



The English Martyrs
Catholic School and
Sixth Form College

Parent and Carer Bulletin

Issue #17 | 6th February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we move through the darker mornings and evenings, it has been heartening to notice the first signs of lighter days returning. This gradual shift always brings a sense of renewed energy and optimism into school, and it has certainly been reflected in the atmosphere around our corridors this week. It has been a particularly uplifting week in school, and I wanted to take a moment to share some highlights that I believe truly reflect the strength of our school community.

Thank you to all the parents and carers who joined us on Tuesday evening for our Year 11 Revision Evening. The turnout was good, and the atmosphere throughout the event was incredibly positive. Every student and parent had the opportunity to discuss exam preparation directly with the subject specialists, clarifying for parents the key nuances specific to each subject. There were also opportunities for students and parents to speak with members of the senior leadership team who provided expert advice around exam preparation, such as building an effective revision timetable, effective use of past papers, effective use of flash cards and many other revision techniques. Each student who attended also received a pack of resources that will support them in revising over the coming months. If your child was unable to attend, we would advise them to speak with their form tutor who can provide them with the materials. It was wonderful to see families and staff working together to ensure our students feel confident and supported as they move into the final stretch before their exams. The feedback we received has been overwhelmingly encouraging, and we are delighted that so many of you found the workshops and resources helpful.

Hopefully, you will have seen in last week's bulletin that there is an upcoming opportunity for parents and carers to work with the school. The intention is for the Parent and Community Advisory Board to meet each term to *'strengthen communication between school and home, ensure parent and carer voices are heard, and work together to co-design improvements that benefit our pupils and wider school community. Above all, it is about building even stronger trust, relationships and shared understanding between families and the school'*. These sessions will be an important part of how we listen, reflect, and continue to improve as a school. Your insights help shape our priorities, and your willingness to work alongside us makes a real difference. A strong partnership between home and school is one of the most powerful influences on a child's success, and we will greatly benefit from the open, constructive dialogue that the forum will provide.

As always, thank you for your continued support. Our school thrives because of the strong relationships we build together, and weeks like this remind us just how much we can achieve when we work in partnership.

Wishing you all a restful weekend.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Glenn Thompson
Head of School



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EMS Parent Community Advisory Board

We are delighted to invite you to be part of an exciting new initiative at our school – EMS Parent Community Advisory Board.

This group is being created to strengthen communication between school and home, ensure parent and carer voices are heard, and work together to co-design improvements that benefit our pupils and wider school community. Above all, it is about building even stronger trust, relationships and shared understanding between families and the school.

The Advisory Board will:

- Provide a forum for parents and carers to share ideas, perspectives and feedback
- Support open, constructive communication between school and families
- Collaborate with school leaders to help shape future developments and priorities
- Strengthen links between the school, families and the wider community

We are keen for the board to reflect the diversity of our school community. No previous experience is needed – just a willingness to listen, share, and work positively together for the benefit of our children.

Meetings will be held half-termly at times designed to be as accessible as possible, and involvement will be supportive and flexible.

If you are interested in joining, or would like to find out more, please complete the short expression of interest form (link below) by Friday 20th February.

[EMS Parent Community Advisory Board – Fill out form](#)

We truly value the role parents and carers play in our school, and we hope many of you will consider being part of this important new partnership.

Mr Gray

Holocaust Memorial Visit

On Tuesday 27th January, Holocaust Memorial Day, Year 9 students attended an event with a second-generation Holocaust speaker in school. Vivienne Cato spoke of her mother Eva Cato, who lived under a false identity in Budapest during the Holocaust, following news of her aunt who had been transported to Auschwitz. Year 9 students listened intently and were extremely respectful.

Following this event, we held our KS3 History club on Thursday 29th January. 36 students participated in painting remembrance stones for victims of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides. We will now display these stones in school.

Ms Edwards

Health and Wellbeing Support

EMS will be celebrating Children's Mental Health Week (9th–15th February). As part of this, EMS Together will be running a range of wellbeing activities to support students' mental and emotional health. These will include mindful colouring during breaktime in Miss Hodgson's room, along with several fundraising activities to promote positive wellbeing across our school community.

Lunchtimes Health Stand – Tuesday 10th February 2026

The school nurses will host a drop-in health stand at lunchtime.

This is a great chance for students to:

- Speak with the nursing team
- Ask questions about health and wellbeing
- Find out more about Alliance and the support they offer

All students are welcome to attend.

Sixth Form Assembly – Wednesday 11th February 2026

Sixth Form students will receive an assembly led by the school nurses, focusing on health, wellbeing, and the support available to them as older students.

Year 11 Exam Stress Support

To support Year 11 students through their upcoming PREP exams and GCSE preparation, we are planning two sets of wellbeing workshops:

One-off workshop before mock exams – focusing on managing stress, preparing effectively, and building healthy routines.

Three-week workshop series after PREP exams. This will be a deeper programme offering practical strategies, wellbeing guidance, and emotional support.

Further details are available from Mr Gray or Miss Taylor.

KS3 Assemblies – February 2026

We will also be delivering tailored sessions for Key Stage 3:

Year 7 Assembly: Friday 6th February delivered by Alliance mental health team.

Years 8 & 9 Assemblies: Friday 13th February delivered by Alliance mental health team.

These assemblies will focus on health awareness, wellbeing, and how to access support when needed.

Mr Gray

Holocaust Memorial Visit

Mrs Fairclough accompanied six students from our school to St Michael's Catholic Academy in Billingham, part of our Trust of schools, for a moving and reflective morning commemorating the Holocaust.

St Michael's is home to the only Holocaust memorial in the North East within a Catholic secondary school. During the visit, students laid stones in remembrance of those who lost their lives, taking time to reflect on the importance of remembrance, tolerance, and learning from history.

Our students conducted themselves with great maturity and respect throughout the visit, and the experience provided a powerful opportunity for reflection and education.

Ms Fairclough





EMS RE Trip **ROME**

OCTOBER 2026

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

Visits to iconic landmarks such as the Vatican City, St Peters Basilica, and more, with guided tours and educational activities designed to enhance students' understanding of historical Catholic buildings linked to their curriculum in RE. As well as this it will include evening meals at venues such as Hard Rock Café and a pizza making workshop in the heart of Rome.

**REGISTER YOUR INTEREST NOW - LETTERS AVAILABLE
FROM RE STAFF FOR CURRENT Y10 & Y11 WHO ARE
JOINING EMS6**



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Updates in Sixth Form

Year 13 Aspirations

We are incredibly proud to celebrate the outstanding success of our Year 13 students; many of whom are already holding offers to study prestigious healthcare courses at universities across the UK. These pathways will see them progress into highly skilled, in-demand careers within the NHS.

We are thrilled to share that Civ has received an offer to study Medicine at the University of Cambridge - an exceptional achievement. Elise and Kidus are holding offers to study Diagnostic Radiography, while several students are preparing to begin rewarding careers in nursing. Eryn has offers to study Children's Nursing, with Tahi and Maila pursuing Mental Health Nursing. Alexandra and Tahiya are also aiming to progress into Dental Hygiene.

These successes reflect the ambition, dedication and talent of our students, as well as the high-quality guidance and support they receive as they prepare for life beyond sixth form. We are proud to be helping shape the next generation of NHS professionals and future healthcare leaders.

If your child is considering a future in healthcare, it's not too late to join us. Applications to study with us for a September 2026 start are now open, and we would love to support the next success story.

Year 11 Sixth Form Interviews

We will soon be inviting all Year 11 students who have applied to our Sixth Form to attend an interview. We use the term interview lightly - it's simply an informal chat to discuss your subject choices, attendance, the support you may need, and your plans moving forward.

These conversations will take place after the Prep Exams, and we look forward to speaking with each of you.

Sixth Form Period 6

Period 6 is running across Sixth Form to help you stay on track, boost confidence and push your grades higher. Make the most of the extra support on offer.

Subject Interventions:

Digital Media: Monday / Wednesday
French: Wednesday
Geography: Friday
Health and Social: Monday
History: Thursday (Revision) / Friday (Coursework Clinic)
Law: Thursday
Maths: Wednesday / Thursday
Music: Monday
Politics: Monday / Thursday
Psychology: Wednesday / Thursday
RE: Monday / Tuesday (Webinar)
Science: Various - See Science Teacher
Sport: Tuesday AM / Thursday AM

Ms Jackson

Y11 PREP Exam Timetable

16th February – 6th March

	Monday 16th February	Tuesday 17th February	Wednesday 18th February	Thursday 19th February	Friday 20th February
Lesson 1	Biology	English Language	Chemistry	Maths Paper 1	English Literature
Lesson 2	1hr45(triple) 1hr15(combined)	1hr45	1hr45(triple) 1hr15(combined)	1hr30	1hr45
Lesson 3			French Reading 45m(F) 1hr(H) Spanish Listening 35m(F) 45m(H)		
Lesson 4	History	Religious Education	French & Spanish Writing 1hr10(F) 1hr15(F)	Comp Science iMedia Business Studies	History 1hr30
Lesson 5	1hr50	1hr30	Product Design 1hr40	CNAT Sports Science GCSE PE	Geography 1hr30
Half Term Intervention 23rd February - 27th February					
	Monday 2nd March	Tuesday 3rd March	Wednesday 4th March	Thursday 5th March	Friday 6th March
Lesson 1	Maths	English Language	Physics	English Literature	Maths
Lesson 2	1hr30	1hr45	1hr45(triple) 1hr15(combined)	2hr15	1hr30
Lesson 3	Spanish Reading 45m(F) 1hr(H) French Listening 35m(F) 45m(H)				
Lesson 4	Music	Religious Education	Comp Science Business Studies	History 1hr20	Religious Education
Lesson 5	1hr30	1hr30	CNAT Sports Science GCSE PE	Geography 1hr	1hr

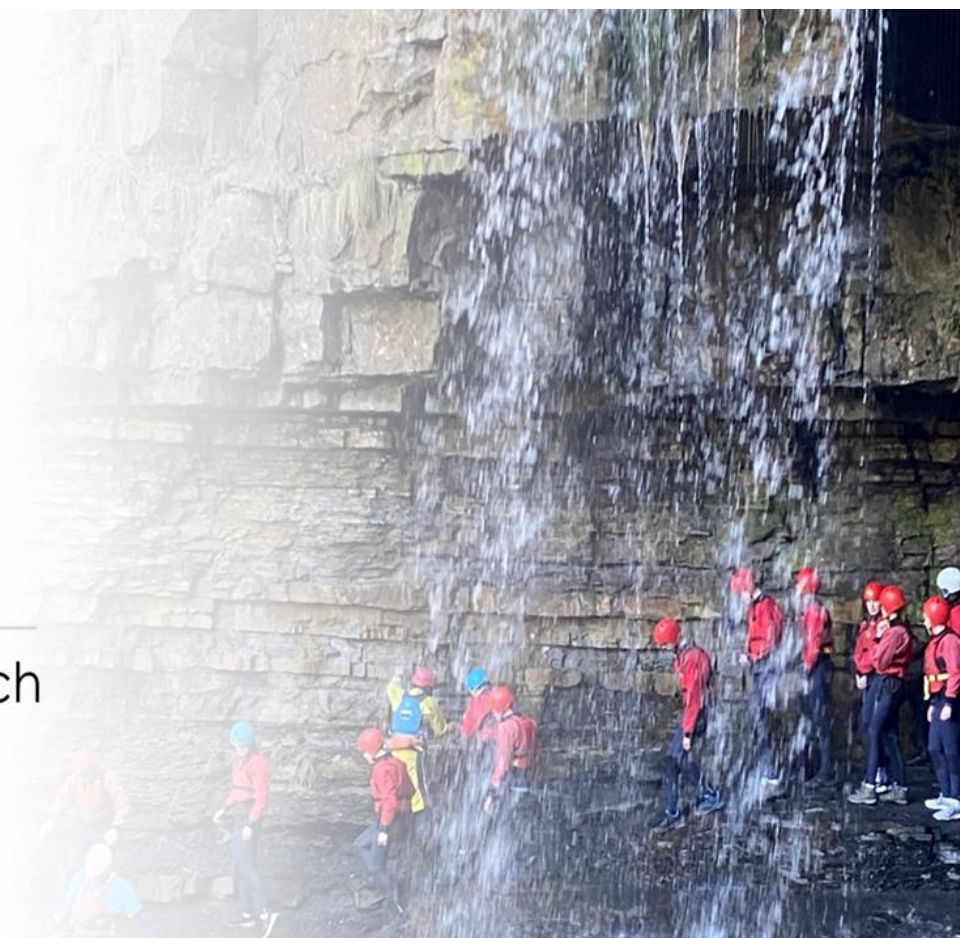
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GCSE Yr 11 Geography Revision Adventure

Weardale 2026
Friday 27th –
Saturday 28th March

See Mrs Martindale for a letter or ask your
geography teacher for more information.



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Geography Revision Weekend – March 2026

Get ready for a fun, active and energising short weekend designed to help you boost your grades ahead of the summer exams! Join us for Friday evening and Saturday morning for packed interactive sessions, hands-on activities, expert guidance, and plenty of opportunities to strengthen your confidence in every part of the course.

Whether you want to secure top marks or simply feel more prepared, this is your chance to revise in a relaxed, motivating environment with friends. Don't miss it!

Learn more. Think deeper. Achieve higher.

See you there!

Ms Martindale

Intense Focused Art Intervention

Two Year 11 male students, who joined the course exceptionally late in the year, have made remarkable progress by creating expressive ceramic head sculptures inspired by the work of Gustav Klimt.

Despite having far less time than their peers, both students quickly engaged with the project and demonstrated strong determination to develop their skills. They explored Klimt's distinctive style—his use of intricate pattern, rich colour, and symbolic decorative elements—and translated these influences into their own three-dimensional clay forms.

Working through the full ceramic process in a condensed timeframe, they produced sculptural heads that show clear consideration of facial structure, surface texture, and artistic intent. They incorporated Klimt-inspired motifs into the surface decoration, using pattern, linework, and metallic finishes to echo his iconic aesthetic while still expressing their own individuality.

Their commitment, creativity, and ability to catch up with complex practical work in such a short period is highly commendable, and their final outcomes contribute strongly to the overall quality of the group's work.

Mr Meynell



Vatican Correspondent Hosts Webinar for A Level RE Students

We were delighted to welcome Christopher Lamb, Vatican Correspondent for CNN, who joined our Year 13 A Level Religious Education students via webinar last week. His talk provided valuable insight at a perfect moment, complementing students' recent studies on Gender and Society and Gender and Theology.

Christopher Lamb offered a rare insider's perspective on the recent conclave that elected Pope Leo. He discussed the traditions that shape a papal election, the atmosphere in the Vatican during a conclave, and the global issues that often influence the cardinals' deliberations. Students were especially interested in hearing how journalists navigate the secrecy surrounding the process and how quickly events unfold once the white smoke appears.

A significant portion of the webinar focused on the changing role of women in the Vatican and the wider Catholic Church. Mr Lamb explored the increasing presence of women in senior Vatican positions, the theological conversations driving these developments, and the challenges that continue to shape the debate. His insights gave students a tangible link between their academic learning and real-world developments within the Church today.

Our students engaged thoughtfully, asking perceptive questions throughout the session. Many commented afterwards on how valuable it was to hear directly from someone with firsthand experience of Church life at the highest levels.

We are grateful to Christopher Lamb for giving up his time and sharing such rich, thought-provoking perspectives. His webinar brought real depth to our Year 13 study of gender, authority, and modern religious institutions.

Mr Bayne

What an inspiring morning at EDF Hartlepool Power Station

Our Year 11 students had the chance to take part in a bespoke tour of one of the UK's leading nuclear power stations, giving them first-hand insight into the world of nuclear engineering and the pathways available through EDF's engineering apprenticeship programmes.

The visit began in the visitor's centre, where students were given an introductory briefing about the opportunities on offer. They then had time to speak with current apprentices who are progressing through the scheme and were able to hear directly about their experiences.

The tour continued into the turbine hall, giving students an exciting look at the scale and operation of the site. They also explored the workshop facilities, where apprentices work alongside qualified technicians and develop the practical skills needed for their roles.

It was a valuable experience that has strengthened students' understanding of the opportunities available to them beyond Year 11.

Ms Russell



Year 8 & 9 Retreat to Emmaus Youth Village – Living Hope in Action

This week, our Year 8 and 9 students have taken part in a truly special residential retreat at the Emmaus Youth Village, an experience rooted in prayer, joy, and personal growth. Guided by the retreat theme Living Hope, students were invited to reflect on what it means to live as people of hope in today's world – not only in words, but through their actions, relationships, and faith.

Throughout the retreat, our young people embodied this theme in powerful and inspiring ways. Whether supporting one another during activities, engaging thoughtfully in moments of prayer, or stepping outside their comfort zones with courage and openness, students consistently demonstrated compassion, resilience, and generosity of spirit. In doing so, they lived out our school mission statement inspired by the words of St Teresa of Avila:

“Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”

This message was made visible in the way students cared for one another, showed respect, and embraced opportunities to serve and lead. They were not simply learning about faith – they were witnesses of faith, showing that hope is something we choose daily through love, kindness, and action.

The retreat struck a wonderful balance between fun, prayer, and formation. Highlights included energetic team activities that built trust and friendship, moments of quiet reflection that allowed students to encounter God personally, and thoughtful input that encouraged them to see how faith connects to everyday life.

A particularly meaningful moment was our pilgrimage to the Source, where students joined other young people from across the diocese at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle. This experience reminded our students that they are part of a wider Church family, walking together as pilgrims of hope and faith.

Of course, there was also plenty of laughter and joy, with one of the most talked-about moments being an action-packed game of Capture the Flag, which brought out teamwork, enthusiasm, and good-natured competition – a joyful reminder that faith-filled experiences can also be full of fun.

We are incredibly proud of how our students have represented our school community throughout the retreat. They have returned not only tired but enriched – carrying with them a deeper understanding of hope, faith, and their call to be the living presence of Christ in the world today.

Our sincere thanks go to the staff and the team at Emmaus Youth Village for making this retreat such a memorable and formative experience for our young people.

Mr McCartie



Dates for the Diary

Dates	Event
16 th February – 6 th March	Year 11 PREP Exams
10 th February	Year 10 Parents Evening (3pm – 6pm)
17 th February	Year 13 Parents Evening (3pm – 6pm)
19 th February	Year 9 Options Evening (3pm – 6pm)