NEWSLETTER

October 9th 2026

ST. AIDAN'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Following the recent events in the River Wear, our hearts are filled with sorrow for the young lives that have been lost and for the families, friends and communities whose grief is beyond words.

As a Catholic school community, we are reminded that every child is a precious gift from God, created in His image and loved beyond measure.

At times like these, we hold firmly to our faith and entrust these young people to God's eternal care. We give thanks for their lives, for the joy they brought to others, and for the lasting impact they have made on all who knew and loved them.

In our prayers, we remember all who are mourning and ask God to surround them with His comfort, strength and peace.

Please join us in praying for them:

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. Amen.

Mrs Whitten Headteacher

WORD OF THE WEEK

Cycle 1 Week 5 :

Dystopian - Dys/to/pi/an
Word Class: Adjective

Etymology: From Greek *dys* meaning "bad" and *topos* meaning "place"
Student-friendly Definition: Describing an imagined society that is unpleasant, unfair or frightening.
Example sentence: *The Knife of Never Letting Go* presents a dystopian world full of danger and uncertainty.

Cycle 1 Week 6 :

Polarisation – Po/la/ri/sa/tion
Word Class: Noun

Etymology: From Latin *polaris,* meaning "of the pole"
Student-friendly Definition: The division of people into two very different and opposing groups.
Example sentence: In *Noughts and Crosses,* polarisation shapes the relationships between communities.

PUPILS OF THE WEEK

Cycle 1 Week 4:

Jack (7A)
Nominated for his outstanding start to year 7. His history work (using St Aidan's standard) is exemplary. Well done, Jack!

Sabith (7A)
Sabith has had such a strong start to Y7 Geography. Not only is he excelling at fulfilling our core values, he constantly is striving to improve and share his excellent ideas. Well done Sabith- keep this up!

Ryan (9A), Alex (10M)
Nominated for supporting a member of the public who had dropped all of her belongings. You were both straight there to help her. Such a caring response from you both. We are very proud of you.

Harry (8M)
Harry's work in History is an excellent example of St Aidan's Standard. His work has been shown to our new Year 7s to help embed our high aspirations. He should be extremely proud.

Patrick (8M), Brydon (11C), Jay (11C)
Nominated for the excellent support provided to the Year 6 pupils with the Physics demonstrations during open evening. You were outstanding!

Mark (7M)
Mark has made a fantastic start to his time at St Aidan's and is already making positive contributions to our school and developing his legacy. Mark has been an integral part of our anti-bullying team and had some excellent ideas and contributions. Mark also volunteered to help support the pastoral team at our recent open evening for years 5 and 6. Mark was polite, friendly and knowledgeable and I'm sure the next generation of pupils will have appreciated his help.

Cycle 1 Week 5:

Ellis (7C), Elwyn (9C), Seyshan (10C), Camron (10C)
Nominated for providing wonderful music during McMillan Coffee Morning, outstanding boys. Thank you and well done!

ACHIEVEMENT POINTS TO DATE: 10372 (AV: 11.2 PER PUPIL)

WELLBEING STATEMENTS

Cycle 1 Week 5 :
Take steps to stay safe and feel supported at school, at home, and in your community.

Cycle 1 Week 6 :
Develop healthy coping strategies to manage challenges, stress, and setbacks.

ST AIDAN'S ALUMNI REUNION

We are hosting our next alumni reunion on Thursday 3rd December, 1pm-4pm.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to any former members of staff or former pupils. Please register via the link below.

https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/1c2nwyDNEC

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ICT/COMPUTING EXTRA CURRICULAR CLUB - MONDAY NIGHT

On Monday after school students enjoyed working with Sphero Bolt+ Robots and programming them through an app.

Students used interactive coding to make shapes and managed to change colours as well as include sound and text on the Bolt+.

Next week we will challenge the students to include more features including art work, math and block coding.

If anyone is interested In learning to play and develop interactive coding with Bolt+ robots come along after school on a Monday to the Ideas/Gaming Club Room 312



READING TOGETHER: SUPPORTING OUR YEAR 7 READING JOURNEY



Our Year 7 students have made a fantastic start to their reading journey this year through our Reading Canon programme. We are particularly proud of the support being provided by our Sixth Form students, who have been working alongside Year 7 pupils during fluency sessions. Their encouragement, guidance and positive role modelling are helping our new students develop confidence, accuracy and enjoyment in reading.

Reading is one of the most important factors in academic success, and we would like to thank families for their continued support. A reminder that reading every evening forms part of your child's **homework.** Just 20 minutes of daily reading can make a significant difference to vocabulary development, comprehension and overall progress across the curriculum.

We are also excited about the opening of our new school library in the new build. This will provide a welcoming and inspiring space for students to read, study and discover new interests through books.

To help create a truly exceptional library, we have launched our "2,500 Books by Easter 2026" campaign. We are delighted to report that we have already collected 1,000 books, but we still need your help to reach our target.

If you have any good-quality books at home that are no longer needed, we would be extremely grateful for donations. We also have an Amazon Book Wishlist featuring titles that would help us build a diverse and engaging collection for our students.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/1IB01CLOKPPQS/ref=hz_ls_biz_ex

Every donated book will help inspire a love of reading and ensure our new library becomes a valuable resource for all young people in our school community. Thank you for your continued support!

YEAR 7 CLIMB THEIR MOUNTAIN

Our Year 7 pupils recently enjoyed an unforgettable trip in the beautiful surroundings of Keswick, where they took on the challenge of climbing their **first mountain with St Aidan's.**

The trip provided pupils with an opportunity to challenge themselves, step outside their comfort zones and discover what they are capable of achieving. There were certainly some tired legs and challenging moments along the way, but our pupils showed incredible determination and resilience, supporting and encouraging one another from the first step to the last.

It was a real pleasure to see our core values of H**ard Work, Trust and Fairness** demonstrated so clearly throughout the trip. Pupils worked hard to reach the top, trusted one another to provide encouragement when the going became tough and showed fairness and kindness by ensuring that everyone felt supported and included.

Perhaps most importantly, pupils learned that climbing a mountain is not just about reaching the top. It is about the journey, the people you share it with and the determination to keep going when things become difficult.

There was plenty of laughter, a few muddy boots, some spectacular views and lots of memories made along the way. For many of our pupils, this was their first experience of climbing a mountain, and they should be incredibly proud of what they achieved.

At St Aidan's, we encourage every young person to **"Climb Your Mountain"** — to face challenges with courage, believe in themselves and never underestimate what they can achieve.





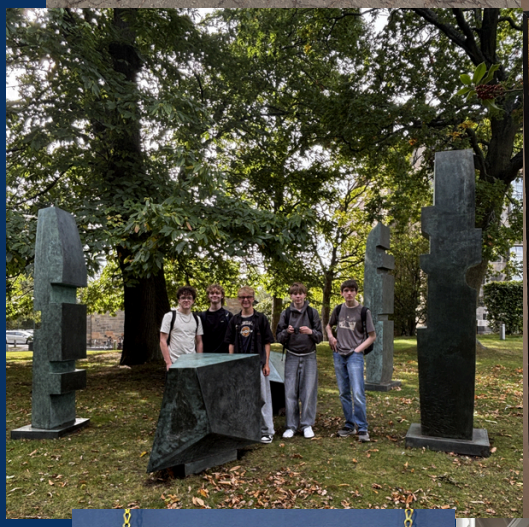
A huge well done to all of our Year 7 pupils.
We are incredibly proud of you all!

YEAR 11 EDINBURGH ART TRIP

Our Y11 art students had a fantastic time in Edinburgh recently, viewing famous artwork first hand and gathering research images to use in their personal study projects.

Their behaviour and attitude were exceptional from start to finish, behaving like true ambassadors of St Aidan's.








Our mission statement founded in John 10:10
Here at St. Aidan's every individual is encouraged to work hard, fulfilling their God given potential to pursue their next steps in life whther that be University or a high-quality career.

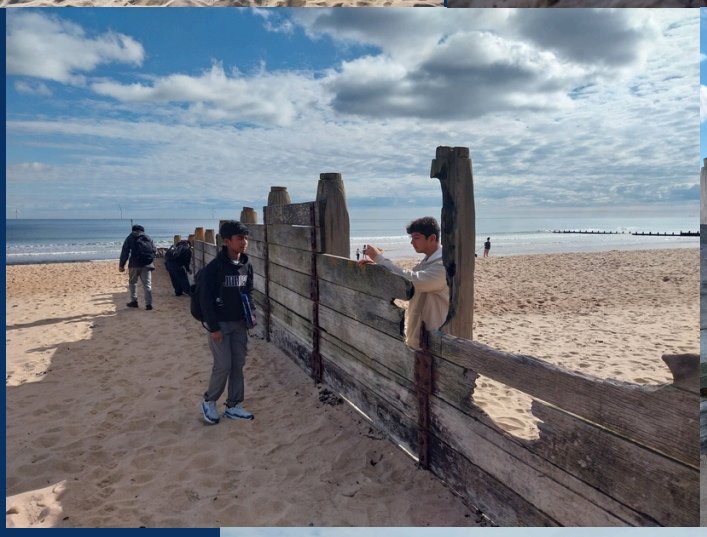
YEAR 10 GEOGRAPHY FIELD TRIP

All year 10 pupils have completed their data collection for their GCSE Geography exam paper at Blyth Beach.

They were excellent ambassadors for St. Aidan's. Members of the public sought out staff to commend their excellent behaviour and the way they conducted themselves when completing their questionnaires.











FAITH IN ACTION - CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

Supporting young people in faith is most effective when school, home and parish work together. At St Aidan's Catholic Academy, we are committed to supporting parents and carers in the vital task of educating and raising their children in faith.

Catholic life is at the heart of everything we do. Pupils are given opportunities to grow in faith through prayer, worship, learning, service and positive relationships. This includes form prayer, assemblies, weekly Mass, celebrations of the Word, Religious Education, charitable outreach, staff reflection and strong staff-student relationships rooted in Gospel values.

We encourage all pupils to work towards the Faith in Action Award during their time at St Aidan's Catholic Academy. The award journey begins with Bronze, progresses to Silver, and culminates in Gold.

The Faith in Action Award, developed by the Catholic Youth Ministry Federation (CYMFed), recognises and celebrates young people's commitment to serving others and living out their faith. Many of our pupils already demonstrate Christ's love through their service in school, parish and community life. The award encourages them to deepen this commitment, take on greater responsibility and become active witnesses to the Gospel.

Through the programme, pupils explore Scripture and Church teaching and learn how to put these teachings into action in their daily lives. Regular reflection helps them recognise how God is working through their service and encourages them to continue growing as disciples of Christ.

We warmly encourage your son to become involved in this rewarding programme and make the most of the many opportunities available to live out their faith through action and service.

For further information, please contact Ms Szczepanska, School Chaplain.

INVITATION TO MASS

The parishioners of St Leonard's Church warmly invite all pupils and staff, parents and carers to attend the **5:00pm Mass on Saturday 17th October.** This is St Leonard's regular weekend Mass, and we are delighted that St Aidan's pupils will be taking part by reading the Scripture readings, presenting the Offertory gifts, and leading the Prayers of the Faithful.

This is a wonderful opportunity to strengthen the links between our school and parish communities. All pupils, staff, and families are very welcome to attend and support those who will be participating in the Mass.

FIREWORKS EXTRAVAGANZA



We're excited to announce that Red Sky Foundation's legendary Fireworks Extravaganza is back for 2026! 🎆

We'll be returning to Ashbrooke Sports Club on Wednesday 4th November 2026, and we're hoping to make this year's event bigger and better than ever!

We'd really appreciate your support in helping us spread the word to your students, parents, families and wider school community.

Our Fireworks Extravaganza is a fantastic opportunity for families to come together and enjoy a spectacular evening of fireworks in a safe, organised and family-friendly environment, while supporting a brilliant local cause.

As well as being a wonderful community event, it's also an important fundraiser for Red Sky Foundation, helping us continue our vital work supporting babies, children and adults living with heart conditions, funding lifesaving equipment and helping to save lives.

We'd be incredibly grateful if you could share the event with your school community, whether that's through your school newsletter, parent communications, social media pages or any other channels you may have available.

Every share helps us reach more families, bring our community together and make this year's event another fantastic success!

Thank you so much for your continued support. We really do appreciate it, and we hope to see lots of your students and their families there for a brilliant evening!

Best wishes,
Red Sky Foundation Team ❤️

YEAR 7 FOOTBALL SUCCESS

Well done to the year 7 football A squad who won 4-1 against High Tunstall in their first competitive game for the school. They progress to the next round of the ESFA National Cup.

A special mention to Bobby-John (7A) who scored a hat trick and James (7B) who scored one goal. Well done lads.

RUGBY ACCOLADE

Congratulations to Quade (10R)

Quade is the only player from Sunderland RFC who qualified for the North Hurricanes U15 Redbull development squad. We are super proud of him!





GENERAL REMINDERS

ABSENCE REPORTING

Parents are required to call the student absence line each day to report any absence. Please dial the main school number and select Option 1.

Please ensure that you provide your child's full name, form group and a reason for the absence.

PASS OUT REQUESTS

Pass Out requests should be emailed to contactus@staca.co.uk. Please include your child's full name, form, date, reason for the Pass Out and collection/leaving time.

Parents will receive an email to confirm that the Pass Out has been completed.

Students need to collect their Pass Out slips from the Student Support office prior to their appointment. They should present the slip to their class teacher at the time stated on the Pass Out and make their way to the Main Reception.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Thursday 15th October 2026
Sixth Form Open Evening 6pm - 8pm

Wednesday 21st October 2026
Yr 7 Virtual Parents Evening 2.15pm - 6.15pm
School closes at 1.55pm for all pupils - Enrichment sessions cancelled with the exception of Peripatetic Music Lessons

Friday 23rd October 2026
Inset Day - School Closed

Monday 26th October - Friday 30th October 2026
Half Term holiday - School Closed

Monday 2nd November 2026
School re-opens - normal school hours

DATES FOR THE DIARY CONTINUED

Wednesday 4th November 2026
Yr 8 Virtual Parents Evening 2.15pm - 6.15pm
School closes at 1.55pm for all pupils - Enrichment sessions cancelled with the exception of Peripatetic Music Lessons

Wednesday 11th November 2026
Yr 9 trip to Billy Elliott

Wednesday 11th November 2026
Yr 10 Parent Revision Day 5.00pm - 6.00pm

Friday 18th December 2026
School Closes for Christmas Holidays

Monday 21st December - Friday 1st January 2027
Christmas Holidays

Monday 4th January 2027
School re-opens - normal school hours