

# St. Aidan's Catholic Academy

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To all in our community,

I value highly the professional and respectful relationship we have with all stakeholders in our community. Through the many things that go on across the academy, I am always struck by the team ethic we have fostered with the pupils, the staff and the wider community. From working closely with the governors this week right through to having constructive and meaningful parental discussions at Parent's Evening, I know that everyone connected to St Aidan's has nothing but positive experiences of our school and all are keen to help in our continued journey towards outstanding. In the coming days I will meet some of the companies who are keen to become the main contractor on our new build project. Our vision for our new school is rooted in our community with our Gospel values underpinning everything we want from our 21<sup>st</sup> century educational space. It is such an exciting time to be affiliated with St Aidan's and we continue to be a draw for colleagues from across the trust and wider afield who all want to come to see how we change the lives of our young men. As we enter the season of advent I always like to take stock and reflect on where we are going as an academy and where our journey will take us in the coming months. I hope your journey through advent is a peaceful one and that the season brings you much joy and happiness. I always look forward to this time of the year as it is a time for family and friends and sharing in the joy of the Christmas story. My faith always sustains me but during advent it is even more profound.

Take care and God bless.

Glenn Sanderson

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## Upcoming Events

**Monday, December 11, 2023**

Y11 Parents' Evening.



Lord God of all creation,

We are grateful for what you  
have given us.

Help us to take what is given,  
And with patience and love.

Attempt to construct it  
according to your pattern.

Amen

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## Chaplaincy

### Sunday Gospel

Mark 13:33-37

If he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So, stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!'



*Christ is the  
light of the world.*

**3<sup>rd</sup> of December if the first  
Sunday of Advent**



*Christ is the  
light of the world.*

**Look forward by  
looking backwards.**



## Norah's North Pole

### HELP US SPRINKLE A LITTLE CHRISTMAS KINDNESS

Are you or your organisation able to help spread a little Christmas kindness this year? We are Norah's North Pole, a North East based family who collect toy donations and pack Santa sacks for those children in the North East who would otherwise no receive presents on Christmas morning. Over the past 8 years we have delivered thousands of Santa sacks to children most in need in the North East.

Each year, our hearts break as we hear stories of children within our own community, living in such sad circumstances. With your help we can make a difference, even if it is only for that moment on Christmas morning when the child wakes up knowing Santa has not forgotten them.

Norah's North Pole was set up in memory of our Grandma who lived by the motto 'It's nice to be nice'. Every Christmas Norah would give each of her grandchildren money to buy toys which they would then make into gift boxes for children who would otherwise wake up on Christmas morning with no presents. In her memory, Norah's children and grandchildren have continued this tradition, now making up Santa sacks filled with the most wonderful presents for those children most in need. Norah's North Pole is not a charity, we are just a family who are committed to continuing what Norah started.

You can help make a difference!

There are different ways you can help:

- \* Donate gifts from our Amazon list and have them delivered directly to the elves at Norah's North Pole HQ
- \* Donate to our GoFundMe page
- \* Collect gift donations within your organisation and drop off gift donations to one of our official collection points. All we ask is the items are new, every child deserves their very own present on Christmas morning. We really hope you are able to support us this year to make a difference to children most in need in the North East. If you would like to find out more about Norah's

North Pole and to find our links to donate please visit our website [www.norahsnorthpole.co.uk](http://www.norahsnorthpole.co.uk) or find us on social media @norahsnorthpole.

If you have any questions at all please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you

The Elves, Norah's North Pole

Email: [elves@norahsnorthpole.co.uk](mailto:elves@norahsnorthpole.co.uk)



Our Food Bank is still going strong. We ask the boys to make donations on a Friday. The Food Bank door is open from 8am giving them the opportunity to put the food away by themselves.



## Pastoral News

### Christmas Holidays

We will close for the Christmas break on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2023 at 12.00. All pupils return to school on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at the normal time. The school office will be closed from 12.00 on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2023 until 8.00am on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

### Important Dates:

To accommodate our parent evenings this academic year, school will close at 1.55pm for all pupils on the following dates:

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023  
Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024  
Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024

## Attendance

While we place great importance on the health and wellbeing of all of our pupils we also need to, where possible, minimise absence to ensure pupils are provided with a first-class education.

The importance of school attendance cannot be overstated – a pupil with attendance of below 91% is statistically likely to drop, on average, one GCSE grade per subject. If your attendance is between 96% and 100% you are twice as likely to achieve 5 or more GCSE at Grade 5 and above.



## Attendance Stars

**Week 11 – WB 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023**



7F – 98.4%



**Weeks attendance – 92.6%**

**Whole school attendance from Sept – 94.3%**



The statistics above provide stark evidence as to why we set all of our pupils an attendance target of 97%, as we know this provides them with the greatest possible chance to achieve their best possible outcomes; this is a habit born in lower year groups and embedded in the culture and ethos of our school.

## House Competition



# Annual House Competition



## Week 11 – WB 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023

House	Overall Points	Points awarded this week
Ashbrooke	<b>3725</b>	100
Corby	<b>3675</b>	250
Brookfield	<b>4450</b>	500



## Arbor

We have now made our move to Arbor for communication and to log, track and monitor achievements, behaviour, corrections and homework. It is essential that all parents are signed up and have access to the system. If you are having issues with this please contact 0191 5200333 Ext 222.



# Arbor

**Year 11 Parents** - You have now received your invite for Parents Evening on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023. Please ensure you log in to book your appointments here:

<https://staca.schoolcloud.co.uk/>

### **Christmas Food Vouchers**

Families who are in receipt of Free School meals will receive - £60 voucher per child to support over the Christmas break. A message will be sent once your eVoucher has been processed.

### **Creating a smoke free generation - have your say!**

The Government has launched a major consultation on their ambitions to create a smoke free generation. They are proposing to increase the age of sale of tobacco every year so that everyone born after 1st January 2009 will never be able to legally buy tobacco. Alongside this, they are consulting on increasing restrictions on vapes to tackle the concerning rise in youth vaping. Sunderland City Council are supporting this consultation and encourage everyone to have their say - [Sunderland backs proposals for smokefree generation - Sunderland City Council](#)

**Please have your say and make a response [here](#) by Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023.**

### **Wellbeing Week - 4<sup>th</sup> December**

As a Catholic community we feel it is important to take some time to step back from the busyness of daily life as we journey through the academic year.

We would like all members of our community to have the opportunity to take time for themselves as we start our journey through Advent. Therefore, we will hold a 'wellbeing week' for both staff and pupils in the week beginning 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 which falls during Week 13 of Cycle 1. This will work in the same way as our wellbeing weeks in previous years.

In order to give our pupils the opportunity to step back there will be some changes to our week:

- No homework will be set during week beginning 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- No morning meetings will be held between Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to allow pupils to spend time with their form tutors.
- No subject homework will be set during this week. Any homework due to be submitted during this week will be expected to be handed in on time.
- No enrichment activities will run between Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- Corrections will run as normal.
- Peripatetic lessons will run as normal.

Our pastoral team can be connected on the following emails.  
 Ashbrooke House – Mrs McKenna – [kmckenna@staca.co.uk](mailto:kmckenna@staca.co.uk) – Ext: 201  
 Corby House – Mr Gray – [agray@staca.co.uk](mailto:agray@staca.co.uk) – Ext: 223  
 Brookfield House – Mrs Halliday – [mhalliday@staca.co.uk](mailto:mhalliday@staca.co.uk) - Ext: 216



## Parent Engagement Sessions December 2023



Date	Time	What's On?	More information	Venue
4 <sup>th</sup> December	6pm – 8pm	<b>Christmas Market</b>	Our Musical Christmas Market is this Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> December from 6pm -8pm. Please come along with friends and family and help us kick off the festive season. We have a range of stalls, prizes and live festive music.	Main School
11 <sup>th</sup> December	2.15pm – 6.15pm	<b>Year 11 Parents' Evening</b>	An opportunity to speak with your son's subject teachers. A letter will be sent home with a link to the School Cloud bookingsystem.	Virtual – School Cloud System.
4 <sup>th</sup> December	2:20-3pm	<b>Lets talk about Advent – walk and talk.</b>	Spend time with our school Chaplain talking about Advent.	Main school.
15 <sup>th</sup> December	2.20-3pm	<b>Advent</b>	Let us rejoice and celebrate Christ as our Light. Gathering in our school Chapel.	Main school Chapel



### PDE

Over the past cycle the school has put on over 70 clubs a week after school as part of the extensive enrichment programme. Every department in the school runs a club a week which gives the boys a huge variety to choose from and allows them to select a club that suits their interests. Each club helps to develop confidence, communication, and organisations skills, along with embedding subject knowledge. This cycle has seen over 350 boys turn up every week to clubs after school.

Your son will have the opportunity to sign up to the next Cycle's set of clubs and you will receive information on how to sign up using our new Arbor platform. Let's see if we can have even more boys attending in cycle 2.



Useful links shared with pupils

**Careers:** speak to Mrs. Osmialowski

**ChildLine:** [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) Phone: 0800 1111

**Young Minds:** [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

**Samaritans:** [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org) Phone: 116 123

**MIND:** [www.mind.org.uk/](http://www.mind.org.uk/) or Phone **0300 123 3393**

**TALK TO FRANK** [Honest information about drugs | FRANK \(talktofrank.com\)](http://Honest information about drugs | FRANK (talktofrank.com))

## Community News

### Community Allotment

We have been working hard in collaboration with pupils from St. Benet's primary school and our local volunteer Lynne, to continue taking action against climate change as well as to improve sustainability in our school community. Over the past weeks, we have harvested the remaining produce, including cucumbers, sweetcorn and tomatoes. We have then been focusing on preparing the beds to sow winter produce. We are very thankful to the pupils from St. Benet's who have shown real dedication to our cause.

As well as working on the allotment, our pupils have also been working on the Crisp Packet Appeal. We have collected 100's of crisp packets and we will be spending some time before Christmas on preparing them to create blankets for those facing the winter on the streets.

Some of our pupils have also been litter picking at Backhouse park on a weekly basis as part of their enrichment. As the weather deteriorates and as the days become shorter, we have decided to postpone the litter picking until February time. This is to ensure our pupils are safe, however, they still continue to be stewards by volunteering to clear litter on the school yard.

## Sporting Success

### Year 7 Rugby


Year 7 Rugby. Well done to all the boys who represented the school in a local Year 7 rugby competition this afternoon, at Park View School. St Aidan's won all 3 games against Park View, Boldon and Durham Johnston, scoring 10 tries and only conceding 1. All the boys were fantastic and all played really well. Try scorers included Leo B, Ronan N (2), Sam C, Fraser W, James W (3), Oliver M and George J.



Rugby at St Aidan's has really taken off this year. With over 30 students across the year groups now attending enrichment sessions, it is the highest level of participation in the 10 years we have had in school. Not only have numbers attending enrichment sessions exceeded all previous years, but with the generosity of one of our parents and his employer, Constellia, and we now have a brand new rugby kit for the students to compete in. Being able to compete wearing a new kit, emblazoned with the school badge and name allows our students to play with pride. It showcases the school's ambition to provide a platform for students to enjoy, compete and achieve in a different sport and allows us to provide a pathway for students to learn, have fun and hopefully continue participation in rugby beyond school. With the support of Mr Terence Milner and Constellia we can demonstrate how seriously we wish to develop the sport within the school, not only to boost numbers but allow students to feel and look like they are a part of a team.



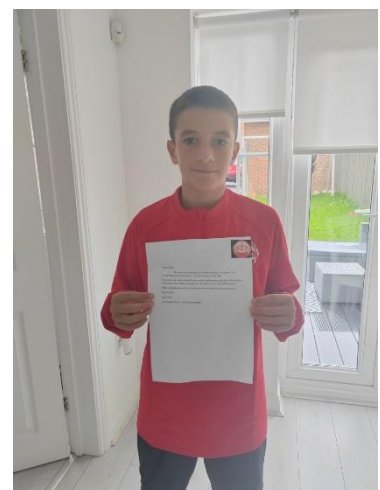
### Year 7 Football

An excellent performance from the Year 7 football team who beat English Martyrs 4-1 in the National Cup! Goals from Ben (2), Harrison and Enoch  who was also the player of the match! Well done to all the lads and a huge thank you to all the parents who travelled down and had to watch from afar. The boys really appreciated your support. The boys will now travel to local rivals Monkwearmouth in round 4 of the Cup.



### Exceptional Talent

We are so proud that Carter B in Y8 was successfully selected for the U13 Sunderland Boys football squad. He took part in trials in July and started his season in October. Let's hope he goes on to have a very successful career. Well done Carter!

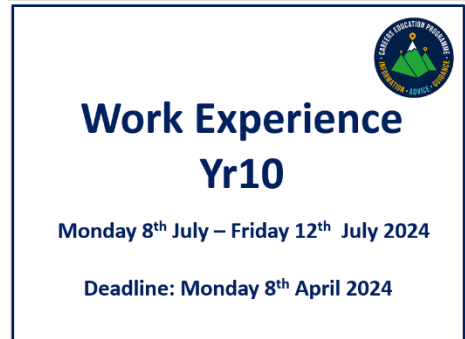



## Careers

### Careers Fair

This week we launched Yr10 work experience. This is an opportunity for pupils to gain first hand experience of the work place and to develop the employability skills needed for the future. Pupils have been asked to source and secure a work placement of their choice and complete the placement tool on Unifrog. All information and resources can be found on the Character Development team – work experience channel for pupils. A letter has been sent home to all parents/carers and additional information can be found on the academy website.

Any local businesses interested in hosting any of pupils for work experience can make contact with Mrs. Osmialowski [contactus@staca.co.uk](mailto:contactus@staca.co.uk)



  
**Work Experience**  
**Yr10**  
Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024  
Deadline: Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024

### Sunderland City Provider Network

Sunderland City Provider Network are hosting a careers event this month for KS4 & KS5 pupils. All young people in Sunderland will receive a personalised invite through their door. Information can be found on this poster – an ideal event to help you consider your next steps!



Don't miss this opportunity!  
**CAREERS LIVE!**  
Saturday  
18th November 2023  
10.30 – 2.00  
The Beacon of Light, Stadium Park  
Sunderland SR5 1SN

In years 10,11,12 or 13 and not sure what to do next?  
Come and talk to the local experts about your next steps.  
Find out about Apprenticeships, Skills for Work  
and careers in the Health Service.

Parents and Carers welcome too!  
Enter the draw to win Sunderland match tickets



## Open Events

Sunderland College, Gateshead College and SETA are hosting open events to prepare you for your next steps!



**Open Events 2023/4**

Tuesday 10 October: Bede Campus 4:30-6pm  
 Thursday 12 October: City Campus 4:30-6pm  
 Tuesday 14 November: City Campus 4:30-6pm  
 Thursday 16 November: Bede Campus 4:30-6pm  
 Tuesday 16 January: Bede Campus 4:30-6pm  
 Thursday 18 January: City Campus 4:30-6pm

**Engineering Careers Event  
Thursday 7th December  
2023**



Seta offers apprenticeships in:

- Electrical and/or Mechanical Fitting
- Mechatronics Maintenance (Multi-skilled)
- Machining, Toolmaking and CNC
- Technical (e.g. CAD, Design)
- Welding and Fabrication



Interested in a career in engineering starting in September 2024 or before?

Want to know more about the apprenticeships available, look around the training centre and meet employers recruiting apprentices? Then our Engineering Careers Event will be perfect for you.



Book now to secure your place using the QR code on this leaflet. Early applications are essential to ensure your best chance of getting an apprenticeship. Apply at [www.seta.co.uk](http://www.seta.co.uk)

Seta, 17 Sedling Road, Wear Estate, Washington, NE38 9BZ  
 T: 0191 416 2860 W: [www.seta.co.uk](http://www.seta.co.uk) E: [enquiries@seta.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@seta.co.uk)

 SetaTrain
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  [sunderland engineering training association limited](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sunderland-engineering-training-association-limited)



**GATESHEAD COLLEGE**  
 EDUCATION WITH EMPLOYMENT  
 EDGE

# CAREER CHOICE ENROLMENT EVENT.

**Deciding what to do after your GCSEs can be confusing, there's lots of different options and it's important to make a choice that's right for you.**

Come along to our Career Choice Enrolment Event to find out more about your options as well as what life's like at Gateshead College.

**When: Wednesday 8th November 5pm - 8pm**

**Where: All campuses - [click here](#) to find out which campus to attend depending on your interests.**

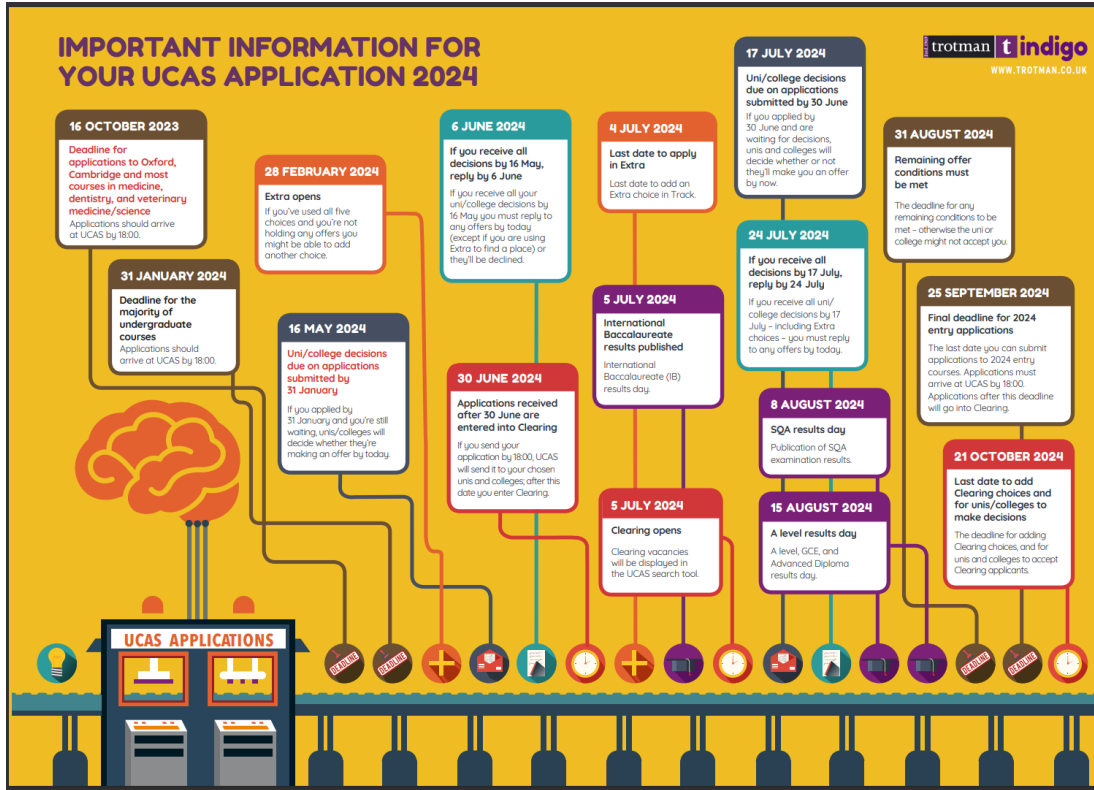
**Book your place now**  
 Scan the QR code or visit [www.gateshead.ac.uk/events/career-choice-enrolment-event](http://www.gateshead.ac.uk/events/career-choice-enrolment-event)



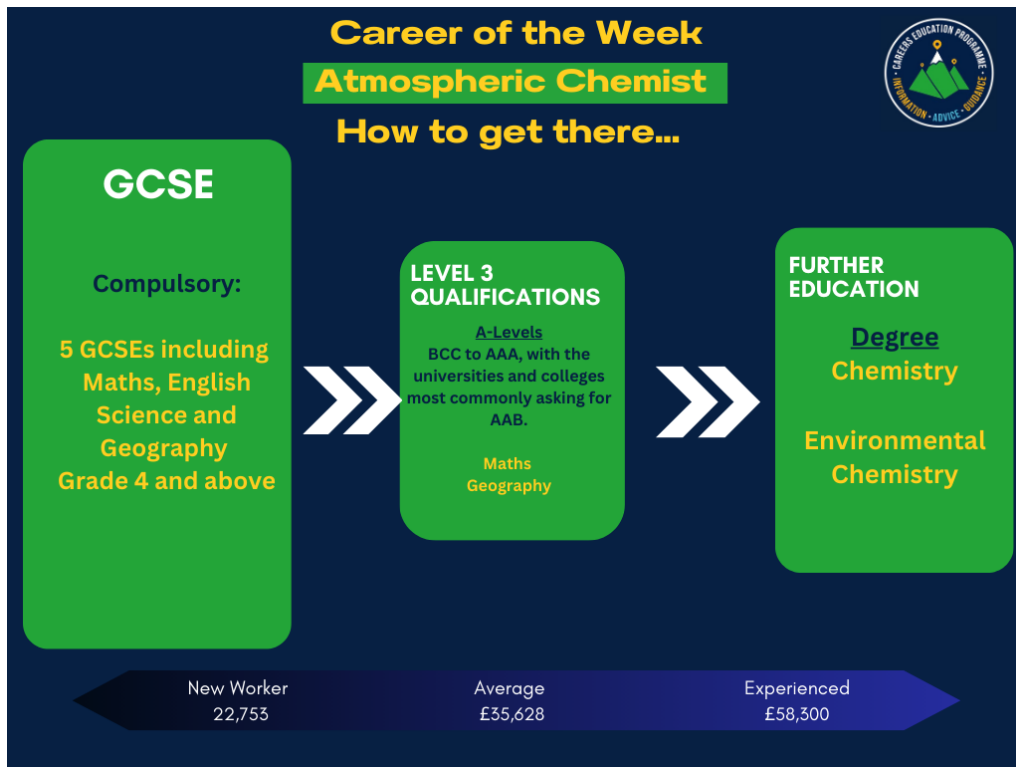
**At the event you can:**

- Join a talk to find out more about A Levels, T Levels, Apprenticeships and Vocational courses.
- Chat with our expert teachers and careers advisers
- Find out more about our courses
- Learn about the financial support you may be entitled to
- Secure your place for September 2024

# UCAS Applications



# Career of the Week



## Character Development

For the last 2 weeks, pupils have been strengthening their virtues through a specific CLIMB task. Every year group has had their own focus: Year 8s have been focusing on the British Value of tolerance, responding to Maya Angelou's quote, "In diversity there is beauty and there is strength". Students have been taught that tolerance means being open to the differences that exist amongst us all, which means respecting and learning from others, valuing our differences, and discovering what we have in common. It has been very enlightening reading the responses and amazing to see how our students demonstrate tolerance in their life outside of school.

## Music

### Joy in My Heart

Well done to all who participated in the Joy in My Heart concert at the Rainton Arena last Thursday. The feedback was absolutely outstanding. Great singing the St Aidan's singers!



### Upcoming events:

Christmas Fair at the Main School Hall on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December

### Music Enrichment:

Drum Fun	Tuesday	Music Room
St Aidan's Singers	Wednesday	Music Room
Rock Band	Thursday	The Bunker (4-6pm)
KS4 Music Club	Friday	Music Room

### Instrumental lessons:

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Bass</b>	<b>Mr Harland</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Violin, Piano</b>	<b>Mr Nyberg, Mr Shepherd</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Drums, Guitar</b>	<b>Mr Wake, Mr Smith</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Guitar</b>	<b>Mr Smith</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Woodwind, Cello</b>	<b>Mr Toomey, Miss Pearson</b>

All lessons are now after school between 3-6pm.

If you wish your child to sign up to/continue instrument lessons please email me at [musiclessons@staca.co.uk](mailto:musiclessons@staca.co.uk) stating your son's name, form and desired instrument. For further information please see our [Instrumental Music Policy here](#).

Our "Live Music Friday" breaktime slots is continuing this half term - it's an excellent opportunity to practise your live performing skills in front of a low pressure and friendly audience. Please see Mr Payne for further details.

# Enrichment

## St. Aidan's Catholic Academy Enrichment Cycle 2 2023-2024

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday		
MORNING	Breakfast Canteen	Breakfast Canteen	Breakfast Canteen	Breakfast Canteen	Breakfast Canteen		
	Reading Club Reading Room Mrs Naile	Reading Club Reading Room Mrs Naile	Reading Club Reading Room Mrs Naile	Reading Club Reading Room Mrs Naile	Reading Club Reading Room Mrs Naile		
AFTER SCHOOL	Art Club 162 - Mrs Nipper	Bass Guitar Lessons Music Room Mr Harland (£72 per term)	Piano Lessons Music room Mr Shepherd (£72 per term)	Badminton Sports Hall - Mr Jones	1st Lego League – Super Power 166 - Mrs Swales	Basketball Sports Hall - Mr Adey & Lampton Coach (£1)	Cello Lessons Music room Mrs Pearson (£72 per term)
	British Sign Language 301 - Mrs Gardner	Bronze iDEA Award Digital Enterprise (ICT) 312 - Miss Cain	Violin Lessons Music room Mr Nyberg (£72 per term)	Book to film club 304 Mrs Wheeler	Brass Lessons Music room (£72 per term)	Careers Champion 103 - Mrs Osmialowski	Football (Y7,8 & 9) Sports Hall Mo (*£4 per session)
	Chess Club 209 - Mr Herbertson	Sherlock's Mystery Solving 306 - Miss Sansom	Homework Club Room 313, 314	Crisp Packet Appeal 205 - Mrs Priest	Football (Year 7) Ashbrooke with Mr Hutton	Football (Year 9) Ashbrooke with Mr Flounders	Homework Club 313, 314
	Dodgeball Sports Hall Mr Hutton	Debate Club 108 - Mrs Jopling	Football with Mo Year 7&8 (£4 per session) Sports Hall	Dungeons and Dragons Reading Room Mr Richardson	Weight Lifting Club School gym Mr Watts	Guitar Lessons Music room Mr Smith (£72 per term)	Rugby Ashbrooke 3G Mr Adey
	Football (Year 10&11) Ashbrooke 3G Mr Watts	Fitness School Gym – Mr Gray	Drum Fun Music Room – Mr Wallace	Drum Lessons Music Room –Mr Wake (£72 per term)	GCSE History booster 108 - Mr Nunn	Homework Club 313, 314	Woodwind Lessons Music Room Mr Tooney (£72 per term)
	GCSE Spanish Club Year 10 & 11 104 – Mrs McKenna	Further Maths (Y11) 210 - Mrs Hudson	Fitness School gym Mr Flounders	Fitness School gym Mr Flounders	Lego Fun Club Mrs Whitten	Maths Enrichment 212 - Mr Mann	Year 10 &11 Music Club Mr Payne
	Indoor Cricket Sports Hall Mr Hutton	Homework Club 313, 314	Football (Year 8) Ashbrooke 3G Mr Gray	Football (Year 8) Ashbrooke 3G Mr Gray	Performing Arts Mrs Moorhead/Mr Payne	Rock Band @ The Bunker 4-6pm Mr Payne	
	Keyboard Ninja Club (ICT) 312 - Mrs Cain	Justice and Peace (KSS) Briery Miss Gordon/ Mrs Priest	Gardening Club Briery Mrs Armstrong	Gardening Club Briery Mrs Armstrong	Robotics Club 164 - Mr Wallace	Table Tennis Mobiles Mr Hamilton (Week B Only)	
	Running Club Mobile Changing Rooms- Mr Coon	Orienteering Ashbrooke Mr Watts	Guitar Lessons Music room Mr Smith (£72 per term)	Guitar Lessons Music room Mr Smith (£72 per term)	STEM Activities 121 – Science Staff		
		Sparx Maths Club 312 – Mrs Smith	Homework Club 313, 314	Homework Club 313, 314			
			St. Aidan's Singers Music room Mr Payne	St. Aidan's Singers Music room Mr Payne			
			Spanish Club 106 - Mrs Alonso / Miss Donkin	Spanish Club 106 - Mrs Alonso / Miss Donkin			
		Litter Picking 203 - Mr Brown	Litter Picking 203 - Mr Brown				
		Geography in the News 113	Geography in the News 113				

Here at **St. Aidan's Catholic Academy** we believe in a curriculum that the mind, enriches the community and advances the future of our students. Our enrichment programme is integral to this broad and rich curriculum. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact:  
**0191 520 0333**

*"St. Aidan's Catholic Academy, where excellence is a habit!"*