The English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Parent and Carer Bulletin

Issue #8 | 13th November 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this message finds you and your families well. This week has been one of the highlights of the term, providing us with opportunities to celebrate our Catholic faith, recognise the talents of our students and support our Year 11 pupils as they begin an important stage of their educational journey.

Earlier this week, we were privileged to welcome Bishop Stephen to our school. His visit was a wonderful occasion for our community and provided students with a valuable opportunity to engage with and learn from the leader of our Diocese. During his visit, the Bishop toured the school, spent time speaking with students and staff, and was able to see first-hand the positive culture that exists across our community. I know he was particularly impressed by the confidence, courtesy and maturity demonstrated by our young people throughout the day.

The visit culminated in a beautiful Mass celebrated by Bishop Stephen, Canon Paul and Father Joseph. As part of the celebration, we also took time to mark Remembrance Day, remembering those who have served and sacrificed for the freedoms we enjoy today. The prayerful atmosphere and respectful participation of our students throughout this period of reflection were a credit to them, demonstrating both compassion and gratitude. It was a fitting reminder of the importance of remembering the past while continuing to live out our faith through service to others in the present.

I would like to offer particular praise to the students who played a direct role in the celebration. The readings, serving and participation throughout the Mass were exemplary. A special mention must go to our school choir, whose contribution helped to make the liturgy such a memorable and uplifting occasion. Their talent, commitment and dedication were evident for all to see, and they should be incredibly proud of the role they played in making the visit such a success.

Alongside these celebrations, this week has also marked the beginning of our Year 11 mock examinations. I have been extremely impressed by the attitude shown by students as they have approached this important period. They have conducted themselves with maturity, focus and determination, recognising that these examinations provide an invaluable opportunity to prepare for the challenges that lie ahead.

Mock examinations are about much more than assessing what students currently know. They help students become familiar with the routines, expectations and pressures of formal examinations. They provide an opportunity to practise managing time effectively, experience examination conditions and identify areas for further development before the summer examination season. By running a full programme of mocks, we are helping students to build confidence and better prepare themselves for success when the stakes are highest.

One of the key lessons students learn during this period is the importance of strong routines. Regular attendance, consistent revision, organised preparation, healthy sleep patterns and punctuality all play an important role in supporting examination performance. The habits students establish now will not only support their success in Year 11 but will also benefit them throughout their future education and careers.

I would like to thank parents and carers for the encouragement and support you continue to provide at home. The partnership between school and family is particularly important during examination periods, and your support helps ensure that students can approach their studies with confidence and resilience.

I would also like to update parents on the introduction of our mobile phone pouches. As many of you will be aware, the expectations placed upon schools nationally regarding mobile phone use have become increasingly clear, with schools being directed to ensure that mobile phones do not disrupt learning, wellbeing or social interaction during the school day. While mobile phone use has not been a significant issue at our school, it is important that we align with this guidance and implement systems that support the highest standards of learning and behaviour.

I am pleased to report that the introduction of the pouches has been extremely positive. Students have adapted quickly to the new routine, demonstrating maturity and a willingness to embrace the change. Staff have reported calm starts to lessons, strong levels of engagement and increased face-to-face interaction between students during social times. The success of the rollout is a credit to our students, who have approached the change with considerable responsibility. We will continue to monitor its impact, but the early signs suggest that this approach is helping us further strengthen an already positive learning environment

As we reflect on a week that has combined faith, celebration and academic endeavour, I am once again reminded of what a privilege it is to work with such talented and committed young people. Whether representing the school during Bishop Stephen's visit or applying themselves diligently in mock examinations, our students continue to make us proud.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. I wish you and your families a peaceful and enjoyable weekend.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Glenn Thompson
Head of School

KS3 Students Showcase Creativity in St Thérèse of Lisieux Portrait Competition

KS3 students recently demonstrated their outstanding creativity and artistic talent by participating in the St Thérèse of Lisieux Portrait Competition, organised by the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The competition provided students with an exciting opportunity to develop their portraiture skills while exploring the life and legacy of one of the Church's most inspiring saints.

As part of the project, students researched St Thérèse and used a range of artistic techniques to create thoughtful and expressive portrait responses. Working with a variety of media, including pencil, coloured pencil, paint and mixed media, students carefully considered proportion, tone, colour and detail to produce highly individual interpretations. The project encouraged students to combine technical skill with personal creativity, resulting in a diverse and impressive collection of artwork.

The standard of entries was exceptionally high, with students demonstrating excellent commitment, perseverance and attention to detail throughout the creative process. Many took great pride in refining their work and producing portraits that reflected both the character of St Thérèse and their own artistic style.

The competition proved to be a tremendous success for English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College, with two Year 8 students receiving outstanding recognition. One student was awarded Overall Winner of the Competition, while another secured the title of Best Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 Entry. These remarkable achievements highlight the exceptional artistic talent within the school and are a testament to the creativity, dedication and technical skill of our young artists.

As part of the awards presentation, the winners were welcomed and congratulated by Michelle Ross, a representative from the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. Her presence made the occasion even more special and provided students with a memorable opportunity to celebrate their success.

The competition was a wonderful celebration of artistic achievement and offered students a meaningful opportunity to engage with their faith through creativity. The finished artworks showcased the depth of talent across the Key Stage 3 cohort and highlighted the enthusiasm students have for Art.

The Art Department would like to congratulate all students who participated, and particularly our two Year 8 award winners whose achievements brought great distinction to the school. Their hard work, creativity and commitment made the competition a tremendous success and provided a fantastic opportunity to celebrate both artistic excellence and our Catholic ethos.

We would also like to thank Michelle Ross and the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle for organising the competition and recognising the outstanding achievements of our students.

Mr Meynell



Year 9 Careers Workshop

On Wednesday, all year 9 students took part in the first of four Building My Skills careers workshops, with the opening session delivered by Northumbrian Water. Students explored the skills, behaviours and qualities valued by employers while learning about a range of career opportunities within the organisation. The session highlighted both technical and vocational pathways, as well as higher-level entry routes such as apprenticeships, degree apprenticeships and university programmes, helping students to understand the different options available as they plan for their future careers.

Ms Mincher

Anti-Bullying Week

Anti-Bullying Week begins on Monday 16th November. Throughout the week, students will take part in activities designed to promote kindness, respect and positive relationships across our school community.

We would like to remind parents and students that any concerns about bullying should be reported as soon as possible. Our #NeverOk reporting system is available via the school website and can be used by students to report bullying incidents. While our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mr Gray, is available to support students, concerns can also be reported to any member of staff, who will ensure they are dealt with appropriately.

As part of Anti-Bullying Week, we also encourage parents to speak regularly with their children about online safety, including responsible use of social media, gaming platforms and messaging apps. Open conversations at home can play an important role in helping young people stay safe online.

Students are warmly invited to wear odd socks on Monday 16th November to celebrate what makes us all unique.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring our school remains a safe and respectful environment for all.

Ms Stanwick



Y11 November Mock Exams

This week marked the start of the Year 11 November mock exam timetable. Students have successfully completed their French writing, English Language, Maths, RE and Humanities exams. We are incredibly proud of the outstanding attendance, conduct and resilience shown by our Y11 students as they reach the halfway point of this important and demanding fortnight.

Mr Doyle

Year 11 Period 6 Update

With Year 11 mock exams underway, a revised Period 6 timetable is in place. The timetable follows the sequence of the mock exams, providing targeted support to tackle key misconceptions and help students achieve success.

Last week saw our highest ever Period 6 attendance, with an incredible 478 attendance logged! Even more impressively, over 50% of the entire Year 11 cohort now regularly attends a Period 6 session every afternoon.

Mr Doyle

November Mock Exam Period 6 Timetable			
	Week 1		Week 2
	9th Nov – 13th Nov		16th Nov – 20th Nov
Monday	Maths		History Geography
Tuesday	French Biology		Maths
Wednesday	English		Physics
Thursday	Maths		English
Friday	RE Chemistry		

Attendance League Winners

On Monday our Season 1 students celebrated with an attendance breakfast.

Congratulations to our 5 form groups who were crowned champions.

Bronze - 11JB2 Mr Maddison

Silver - 7JB2 Mr Garvey

Gold - 8AL2 Miss Simpson

Platinum - 7TM1Mr East

Diamond -7JI1Mrs Ball

Ms Corcoran









Sixth Form Updates

Progress Reviews

Progress reviews were sent to parents and carers last week via email and the app. If you have not received your child's progress review, or if you have any questions regarding their progress, please contact a member of the Sixth Form team who will be happy to help.

Save the Date: EM6 Open Evening

We are delighted to be welcoming prospective EM6 students and their families to our Sixth Form Open Evening on Tuesday 8 December, from 3.30pm to 6.00pm. This is a fantastic opportunity to meet our dedicated subject specialists and current students, explore our facilities, and gain a real insight into life within our thriving Sixth Form community. In the lead up to the event, Mrs Henderson will also be delivering an assembly to Year 11 students about the exciting opportunities available at EM6.

MET Mission Christmas Appeal

As we approach the Christmas season, EM6 students are working together to support The Mission to Seafarers by creating hampers filled with essential toiletries for seafarers spending Christmas away from home. We would be very grateful for any donations of toiletries to support our MET Mission and help make a difference to those who work tirelessly at sea. Thank you for your generosity and support.

PPD - Cleveland Fire Brigade

It was a pleasure to welcome Corrie from Cleveland Fire Brigade to speak with our Year 12 students about road safety as they begin learning to drive. The session was both engaging and informative, providing valuable insights into the responsibilities of being a safe driver and the importance of making sensible decisions on the road. The powerful messages and advice shared will stay with our students for many years to come. A sincere thank you to Corrie for delivering such an impactful presentation.

Year 12 Success

Congratulations to Mehdi, one of our Year 12 students, who was successful in securing a place on the highly competitive Norton Rose Fulbright Work Experience Programme. During the October half-term break, Mehdi completed a placement with the global commercial law firm, gaining valuable insight into the legal profession and the work of an international business. As part of the programme, he will continue to receive mentoring, guidance and development opportunities throughout his time in sixth form, helping him build the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to pursue a career in law. We are incredibly proud of his achievement and look forward to following his continued success.

Ms Scaife

YOU'RE INVITED TO OUR

OPEN EVENT

EMS

The English Martyrs
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE



Tuesday 8th December, 3.30pm - 6.00pm

Discover a place where every student is
known, challenged, and supported.

Remembrance Sunday

On Sunday 8th November, a group of ten students across Years 7-11 marched in the headland parade. Prayers, hymns and a two-minute silence were observed along with the playing of The Last Post. Well done to all students who represented EMS and graced the occasion with the respect it deserved.

On Wednesday 11th November eight Year 7 students from KS3 History Club laid a remembrance wreath in the museum gardens. We read In Flanders Field and held a two-minute silence. We heard stories from the museum volunteers about the Battle of the Somme. Thank you to the museum and we are looking forward to working with them again in the near future.

Ms Edwards



Key Dates	
17th Nov 15:30 – 18:00	Yr 10 Parents Evening
1st Dec 15:30 – 18:00	Yr 11 Parents Evening
8th Dec 15:30 – 18:00	6th Form Open Evening