

# CONTACT

No. 1720 – Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026

**Receiving letters and messages – MCAS App:** As we all adjust to the new systems, we are aware of some issues with receiving letters/communication from school. We are really grateful for everyone's patience with this. Just a reminder that letters and messages are often sent via the new MCAS app - [MyChildAtSchool - Login](#). These can be found in the messages section of the app and if you allow notifications for this app you should receive an alert when messages are received. Please check this regularly for news and updates, but if you have any problems or are concerned that you are not receiving information, please let us know. Urgent or high importance communications will be sent via email as well during this transition period to hopefully ensure no messages are missed.

**Year 10 Parents Evening** takes place in school on **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March** from 4:00pm, all parents should have received an email with further information and how to book appointments using our online booking system. We look forward to seeing as many families as possible at this evening to discuss how our year 10 students are progressing.

**Year 8 Options Process and Options Evening:** Our Year 8 Options Process begins this half term, with Options Evening taking place on **THURSDAY 26<sup>th</sup> MARCH**. A letter was sent out this week outlining the format of the evening, along with further details of this important process, and we hope to see all year 8 parents/carers and students on 26<sup>th</sup> March. A copy of this letter can also be found here – [Year 8 Options Evening](#)

If you have any questions regarding the options process, please do not hesitate to contact me: [ahardiman@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk](mailto:ahardiman@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk)

**Year 11 English 'Walking Talking Assessments – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March:** On Monday and Tuesday next week Year 11 students will be having 'Walking Talking' assessments in English Language and Literature. Students will reap the benefit of the English departments expertise who will guide them through each question on each paper allowing them to fully understand what the examination board expects. They will then be allowed to practice their skills under timed conditions. This has proved to be an extremely valuable experience in the past, assisting with how best to approach and planning their time for each question. We hope the students benefit greatly from the experience.

- *English Literature will take place on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March – Paper 1 (am) and Paper 2 (pm)*
- *English Language will take place on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March - Paper 1 (am) and Paper 2 (pm)*

## School Play – A Christmas Carol – Tickets now available

Tickets are now on sale for this year's school play – *A Christmas Carol*. Performances will be taking place on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> and Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March. Doors open at 6.30pm and the performances begin at 7pm. [Tickets can be purchased here](#), or via the QR code on the flyer below. We look forward to seeing you there.

**Pi Day - Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026:** Following on from last year's successful Pi Day celebrations and fantastic amount raised, this year will hopefully be even better! We will be having our usual "Number" **NON – UNIFORM** day where students will be encouraged to wear something that includes a number or numbers. The expected donation is £2, payable via [MCAS](#), and this will include a Number Hunt sheet. There will be prizes for the best entries! As well as pi – related activities happening in lessons during the day, we have a Pi Cake Decorating competition! Entries need to be brought in on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March to Maths 1. Prizes for the best three decorated cakes! Also new for 2026 – Pi Day Run! This year there will be a 3.14 mile race – prizes for the winners! All money raised during the day will go to Southend Hospital's Special Care Baby Unit. Ms Clarke, Head of Maths. **Non-uniform day rules apply:** *No clothing to be worn with messages or pictures on them which could be seen as inappropriate, disreputable or offensive, no earrings or other jewellery other than watches as per usual code of conduct. Clothes worn should be appropriate for a school day. Hats or headwear must be removed on entering the school.*

Dr. Thomas Holt Presents

# A CHRISTMAS CAROL



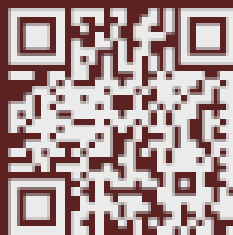
THURSDAY 12TH & FRIDAY 13TH MARCH

DOORS OPEN AT 6.30PM PERFORMANCE AT 7.00PM

ADMISSION\*

£5

SCAN TO BUY



VIP TABLE\*

£50

(6 max)

\*PLUS BOOKING FEE

**COULD YOU BE A FOUNDATION TRUSTEE?** [Assisi Catholic Trust](#) is currently seeking a foundation Trustee with experience or confidence in HR; to support the development of people strategy or experience to support our flourishing capital strategy covering buildings, digital infrastructure & technology and our asset management plan. If you, or someone you know, have these skills and a heart for supporting Catholic education, we would love to hear from you. Trustees play a vital role in ensuring strong oversight, value for money and long-term planning. If interested, please contact the school office and speak to Mrs Ackred for an informal discussion.

## Prayer of the Week

by St Thomas Aquinas

Bestow upon me, O God,  
An understanding that knows you,  
Wisdom in finding you  
A way of life that is pleasing to you  
Perseverance that faithfully waits for you  
And confidence that I shall embrace you at the last  
AMEN

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent

Matthew 17:1-9

Artwork: “The Transfiguration” (1516-1520) by Raphael



In this week we hear from the Gospel according to St Matthew. In this reading we hear about a very famous and important part of our Lord Jesus Christ's earthly ministry – the Transfiguration. In the narrative we see three of His apostles – Peter, John, and James – go with our Lord up a mountain. While they are on this mountain with Him, they witness the transfiguration, where Lord Jesus shines so brightly He is compared to the sun. Though not recorded in this particular Gospel, others describe that the three apostles become sleepy but keep themselves awake. During this transfiguration these apostles see Moses (representing the Old testament Law) and Elijah (representing the Old testament Prophets) beside the shining Jesus. They also hear the voice of God the Father from heaven, telling them to listen to Lord Jesus. It's a beautiful story that inspires fantastic imagery in our minds, imagine how incredible these Apostles must've felt to be privileged to witness this.

During the season of Lent we are called to be reflective on the journey our Lord Jesus Christ has between His fast and temptation in the desert, and the events leading to His arrest and death. There is an important story that occurs just moments before Jesus's arrest that has striking similarities to this weeks Gospel.

On the night that the Lord would be arrested He went to the Garden of Gethsemane along with three of His apostles – Peter, John, and James. Lord Jesus asks these men to stay

awake and pray with Him, but they don't. They fall asleep and have to be woken multiple times. In the Garden our Lord is very distressed, His body under so much physical and mental stress that St Luke's Gospel describes Him as sweating blood because He knows the suffering He will go through at the Crucifixion. He only asks for the apostles to stay awake and pray with Him during His time of need, and these same apostles who were able to resist sleep on the Mount of Transfiguration can't do it, they can't stay awake. They are there for Him when things are positive and benefit them (seeing something as awe-inspiring as the transfiguration would be quite beneficial), but they struggle when they have to support Him with no obvious or immediate benefit to themselves.

How often do we do this? How often are we faithful to God when it's convenient to us, but not when professing our faith is more difficult? Do we do this to those in our own lives? Do we support our friends and family through bad times as much as we do the good?

This week lets consider if we are consistently present and reflect on what we can do to help others more selflessly.

**Max  
Morris, Lay Chaplain**

## Chaplaincy News

**Want to understand more about the Catholic faith?** Unsure why we stand, sit, or kneel during certain parts of Mass? Have questions about the wording of certain prayers? Whether you're Catholic or not it's easy to have questions about the Catholic faith, every Mass, service, prayer, and dedication is full of rich meaning, Biblical origin, or tradition. On the request of multiple students there will now be 10-minute drop-in sessions during most break times in the chapel. The notice board in the chapel will contain information on each day the group will meet during the week, as well as any topics that have been previously agreed on (or if it will be just a general Q&A style session). If you want to join or have a question that you want to put forward for a full 10-minute session, please speak to Max.

**CAFOD's Big Lent Walk 2026!** This Lent we are supporting CAFOD and joining other schools around the country to help support our global neighbours. To raise money, at St. Thomas More we're going to run the following events:

**Year 8** Big Lent Walk held during RE lessons: 8A, 8G, 8P, 8S and 8V - Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025. 8D - Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

**Year 9** Big Lent Walk held during a RE lesson: 9s5-9s8 Monday -16<sup>th</sup> March 2026. 9s1-9s4- Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

**Year 10** Big Lent Walk held during a RE lesson: 10s5-10s8- Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026. 10s1-10s4 -Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

Instead of completing a Big Lent Walk, **Year 7** will have a Interhouse Pancake Race Competition during Period 5 RE/Geography/Modern Languages on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026 to raise Money. Year 12 will complete a Big Lent Walk to Southend Pier on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026. The CAFOD Young Leaders will write a letter to parents/carers nearer the time with more information. All pupils are asked to contribute a minimum of £2 to take part in their event. If they wish to raise more money, they can ask family and friends to sponsor them for the relevant event above. Please make your donation online via [MCAS](#). Pupils can use the CAFOD sponsor form which will be attached to a letter send to parents and carers. The CARITAS Team will be organising a number of additional fundraising events- a scavenger hunt, Lenten Bazaar and other activities. Further information will be available at a later date.



**Charity Keyrings:** we would like to offer you the the opportunity to purchase a house keyring, they are £1 each, with money going to charity. Please logon to [MCAS](#), click on the store icon and follow instructions for the house your child is in.

**CAFOD Family Fast Day 2026 -Simple Lunch:** Thank you to all who supported our Simple Lunch today. For more information please click on [Family Fast Day - Lent 2026](#) The CARITAS Team



# Diocesan News

**ST JOHN BOSCO CHILDREN'S CAMP – AN AMAZING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY FOR THIS SUMMER:** If you are in school year 12 or student age (or any age over 17!) you are very welcome to apply at [www.boscocamp.co.uk](http://www.boscocamp.co.uk). The application process includes references and a DBS check, which we can help with, as well as a training and support before and during Camp. The Camp provides over 100 children a week with a summer holiday – for many their only holiday. As a volunteer you use your skills in assisting with different sporting and fun activities, as well as the practical aspects of camp life. Volunteer for 25th July – 1st August or 1st – 8th August. The Camp is a special work of Caritas Diocese of Brentwood and also seeks financial donations – all information on the website.

**Sacred Heart Church Community Warm Café – Every Friday 11am-2pm:** Throughout winter, Sacred Heart Church (418 Southchurch Road, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 2QB) will be opening up the doors of their parish hall every Friday from 11am-2pm for their community warm café. Come along and enjoy a bowl of hot soup, refreshments, cakes & biscuits and a friendly chat. This is free of charge.

## Our Assisi Catholic Trust Family


Schools	Parishes
 <a href="#">Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School and Nursery</a>	<a href="#">Our Lady of Lourdes and St Joesph Msgr Kevin Hale</a>
 <a href="#">St George's Catholic Primary School</a>	<a href="#">St. George and The English Martyrs Fr. Brett</a>
 <a href="#">Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and Nursery</a>	<a href="#">Sacred Heart of Jesus Fr. Graham</a>
 <a href="#">St Helen's Catholic Primary School</a>	<a href="#">Our Lady Helo of Christians and Saint Helen Fr. Alex</a>
 <a href="#">St Joseph's Catholic Primary School</a>	<a href="#">Our Lady of Canvey and English Martyrs Fr. Eamonn</a>
 <a href="#">Holy Family Catholic Primary School</a>	<a href="#">Holy Family and St Thomas More Fr. Eduard</a>
 <a href="#">Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School</a>	<a href="#">Our Lady of Ransom Fr Paul</a>
 <a href="#">St Teresa's Catholic Primary School</a>	<a href="#">Catholic Church of St. Teresa and the Child Jesus Fr. Gerry</a>
 <a href="#">St Thomas More High School</a>	<a href="#">St Peter's Fr. Jeff</a>

### Vacancies:


St Thomas More: Cleaner - [Cleaner Vacancy](#)

St Joseph's: Admin Assistant - [St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and Nursery - Admin Assistant](#)

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and Nursery



**70 YEARS OF OUR WONDERFUL SCHOOL!**  
Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March - community open evening from 3:30pm - 7:00pm.  
Were you an ex-pupil, parent or staff member of St Joseph's?  
All welcome! £1 entry suggested donation; pop-up museum and cafe; tours around the school



**SACRED HEART PRIMARY SCHOOL**

IS YOUR CHILD STARTING SCHOOL IN SEPTEMBER?

BOOK YOUR VISIT NOW

*Come and see how we can support your child*

A catholic school that welcomes all

01702 414200  
office@sacredheart.southend.sch.uk



**Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School and Nursery**

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School and Nursery has 2 & 4 year olds. Our enhanced team offers opportunities for all children to learn through play, inside and outside the classroom. We are pleased to offer spaces from September.

Please contact the school office to book your visit.

**NURSERY SPACES AVAILABLE**  
September 2026



**WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK WITH US AT ST JOSEPH'S?**

**COULD YOU BE OUR NEXT ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT?**



See our website for more details.  
Closing date - 11<sup>th</sup> March  
[stjosephscanvey.net](http://stjosephscanvey.net)

# Parent Reminders and Student Information

**Term Dates:** Please find the [Term Dates 2025-26](#).

**Term Dates:** Please find the [Term Dates 2026-27](#)

**Calendar for Parents:** can be accessed [here](#).

**Half-Term Holiday Ideas:** If you are looking for free and cheap things to do with kids over the half-term break some useful ideas can be found [here](#).

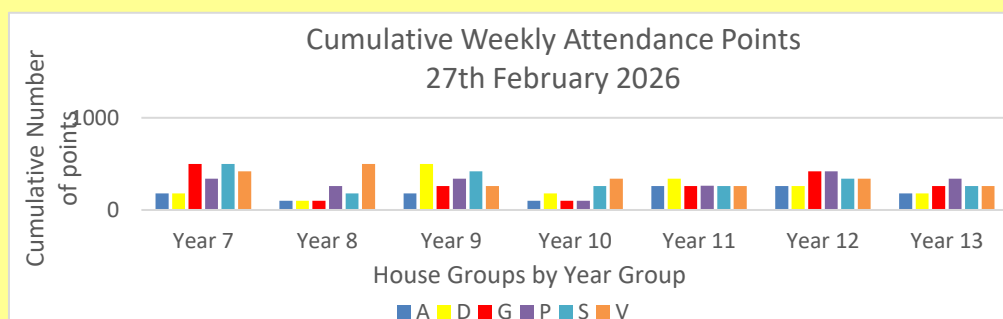


**Parking:** Despite persistent reminders, parents are still parking dangerously by the red gate exit at the end of each day. This is extremely dangerous as students, particularly those on cycles must swerve to get around illegally parked vehicles. We have contacted the Local Authority, and if it continues, we have been asked to record number plates of offending vehicles to pass on to the traffic department. Could you please co-operate for the safety of our students.

**Absence:** If your child is unwell and unable to attend, please notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school and selecting attendance or by emailing [attendance@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk)

If the absence lasts more than one day, please update the school daily. Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. You can request a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances by through school gateway or alternatively email [attendance@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk) or by collecting a form from Reception. Please keep medical evidence of absence eg appointment cards or letters, copies of prescriptions, pharmacy receipts etc in case you need them to provide more details on your child's return to school.

**House Attendance Points:** The form with the highest attendance in the year group gets 100 points each week and every form achieving 97% or above for the week achieves 20 points towards their house.



**Student Medical Conditions:** Please ensure school is made aware of any updates regarding students medical conditions, particularly if they can potentially have an impact on their time in school and require support. Please contact Mrs Walford [mwalford@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk](mailto:mwalford@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk) if you wish to discuss your case in detail.

**Severe Weather Procedures:** In the event of severe weather, especially heavy snow, staff will conduct a risk assessment of the safety of the site before making any decision to close the school for the day.

We always hope to avoid that scenario but the health and safety of our students and staff must be weighed against any inconvenience caused by closure. If a decision is taken to close the school due to severe weather, an announcement will be posted on the website at approximately 7am on the morning of closure. We will also email parents via School Comms and post onto [Instagram](#). If the school is required to close for a second day work will be set via Teams as per our [Remote Learning Policy](#) and we encourage those preparing for public examinations to make use of the time revising at home. We will endeavour to ensure that the site is as safe as quickly as possible. Please can you ensure that your contact details, particularly your email, is updated on [MCAS](#) so you are able to receive these messages. We all hope that the cold weather will pass and that we will not be affected.

**Changes to Contact Details:** If you have moved house, changed your email address, mobile telephone number or work contact number, etc. over the summer holiday, **please remember you can make these changes via your child's [MCAS](#) account.**

### **16–19 Bursary Fund – Support for Sixth Form Students**

The Government's **16–19 Bursary Fund** is available to help students stay in education by covering costs such as travel, meals, books, equipment, and trips. There are two types of bursaries:

- **Vulnerable Student Bursary** – up to £1,200 for young people in care, care leavers, or those receiving certain benefits.
- **Discretionary Bursary** – for students facing financial hardship, awarded by the school based on household income and individual need.

To apply, parents/students should complete the bursary application form (available from the Sixth Form office or school website) and provide supporting evidence. For full details and eligibility, visit: [www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund](https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund) If you have questions or need help with the application, please contact our Sixth Form office.

**Lights Required for cyclists:** With the darker evenings drawing in, it won't be too long before it is dark at the end of the school day. This is a reminder to all cyclists to ensure your bike is equipped with proper lights. Riding with front and rear lights is not just essential for your safety, but it's also a legal requirement to help you stay visible to others on the road.

**Please check:**

- **Front Light:** A white light on the front of your bike.
- **Rear Light:** A red light on the back, plus a rear reflector if possible.
- **Visibility Gear:** Consider reflective clothing or accessories to further increase visibility.



**ACHIEVEMENTS FOR CONTACT**

HAS YOUR CHILD DONE SOMETHING OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL THAT DESERVES RECOGNITION?

WE WOULD LIKE TO CELEBRATE IN CONTACT

Send Information & Pictures to:  
[office@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk](mailto:office@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk)

# Spotlight on Wellbeing and Keeping Safe

Please don't forget that staff are here for you and your children, and you can get in touch with Mrs Walford via [welfare@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk](mailto:welfare@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk) if you need some support. Parental factsheets on various topics are available on our website under the Safeguarding section, [Parent Fact Sheets \(st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk\)](https://www.st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk)

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](https://www.nationalcollege.com).

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ADULT ANIMATED CONTENT

**WHAT ARE THE RISKS?**

Bright, bold, and widely shared, adult animated content is more popular than ever, but not always what it seems. These videos, which may appear cartoonish and harmless, often contain strong language, explicit themes, graphic violence, or dark humour. Many are accessible through platforms like YouTube, TikTok or streaming services, where filters may not catch them in time.

**MISLEADING VISUAL STYLE**

Many adult animations mimic the colourful, exaggerated look of children's cartoons. This can easily mislead not just children, but also adults, into thinking they're suitable for younger viewers. Without watching the content fully, parents or educators might approve a show or video that contains explicit jokes, graphic imagery, or highly inappropriate language, all disguised beneath a playful and fun visual style.

**INFLUENCE OF EDGY HUMOUR**

Dark, edgy humour is common in adult animation and often includes jokes about topics like sexism, racism, mental illness, or abuse. When children hear these jokes, they may repeat them without fully understanding their meaning. This can lead to inappropriate behaviour in school or online spaces, and in some cases, it can reinforce harmful stereotypes or desensitise children to real-world injustice and discrimination.

**EXPOSURE TO HARMFUL THEMES**

A number of adult animated shows and online videos explore mature or disturbing themes, such as addiction, trauma, abuse, self-harm, or violence, and often do so in a stylised or humorous way. Younger viewers may not have the emotional maturity to process this content, leading to confusion, distress, or the normalisation of very serious issues that should be discussed in a supportive context.

**ALGORITHMIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

Video platforms are designed to keep users watching by suggesting similar content. If a child watches one mature animation, they may quickly be shown more, including even darker or more extreme videos. These recommendations are based on viewing patterns, not age-appropriateness. Without strict settings in place, this can lead to a rapid spiral into unsuitable, upsetting, or even harmful content online.

**RISK OF DISTRESS AND FEAR**

Some adult animations, especially horror-based content or 'creepypasta' style stories, include disturbing imagery, unsettling music, and sudden scares. These videos sometimes feature distorted versions of well-known children's characters, such as Sonic the Hedgehog or Peppa Pig, in frightening or violent scenarios. Children can be negatively affected if they come across this unexpectedly, leading to sleep disturbances, anxiety, or long-lasting fears, especially if children have existing worries or sensitive personalities.

**DESENSITISATION TO VIOLENCE**

Stylised violence in animation is often exaggerated and constant. Repeated exposure to it can reduce a child's emotional response to harm, making aggression or cruelty appear entertaining or acceptable. Over time, children may become less empathetic or more tolerant of harmful behaviours in real life, especially if they see others online reacting with humour, memes, or praise for violent characters or scenes.

### Advice for Parents & Educators

**LEARN WHAT CHILDREN ARE WATCHING**

Take time to ask children what they're watching and who their favourite creators are. Sit down and watch a few videos to get a full understanding. This helps you spot inappropriate content early and shows children that you're interested and engaged in their online world, not just policing it.

**TALK ABOUT WHAT'S APPROPRIATE**

Keep communication open and non-judgemental. Talk about why certain themes or jokes are not appropriate for children, even if they appear in animated form. Help children understand that just because something is popular or shared widely, it does not mean it's suitable or safe. If they've seen something upsetting, respond calmly, offer reassurance, and explain things in an age-appropriate way.

**USE PLATFORM SETTINGS WISELY**

Make use of built-in safety tools like content filters, restricted mode, and age settings on platforms such as YouTube, Netflix or TikTok. Turn off auto-play where possible and regularly review what children are being recommended. Although these settings aren't foolproof, they add an important layer of protection and help reduce the risk of children encountering disturbing or adult content accidentally.

**ENCOURAGE CRITICAL THINKING**

Help children think carefully about what they watch. Talk about the difference between fictional exaggeration and reality, while helping them question why certain content is made. Is it informative, entertaining, or meant to shock? This builds digital resilience and encourages them to make safer choices in future, rather than simply following viral trends or peer pressure to watch mature content.

**Meet Our Expert**

Home to the world's largest CPD library for educators, The National College has transformed the way education establishments go about developing their workforces and managing compliance. We offer memberships and packages to help all phases and types of setting raise standards, save time, reduce risk, and build a culture of improvement.

See full reference list on our website

**#WakeUpWednesday** The National College

[@wake\\_up\\_weds](https://www.st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk) [/www.thenationalcollege](https://www.thenationalcollege.com) [@wake.up.wednesday](https://www.tiktok.com/@wake.up.wednesday) [@wake.up.weds](https://www.youtube.com/@wake.up.weds)

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 25.02.2026

# Departmental News



**Our [Amazon Wishlist!](#)** Friends, family and alumni can donate directly to the school library. We still accept preloved copies from home you may wish to donate, but student and departmental requests for library stock can be found [here](#). The book wish list is chosen and updated by the Library team as texts that benefit the student's reading comprehension, engagement with the curriculum and foster an interest in reading. If students have overdue library books, you should have received an overdue notice and may be charged an overdue fee per book via Gateway. To have the overdue notice removed, students can return the book, pay the fee, or replace the missing book with a new copy.

**World Book Day 5<sup>th</sup> March:** World Book Day is on its way! Next week on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March, students have all kinds of literary-themed events to look forward to; keep a look out for events around the school! Students can also come by the library anytime up until the 15<sup>th</sup> of March to collect World Book Day Tokens and bookmarks to celebrate.

**Does your child need somewhere quiet to study with access to a computer to complete extended learning?** We currently have two Study Clubs available: Study Club: Monday 3.30-4.30pm in CR3 overseen by Mrs Williams (open to all years). Veritas Mentors: Thursday 1.30-2.25pm in the Year 12 study room. The Veritas mentors idea is based on the plan on having an extended learning support group run by sixth form students who will be on hand to offer support if needed (open to key stage 3 students). Mrs Napper (Enrichment Coordinator)



**Guardians of the Garden:** Hello, we are the Guardians of the Garden, a club of students from St Thomas More High School. We are currently trying to fundraise money for our school wellbeing garden, which we believe will help create a quiet natural space for students to enjoy at lunch and breaktimes. We would be grateful for any donations, such as gardening equipment like shovels and rakes, soil, sensory flowers and plants such as fruit trees and lavender, and potentially benches and tables, to put in the garden. Ultimately, we think it would be an amazing opportunity to bring the school garden to life and to create a safe space for students and would be grateful to receive any donations. Thank you from the Guardians of the Garden.

## GCSE Spanish Trip to Barcelona (13th-16th February



**2026):** During half term, some of our GCSE Spanish students went to Barcelona with Mr Pereira, Ms Rey and Mrs Fleming for an unforgettable Spanish adventure. We visited the grounds of FC Barcelona, where, although the stadium is currently being refurbished, we explored the immersive museum and learned more about the club's incredible history. We



also visited the Estadi Olímpic Lluís Companys, which hosted the 1992 Olympic Games, and enjoyed exploring Poble Espanyol, where we admired architecture from across Spain and took part in a tapas-making workshop, discovering the origins of tapas and the difference between a tapa and a pincho. We spent time at Park Güell, where we admired Gaudí's colourful mosaics and unique architectural designs while taking in stunning views across the city. During our visit to La Rambla, we explored the lively atmosphere and visited the famous La





Boqueria market, where we experienced the vibrant sights, smells and flavours of local produce. We also toured Casa Batlló, where we learned more about Gaudí's imaginative design, inspired by nature and rich in symbolism, and saw its famous colourful façade and unique interior spaces. Our cultural experiences continued with a vibrant flamenco show, a visit to Palau de la Virreina to see art exhibits and traditional Catalan Gegants, and a walking tour through the Gothic Quarter, where we saw Roman ruins, the

Town Hall, Barcelona Cathedral and the Parliament of Catalonia. A fun highlight was enjoying a meal together at Hard Rock Cafe Barcelona. For many, the most memorable moment of the trip was visiting the breathtaking Sagrada Família. We were fortunate to attend a beautiful and solemn international Mass there, with prayers spoken in English, Spanish, Catalan, French, Italian and Latin, and two members of our group reading the Prayers of the Faithful. During our guided tour, we gained a deeper understanding of Gaudí's architectural vision and the rich religious symbolism that makes this basilica such an extraordinary place.

## MFL Department's Word and Idiomatic Expression of the Week:

# Tomar el pelo

**Literal translation in English:** To take the hair.

**When do we use it?:** When someone is tricking or making fun of someone else, but in a good-natured way. (Pulling your leg)

**Example:** Me estás tomando el pelo (you're pulling my leg)

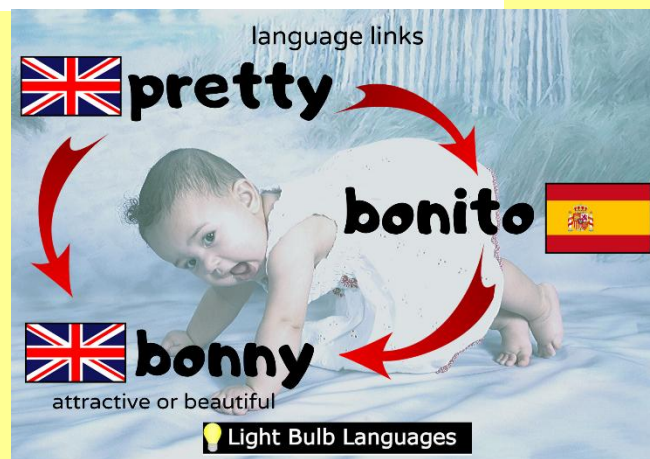
# Zorro

(soh-rroh)

Masculine Noun

**In English:** Fox

**Example:** Hay un zorro en el jardín.  
(There is a fox in the garden.)



**Alumnus of the Month:** [February 2026.](#)

**Aspire:** online resources for all things careers/universities and apprenticeships, great for those not sure of the opportunities after GCSE's (POST 16) and A levels (POST 18). Click to find out more [The Aspire Guide - Flipbook - Page 1 \(paperturn-view.com\)](#)



**Connexions Events:** a list of 6<sup>th</sup> Form and colleges open events for 2025/26 can be found [here.](#)

[Webinars & Workshops - Amazing Apprenticeships](#)

[The Telegraph Media Literacy Programme 2026 :: Telegraph Media Group Jobs](#)

**Where Next booklet** is a useful tool for parent/carers to use to help support theirs and their child's understanding of what careers pathways and next steps they can actively support them taking

## CAREERS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is a collation of all the opportunities we have heard about from employers and universities. Please use the links included to read more information and apply to anything you are interested in. Links are underlined.

Careers Newsletter can be found [here](#).

### Poetry Corner No.91

#### Wedding

From time to time our love is like a sail  
and when the sail begins to alternate  
from tack to tack, it's like a swallowtail  
and when the swallow flies it's like a coat;  
and if the coat is yours, it has a tear  
like a wide mouth and when the mouth begins  
to draw the wind, it's like a trumpeter  
and when the trumpet blows, it blows like millions ...  
and this, my love, when millions come and go  
beyond the need of us, is like a trick;  
and when the trick begins, it's like a toe  
tip-toeing on a rope, which is like luck;  
and when the luck begins, it's like a wedding,  
which is like love, which is like everything.

Alice Oswald

**Sir Andrew Motion on Alice Oswald's 'Wedding'**

Carol and Sandra swim at their local 25 m pool. Sandra always swims 4 lengths in the same amount of time as Carol swims 3 lengths. One Monday morning, Carol swims 36 lengths. How far would Sandra swim in the same time?



**Maths Problem of the Week:** The difference is 15.

# Fixtures

Date	Fixture
2/3/2026	Year 8 Rugby 7's @ New Hall - 11am start - Leave 10:10am, return 4pm Year 11 Football v Greensward (HOME) 4pm kick off
3/3/2026	No Fixtures
4/3/2026	Swimming Gala - Leave 11:30am, return 3:30pm Year 7 Rugby 7's @ New Hall - 11am start - Leave 10:10am, return 4pm Year 8 Football v Eastwood (HOME) 4pm kick off
5/3/2026	Year 9 Rugby 7's @ Westcliff Rugby Club - 11am start - Leave 10:10am, return 3:30pm
6/3/2026	Year 9 Football v Chase (AWAY) 4pm kick off – return 5:30pm
3/9/2026	Year 8 Football v Shoebury (AWAY) 4pm kick off - return 5:45pm
3/10/2026	Year 10 Rugby 7's @ Westcliff Rugby Club - 11am start - Leave 10:10am, return 3:30pm Year 7 Football v Cecil Jones (AWAY) 4pm kick off - return 5:30pm Year 11 Football v Southend High (HOME) 4pm kick off
3/11/2026	1st XI Football v King John (HOME) 2pm kick off
3/12/2026	Under 14 Basketball v Gateway @ Eastwood 4pm tip off Under 16 Basketball v Barking Abbey @ Woodlands 3:30pm tip off
3/13/2026	Year 9 Football v Westcliff (HOME) 2:30pm

## PE Extracurricular Timetable

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
7.45 - 8.30 am	Year 7-10 Basketball (RHE)	Year 8/9 Gym (JEN) Rackets Club (All Years) (RHE)	Year 10-13 Gym (SB) Year 7-10 Indoor Athletics (AAC)	Darts Club (All years) (SB) Year 8/9 Futsal (JEN) Year 10-13 Gym (LSH)	Year 11-13 Basketball (SB) Year 10-13 Gym (EK)
1.35 - 2.25pm	All Years Athletics - Back Field (JEN) Year 7 Basketball (JTB) Year 10 Astro (NSP)	Darts Clubs (All years) (SB) Year 10/11 Basketball (RHE/AWI) Year 9 Astro (JTB)	Year 8 Astro (JEN) Year 9 Basketball (SB) Year 9-11 Gym (NSP) Year 7-9 Rugby - Backfield (RHE)	Year 7 Astro (LSH) Year 11 Basketball (AWI)	Year 8 Basketball (JEN) Year 11 Astro (TH)
3.30 - 4.45pm	Year 7 Football - A + B Team (LSH) <b>FIXTURES</b>	Year 12/13 Basketball (SB) Yr7-9 Rugby (AAC & EwM) <b>FIXTURES</b>	Year 8 Football - A + B Team Training (JEN) <b>FIXTURES</b>	Badminton Club (All Years) (SB) <b>FIXTURES</b>	Week 1 - Year 9 'A' Team football training (MH/AH) Week 2 - Year 9 Open football training (MH/AH) Indoor Athletics (AAC) <b>FIXTURES</b>

## Extracurricular Timetable – Spring

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>Before School</b>	Group Prayer 8.15-8.30am (Chapel)  Library 8-8.40am  Music Rehearsal Room 8-8.35am (Music 1)	Group Prayer 8.15-8.30am (Chapel)  Library 8-8.40am  Music Rehearsal Room 8-8.35am (Music 1)	Group Prayer 8.15-8.30am (Chapel)  Library 8-8.40am  Music Rehearsal Room 8-8.35am (Music 1)	Group Prayer 8.15-8.30am (Chapel)  Library 8-8.40am  Music Rehearsal Room 8-8.35am (Music 1)	Group Prayer 8.15-8.30am (Chapel)  Library 8-8.40am  Music Rehearsal Room 8-8.35am (Music 1)
<b>Breaktime</b>	Personal Prayer 11.10-11.25am (Chapel)  Library 11.10-11.25am	Personal Prayer 11.10-11.25am (Chapel)  Library 11.10-11.25am	Personal Prayer 11.10-11.25am (Chapel)  Library 11.10-11.25am	Personal Prayer 11.10-11.25am (Chapel)  Library 11.10-11.25am	Personal Prayer 11.10-11.25am (Chapel)  Library 11.10-11.25am
<b>Lunchtime</b>	Personal Prayer 1.30-2.25pm (Chapel)  Library 1.30-2.25pm  Chess Club 1.30-2.25pm (RE3)  Anime and Manga Club 2-2.25pm (Library)  Aviation Club 2-2.25pm (MFL3)  Chaplaincy Games Club Years 7-11 1.35-2.25pm (RE4)  Warhammer Club 1.40-2.20pm (Lab 1)  KS3 Maths Support Club Years 7-8 1:45 – 2:15pm (Tech 4)	Personal Prayer 1.30-2.25pm (Chapel)  Library 1.30-2.25pm  History Club 1.30—2pm (RE3)  Liturgy Band 1.50pm (Music 1)  Latin Club 1-2.25pm Years 7-9: invite only (RE1)  Culture Club (Literature, Arts, Culture and Society) Years 10-13 1.30-2pm (E3)  Labrats Years 7-8 1.40-2.25pm (Week 1 Lab 1/ Week 2 Lab 5)	Personal Prayer 1.30-2.25pm (Chapel)  Library 1.30-2.25pm  The Caritas Team 1.30-2pm (E4)  Dungeons and Dragons 1.30-2.25pm (Lab 2)  Computer Science Club Years 9-11 1.30–2.30pm (CR5)  Minecraft Club Years 7-8 (CR4)  Junior Rock Band 1.50pm (Music 1)  Origami Club 2-2.25pm (RE3)	Personal Prayer 1.30-2.25pm (Chapel)  Library 1.30-2.25pm  Pokémon Club 1.30-2.25pm (Lab 2) Folk Band 1.50pm (Music 1)  Classics Club 2-2.25pm Years 7-9: invite only (RE4)  Chess Club 1.30-2.25pm (RE3)  Guardians of the Garden 2-2.25pm  Drama Club 1.50-2.25pm (H3)  Accounting Club Years 11-13 1.30-2pm (BS2)  Veritas Mentors 1.30-2.25pm (year 12 study room)	Personal Prayer 1.30-2.25pm (Chapel)  Library 1.30-2.25pm  Choir 1.50pm (Music 1)  Film Club Years 7-10 1.40-2.20pm (Yr. 12 Study Centre)  Star Wars Club 2-2.25pm (Library)  Bible Study 1.35-2.25pm (RE4)  Cards Club 1.30-2.20pm (M2)
<b>After School</b>	Group Prayer 3.30-3.40pm (Chapel)  Library 3.30-4pm  Study Club 3.30-4.30pm (CR3)	Group Prayer 3.30-3.40pm (Chapel)  Computer Science Club Years 9-11 3.30-4.30pm (CR5)	Group Prayer 3.30-3.40pm (Chapel)  Library 3.30-4pm  Silver Duke of Edinburgh 3.30-4.45pm (Lab 10)  Morley's music lessons	Group Prayer 3.30-3.40pm (Chapel)  Library 3.30-4pm  Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (Holy Hour) 3.50-4.40pm (Chapel)  Morley's music lessons	Group Prayer 3.30-3.40pm (Chapel)  Library 3.30-4pm  Senior Rock Band 3.30-4.30pm (Music 1)

*Note: Clubs with no mention of year groups are open to all year groups*