

# LOVE-RESPECT-FLOURISH

St. Mary's Catholic School Newsletter

Issue 10 - 24th November 2023



## Rise to the Challenge!

**Mr Johnston - Headteacher**

On Thursday and Friday last week, we held our inaugural 'Staff Conference' at school. This was two days of high-quality professional development for the teachers along the theme of 'Rising to the Challenge'. This links with our 3-year School Development Plan (Objective 2) which is to maximise the impact of the teaching across the school.

The first day was led by representatives from NACE (*National Association for Able Children in Education*) which for over 40 years has been researching and promoting strategies to help more able students to ensure they reach their potential. Our focus is on challenge for all, developing deep thinking, encouraging independence, maximising time with the brain fully engaged in learning and limiting opportunities for the 'easy option' to be taken.

Both guest speakers were very impressed by our teachers—the way they welcomed the ideas, gave thought-provoking feedback and responded to the materials they were presenting.

On the second day, each department area had some time to plan how to use the ideas in the classroom before a range of workshops led mainly by our teachers on a range of subjects linked to the theme of 'Challenge'. I was very grateful, too, to colleagues from our Trust family of schools who came into St. Mary's to discuss 'The Transition Challenge' - ensuring that, from 'Day 1' of secondary school we are building on the excellent and very challenging work completed in Year 6 across our feeder primary schools.

100% of our teachers reported that the conference had exceeded or met their expectations, and the feedback was that they feel empowered, and able, to embed a 'challenge culture' across the school. Some of their comments included:

***"Everyone has been so positive, and I have gained a lot of great ideas that I can apply to my teaching!"***

***"Some fantastic and refreshing ideas to take into the classroom"***

***"Excellent attention to detail... I enjoyed the visiting speakers. I can use a lot of the tools to challenge the students"***

Work has already continued in department meetings this week. I would very much like to thank all the staff for their engagement and enthusiasm in providing the very best experience in the classroom for our students. Special thanks go to Mr Diggory, Assistant Headteacher in charge of Teaching and Learning, and the group of teachers who assisted him as part of the Professional Development Team.



St Francis of Assisi  
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST



### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday 30th November 2023**  
Presentation Evening

**Wednesday 6th December 2023**  
Scholastic Book Fair Opens

**Thursday 7th December 2023**  
Year 11 Parents Evening

## #Red Wednesday 2023



**#Red Wednesday 22nd November 2023 was organised by the Catholic Charity, Aid to the Church in Need (CAN),** who support projects in over 135 countries worldwide.

Millions of Christians experience discrimination, injustice, assault, kidnap, forced conversion, torture and death as part of their daily realities.

On **#Red Wednesday**, students were invited to wear an item of **RED** clothing to show support for Christians across the globe who are suffering persecution.

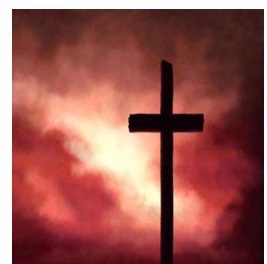


I would like to thank you and your child's support of Red Wednesday 2023. It was fantastic to see so many of our St Mary's community wearing an item of red clothing to both support and mark this day. I would also like to thank our Spiritual Leaders who led their form groups through a powerful presentation about our Brothers and Sisters who are being persecuted, and how ACN support others who have experienced hardships or loss. There is still time to support ACN's work by donating on ParentPay, so if you able to help in any way, it would be greatly appreciated. If you would like to find out some more information then please do go to <https://acnuk.org/our-campaigns/redwednesday/>

*We pray for all those unjustly held or kidnapped because of their faith.  
May they be freed.*

*We pray for all those suffering with mental or physical illness,  
especially those facing constant discrimination and oppression.*

*We pray that you may ease their pain.  
Amen*





## House System ~ Headteacher's Tea

Students from across the school who, over the last half term, achieved fortnightly the highest number of positive house points, were invited to attend a Headteacher's Tea.

This event was organised as a mark of the school's appreciation for all the work and dedication our students demonstrated both in and outside of class.

It was a very well attended event, with the students enjoying cake and hot chocolate! They also had the opportunity to share conversation with our Headteacher, Mr Johnston, House Coordinator, Mr Eddleston, and our Senior Prefects.

Congratulations to all those invited!

*Mr Eddleston*  
House Coordinator



## Oracy Day at St Mary's

### Oracy Day – Debating Theme

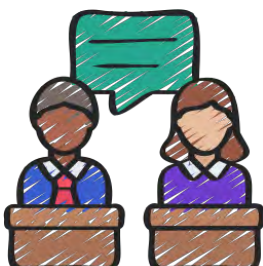
#### *Student Report by Eireann P*

Oracy means the ability to express oneself and speak in an engaging way. You can do this looking up at the people you are talking to and making eye contact with them. Other ways are to use facial expressions when you are talking and some hand gestures. You also need to speak up and speak clearly so that people hear what you are saying; you might even put it in ways that are easier and simpler to understand, rather than giving a whole lot of information that is confusing.



On Monday, we learnt about oracy and we practised our oracy skills by debating. For example, in RE we were debating about Creation and in English we were debating about lots of things, such as poetry, autobiographies and biographies, and if friends were better than family. They were both very fun and even though I wasn't there for some of the English lesson, it was still fun because I got to listen to everyone's points about the different subjects and then I also got to decide who was most persuasive.

These activities were fun and they helped my oracy skills. Sometimes they could be a bit challenging because you had to come up with lots of ideas and you also had to think about lots of answers for the other people who are debating against you but overall it was a very fun day.





## St Mary's Annual Christmas Dinner

We will be having our annual Christmas Dinner on Tuesday 19th December.

There will be no other food available on the day, therefore if your child does not want a Christmas Dinner they will need to bring a packed lunch to school.

The price for the meal is £4.70, and will need to be prepaid through ParentPay.  
**The final date for payment is 1st December.**



STUDENTS ARE INVITED TO THE ST MARY'S

# Christmas Dinner

DECEMBER 19, 2023

Prepay £4.70

Please pay via Parentpay by 01/12/23.  
Payment cannot be made on the day

Vegetarian option available

No other food is available  
from the Refectory on the day,  
packed lunch only.

The poster features a dark green background with a string of warm white lights at the top. In the center is the St Mary's Catholic School (SMCS) logo. At the bottom, there are two identical illustrations of Santa Claus and a snowman standing next to a small evergreen tree, with a fox perched on the tree. The entire scene is set against a snowy ground.



## District Cross Country Competition



**Last Tuesday was the annual District Cross-Country Competition.**

The St Mary's teams were made up of the students who finished in the top 8 in the Inter-House Cross-Country event.

The students were absolutely brilliant, they were highly competitive, showing huge amounts of resilience running in the pouring rain.



A particular well done has to go to Isla K, who won the Year 7 girls event.



## Read and Review Opportunity



The school has brand new copies of 'Brown Girl Dreaming', a memoir by the award-winning author Jacqueline Woodson.

It's about Jacqueline's childhood in the 1960s in New York and the Deep South of the USA. She was born just before the march on Washington for African American rights, and she shares her family's experiences of this important period in history. The book is also full of warmth and humour, with an easy-to-read, poetic style. It's suitable for Years 7 to 9 and beyond.

**Students who read 'Brown Girl Dreaming' and complete a review will receive three house points.** Reviews are sent to the publisher via the Reading Agency (students don't give their full name). Students should come to the library if they would like to borrow and review the book.

## Scholastic Book Fair – Coming soon!

St Mary's will be hosting a Book Fair from 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> December.

Watch this space for details of how to buy vouchers for your child to spend, or how to pay online once the fair has started. Every book bought earns money for our school to buy new books. There will be some great deals, just in time for Christmas!





## Extra Curricular Club



### Eco Club

**The Eco Club is an extra curricular club that meets every Tuesday evening.**

We have been meeting to discuss ways to improve the environment by taking action in our school community. We have decided to focus on developing the school environment by improving garden areas within the school site. We have teamed up with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and have been working on our RHS School Gardening Awards. We are delighted to share that we have met the criteria for Level 1 and therefore been awarded our first badge.

This week marked an important milestone as we now work towards achieving our Level 2 RHS School Gardening Award. The club have planted a selection on bulbs in our prayer garden.

We hope to update you in spring when we begin to see our bulbs sprout and eventually flower.



Below is a picture of our Eco Club members (Caitlin, Leticia, Laura, Filip, Isobel, Lucas and Mariana)





## Cross Country Success



**Congratulations to Year 7 student Isla who ran in the English Cross Country Relays at the weekend for her running club.**

Isla took part in an under-13 race for students in Year 7 and Year 8. Each team consisted of three runners. Isla was in the B team and they came 22nd out of over 60 teams.

Well done!



## Year 7 ~ AP Success

**Well done to the top 20 students in Year 7, who celebrated their AP success with a special cake break!**



## Our Senior Prefect Team



## Absence : Illness ~ diarrhoea and vomiting

**We advise that if students have had diarrhoea and/or vomiting that they do not attend school for 48 hours.**

### Important

Stay off school or work until you've not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days.

If you also have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to do your normal activities, try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people until you feel better.

To help avoid spreading an infection:

### Do

- ✓ [wash your hands](#) with soap and water frequently
- ✓ wash any clothing or bedding that has poo or vomit on it separately on a hot wash
- ✓ clean toilet seats, flush handles, taps, surfaces and door handles every day

### Don't

- ✗ do not prepare food for other people, if possible
- ✗ do not share towels, flannels, cutlery or utensils
- ✗ do not use a swimming pool until 2 weeks after the symptoms stop

### Do

- ✓ stay at home and get plenty of rest
- ✓ drink lots of fluids, such as water or squash – take small sips if you feel sick
- ✓ carry on breast or bottle feeding your baby – if they're being sick, try giving small feeds more often than usual
- ✓ give babies on formula or solid foods small sips of water between feeds
- ✓ eat when you feel able to – you do not need to eat or avoid any specific foods
- ✓ take [paracetamol](#) if you're in discomfort – check the leaflet before giving it to your child

### Don't

- ✗ do not have fruit juice or fizzy drinks – they can make diarrhoea worse
- ✗ do not make baby formula weaker – use it at its usual strength
- ✗ do not give children under 12 medicine to stop diarrhoea
- ✗ do not give aspirin to children under 16



## The Big Ambition ~ a national campaign



**The Big Ambition is a national campaign which invites all students to complete a survey.**

**It is really important that the pupils at St Mary's Catholic School have participated in The Big Ambition survey and had their say.**

I want to ensure that the voices of the children in Hertfordshire are fairly represented in the findings so that I can share their views with the most senior members of the country.

I must reiterate that it is vital that all children have their voice heard through this survey because, as Children's Commissioner for England, I have a statutory duty to protect and promote the views and interests of children. The Big Ambition provides a much-needed opportunity for the children of England to tell political decision makers what is important to them ahead of the General Election.

The survey can be done as homework and parents can assist children who cannot complete the survey themselves (children under 5 and children with Special Educational Needs). This is a great opportunity to teach children about politics and why it is important for them to use their voice!

Children or parents can complete the survey here:  
[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigambition](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigambition) . Further resources are available on our [website](#).

Yours sincerely,



**Dame Rachel De Souza**

**Children's Commissioner for England**



## House System ~ Student of the Fortnight

The following students achieved the highest number of positive house points since half term.  
As a reward for this excellent achievement, they will receive an Achievement Postcard including an Invitation to Headteachers's Tea next term.

### Junior Inter House Competition

Caitlin O, 7B	62		Brian T, 8A	32
Joel F, 7B	38		Arianne R, 8A	25
Luke B, 7B	33		Emil D, 8A	24
Anton K, 7M	33		Chisom I, 8J	24

### Intermediate Inter House Competition

Olivia L, 9R	28		Leonardas J, 10J	31
Franklin O, 9K	27		Michael C, 10J	27
Owen Mc, 9R	24		Michelle V, 10T	19
Ifechukwu David I, 9T	24		Chisom I, 8J	24

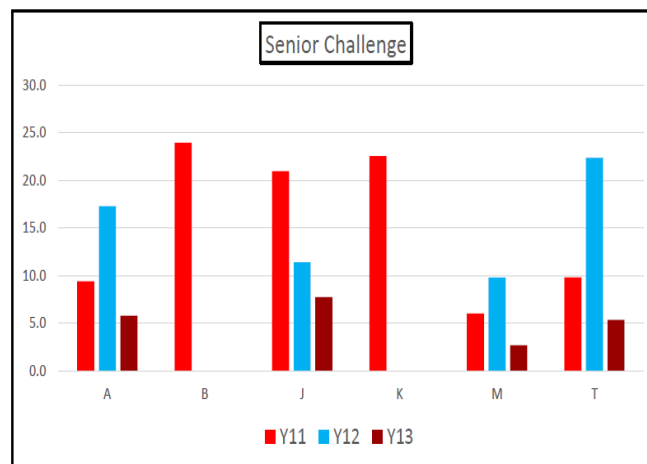
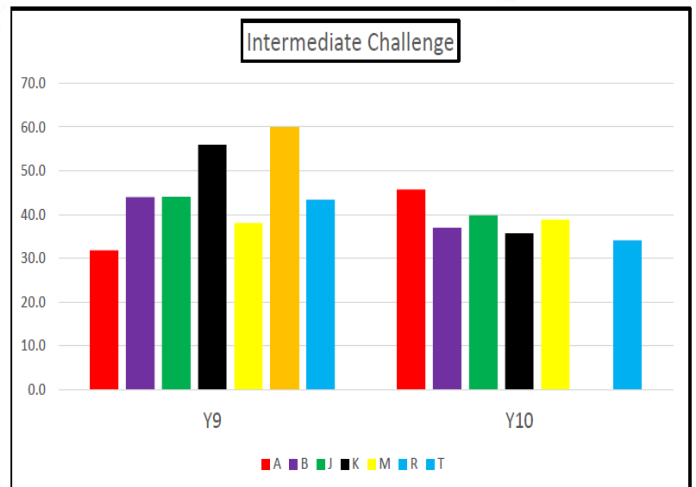
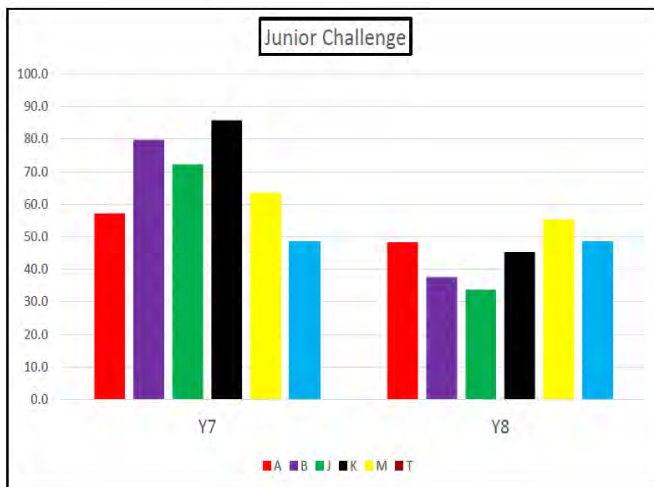
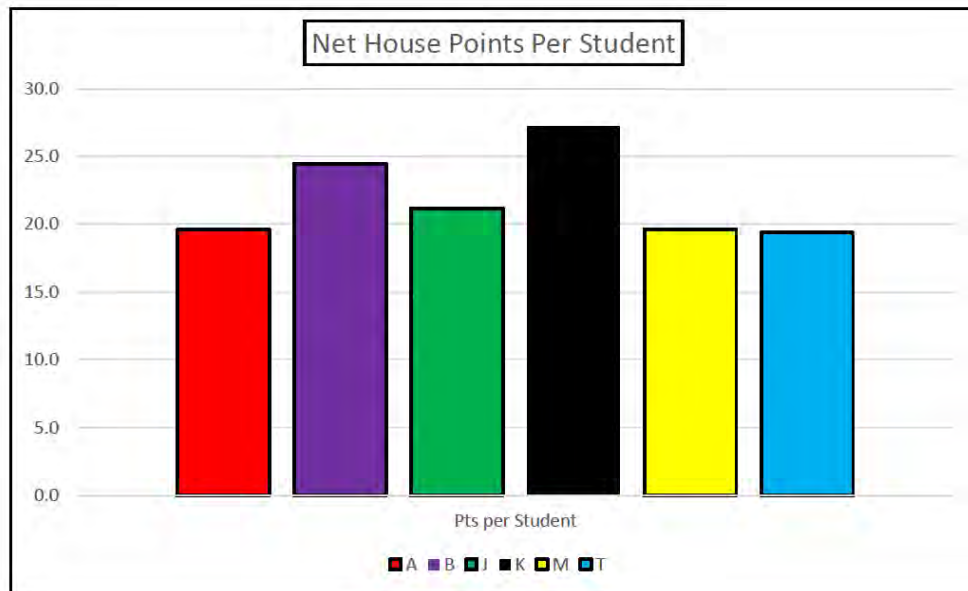
### Senior Inter House Competition

Jamie C, 11B		Amelia P, 12M		Irene B, 13J
Mercedes R, 11B		Joseph S, 12M		Orla G, 13M
Jessica K, 11K		Benjamin R, 12M		Oliver C, 13T

*Well  
done!*



## House System ~ Points



## Artist in Focus

### Ollie W, Year 13



#### Why do you study or love Art? Tell us about your journey and who you are...

Ever since primary school I have had a love for Art and as I have grown throughout my years at St Mary's my passion and skill have developed more than I could possibly have imagined. I think the reason I've been so drawn to Art is because of the freedom it gives you being able to express yourself in an endless amount of ways, and the beauty of it is that everyone is different and you can learn from absolutely everybody else. Seeing what works for others and talking through ideas and techniques really broadens your artistic field of vision. I am currently working on a project that is about a hobby I enjoy outside of school, which is motor sports. The fast-paced world of motor sports has changed the way I view my art and has really inspired my most recent work.

#### Who inspires you?

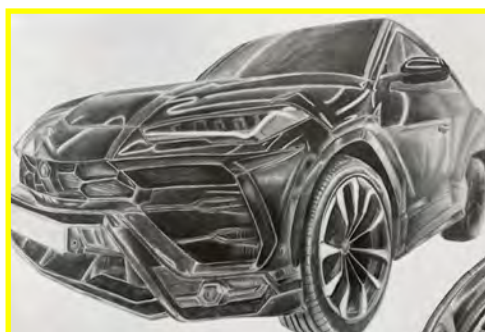
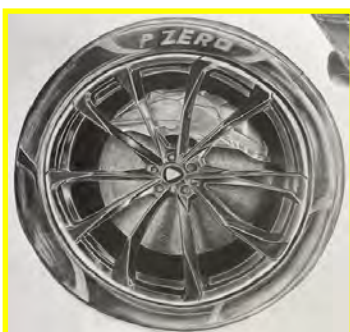
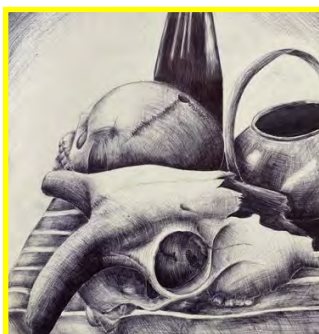
Jono Dry is a self-taught South African artist; his hyper-realistic drawing really inspired me to keep improving the quality of my work. His artistic skill is incredible and it is hard to imagine how so much detail can be captured by a man with a pencil.

#### Where do you want to go and what do you want to do when you leave St Mary's?

When I leave St Mary's I want to go on and study Film Production at University. Going forward, I will further develop my artistic journey, specifically in the area of cinematography. The universities I have applied for are; University of Creative Arts, University of Chichester, Middlesex University London, Nottingham and The University of Plymouth.

#### What advice would you give aspiring artists here at St Mary's?

The advice I would give aspiring artists is to, when possible; adapt your subject matter to something that spikes your interest. Experiment with different mediums to try to find what you like and what you don't like to create art with. I know, especially for me, choosing the correct media can make or break a piece of artwork so try not to skip this process in your creative journey.





## St Mary's Catholic School ~ Careers Bulletin

**GSK Ware Apprentice Job Fair**  
Wednesday 06<sup>th</sup> December 2023



OPEN EVENINGS



Find out more about the fantastic Apprenticeship opportunities at GSK Ware\*!

The apprenticeships we will be showcasing are\*\*:



↑ Scan the QR code above to register ↑

Each session includes:

- 1. Talks by Current Apprentices (30 mins)**  
Listen to our some of our current apprentices talk about their experience at GSK. This includes key responsibilities, balancing work and study, and top tips!
- 2. Meet and Greet (30 mins)**  
Walk around the different stalls and speak to current and graduated apprentices from each discipline. They will provide information about their specific programme and answer specific questions you may have. You will also have the chance to ask more general questions about the site and the recruitment process.

Please select one of the sessions (both are identical):

Session 1	Wednesday 06 <sup>th</sup> December	16:30-17:30
Session 2		18:00-19:00

Click here to sign up: <https://forms.microsoft.com/r/sGrBDHCXsK>



Take your first steps towards a healthcare career with the UK's only LIVE Virtual Work Experience Programme. You can select from one day or a full 6 month work experience programme where you will follow patients from admission to discharge in the high fidelity simulation suite, designed to provide you with an immersive experience from the comfort and safety of your home. Choose from the dates below. Students will be awarded certificates for attending each day, no day is the same!

### 1-Day Programmes

Select the dates that suit you. You can register for just £10 a day!

3rd December £10.00	7th January £10.00	4th February £10.00
3rd March £10.00	7th April £10.00	5th May £10.00

21st November 2023

5.30pm - 8.00pm

Broxbourne Campus, Ware Campus  
Open Events



Saturday 25th November 10am - 3pm



Next Open Events

Wednesday 21 November 4.30pm - 6.30pm (on campus)

Thursday 13 February 2024 - 5pm-8pm

Wednesday 28 April 2023 - 5pm-8pm



Virtual Advice Session

Thursday 7 December, 6pm to 8pm



Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 - 6.00pm-7.30pm  
Apprenticeship Information Evening



Wednesday 07th February 2024 (4pm-6.30pm)



LOVE-RESPECT-FLOURISH

#DedicatedtoExcellence

# Girls Football Camp at Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre



**Thursday 21st December 2023**

**9am - 11.30am for 8 - 10 years, cost £10**

**12pm - 3pm for 11 - 15 years, cost £12**

**SCAN ME  
TO BOOK**



**Book Now** via the QR code  
or call our team on 0127 965 2332



everyone  
ACTIVE  
Feel better for it

## We are hiring!



St Francis of Assisi  
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

Click Here For Latest Vacancy Information

<https://www.stmarys.net/vacancies>





## arriva ~ Student Travel



### Student Travel 2023-24

Do you or your child travel to University, College or School by bus? If so, we've got the perfect solution! Arriva Student and Child Saver tickets are valid for anyone in full time education and, is a cost effective and flexible way of paying for travel costs.

**Unlimited travel** - You'll get unlimited access to travel on any Arriva bus, at any time, across all routes in your chosen area.

**No restrictions** - The Saver tickets will cover your travel to and from University, School or College, evenings, weekends and throughout the holidays too at any time of the day.

**Flexible payments** - Arriva's Direct Debit scheme allows you to spread the cost of your ticket over affordable monthly payments. It's an easy way to pay for travel and there's no contract involved, making it an ideal way to get reduced bus travel for the whole Academic year, without paying upfront.

**Sign up in advance** - Either set your direct debit to start at a future date for when you need the ticket or, you can start your ticket now to get used to the local bus routes.

**Plan your journey** - Please use our 'Plan a journey' tool on our website to work out which bus you require or, download our app on the Apple Store or Google Play: [www.arrivabus.co.uk](http://www.arrivabus.co.uk)

It's a simple process to apply, to arrange your Direct Debit and for further information please use the link or scan the QR code below and, select the region the school, college or university is in:

[www.arrivabus.co.uk/monthlytickets](http://www.arrivabus.co.uk/monthlytickets)



Once registered you can select either to receive your monthly pass by post or sent to your mobile phone, so you won't have to worry about paying every time you board the bus. This ticket will rollover every month for as long as the direct debit remains active.

For any queries regarding the scheme, please email: [talktous@arriva.co.uk](mailto:talktous@arriva.co.uk)

*Direct Debit tickets are an alternative to the Herts Saver Card. A Herts Saver Card will only be required as a form of ID with a Direct Debit Ticket, for any student (6<sup>th</sup> form upwards, College or University Student), who does not have a valid student ID. Any student in school year up to Year 11, will not require a Herts Saver Card with a Direct Debit Ticket*

**\*Our tickets do not cover Arriva London/TFL routes**



Never Lose your ticket again  
Choose to have your ticket on your  
mobile phone with the Arriva UK Bus  
app.

