
Bi-Weekly Newsletter – 26/1/24

St. Aidan's Catholic Academy

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To all in our community,

Despite the cold and dark weather, the drive and commitment to study from all year groups in our academy never ceases to amaze me. Regardless of which department I am in, I always see committed professionals working closely with hard working, engaged young men. We have spent a lot of time developing this culture for learning across the academy and I am humbled with how our young people have risen to the challenge. Earlier this week I had an important meeting with the DfE and affiliated contractors who are interested in bidding for our school rebuild project. Their passion and vision for has given me an enormous amount of confidence that we are going to be able to give our community a breath-taking building on which to further develop our young people into engaged and motivated citizens of the future. Alongside this, enrichment activities and period 6's are well under way for cycle 2. The sight of a busy school past the official finishing time, gives one a sense of enormous pride. Our young men buying into the opportunities that they have on offer to them makes all the planning and time worthwhile. Mock exams for Y11 and Y13 are only a couple of weeks away and it is essential that these are taken seriously in case an unforeseen event takes place and examinations have to be cancelled. As professionals we may have to use these assessments as proof of final grades so targeted revision and good habits need to be followed now.

Take care and God bless

Glenn Sanderson



Upcoming Events

Monday, February 19, 2024

Y9 Parent's Evening



God, thank you for walking with us through the seasons of our lives. For the winter, when we are held safe in your arms through the darkness and cold. The hope of spring, as we are filled with new promise and life. For summer time, full of warmth and colour And for autumn days as leaves fall to foster new growth.

You are always with us.
Amen.

Chaplaincy

Sunday Gospel

Mark 1:21-28

Unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority

Jesus and his disciples went as far as Capernaum, and as soon as the sabbath came he went to the synagogue and began to teach. And his teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority.

In their synagogue just then there was a man possessed by an unclean spirit and it shouted, 'What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God.' But Jesus said sharply, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' And the unclean spirit threw the man into convulsions and with a loud cry went out of him. The people were so astonished that they started asking each other what it all meant. 'Here is a teaching that is new' they said 'and with authority behind it: he gives orders even to unclean spirits and they obey him.' And his reputation rapidly spread everywhere, through all the surrounding Galilean countryside.



The Year of Prayer

The year 2024 is the Year of prayer, as a preparatory year for the Jubilee. This is in preparation for the 2025 Jubilee Year 'Pilgrims of Hope'. Please see the link below for the diocesan page about the year of prayer.

<https://diocesehn.org.uk/living-the-faith/the-year-of-prayer-2024/>

To those of you who would want some inspiration with prayer I have found the link for Pilgrims of Prayer Booklet.

[Pilgrims-of-Prayer-A5-BOOKLET-School-of-Prayer.pdf \(cbcew.org.uk\)](#)

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.



Youth Ambassadors, Geneva trip 2024

Two year 12 pupils visited United Nations offices this week. Benjamin and Olivia alongside with other pupils and staff from Edmund Rice Schools flew to Geneva on Sunday. They visited Edmund Rice International Office where Brother Brian told them about the work of NGO. During their visit they listened to Senegal and China's UPR. Our young people also went to Red Cross museum and explored Geneva. This visit inspired them to look at the world differently, through the prism of Human Rights. We invite all our young people to become Youth Ambassadors in the future.



Pastoral News

Important Dates:

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

Monday 19th February 2024

Wednesday 6th March 2024

Tuesday 30th April 2024

February Half term is Monday 12th until Friday 16th February 2024. All pupils break up at normal time on Friday 9th February and return to school on Monday 19th February 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. 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.

As per the guidance issued from the Chief Medical officer last week, please ensure you only keep your son off where necessary. If he is too unwell to attend, please ensure he is absent only for as long as needed so that he does not fall behind in his learning.



Bishop Chadwick
Catholic Education Trust



Attendance Stars

Week 17 – WB 15th January 2024



11F – 96.5%



Weeks attendance – 88.9%

Whole school attendance from Sept – 93.6%



If your child is unwell.

What YOU must do:

Try to telephone the school before 8.30am each day of your child's absence.

Tell the school in advance, of any medical appointments and bring in appointment cards/letters. If you are not sure whether your child is well enough to attend school, send them in anyway as they often perk up on arrival.

Have a backup plan for if your child misses transport, call on a family member, neighbour or friend.

If you and your child are experiencing difficulties with school attendance then talk to us as a first step so we can help!

**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**

What WE will do:

Check your child's attendance every day.

Phone home to discuss your child's attendance with you.

Invite you into school for attendance meetings if we are concerned.

If we cannot establish a reason for absence, then we may make a welfare home visit.



Annual House Competition



Week 17 – WB 15th January 2024

House	Overall Points	Points awarded this week
Ashbrooke	6100	225
Corby	4950	375
Brookfield	5600	250



Arbor

A reminder that all communications are now made through Arbor.



Our Best Life

My Best life is a brand-new website offering events and advice for families in Sunderland, offering an easy way to explore and discover exciting family friendly activities and support services happening Sunderland's Family Hubs and online. Whether you are wanting play dates for your little ones, wanting expert advice or you are wanting to meet people just like you, My Best Life helps you to get connected to local resources, events and services in Sunderland that will help you and your family thrive.

You will find everything from parenting workshops and playgroups to interactive classes and support and is available in over 100 languages.

My Best Life provides:

- Family friendly events for all ages
- Access to support through the Family Hubs and online
- Practical guidance and parenting support
- Connection to local resources and services
- Opportunity to be part of the local community

Please find attached a toolkit for My Best Life which contains further information as well links to additional assets such as social media posts, a leaflet and posters and we would be very grateful if you could share some of the content on our behalf.

Find out more at www.mybestlife.org.uk



Lumi Nova discovery session

Lumi Nova is an exciting online therapeutic game for children aged 7 - 12 years who are experiencing difficulties with anxiety. Children and families across Sunderland have been using the system since September last year and we have already had over 145 sign-ups since launch and positive feedback from both professionals and families.

If you would like to learn more about Lumi Nova and how it can support your students please go to www.luminova.app [Please use this link to sign up to Lumi Nova!](#)

Keeping children safe when gaming.

FREE workshop for parents and carers about keeping children safe when gaming

This year, the NSPCC launches its first Game Safe Festival. We're bringing together key players to make sure children have positive gaming experiences. And we're helping the adults in their lives have the knowledge, confidence and tools they need to help keep children safe when they game.

The free workshop will take place on Zoom on **Wednesday 7 February 2024, 7-8 pm**. See the information provided to sign up!



NSPCC

Online gaming and keeping children safe

Do you know your whispers from your skins? Your Fortnite from your EA Sports FC 24?

GamCare will be sharing expert advice, and you'll hear directly from young people.

Our webinar will help you:

- understand how young people game online.
- learn about tools and resources that support safe play.
- gain the knowledge you need to keep children safe.

As part of the NSPCC Game Safe Festival, we're encouraging parents, carers and those working with children and families to have conversations about online gaming.

7 February 2024, 7pm-8pm, via Zoom. Book your place via this link nspcc.org.uk/gamesafe/tickets

GAME SAFE FESTIVAL

EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

NSPCC is a National Charity for the Protection of Children in Britain. Registered Charity Incorporated in England. Number 252977 and limited by guarantee. 1999-2024. All rights reserved. Photograph by Neil Hall - 2023/24.

Measles

There have been recent localised outbreaks of measles centred around the West Midlands. There is a risk of further outbreaks in other areas unless urgent action is taken to increase Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccination take up in areas with low MMR vaccine rates.

Measles spreads very easily among those who are unvaccinated, especially in nurseries and schools. The best protection against measles for children and adults is to get both doses of the MMR vaccine. It is never too late to have these vaccinations.

The NHS also has the following advice for parents on measles:

- [Measles - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

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

Community News

Community Allotment

We are continuing to develop a strong relationship with staff and pupils from St. Benet's. The children who visit us on a weekly basis work very hard and perform all jobs willingly and joyfully. Over the past couple of weeks, we have been working indoor due to poor weather, and we have sown leeks, tomatoes, spring onion, and many different types of herbs, including rosemary, thyme and coriander. As part of our practice, we also came up with the idea to spend some time at the end of each session to read a book with an environmental theme. We have chosen to read 'The Last Bear'. The children are looking forward to finding out what adventures the characters will experience and our St. Aidan's pupils will help to read to the younger children. This practice has been inspired by our Reading Fluency sessions which are delivered daily during form time, and which we pride ourselves on as a school. We are still awaiting confirmation from a local care home and hope the residents will be joining us on a regular basis.

Sunderland City Council Environmental Group

This week, one of our y8 pupils attended a meeting held by the Sunderland City Council about the environment and sustainability. Ahmad really enjoyed spending time with peers from different schools within the Sunderland area, and together they discussed how schools can improve their conduct with regards to the environment. They also shared many different practices which each school already implements, and talked about the importance of caring for our planet. We would like to thank Ahmad for his commitment and enthusiasm, and for representing our school with pride. He's a fantastic role model to his peers. Well Done, Ahmad!

St. Aidan's Stewards

We are very proud to have a dedicated group of Y7 and 8 pupils who are our St. Aidan's Stewards. They volunteer on a daily basis to litter-pick during break and lunch time in order to ensure our environment is looked after. Additionally, they collect empty crisp packets which are then used to create blankets for the homeless. Thank you, boys, for being fantastic role models to us all.

Personal Development Education

The students are currently studying Relationships and Sex Education in their PDE lessons this cycle, up until Easter. Each year group focuses on age-appropriate topics that allow them to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way. Over the next fortnight each year group has been learning:

Year 7	<i>Healthy inside and out - The impact of self-esteem on emotional health</i>
Year 8	Feelings - The emotional changes during puberty.
Year 9	Careers - Options at KS4, BTEC's and GCSE's
Year 10	Values, attributes and beliefs - The importance when making choices.
Year 11	Eating disorders - Bulimia, anorexia, binge eating

Parents and carers can access the resources for Relationship and Sex Education via the parental portal, using the information below.

Website <https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/parent-portal/>

User Name: st-aidan-sr2

Password: island-458

Teaching about mental wellbeing is central to these subjects, especially as a priority for parents is their children's happiness. We know that children and young people are increasingly experiencing challenges, and that young people are at particular risk of feeling lonely. The new subject content will give them the knowledge and capability to take care of themselves and receive support if problems arise. In school we offer a large amount of support to all students. However not everyone is comfortable discussing their issues with people they know. Below are some contact details for any additional support students or parents if need be.

ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk Phone: 0800 1111

Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk

Samaritans: www.samaritans.org Phone: 116 123

MIND: 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))

Sporting Success

St Aidan's basketball keeps going from strength to strength with sides from every age group competing over the next few weeks. On Monday it was the turn of the U14 side, looking to go a step further than last year's 4th place finish in the Tyne and Wear Championships. The boys played 3 games with the winner of the group advancing from the Sunderland competition. After a slow start and falling behind, St Aidan's finished strongly against a very competitive St Roberts team to win 14-5. A 2nd victory in a row against a valiant Farringdon team 13-2 set up a final match against rivals Argyle House. What is usually a competitive encounter turned into a dominant performance from the boys as they secured a 28-6 victory, finishing top of their group. A fantastic effort from all the boys involved means they can now look forward to competing in the Tyne and Wear finals at the Vertu Arena.



Music

We've had another fantastic start to music tuition this term. Well done to all who are showing a massive commitment in turning up week in week out. You know hard work and perseverance will undoubtedly make a massive difference to your achievements, well done!

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:

Monday	Bass	Mr Harland
Tuesday	Violin, Piano	Mr Nyberg, Mr Shepherd
Wednesday	Drums, Guitar, Brass	Mr Wake, Mr Smith, Miss Brierley
Thursday	Guitar	Mr Smith
Friday	Woodwind, Cello	Mr Toomey, Miss Pearson

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 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)
	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
	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
	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)
	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
	GCSE Spanish Club Year 10 & 11 104 – Mrs McKenna	Further Maths (Y11) 210 - Mrs Hudson		Fitness School gym Mr Flounders	Lego Fun Club Mrs Whitten	Maths Enrichment 212 - Mr Mann
	Indoor Cricket Sports Hall Mr Hutton	Homework Club 313, 314		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	Robotics Club 164 - Mr Wallace	Table Tennis Mobiles Mr Hamilton (Week 8 Only)
	Running Club Mobile Changing Rooms- Mr Coon	Orienteering Ashbrooke Mr Watts		Guitar Lessons Music room Mr Smith (£72 per term)	STEM Activities 121 – Science Staff	
		Sparx Maths Club 312 – Mrs Smith		Homework Club 313, 314		
			St. Aidan's Singers Music room Mr Payne			
			Spanish Club 106 - Mrs Alonso / Miss Donkin			
			Litter Picking 203 - Mr Brown			
			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!"