



Friday 28th February 2025

HEADLINES

St Mary's Catholic School



DATES FOR THE DIARY

Monday 3rd March
Careers/Science Week begins

Wednesday 5th March
Ash Wednesday Liturgies

Wednesday 5th March
Y7 Maths Challenge Heats
3.30pm - 5.00pm

Thursday 6th March
Y10 Parents Evening
4.30pm - 7.30pm

Thursday 6th March
World Book Day

Tuesday 11th March
Battle of the Bands

Dear Parents

I hope your family has had an enjoyable and successful first week back to school after the February half term break. We were delighted to see our annual ski trip return safely following a wonderful week of skiing in Italy. A tremendous thank you to the staff who led and accompanied this trip during the half term break, enclosed in this edition are a selection of photographs of the students enjoying such an exciting opportunity.



This week a group of our Y10 and Y11 students were on residential retreat in Pinner, London led by the Youth Ministry team from the Diocese led by Ms Creus and Mr Packer, I had the privilege of joining the group on Tuesday and Wednesday for their evening activities. The group were exceptional in their prayer experiences and reflection, and gained so much richness during the three days understanding and exploring their faith journey. As we prepare for the season of Lent, every student will be exploring their faith as we reflect and pray during together during Si-Lent and our Lenten Stations of the Cross. I will be sharing more of this with you as parents over this half term.

As we are now already halfway through this academic year, please take this opportunity to reflect on your child's progress. Go 4 schools is an excellent starting point to access your child's up-to-date academic progress. Along with their progress review this will give you a good idea of where they are at this point in the year as the data is live and shows the grade for their marked assessment data.

Along with your child's engagement in school, homework is key to your child's progress. Go4Schools is the go-to site for both you and your child to keep on top, and in advance of, homework deadlines. Please ensure your child is being supported with their homework. Good practice is for your child to sit in a central space such as at the dining room/kitchen table so you can monitor their progress, support and ensure they are using their time wisely. MyMaths is a weekly set homework for every student from Years 7-11 to recap and support maths learning and it is vital your child is spending the required amount of time on it each week. Support is available in school should your child wish to complete their homework in the library daily. May I wish you and your family a restful and relaxing weekend

God Bless,

Miss D McHugh



Years 10 & 11 Retreat

During my time at Westminster Youth Ministry, we have been focussing on the objective of 'Calm My Storms'. The idea of the objective is to recognise where God helps us to overcome the challenges we face and how they give us strength. I have enjoyed being able to reflect on my journey as a Catholic, as well as my journey since the start of the year.

The retreat has given me a chance to focus on myself and how I can overcome my next challenges with God closer to my heart. I feel more at peace with the thought of GCSEs and the other hurdles that I have faced outside of school. I am very grateful for the opportunity to visit Westminster Youth Ministry.

Ciara M Y11



During my three-day spiritual experience at the SPEC retreat, the first day was all about learning to get closer to God. We engaged in various activities that fostered connection and reflection, and the food was absolutely amazing, which added to the overall positive atmosphere.

On the second day, we delved into the topic of the Holy Spirit and explored how life, despite its challenges, can be uplifting and filled with hope. Overall, it was a very enriching experience that truly helped me deepen my relationship with God and understand the spiritual journey better.

Sheyon H Y11



Catenian Public Speaking Competition

Congratulations to Sixth Form students Patricia and Jessica, who represented St Mary's at the Catenian Public Speaking Competition before half term. Supported by a group of Year 12 students, the girls were a tremendous credit to the school and we are delighted that Patricia placed second with her speech about exploitation and enslavement through the British Empire. Both girls have written about the experience for Headlines:



On Wednesday, 12th February, I had the incredible opportunity to represent St Mary's Catholic School in the Catenian Sixth Form Speaking Competition, hosted at St Edmund's College. This was my first time competing in an event like this, and public speaking has always been a challenge for me. However, I was determined to step out of my comfort zone and give it my best.

My speech, The Sun Never Truly Set on the British Empire, was a topic I felt passionate about, and I wanted to engage my audience in a meaningful discussion. I aimed not only to educate but also to entertain, and it was rewarding to see people laugh while also gaining new perspectives. Competing against so many talented speakers was intimidating, but I embraced the challenge. When my turn came, nerves threatened to take over, but I took a deep breath and delivered my speech with confidence.

To my amazement, I placed second in the competition! More than just a contest, it was a fantastic experience shared with a great group of friends who came along to support us. The event was filled with laughter, friendship, and valuable lessons in communication. This opportunity has not only boosted my confidence but will also help me in the future, as strong public speaking skills are essential in many aspects of life. It was truly an unforgettable experience, and I look forward to taking on more challenges like this in the future.

Patricia

Participating in the recent Catenian Public Speaking Competition was an amazing experience that pushed me beyond my comfort zone and gave me the opportunity to engage with a group of young speakers in my year. My speech was called, 'Passion vs. Money', which was about following your passion versus having a job that gives you financial stability. It's a topic that I feel resonates deeply with people my age (sixth formers), as we are all starting to make choices that shape our future.

The best part of the competition was having the privilege of listening to others share their perspectives, and it was an eye-opening experience to see how passionate everyone was about their topics. Some spoke about the pressures of high expectations, others tackled the struggles of being a woman or a man in today's world and two spoke about the history of the British Empire, one being the positive side to it and the other on how many countries has struggled because the Empire. There were aspiring lawyers, athletes, businesspeople and doctors in that room, all with unique insights which made me think in ways I haven't before, making me more self-aware of the world around us

This experience has shown me that people my age are incredibly ambitious, thoughtful, and determined to carve their own paths. Reflecting on my own speech, I realised that passion truly does fuel innovation, creativity, and resilience. To me, the competition wasn't about winning, it was about exchanging ideas, learning from one another, and gaining a deeper appreciation for the motivations that drive us. I left feeling inspired, more aware, and excited for the future ahead

Jessica

Year 11 Ski trip

Seeing as this was almost everyone's first time skiing, it came naturally to most of us- everyone enjoyed our days on the slopes, even if that did involve waking up early during the half term. Our instructors pushed us to attempt hard slopes, which, although challenging for some, no one ever complained about.

We all enjoyed spending time together outside of school time- especially spending mornings and evenings together as well as eating meals. It gave us a great opportunity to become closer with people who maybe we wouldn't normally speak with in school.

Our trip to Civetta was jam-packed full of activities. Every night, after a long day of skiing, there would be a surprise waiting for us back at our hotel, whether that was a karaoke night or even a disco. On Thursday, we had an amazing opportunity to go night-skiing, which gave us a whole new perspective of the mountains in the darkness and the slopes lit up by floodlights.

This trip was a lovely experience to take our minds off of our upcoming exams, and gave us time to relax and spend time with our friends whilst also learning new skills.

Rosie M



The ski trip was likely one of the best experiences of my life. Here is a general synopsis of the trip to help you gauge the amount of enjoyment and understanding I gained.

- Day 1 – Mostly travel, with it allowing us to all begin to build excitement about the trip to come and bond.
- Day 2 – Most of us began on level footing with the easy slope. This allowed us to get a hang of the basics as well as prepping us for the considerable shock to come!
- Day 3 – Some of the group, including myself, moved on to our first real hurdle: the blue slope. This day really began to push ourselves out of our comfort zones and led to massive amounts of progress. The evening entailed a disco night, which led to some interesting dancing to say the least.
- Day 4 – From this day forward, I was placed with the group of advanced individuals, which made each fall even more embarrassing! However, this day is when I really began to make sense of skiing, putting the skills I had learnt into action and challenging the terrifying red slopes. In the evening, the karaoke as entertainment ended up being quite a shocking display for some, both good and...not so, but nonetheless, it was exceptionally entertaining.
- Day 5 – This day. This was the big one. I took on the most daunting challenge: the black slope. And I did it flawlessly! That feeling of conquering what even just 4 days ago would have sent me to the hospital was indescribable.
- Day 6 – A final day of consolidation.
- Day 7 – A day of relaxed return. By this point, we had all earned the rest.

If you are offered the opportunity to attend this trip, I could not praise it more. It was simply incredible, and I will remember it forever!

Ryan K

NSPCC National Number Day 7th February

Thank you to all parents and students who supported Number Day activities with such enthusiasm!

In lessons, students linked maths to Art, History and Architecture, learnt about budgeting and took part in Times Tables and the Four 4s Challenge.

At break and lunch, having sold over £500 -worth of Number Day passes, we had plenty of entrants for our various competitions and I am pleased to be able to report the following winners:

Guess the Co-ordinates of the Treasure: Lottie H.

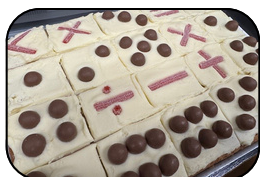
Guess the Weight of the cake: this was 907g....someone put 905g but then crossed their name out! So this prize went to Jamie C who guessed 910g as the next closest- and I gather he took the cake home on his Mum's birthday!

The raffle winner was Filip in Year 7, while the Treasure trail prize went to Ethan in Year 8.

We had some beautiful bakes brought in, and amongst those that really stood out were the most delicate and beautiful number 7, and Ivy's very mathematically decorated cake with a squared Battenberg interior. I personally wished I could have tried the lovely Symmetry cake with caramel counters all round it. The one staff just couldn't keep their hands off, and turned out to taste every bit as delicious as it looked, was a traybake in the form of a set of dice. Very delicate white icing studded with chocolate chips surrounded a set of 12 perfect marble cake cubes. Congratulations to joint winners Alice P, Adaobi, and Noah S.

The estimation challenge kept everyone guessing! Students had to estimate angles and lines as well as the height and perimeter of the hall. Our estimation star was Joseph I in Year 8, well done!

Thank you again to everyone for their support and I hope you had a great morning for an extremely good cause! At the time of writing the Year 7 sponsor money is still coming in but we are already well in excess of £600.



Find Einstein the Penguin!

There will be 30 Einstein's hidden around school. Find all of them to be entered into a draw to win a copy of 'Einstein the Penguin'.



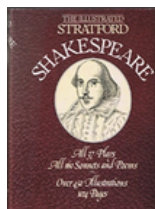
WORLD BOOK DAY

6 MARCH 2025

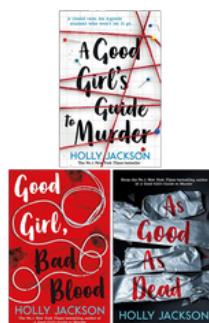
Staff dress-up

Guess the theme for each department. Prizes for the best dressed department and teacher!

Guess the number of pages in the copy of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* in the library (without touching!). Closest guess wins.



Years 10 - 13 Giveaway
renew or take out a library book between 3rd-7th March to enter a draw to win *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* trilogy.



Years 7 - 9 Giveaway
renew or take out a library book between 3rd-7th March to enter a draw to win a choice of signed book.



Pupil Achievements

Y10 – Published Writers!

We are thrilled to announce a fantastic achievement for 10X1/En! A record-breaking 27 students from the class have been selected to have their work published in *Fight or Flight – UK Tales*, a collection of mini-sagas celebrating moments of decision and the consequences of choice.

Each student crafted a captivating 100-word story, and their work will now be published and preserved forever in the National Archives of the British Library. This remarkable accomplishment highlights the creativity and talent of our English students, and we couldn't be prouder of them. Well done to everyone involved!

Here are some examples:

GREED

They sprinted through the valley as the moon's light shone upon them. The sound of galloping echoed against the ground, like a cavalry charging against an army. Their pursuers weren't far behind. But could they really just leave? The taller of the two men suddenly froze. A thought lingered in his mind: *what about the money? With the suffering that they had endured, were they really willing to start over?* The mountain nearby was the only spot that could shelter them from the sinister demons. They began their ascent. But then, overcome by greed, the taller man vanished.

Tommy
St Mary's Catholic School, Bishop's Stortford, Windhill

SO CLOSE, YET SO FAR

I woke with a start. Running. From what? I'd never know. All I knew was I was running faster than I knew I ever could. Suddenly, the sky dazzled with rifle fire, sparks flying everywhere. The sound filled the air; echoes never ceased to fade. My supposed destination seemed so close, yet so far. Like a dead weight, I lugged my rifle, burdening the pace of the cogs in the clockwork of a bigger machine I was forced to be a part of. Everything that was promised dissipated as I ran. Running for my life, not for my country. I knew I should've never signed up. Would safety ever come?

Abbie
St Mary's Catholic School, Bishop's Stortford, Windhill

10 SECONDS

10. Shock resonates throughout his body like a thunderbolt, his heart drops to the depths of his soul.
9. His posture stiffens, his feet disobeying his desperate commands to move.
8. His heart pounds incessantly, sweat streaking down his face.
7. "Snap out of it!" he yells.
6. A cacophony of thoughts thunders through his mind like a violent storm.
5. His neck jolts in all directions, scanning for something, anything to liberate him.
4. Terror tears through his body; his struggle is futile, death inches closer.
3. But then, a thought strikes him.
2. Courage surges within him and he bolts to the device.
1. It's now or never.

Chukwudiebube
St Mary's Catholic School, Bishop's Stortford, Windhill

Cross-country success



Isla K (Y8) has been extremely busy lately, competing in two cross-country events within a week of each other. Firstly, Isla competed in the Hertfordshire Schools' Championships, where she placed fourth and qualified to represent Hertfordshire at the English Schools' Finals.

Isla then competed in the final race of the Essex Cross County League, which is a series of five different races at venues across Essex. Points are awarded for each race and the competitor with most points is declared the winner. Despite being injured, Isla completed the race and declared champion after finishing top of the table.



Year 8 Cake Break

Congratulations to students in Year 8 who achieved the top AP data recently. They celebrated with cake and games.



Headteacher's Tea

The Headteacher's Tea is held every half term to congratulate those students in Years 7 - 10 who achieve the most positive House Points.

Very well done to the students who achieved this over the last half term!

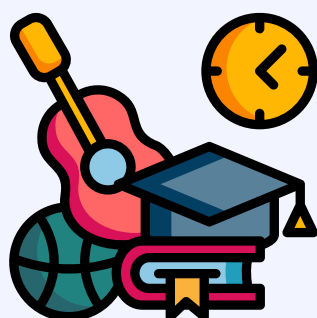


CLUBS TIMETABLE HT4

Clubs run 3.15pm - 4.15pm unless stated otherwise. New clubs are in yellow. Lunch club in dark colours and after school clubs are underneath.

| MONDAY | | | | TUES | | | | WEDS | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|------|------------|---------|---|------|------------|------------|
| CLUB | LEAD | YR GP | VENUE | CLUB | LEAD | YR GP | VENUE | CLUB | LEAD | YR GP | VENUE |
| | | | | Registration: Gospel Choir | LBE | ALL | M1 | Registration: Choir | JMA | ALL | M1 |
| Maths Soc Y9 (Early lunch wk A) | MAT | 9 | T02 | Coding Games with Python (Late lunch) | RJD | Y8 and Y10 | E1 | Board Games Club late lunch | SSM | Y8 | Library |
| Medics' Society (late lunch) | 6th form/DNE | Y10 and 6th form | H6 | ECO CLUB (early lunch) | DMG | 7,9,11 | H1 | Spanish Cultural Club (early lunch) WkA | JC | 7,9,11 | T14 |
| ECO CLUB (late lunch) | DMG | H1 | Y8,10 and 6th form | CHESS | GBE | ALL | F6 | NATIONAL READING CHAMPS QUIZ | SSM | Y7 TO 9 | Library |
| Sewing Club (EARLY LUNCH) | GWJ | C2 | y7 & y9 | JAZZ ENSEMBLE | ACX | All | M1 | DANCE CLUB | ELA | Y7 to 10 | HUME |
| CREATIVE WRITING | SSM | ALL | LIBRARY | HW CLUB | LSA | ALL | A1 | ADVANCED MATHS | SAN | YEAR 11 | T03 |
| DT COURSEWORK | MHU | 10,11,12,13 | KS4 | GIRLS' NETBALL | PE | ALL | COURTS | EMBROIDERY AND CRAFTS | GBEN | all | C2 |
| DRAMA CLUB | CHA | HUME | Y7 TO 10 | LEGO | SSM | YEAR 7-9 | library | Cookery Skills Club | CJO | Y7 TO Y9 | E3 |
| ART COURSEWORK | HNA | C6 | Y10 TO 13 | F24 DT CLUB | DT | Y8-10 | DT ROOM | SPORTS FIXTURES | PE | ALL | VARIOUS |
| CREST SCIENCE AWARD CLUB | DMG | H7 | Y7 TO 10 | LEVEL 1 SIGN LANGUAGE COURSE | CMG | ALL | F4 | BASKETBALL | HPA | Y11 TO Y13 | SPORTSHALL |
| COOKING FOR UNIVERSITY | CJO | Y10-Y13 | E3 | DEBATING (from FEB) | TJU | ALL | E5 | POP AND ROCK CLUB | JMA | ALL | M1 |
| EASTER CARDS & CRAFT | GBE | ALL YEARS | F6 | HANDBALL | WLA | Y7 AND 8 | O1 | | | | |
| STUDENT NEWSPAPER | CFE | ALL | B5 | Mindfulness thro' Arts 'n' Crafts | ACS | ALL | K7 | | | | |
| MUSIC COURSEWORK | JMA | Y10/11 | M1 | POLISH GCSE | JNE | Y9-11 | H10 | | | | |
| BOYS' FOOTBALL | SED | ALL YEARS | FIELD | | | | | | | | |
| HW CLUB | LSA | ALL | B2 | | | | | | | | |

| THU | | | | FRI | | | |
|---|------|--------------|---------|--|--------------|--------|---------|
| CLUB | LEAD | YR GP | VENUE | CLUB | LEAD | YR GP | VENUE |
| Registration: String Ensemble | DRU | ALL | M1 | | | | |
| D of E Bronze (early lunch) | PHA | YEAR 9 | H6 | MATHS Society Invitation only Y8 (Late lunch wk B) | MAT/6TH FORM | 8 | TO2 |
| Spanish Cultural Club (early lunch) WkB | JC | 7,9,11 | T14 | ECO CLUB early lunch WkB | DMG | 7,9,11 | H1 |
| Percussion Club (early lunch) | DRU | Year 7 and 9 | M1 | GEOACTIVE CLUB LUNCH WEEK A LATE LUNCH | DOL | 8,10 | D2 |
| D of E SILVER | DNE | Y 10 | H6 | BOOKS AND BISCUITS | SSM | ALL | library |
| HW CLUB | HJO | ALL | B3 | MATHS FILM CLUB (half termly) | MATHS | ALL | K2 |
| Student Librarian Club | SSM | ALL | LIBRARY | MFL FILM CLUB (half termly) | MFL | ALL | T11 |
| EASTER CANDLES | JKN | ANY | C6 | | | | |





MESSAGE FROM THE STUDENT HUB

Temporary Medication

If a student needs temporary medication (ie antibiotics), it must be stored at the Student Hub.

Please complete the 'Administering Medication' form and send it with the medication. Please indicate if the medication should be stored in the fridge.

The form can be found on our website at <https://www.stmarys.net/medicalneeds>

Developing Special Provision Locally (DSPL) 3 Group



DSPL3 group provides a range of courses for parents and carers on topics such as autism, dyslexia and anxiety, amongst others. Further details and how to book can be found [here](#).

DSPL3 holds coffee mornings for the parents and carers of children with SEND. These relaxed and supportive meetings are designed to offer valuable information and networking opportunities. Further information can be found by clicking [here](#).



The next meeting will be held at 10am on Wednesday 19th March at Windhill21 School.

20mph in Bishop's Stortford West – have your say

We're consulting about a 20mph zone in Bishop's Stortford West. The proposed 20mph zone aims to make it easier and safer for people to walk and cycle by creating a lower speed environment.

We would like to hear from the school community including parents and carers.

See the proposals and take part in the survey 'Proposed 20MPH Zone, Bishop's Stortford West' on www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/consultations or use the QR code.

The surveys are open until 17 March 2025.

More information is available at <http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/20mph>.



Creating a cleaner, greener, healthier Hertfordshire

