inappropriate by the Academy, items will be confiscated and pupils will receive a sanction.

A St Aidan's water bottle will be provided to each pupil so that they can regularly drink water throughout the day. We encourage pupils to label their bottle with their name. Water refilling stations are available across the Academy. Replacement water bottles cost £1.60. Single use plastic bottles are not permitted.

Teaching & Learning

At St Aidan's Catholic Academy, we have a relentless focus on the highest standards of pupil achievement. Our teaching is driven by our core values; hard work, trust and fairness. They are the values that underpin achievement for all pupils and are evident in all classrooms.

Our teachers are passionate about teaching and learning. They use the latest research to deliver an evidence-based approach to teaching, learning and assessment; an approach which is continuously evaluated to determine impact and efficacy.

Teaching for mastery is promoted across all subjects and disciplines. Teachers will revisit curriculum components over time, ensuring all pupils practice retrieval, master skills and concepts, develop long-term memory and make progress from their starting points. The use of ongoing assessment allows teachers to evaluate the learning of all pupils and ensure that next steps are specifically planned to develop deep understanding.

We expect all pupils to make outstanding individual progress through each phase of their education. This will result in pupils succeeding in achieving, at least, eight good GCSEs including English and Mathematics.

We achieve this mission through an unwavering focus on providing the very best teaching, firmly believing that every child has the entitlement to access to the full richness of the curriculum, preparing all pupils for the top of their mountain and supporting them to get there.

Curriculum

Our aim, in partnership with respective parents and carers, is to support pupils in their formation: spiritual and social; intellectual and emotional; aesthetic and physical through the provision of a broad, balanced and aspirational curriculum, a rigorous, vibrant curriculum which responds to needs, and at its heart recognises justice, liberty, peace and human freedom, whilst fostering intellectual curiosity and academic achievement.

Each pupil studies an exciting and varied range of subjects, including those with which there is already familiarity such as Mathematics, English, Science and Religious Education. In addition, each pupil encounters a breadth of Humanities, Spanish, Art, Design, Music, Physical Education, PSHE, Citizenship and Information Computing and Technology.



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



This crucial development is supplemented by an extensive enrichment programme that connects learning to purpose, context and real-life application; pupils are provided a wealth of varying experiences, aligned highly to our Ascent initiative, to develop independence, leadership and communication skills. This includes local and international projects, charity work, and the world of work and a wide range of sporting activities.

In addition to this curriculum we have also broadened our online learning opportunities:

Microsoft TEAMS

We use Microsoft Teams to safeguard your son's education in the following ways:

- Provide continuity in learning and access to the curriculum
- Enable pupils who experience gaps in their learning from illness to be able to access resources, support and to continue to make progress from home
- Provide materials that allow our pupils to study independently in aspects of learning through our Character development rooms.
- Develop pupils' fluency in the overarching ideas and concepts in the core subjects outside of the classroom.

During the transition process all pupils will receive training with regards to TEAMS.

We truly believe that **every** individual is capable of excellence and we encourage all pupils to work hard, fulfilling their potential to pursue their next steps in life, whether it be their choice of university or a high-quality career.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (SMSC)

The message of 'Christ at the Centre' is held at the core of our curriculum vision and as such the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) enrichment of our pupils is at the heart of the Academy's work; every pupil's journey into adulthood is a journey of faith; one that recognises that true justice, peace and human freedom require, first and foremost, respect for the dignity of human life: equal in the eyes of the Lord; equality through education.

Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)

Every child or young person's journey into adulthood is a journey of faith: one that recognises that true justice, peace and human freedom require, first and foremost, respect for the dignity of human life. Any teaching about love and sexual relationships in a Catholic school must be rooted in the Catholic Church's teaching about what it is to be truly human in Christ and what it means to live well in relationship with others. With this in mind health and sexual education are covered during Religious Education, Science, Tutorial time, assembly and PDE lessons. Outside speakers will come into the Academy to talk about diet, hygiene, exercise, and relationships and sex. Personal health matters are taught in Science lessons as part of the National Curriculum, and backed up with discussions on relationships and moral values in RE and PDE lessons. We use resources produced by TenTen to deliver our Relationship and Sex Education, all resources are approved by the Diocese.

Personal Development Education (PDE)

Personal development is interwoven through the pastoral, academic and enrichment opportunities that we have in school. Opportunities for personal development are strategically planned throughout



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



the school day, starting with Examen during morning meeting, the development of key personal skills in all lessons, experiencing the rich culture of our world described and discussed in our reading canon, through the relationships with adults in the community and our wider curricular offer.

Alongside these experiences we have a bespoke personal development curriculum. We have designed Personal Development Education (PDE) around DfE Guidance for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship. We have a programme of assembly, liturgy and careers education, including working with external agencies, to ensure each individual has a positive personal development journey, preparing them for the world of work and adulthood. More information regarding this curriculum can be found on our website under the curriculum area of PDE.

Supporting our bespoke personal development curriculum is our Ascent Programme, a carefully designed framework that nurtures character, broadens experience, and prepares pupils for life beyond school.

The programme is organised into six strands, each led by a dedicated member of staff, ensuring a rich and varied experience for every pupil:

- Civic Engagement
- Arts & Culture
- Nature
- Outdoors & Adventure
- Sport & Physical Activity
- Wider Life Skills

Each strand of the Ascent Programme provides meaningful opportunities for pupils to grow both personally and socially. Together, they support the development of the **eight essential skills** required for success beyond school: Listening, Speaking, Problem Solving, Creativity, Adapting, Planning, Leadership, and Teamwork. These skills are woven throughout all activities and experiences, ensuring pupils develop into confident, capable and well-rounded individuals.

The six strands of the Ascent Programme are:

Civic Engagement - Pupils are encouraged to become active, responsible citizens who understand their role within society. Through participation in community projects and social action, pupils develop empathy, leadership, teamwork and communication skills, while learning how they can contribute positively to the world around them.

Arts & Culture - This strand fosters creativity, self-expression and cultural awareness. Pupils engage in a variety of artistic and cultural experiences which develop their creativity, adaptability and confidence in speaking and presenting. Through exploring different perspectives, they strengthen their ability to think critically and communicate effectively.

Nature - By engaging with the natural world, pupils develop a sense of curiosity, responsibility and respect for their environment. Activities within this strand support problem solving, planning and adaptability, while promoting wellbeing and encouraging pupils to become thoughtful stewards of the world around them.

Outdoors & Adventure - Pupils are challenged to step beyond their comfort zones through adventurous and experiential learning. This strand builds resilience, teamwork, leadership and problem-solving skills, encouraging pupils to adapt to new situations and work collaboratively to overcome challenges.



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



Sport & Physical Activity - Participation in physical activity promotes not only health and wellbeing, but also teamwork, leadership and perseverance. Pupils develop communication skills, learn the importance of planning and strategy, and build resilience through both individual and team-based activities.

Wider Life Skills - This strand equips pupils with the practical skills and knowledge needed for adult life. Through a range of real-life learning experiences, pupils develop independence, planning, problem solving and adaptability, alongside strong communication and interpersonal skills.

Through the Ascent Programme, pupils are supported to grow in confidence, character and capability, ensuring they are well-prepared to succeed in their future pathways and to make a positive contribution to society.

Pupils from all year groups take part in a wide range of activities and experiences across and beyond the curriculum, contributing fully to the life of their school and the local community. Our aim is to develop the interests and abilities and provide valuable learning experiences beyond the taught curriculum. In doing so they learn to recognise their own worth, work well with others and become increasingly responsible for their own learning. They reflect on their experiences and understand how they are developing personally and socially, tackling many of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues that are part of growing up. Pupils also find out about the main political and social institutions that affect their lives and about their responsibilities, rights and duties as individuals and members of communities. They learn to understand and respect our common humanity; diversity and differences so that they can go on to form the effective, fulfilling relationships that are an essential part of life and learning.

Wider Curricula Activities

At St Aidan's Catholic Academy, in addition to their classroom studies, we believe that every child should be provided with a range of opportunities outside of the classroom that enable them to fulfil their God given potential. Our extensive enrichment programme allows all pupils at the Academy to participate in a wide range of activities in order to foster friendships and develop key employability, leadership and interpersonal skills, which will ensure our young men, achieve their full potential and have great success in the future.

There is an expectation that pupils will attend **at least one** form of enrichment activity each week as research shows that pupils who engage in enrichment opportunities develop the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding they need to make good choices and to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active, responsible citizens.

Activities provided include: a range of sporting activities; football, tennis, basketball, dodgeball and many more, musical enrichment; including orchestra, private tuition and choir, as well as enrichment opportunities in languages, science, well-being, Lego, archaeology, robotics, debate society and films group. Pupils that have a love for reading are invited to join our reading club every morning before school. There is also daily support for homework before and after school. Our enrichment programme runs across a 13-week cycle, with new opportunities available each cycle.

Alongside our broad afterschool enrichment offer we also provide opportunities throughout the year for a wide variety of educational visits. These range from local visits within lesson time to nearby places of interest, to residential activities further afield.

As part of the Academy life and the National Curriculum, all pupils **must** take part in and experience a variety of outdoor activities. During Years 7 and 8, a residential activity will take place and **every** pupil is strongly encouraged to participate in these experiences.

CEIAG



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



St Aidan's Catholic Academy embeds Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance into our overall approach to raising aspirations and developing a culture of Hard Work, Trust and Fairness. We aim to develop pupils who are employable, confident and ambitious young men with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in their chosen career.

Through our dedicated careers programme, curriculum and school enrichment programme, we support the development of all our pupils to ensure they gain the knowledge, skills and experience they need to make informed choices at key transition points and succeed in learning and the world of work. The careers programme is sequenced from Yr7 - Yr13 and aligned to the new CDI framework and the Gatsby Benchmarks. Throughout each academic year a variety of experiences will be on offer, including encounters with employers/employees, encounters with further and higher education, experience of the workplace, and personal guidance.

The careers programme and related information is shared with all pupils, staff, parents and employers via the school website. Careers events are shared in our newsletter to highlight key areas of the careers programme and share good new stories with families.

Literacy

We believe for all pupils to succeed they must be equipped with enough language to access the pleasure of reading, the excitement of writing and to explore new subjects, unlocking the potential to learn and grow as individuals. A strong command of language is not only essential in the wider academic world but it can also affect a pupil's self-esteem and confidence. Research suggests that pupils who read more frequently tend to have more academic success and go on to have better career prospects after they leave school than those who read less frequently. Further to this, reading has been proven to help lessen anxiety and improve wellbeing (Clark and Rumbold 2006).

With this in mind, the importance of reading is promoted each and every single day through St Aidan's Reading Canon. Pupils participate in four Reading Canon sessions in Form Time each week. The **'Reading Canon'** programme underpins the personal development of our pupils, develops confidence in oracy and allows pupils to share the joy of reading a text with others. In **'Reading Canon'** sessions tutor groups in Years 7-13 share the communal reading of three books per year from the **St Aidan's Reading Canon**.

The range of books have been picked for their interest and challenge, introducing pupils to new vocabulary and developing pupils' confidence and strength in reading. Exposing pupils to a culture where storytelling is valued and rich, aids all of us: it enables older pupils to look to anecdotes to help them understand new concepts; it helps younger pupils assimilate ideas; and it encourages us all to think about our curriculum as a collection of great stories of world culture. The books that make up the prescribed Canon come from a range of cultures, timelines and genres, with the intention of promoting inclusivity and diversity, allowing our pupils to become citizens of the world (9 protected characteristics) with full understanding of British Values.



The prescribed Canon is as follows:

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
The Curious Incident of the Dog	The Kite Runner	Kes	The Bookseller of Kabul	The Road	The Picture of Dorian Gray	The Great Gatsby
Northern Lights	Knife of Never Letting Go	Noughts and Crosses	Boys Don't Cry		Oranges are not the Only Fruit	My Name is Why
I am Malala	The Woman in Black	Animal Farm	To Kill a Mockingbird		1984	The Tattooist of Auschwitz

Exposure to wider academic reading through our 'Scholarly Reading' programme commences from Year 7. The 'Scholarly Reading' programme aims to encourage our pupils to read more around each subject they study and increase their 'cultural capital' and knowledge of the world around them. The texts that pupils read always relate to the subjects they are taught, but cover issues, topics or incidents that aren't necessarily in their day-to-day school curriculum. Departments choose pieces of text which will stimulate pupils' interest and encourage discussion taking pupils beyond the National Curriculum.

Pupils are provided with regular opportunities within every subject's curriculum to transcribe, that is, physically write or type and compose, generating ideas and translating them into words, sentences and structured texts. Pupils are given explicit instruction from subject teachers in the 'rules of writing' in their subject discipline. Throughout every cycle pupils are provided with the opportunity to write extended pieces. The 'Extended Writing' pieces are unique to St Aidan's and are opportunities for pupils to consolidate their knowledge on threshold concepts and are designed to aid pupils in fostering and refining ideas, whilst also developing composition and effect in writing so that they write like Geographers, Scientists, and ultimately subject specialists.

Pupils are also provided with regular opportunities within every subject's curriculum to engage in oracy activities, that is, speaking and listening exercises to develop their verbal communication skills. Pupils are given explicit instruction from subject teachers in the 'rules of speaking' in their subject discipline using 'think-develop-justify-present'. Oracy provides pupils with the opportunity to consolidate their knowledge on threshold concepts and are designed to aid pupils in fostering and refining ideas, whilst also developing their ability to speak like Geographers, Scientists, and ultimately subject specialists.

Within the curriculum, literacy support is rigorous and sequential to support the needs of individuals with particular attention on pupils who have not yet met the national expectation at KS2. All pupils are screened at key points during the year to guarantee that we meet their individual literacy requirements. Our goal is to ensure that all pupils have secure phonic knowledge and are fully fluent in their reading and comprehension so that they can access the full richness of the curriculum. We recognise that to truly ensure that every pupil succeeds, whatever their background or circumstance, we must work closely with parents and carers also. Parents can support their children by continuing to read with them. To support parents/carers in this, we provide regular opportunities throughout the school year with parent engagement sessions.



Numeracy

Mathematics is a tool for everyday life. It is a whole network of concepts and relationships which provide a way of viewing and making sense of the world. It is used to analyse and communicate information and ideas and to tackle a range of practical tasks and real-life problems. It also provides the materials and means for creating new imaginative worlds to explore. Being numerate is crucial to allowing pupils the opportunity to thrive within all the exciting opportunities mathematics has to offer. Daily opportunities to develop these essential mental maths skills are provided within morning meeting when everyone is challenged to take part in a round of countdown.

Our curriculum is developed to ensure that tasks and resources are used to challenge and support pupils' mathematics. Manipulatives and representations are used to provide scaffolding to support pupils when engaging with mathematical ideas, until independence is achieved, and they can then be removed. To further deepen mathematical understanding all teachers provide extensive opportunities to practise and develop metacognition. This includes regular opportunities for pupils to explain their approaches to mathematical tasks to themselves, the teacher, and other pupils. Within our curriculum, problem solving is taught explicitly not simply as a challenge or add on to a task. Problems are deconstructed and information about the problem is slowly revealed to give pupils the opportunity to consider what the question may ask and what information may be required.

We believe that all teachers, regardless of their subject specialism or level of responsibility, should model confidence and interest in maths, developing a culture where staff and pupils believe that everyone can succeed in maths if they work hard. Drop Everything and Reason (DEAR) supports this development through embedding problem solving and reasoning across the Academy, addressing common gaps and misconceptions.

To further develop mathematical confidence, teachers across subjects provide access to engaging and challenging tasks which support pupils in developing mathematical understanding. Careful consideration is given to how tasks provide opportunities to discuss and compare different solution approaches, provide opportunities to investigate mathematical structure and build conceptual knowledge in tandem with procedural knowledge. Maths specialists work in collaboration with other departments to ensure that the approaches used when teaching mathematical skills are consistently applied across the academy.

Structured interventions are used to provide additional support for pupils that are identified from assessments as having gaps in knowledge. Depending upon the support required pupils may attend a 30-minute intervention session each week with a bespoke program of study that will allow gaps in knowledge and misconceptions to be addressed.

Pupil Progress

St Aidan's Catholic Academy considers the greatest impact of the curriculum to be high rates of pupil progress.

Progress in:

1. Pupils' physical, moral and intellectual God given talents: enabling all pupils to flourish as a whole and complete person, preparing them fully to enter the world as active citizens.
2. Values, motivation, aspirations and the moral imperatives that inform their choices and actions as people.
3. The development of knowledge: progress in knowing more and remembering more. The future requires the acquisition and application of a wide range of knowledge. Only when pupils acquire this knowledge will they be ready to lead and participate as active citizens.
4. The ability to apply knowledge: progress in knowledge being applied in more challenging, relevant and engaging ways.



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



5. The acquisition of 21st century skills to translate knowledge into actions for success.
6. Pupil understanding of how well they are doing, both in relation to themselves and others.

Our 6 Learning Habits

To support pupils in upholding our core values, we have six learning habits. These habits have been carefully chosen in collaboration with pupils, teachers, leaders and governors. They are designed to be achievable by all pupils and to ensure that all pupils leave us with the skills needed to be successful in their future choices. As a result of these learning habits we offer the best possible culture for your child to learn in. Our pupils adhere to these six simple habits of excellence every day.

1. No answering back

Our key priority at St Aidan's is to ensure pupils can learn and develop in a safe environment. We ask that pupils do not answer back or question the decision of teachers as it stops others from learning and it undermines the scholarly and respectful atmosphere which we pride ourselves upon. We develop pupils who have the skills to challenge decisions in a respectful manner, at an appropriate time.

2. Uniform

We are proud of our culture and heritage at St. Aidan's. We want all members of our community to know that they belong. We would not want to highlight a lack of financial equality through our clothing. As a result, we ask that all pupils comply with our uniform code at all times, including the journey to and from school. We have spent time working with families to ensure our uniform is as affordable as possible and offer bespoke support to families who need it. We encourage parents to get in touch if they would like to access this support:

- Pupils must be dressed properly in full school uniform.
- Haircuts should be professional preparing pupils for the future. Hair styles should be of subtle styling and natural hair colour with no exaggerated shaping. This includes no steps, undercuts, lines, scratches or any pattern shaved into the hair. No lines in eyebrows are permitted.
- Trainers and boots must not be worn only formal black leather shoes, no suede.
- Black or dark grey socks only.
- House Badges should be worn on left lapel.
- Shirts tucked in at all times, top button fastened.
- Ties should be fastened up to the neck properly and reasonable length.
- Coats should not be worn indoors and removed immediately on entry to the building.
- Jewellery is not allowed in the Academy and will be confiscated for collection at the end of the school day by the pupil: wrist watches are allowed – no smart watches.
- Every pupil should have a bag to carry books and equipment to and from school every day.
- Pupils should be properly equipped for every lesson.
- Pupils must bring the correct kit and equipment for PE and practical lessons.



3. Homework

Subject teachers set homework which supports pupils to climb their own mountains: giving stability; providing nourishment; recognising learning as the fundamental focus of all our work; ensuring that each child can develop as a whole person and 'celebrate life to the full' in order to reach the summits of their mountains. It is vital that a secure knowledge of the curriculum is acquired. Homework focuses on key Concept driven essential knowledge for pupils to build upon allowing them then to fully access the breadth and depth of the curriculum.

All homework should be completed on time and to a good standard, neatly and with pride. Homework club is available every night from 2.50pm in room 311 and our Hot Dining Hall. All homework must be completed for the right day and time. ***Please read additional information in Appendix 1.***

4. On-task

To reach the top of the mountain, we insist that all pupils are 'on task' or 'tracking' the teacher at all times. All lessons in the school are challenging, therefore it is vital that pupils focus for 100% of the lesson. All pupils working together in their lessons ensures that everyone can succeed together.

5. Punctuality

As well as providing pupils with the academic skills and knowledge they need, our learning habits focus on developing the personal skills required to succeed. We insist on punctuality to school and to each and every lesson as we know that this is vital for future education and employment. Every pupil should be on the school yard with all of the equipment they will need by 8.15 am each day. A pupil will be considered late if they do not arrive within three minutes to the start of each lesson. Please support this by keeping to reasonable bed-times and preparing in the morning before school. Your son may worry about this at first but he will soon pick up good habits.

6. Equipment

As your son will know (or soon find out), when we climb our mountains we have to be prepared. Having the correct equipment ready at hand makes all challenges more accessible. In order to achieve this we expect every pupil to carry a sensible and suitable bag containing the items listed below to every lesson. At first, you could help with packing your son's school bag with the relevant books and equipment for the next day after reviewing his own timetable each night. The 100% Book is a vital document and pupils are expected to take great care of it. If the 100% Book is lost, a pupil will be expected to replace it at a cost.

There are a number of items that pupils must bring to school daily:

A clear pencil case containing:

- 2 black pens
- 2 green pens
- Pencils
- Rubber
- Ruler
- Scientific Calculator (Casio)
- Independent reading book – age specific
- PE Kit (on the days they have PE)



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



- St Aidan's water bottle
- Pupil Planner
- 100% Book
- Maths Homework book

Note. Pencil sharpeners are not allowed in school as they contain a blade.

100% book

All pupils will be provided with a 100% book that includes all of the key information needed for all of their taught subjects, each cycle throughout the academic year. This book will contain:

- Curriculum organisers: providing pupils with key 'tier 3' vocabulary needed for a particular component. In addition, they will suggest strategies for revision and ensuring knowledge gaps are filled at the earliest opportunity, as well as providing pupils with a list of key questions they should be able to answer as they progress through a component; allowing pupils to monitor and evaluate their own understanding of the taught curriculum.
- Scholarly reading: used to encourage our pupils to read more around each subject they study and increase their 'cultural capital' and knowledge of the world around them. The texts that pupils read always relate to the subjects they are taught, but will cover issues, topics or incidents in greater depth and sometimes from different, new and refreshing angles.
- 100% sheets: a summary of the foundational knowledge that underpins the curriculum encountered throughout a cycle.

The purpose of the 100% sheets is to utilise retrieval practice in order to promote pupil learning. Retrieval practice strengthens the cues that enable retrieval of previously learnt material. In struggling to remember something that is almost forgotten, pupils search for connections that help bring it back to mind. The act of successfully retrieving and rehearsing something that is to be remembered leaves a trace in the memory that makes the path easier to follow again. Securing this knowledge base will allow pupils to develop their skills of understanding, analysis and evaluation in lessons more effectively.

Retrieval works best when successful retrieval attempts are repeated and for that reason the 100% sheets are used daily for homework with all pupils, which is set during morning meeting. Pupils should use 'look, cover, write, check' to learn the content of the key skills, key knowledge and key vocabulary section of the specified 100% sheet.

- **Look** - Pupils are first of all asked to read through the 100% sheet assigned for homework that evening including saying aloud each of the key vocabulary terms.
- **Cover & write** – This is the active step. Pupils need to remove the information from view and then engage in a generative recall process; noting down all information given within the key skills, key knowledge and key vocabulary boxes. This will include drawing and labelling any diagrams, and the definitions of key vocabulary.
- **Check** – After the generative process, it is important that pupils reveal the covered information to check the accuracy of their recall. Using a green pen, pupils should correct any spelling mistakes, missing bits or mistakes.
- **Respond** – Pupils are asked to complete 10 comprehension style questions on the homework task. These should be answered in full sentences using the knowledge they have gained in completing the 100% homework. Answers will be reviewed during the subsequent morning meeting.

To gain the most benefit, pupils do need to successfully retrieve a certain amount of the information during retrieval practice, and for this reason pupils will be tested on the content of the book each day during



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



morning meeting in addition to regular testing by staff within lesson time. Testing not only aids retention but also helps identify gaps in knowledge. The tests will be accessible to all pupils and consist of a series of short-answer and multiple-choice questions.

Behaviour for Learning

The aim of our behaviour system is to ensure all pupil can thrive fulfilling their God given potential in a safe environment which supports and challenges. Our system is simple, fair and designed to enable all pupils to achieve. Your son will be supported to understand our core values and learning habits. By living and breathing these each day he will thrive in our culture of excellence. Familiarising yourself with our core values and learning habits will give you and your son peace of mind, and will allow the best possible start to secondary school. Regular parent engagement sessions are available to support parents in becoming familiar with our culture of excellence.

At times pupils may fail to meet the expected standard of excellence. In this circumstance we support pupils to identify the choices they made which led to this behaviour and how they can improve the following day. In the first instance this is carried out through a correction. You would be informed via Arbor should this occur and your son will have a 30-minute correction the same night, the length of this will increase to 1 hour for any child who receives more than 1 behaviour point.

If a pupil breaks more than three rules on any given day, we ensure that they can self-reflect by removing them from normal lessons and placing them in Base Camp. This maintains the culture of excellence in our classrooms and allows the pupil involved to be supported. Whilst in Base Camp pupils consolidate foundational knowledge and finish the school day at 3.50pm.

After completing a correction, pupils are given a fresh start the next school day. If a pupil chose not to attend (or presents with more serious behaviour) it would result in him being placed in Base Camp the following day.

The consequences of missing a second correction will be more serious. *Please see our Behaviour for Learning Policy for further information.*

Supporting Individual Needs – SEND Team

The Academy encourages high aspirations, high motivation and high achievement for all. This vision applies equally to pupils with any kind of special educational need. Our philosophy is to educate pupils as far as possible within the normal provision of the Academy, which includes a strong teaching model and early intervention with extra teaching and individual attention for pupils who are having difficulty reaching the expected standards; pupil progress is monitored closely and intervention for those who are not making expected progress is highly tailored and responsive to assessment data and needs.

Additional individualised support for pupils is provided under the direction of the SEND department.

The SEND Department is for all pupils – be they disabled, more able, dyslexic, dyspraxic, with learning or behavioural difficulties, or for pupils who just need advice and support. Our experienced team will always be there to help and support the pupils. Should you require any assistance or have any queries regarding the Academy's provision for your child, please contact the SEND Department who will arrange to meet with you. *Please see SEND policy for further information.*



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



Attendance

Our aim is to ensure our pupils are safe and supported at all times therefore attendance is monitored very carefully at the Academy. Every day missed is a learning opportunity wasted. If your son misses school without school being informed, you will be contacted by a member of staff by telephone/ letter/ home visit or invited for a meeting in school to discuss this.

Our Reading Room in the cold dining hall is open from 7.45am for pupils to participate in quiet reading. The dining hall is open for breakfast from 7.45am.

Should a pupil arrive late for school they will be issued with a 30-minute same day correction. Punctuality is a skill that is necessary for adulthood, this learning habit prepares pupils for their high-quality careers.

Pupils wishing to stay after school to complete homework can do so in our homework club in Room 311.

Absence

When a pupil is absent from the Academy with no advanced notice, for example because of illness, parents must call school with a reason for absence before **8.30am** and each morning of absence after that. You can do this by simply leaving a message on the pupil absence line at any point before 8.30am – a member of staff may call you back to discuss the absence in more detail, and validate the absence. To report an absence, call 0191 5200333 and select the pupil absence option.

To avoid pupils developing gaps in their subject knowledge and a negative impact on their progress, it is important that routine appointments for doctors, dentists, optician etc are made **after 4pm** or in holidays if possible. When it is known in advance that an absence is needed, a letter or appointment card must be shown at least 24 hours before the appointment to your son's Head of House who will issue a pass out. This pass out must be shown at reception when leaving the school and kept on the pupil in case they are challenged by anyone outside of school. It is expected that pupils attend school prior to and or return to school after their appointment, where possible. You are discouraged from visiting reception on the day of the appointment to ask for your child to leave without evidence of an arranged appointment.

Note: Pupils in Year 7, 8 and 9 must be collected if leaving the Academy during the school day. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 can leave without an adult collecting them.

Any unexplained absences will be recorded on our system as 'unauthorised'. Any pupils with persistent absences will be referred to the local authority attendance team, who will, when applicable enforce the legislation as detailed in the section 7 of the Education Act 1996 – which places a duty on parents to ensure their child receives a suitable education. This offence carries a maximum sentence of £2500 fine and or 3-month custodial sentence. This is the last course of action we can take as a school in order to facilitate an improvement in attendance, however we have a strong pastoral support system in place to engage with you to eradicate any issues which may prevent regular attendance. We strongly advise you contact your son's Head of House or the Academy attendance officer to discuss any issues at your earliest opportunity.

Leave of Absence

The Academy **does not** authorise holidays in term time, this is in line with guidance set by the Department for Education which states schools should no longer routinely authorise holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances – this is done at the discretion of the Head Teacher. Please write to the Headteacher before the absence, you will be informed in writing of the decision as to authorise absence or not. If no absence form is received, the academy will refer the matter to the LA attendance team for consideration of legal action.



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



Pupil Planner

At the beginning of each year, pupils are issued with a planner to record homework. The planner is a very important document and pupils are expected to take great care of it. If the planner is defaced, a pupil will be expected to replace the planner at a cost of £5.

Cashless Catering

It's simple, safe and convenient and your child will not need to carry cash into school. Arbor Pay is an online payment system for schools. It allows parents to pay quickly and securely for school meals, trips and activities, uniforms, music lessons and fees. You simply top-up account online in advance by debit or credit card. Your balance can then be used immediately to pay for any of your children's items at school.

We ask that you download the 'Arbor' App. This will allow school to send text notifications rather than text messages which saves the school money. We will send you a welcome email once your son is on roll.

What are the benefits to parents and pupils?

- Arbor is easy-to-use and will offer you the freedom to make online payments whenever and wherever you like, 24hrs a day 7 days a week.
- The technology used has the highest internet security available ensuring that your money will reach school safely – offering you peace of mind.
- Payments can be made by credit, debit card or Apple Pay.
- Full payment histories and statements are available to you securely online at any time.
- Your child won't have to worry about losing money at school again.
- You can see what your child has purchased.

What are the benefits to our school?

When parents use Arbor, the benefit to school is huge. You will help us to reduce workloads for all staff, creating more time to lend to educational support and the smooth running of the school. Using Arbor also ensures that all financial transactions are safe and secure - helping us to remove costs associated with us having to manage cash securely on the school premises.

Contact with Families

The aim of the Academy is to assist parents, who are the primary educators of their children, in the education and formation of their children. Together we share the crucial role of ensuring children achieve at the highest level, adhering to the Academy culture and making the most of the diverse opportunities on offer.

We take pride in our strong relationships with parents. A successful partnership between home and school supports pupils on their journey to be the best version of themselves. We provide regular data updates for parents via text, email, social media, our website, our school newsletter and parental engagement sessions. Parents will receive subject progress reports at 3 points across the year - at the end of each assessment cycle (13 weeks), this contains additional information including attendance, punctuality and attitude to learning.

Parents contacting the Academy to discuss an issue should do this via their son's Head of House. Heads of House aim to return a call / email to parents within 24 hours of first receiving the call/message.



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



Other ways the Academy may communicate with you:

1. **Parent Evenings and Information sessions:** We expect the majority of parents to attend parent evenings and information sessions.
2. **Arbor communications:** Used to pass information to parents about important issues such as school closures in bad weather – these do not cost you any money. Please ensure you have downloaded and are logged into the Arbor App. Please ensure that you update the Academy with any changes of mobile number or e-mail address.
3. **Arbor:** Achievement, behaviour and corrections will be communicated to parents via Arbor. Parents will receive a welcome email with instructions on how to log in.
4. **Academy website:** Where you will find up to date information regarding the Academy, including policies, and term dates as well as a link to ParentPay.
5. **Letters:** Whole school letters are also posted on the Academy website, emailed to parents and shared via Twitter as well as being issued to pupils to take home.
6. **Telephone:** Heads of House and teaching staff may phone parents to discuss progress or developing issues.
7. **Instagram:** Parents should also connect to the Academy Instagram Account to receive regular updates: [sacatholicacademy](#)

Lost Property

When pupils come to the Academy we do request that all their possessions, including clothing, should be named, in order to facilitate returning found articles. All lost property should be handed in at pupil reception. If a pupil loses any item he should ask at the pupil reception if it has been found.

Items that are not named are placed in Lost Property. These are held until the end of term and then put on display for the pupils to look at. Any unclaimed property will then be disposed of.

Media, Film and Photographs

From time to time the Academy receives requests from the media to take photographs and/or films of Academy events and activities. In the majority of cases most parents are happy for their child to be photographed providing that appropriate safeguards are implemented which, of course, are always observed by us. Photos and images of our pupils remain anonymous and pupils are referred to as "Academy pupils".

Social Media

If you have a concern regarding your son, raise this directly with your son's Head of House rather than airing your concerns over social network sites. You can raise your concern by making an appointment to discuss the issues with your son's Head of House. Any malicious or threatening comments constituting harassment will be reported as abuse to the social media administrators and may warrant Police investigation. As such we ask that you refrain from posting comments about members of staff and the Academy on social network sites.

A copy of the Academy's complaints procedure is on our website and can be provided by the Academy upon request should you wish to follow this route.



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



Mobile Phones

At St. Aidan's we want our pupils to focus on learning and face to face social skills. Mobile phones can cause distraction and safeguarding concerns. Therefore, we ask that they are not used within our Academy gates. If pupils need to contact home, they are to see their Head of House at an appropriate time. A pupil does not, therefore, have any need for a mobile phone in the Academy. If a family feels that a pupil needs one for the journey to and from the Academy, then the phone must remain **switched-off** and out of sight throughout the school day.

Any pupil found using a mobile phone during the day will have the phone confiscated. It will not be returned until an adult comes into school to collect it, this must occur during office hours. The pupil will also receive a suitable sanction.

The Academy accepts no responsibility for the safety or security of the above equipment.



Appendix 1 – Homework additional information

Homework

Homework Intent	Pupils receive two main types of homework at St Aidan's: 1. Climb work – Homework is set which supports pupils to climb their own mountains: giving stability; providing nourishment; recognising learning as the fundamental focus of all our work; ensuring that each child can develop as a whole person and 'celebrate life to the full' in order to reach the summits of their mountains. During pupils' ascent it is vital that a secure knowledge of the curriculum is acquired. The ascent homework focuses on Key Concept driven essential knowledge for pupils to build upon allowing them then to fully access the breadth and depth of the curriculum. 2. Summit work- Subject Teachers provide activities that promote pupil independence, exploration and discovery in order to thrive and flourish as a whole person, developing the necessary knowledge and skills to open doors to a successful career, apprenticeship, employment or Higher/Further Education. Our aim is to provide a platform that consistently challenges all pupils to reach higher, to never settle for mediocrity and to be intrinsically motivated to be the best possible version of themselves at all times.
	<u>Independent reading for pleasure (Y7-11)</u> Pupils must do 20mins (minimum) of independent reading for pleasure each night. This could be silent reading or reading aloud to parents/ family member. Exposing pupils to a culture where storytelling is valued and rich, aids all of us: it enables older pupils to look to anecdotes to help them understand new concepts; it helps younger pupils assimilate ideas; and it encourages us all to think about our curriculum as a collection of great stories of world culture. Reading is a joint partnership between the school and parents. All evidence suggests that success in secondary school is built upon pupils' mastery of reading. We strongly urge parents to continue to be part of their son's reading journey and to support and model reading in their homes.
	<u>Numeracy (Y7 - 11)</u> - At St Aidan's we believe a strong focus on numeracy is essential: all children and young people require numeracy skills to gain access to learning and to succeed in life. - All pupils will complete 90 minutes of homework each week on Sparx; this will include multiplication practice for year 7. - Each homework is bespoke to each individual allowing everyone to succeed whilst still being challenged. Short videos are available to support pupils if they are finding any questions difficult and to close gaps in knowledge. - The first hour of homework comprises of 60% new content linking to the taught curriculum and 40% retrieval practice. This core component is completed when pupils have completed all questions accurately. The remaining 30 minutes provides additional challenge through the opportunity to complete problems solving and develop a deeper understanding of the curriculum. - All pupils will have an orange homework book in which they must show all working out and answers to the work they are completing. The quality of work and presentation in these books will be checked by class teachers in the first lesson of Maths after the completion date. - If pupils do not complete this homework to the required standard it will be recorded on arbor as a correction in the usual way, once correction is complete, pupils get a fresh start. - Parents will receive weekly updates via email regarding progress and completion of Sparx homework. - Celebrating outcomes: The Maths department will develop league tables to display in school, website feed and social media to inform parents and pupils of their successes.



	<u>Knowledge Gap tasks (Y7-9)</u> Formative assessment: - Following a formative assessment Y7 and Y8 teachers should plan a knowledge gap lesson to address common misconceptions and weaknesses of the class, no additional homework is set. - Following a formative assessment in Y9, teachers should set a short homework based on the common misconceptions and weaknesses of the class. This can be delivered via an online platform or paper-based activity. The activity should be appropriate for the pupils allowing them to close the knowledge gaps and develop a secure knowledge of the curriculum. - Class teachers should take responsibility to quality assure the homework of each pupil; at this point staff should identify issues: lack of effort or lack of understanding, for example. If lack of effort, an appropriate sanction should be applied; if lack of understanding then further individualised intervention should be provided. Summative assessment: - Following a summative assessment in Y7-9 a review lesson will occur to address the individual pupil gaps in line with the ARR document (pupils do not receive a homework task for Summative assessments in Y7-9). <u>Knowledge Gap tasks (Y10/11)</u> - Knowledge Gap Tasks for Year 10 and Year 11 - these should be issued following a formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment: - Teachers should set a short homework based on the common misconceptions and weaknesses of the class. This can be delivered via an online platform or paper-based activity. The activity should be appropriate for the pupils and allow them to close the knowledge gaps, developing a secure knowledge of the curriculum. - Class teachers should take responsibility to quality assure the homework of each pupil. At this point staff should identify issues: lack of effort or lack of understanding, for example. If lack of effort, an appropriate sanction should be applied; if lack of understanding then further individualised intervention should be provided. Summative assessment: - Pupils in Y10 and Y11 will complete a review lesson to address misconceptions, weaknesses and allow teachers to set task(s) that address individual weaknesses/needs for the individual pupil. In addition to this, pupils will also receive a knowledge gap task that is tailored to individual needs. Class teachers should take responsibility to quality assure the homework of each pupil; at this point staff should identify issues: lack of effort or lack of understanding, for example. If lack of effort an appropriate sanction should be applied; if lack of understanding then further individualised intervention should be provided. - All knowledge gap tasks are designed to ensure pupils develop a secure knowledge of the taught curriculum. All formative assessments should be marked using the visualiser as outlined in the marking policy. All homework, including knowledge gap tasks should be recorded on Arbor to ensure parents are informed.
Summit Work	<u>Ascent Programme</u> All pupils participate in our exciting Ascent initiative which provides a diverse range of experiences to enable each individual to begin their journey to the top of their own personal mountain. Pupils engage in a range of tasks to reach milestones on their mountain every academic year. This is developed for all pupils as they progress further through the school. <u>Greater Depth</u> All pupils are encouraged to engage in Greater Depth tasks, which allows pupils to explore their subjects beyond the classroom. This encourages pupils to independently delve deeper into the topics they are currently studying, nurturing curiosity and building confidence. Through guided exploration and personal research, pupils take ownership of their learning journey, supporting all pupils as they strive for a deeper understanding and mastery of their subjects



Summary		
Year 7/8	<u>Climb Work</u>	<u>Summit Work</u>
	1) 100% Homework- as per calendar. 2) Independent reading for pleasure – 20 minutes. 3) Sparx maths homework – 90 minutes.	1) Pupil participation in Ascent 2) Greater Depth work
Year 9	<u>Climb Work</u>	<u>Summit Work</u>
	1) 100% Homework - as per calendar. 2) Independent reading for pleasure – 20 minutes. 3) Gap tasks from Formative assessments 4) Sparx maths homework – 90 minutes.	1) Pupil participation in Ascent 2) Greater Depth work
Year 10/11	<u>Climb Work</u>	<u>Summit Work</u>
	1) 100% Homework- as per calendar 2) Independent reading for pleasure - 20 minutes. 3) Gap tasks- from formative and summative assessments. 4) Sparx maths homework – 90 minutes.	1) Pupil participation in Ascent 2) Greater Depth work
Year 12/13	- Homework tasks should take a number of forms and can include: - research, - revision, - exam practice, - pre-reading, - further reading - While the frequency may be dependent on length of homework task given, as a guide, each subject should be setting approximately 6 hours per fortnight of homework. Key pieces of homework should be recorded on the central tracking document saved in the shared subject teams area	