



CHRISTMAS 2024

HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME



As we approach the festive period, can I thank all our families for their continued support of school. As you will read, it has been an extremely busy term with a vast array of trips, events and fixtures across all year groups.

Last week our Year 11 pupils received their mock examination results in a similar way to how their final GCSE/BTEC grades will be delivered in August. Can I thank both the pupils and their teachers for all their hard work and dedication over what has been a demanding period.

Could I ask families to refrain from taking their children on holiday during the school term. There has been a change in legislation which prevents schools from authorising holidays under almost any circumstances. Your support on this matter would be greatly appreciated.

I would like to publicly thank Father Brian for his continued support and presence around school. As a secondary school, we are extremely fortunate to have Father visit us on a weekly basis and facilitate visits to both St Joseph's and St Edward's over the course of the year.

Finally, on behalf of the Governors, the staff and myself can I thank families for all their kind and generous charitable donations and to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

To keep up to date with our latest news as and when it happens and to celebrate all things St. Bede's, follow our social media channels:

<https://www.stbedesblackburn.com/social/>



UPCOMING DATES

- 06/01 – School reopens @ 8am
- 09/01 – Year 9 English Theatre trip
- 16/01 – Year 9 Progress Evening
- 24/01 – Jubilee Year 2025 – Pilgrims of Hope official schools' launch
- 27/01 – Holocaust Memorial Day
- 30/01 – Year 9 Curriculum Information Evening
- 06/02 – Year 7 Progress Evening
- 14/02 – School closes @ 2.55pm



**“Everything is possible for
one who believes”
Mark 9:23**



ATTENDANCE

This term we held the 'Ber months attendance challenge. Pupils who have had an outstanding attendance in October, November and December were entered into the 'Wheel of Names'. 319 pupils were entered into the live draw and there was a £50 Amazon voucher winner in each year group.

Please continue to encourage your child to attend school regularly and on time.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS
Which category are you in?

	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	
100	73	45	38	45	40	OUTSTANDING
97 - 99	49	31	49	36	37	EXCELLENT
94 - 96	45	47	49	51	52	GOOD
91 - 93	25	43	35	32	35	SATISFACTORY
88 - 90	11	18	12	44	12	CONCERN
85 - 87	3	11	7	6	12	CONCERN
80 - 84	1	7	11	4	9	CONCERN
Below 80	3	7	6	11	8	SERIOUS CONCERN
Below 50	0	1	3	6	0	SERIOUS CONCERN

YEAR 11: EN ROUTE TO SUCCESS

Last month, our Year 11 pupils took part in their Mock exams. They approached these exams with a serious attitude, recognising the importance of this stage in their academic journey. On Mock Results Day, pupils received their results, marking a significant milestone in their preparation for the final GCSE exams. We are proud of all our pupils for their hard work, and particularly wanted to recognise those with the highest level of attitude to learning and excellent attendance—these pupils were rewarded with a "Save the Date" card for the prom, adding an exciting milestone to look forward to. More students will receive "Save the Date" cards in March and May.

CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY EVENT

We welcomed relatives of our student Prefects and Guardians for our annual Christmas Community event. Our guests enjoyed musical performances and a festive buffet while catching up with family members. A great time was had by all!

SCHOOL LIAISON EVENT

Next half term we will be hosting a School Liaison Event. Information and support on different aspects of school life; school uniform recycling event and refreshments are just some of the things we plan to offer. More details will be sent to families in January.

'BE LIKE BEDE' ADVENT TOMBOLA

Our students have been awarded with Advent tokens throughout December for a chance to have a go on our St Bede's tombola. Students were recognised for showing a virtue linked to the Advent theme. They have been recognised for showing resilience and improvement during the week of Hope; kindness and empathy for the week of Peace; and positivity for the week of Joy.

'BE LIKE BEDE' THROUGHOUT ADVENT
BE... 'the light that shines in the darkness' John 1:5

THE FOUR CANDLES OF THE ADVENT WREATH SPECIFICALLY SYMBOLISE THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTS OF HOPE, PEACE, JOY AND LOVE, WITH THESE CANDLES BEING LIT SUBSEQUENTLY THROUGHOUT EACH WEEK OF THE ADVENT SEASON.

THERE IS BEAUTY IN REFLECTING UPON HOW JESUS DELIVERS THESE VIRTUES TO THE WORLD AND TO OUR LIVES. THROUGHOUT ADVENT, YOU CAN BE RECOGNISED FOR SHOWING THESE VIRTUES JUST AS JESUS WOULD HAVE.

WEEK 1 - HOPE – SHOW IMPROVEMENT AND RESILIENCE
WEEK 2 - PEACE – SHOW KINDNESS AND EMPATHY
WEEK 3 - JOY – SHOW POSITIVITY

Every lunchtime there will be 'Bede's Bureau' in the Atrium and you can exchange your token for a prize on the tombola.

ADVENT TOKEN



AUTHOR VISIT

We were thrilled to host renowned author Tom Palmer at our school this half term. This special event provided a unique opportunity for students and staff to engage with Tom, whose work has captivated readers with many successful stories such as "After the War". During the visit he shared insights into his creative process, answered questions, and inspired our community to explore the power of storytelling. It was an unforgettable experience for everyone involved!





PREFECTS' CHRISTMAS PARTY

Our Year 11 Prefects celebrated their Christmas Party at The Whitehall Hotel. Students enjoyed a Christmas Dinner followed by an After Eight Ice Cream sundae before dancing the night away together. This celebration was a thank you for the valued contribution our Prefects make to our school community.



REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER CENTRE TRIP

We recently took our GCSE Drama pupils to the Asylum and Refugee Community (ARC) as part of their coursework. This inspiring trip offered students a unique opportunity to meet and interview individuals at the centre, listening to their powerful and moving stories firsthand.

The pupils deeply engaged with the people there, gaining a profound understanding of their experiences and the challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers. These conversations have become the foundation for a meaningful and thought-provoking piece of drama that the students are now developing as part of their GCSE studies.

YEAR 7 WELCOME MASS

During the first half term, we were delighted to welcome our Year 7 pupils and their families to our annual Year 7 Welcome Mass, celebrated by Father Brian. The pupils played an active role in the planning of the Mass, contributing with readings and presenting the offertory. The staff choir also performed, adding to the spirit of the occasion. All of the pupils joined together to sing a special song chosen for the Mass, making it a memorable and joyful time for our school community. It was a wonderful way to celebrate the beginning of their journey with us!

YEAR 7 MASS VISIT

This term, small groups of KS3 pupils also attended Mass at St. Edward's Church in Darwen, joining younger pupils from the primary school. Father Brian celebrated the Mass, and all families were invited to join this special time when our parish community came together in prayer and reflection

SPORTING SUCCESS

St Bedes' students have again been excelling in recent sporting events, showcasing impressive talent and dedication across various disciplines. **The Indoor Athletics Blackburn with Darwen Championships** crowned the **Year 7 & 8 Girls** and **Year 8 Boys** teams, who all finished in **1st place**. These victories mean they will represent BwD at the prestigious **Lancashire School Games**. The **Year 7 Boys** also put in a strong performance, securing **3rd place**. In the **Lancashire Schools Table Tennis Team Competition**, the **Year 11 Girls** team were **runners-up**, while the **Year 10/11 Boys** team were **champions**. Looking ahead, we will be hosting the **Northwest Gymnastics Competition** on **Sat, 11th Jan 2025**, with 6 teams from across both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 ready to compete. This event promises to be another exciting showcase of local talent. Congratulations to all the students for their fantastic achievements, and best of luck to those heading to the Lancashire School Games and the upcoming gymnastics competition!



PAIRED READING WITH PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Our students have continued to support reception and Key Stage 1 primary feeder pupils to share the love of reading.



ADVENT AT ST. BEDE'S

During Advent, our school community embraced the spirit of giving through our annual Christmas Jumper Day, supporting the Caritas Advent Appeal. This year, donations also went towards the Caritas Valencia appeal, and any toiletry items collected were given to local homeless charities. A heartfelt thank you to everyone for supporting our Advent charity focus.

We invited pupils to help decorate St Bede's Christmas Tree, which took pride of place in the Arrowsmith building atrium. This year, pupils donated beautiful decorations, and some Year 7 students even created their own Christmas baubles featuring a St Bede's design. We were grateful for all the contributions that made our tree so special.



This week, Father Brian led services for all year groups, reflecting on the important message of Advent. Thoughtfully planned and prepared by our prayer leaders, these services offered a meaningful opportunity for our community to reflect and pray as we approached Christmas.



FOOD & NUTRITION

This half term, our second group of key stage 3 classes have joined the Food & Nutrition journey, focusing on developing and showcasing a variety of skills and techniques. We continued to refine knife skills and emphasized health and safety in the kitchen. Additionally, we explored the origins of our food and wrapped up the term with some festive baking! We're excited for the Spring term, when we can involve more students in cooking activities!

PANATHALON BOWLING EVENT

Two teams of KS3 pupils attended the Panathalon Bowling Event at Blackburn Bowlplex finishing in fourth place.



HARDWICK HALL, EDUCATIONAL VISIT

On Monday 9th December Y11 History students visited Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire which is their Historical Environment study for the 2025 round of exams. Students had a great day exploring the site and were commended by the National Trust staff on their behaviour and academic curiosity.



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING IN HISTORY

Finally, Year 7 and Year 9 History students have recently started new units on Medieval Religion (Year 7) and The Holocaust (Year 9) and have been reflecting in lessons how these topics link to our Catholic Social Teachings at St. Bede's.

STONYHURST DEBATE

In October, our Year 10 pupils participated in a debate with students from St. Augustine's RCHS, marking the return of this annual event. The debate provided an excellent opportunity for pupils to develop invaluable debating skills while meeting other young people from across the Diocese. As part of the day, students were given a tour of the historic collections at Stonyhurst, with a particular focus on Christian symbolism and imagery—topics that are explored in their RE GCSE studies. It was a day filled with both intellectual challenge and cultural enrichment, offering a unique learning experience for all involved.

DRAMA TRIPS

This term has been filled with incredible opportunities for our students to experience the magic of live theatre!

Recently, our Year 7 pupils enjoyed a fantastic trip to Liverpool to watch *Aladdin*. The show was a vibrant and exciting production, introducing many of our students to the joy and wonder of the theatre.

On the last day of term, our Year 10 Performing Arts and GCSE Drama students will head to London to watch the iconic production of *The Lion King*. This world-renowned musical promises to inspire and provide invaluable insights into the world of professional theatre.

CHARITY WORK

Nightsafe work with young people who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness and will provide accommodation, day centres with information, advice, and guidance. We will help with emergency needs and empower our young people to play a positive part in their local community.

Pupils in our school have been collecting items for the homeless of Blackburn and support the charity work of Nightsafe. We provided 80 boxes.



CAREERS' VISITS

This term, we have had an extensive range of Careers' visits to help pupils understand different areas of the work place. In today's competitive job market, understanding the work place is essential for career success.

Engaging with local businesses and Colleges in Blackburn and Burnley, as well as visiting institutions like WEC; all have provided hands-on experience and valuable industry insights.



YEAR 11 GCSE FIELDWORK

This term, our Year 11 Geography students took part in their physical geography fieldwork at the River Darwen. Pupils worked in teams to measure the river's width, depth, and velocity, while also observing the surrounding landscape. Despite the wet conditions, the students remained focused and demonstrated excellent teamwork and resilience.



OXFORD UNIVERSITY VISIT

Pupils in Years 9 and 10 had a chance to experience life at one of the country's most famous Universities. The visit offered a unique opportunity to explore one of the world's most prestigious academic institutions. With its stunning architecture, rich history, and world-class reputation.



SPOTLIGHT ON ART

Our budding Key Stage 3 artists have been exploring a range of themes. Year 7 art students are exploring the theme *Into the Wild*, capturing the beauty of nature through drawing, painting, and mixed media. Year 8 students are focusing on portraiture, developing skills in proportion, expression, and likeness using pencil, charcoal, and paint. Whereas, Year 9 artists are inspired by Tim Burton's unique style, creating characters and scenes with exaggerated features, dark contrasts, and quirky details using various media to refine their artistic expression.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TRIPS AND INTERFAITH WEEK EVENTS

This term, our students have had the opportunity to explore and deepen their understanding of different faiths through several enriching activities and trips.



Our Year 11 pupils visited St. Joseph's Church and Whitefield Synagogue, where they explored the practices, traditions, and history of the Catholic Church and Judaism. The guided tours offered valuable insights into the architecture, symbols, and rituals of both faiths, fostering a deeper appreciation for religious diversity and interfaith understanding.

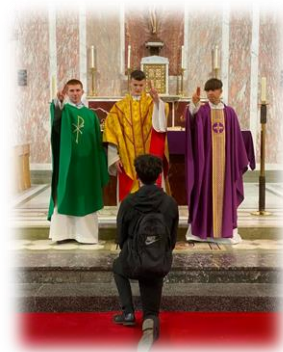
Meanwhile, some of our Year 10 pupils visited the Manchester Jewish Museum, where they learned about the rich history of the Jewish community in Manchester.



A highlight of their visit was making their own challah bread, a traditional bread enjoyed on Shabbat and special occasions. This hands-on activity brought their studies to life, offering a deeper understanding of Jewish culture and traditions.



As part of Interfaith Week, our Year 9 pupils participated in a visit to Guardian Angels in Bury, where they met with students from other schools and engaged with speakers representing a variety of world faiths. Additionally, we welcomed guest speakers from Building Bridges Burnley, who shared insights into interfaith dialogue and understanding. These experiences encouraged meaningful conversations and fostered mutual respect and learning among students of different backgrounds.



All of these activities have provided our students with memorable opportunities to reflect, engage, and grow in their understanding of the diverse world around them.



LAUDATO SI CENTRE VISIT

In October, pupils from our Social Justice Group and Ecology Club visited the Salford Diocese Laudato Si Centre at Wardley Hall in Salford. During the visit, they took part in planting and foraging activities, learning firsthand about sustainable practices and environmental stewardship. The pupils also engaged in thoughtful discussions about how they can connect Ecology and Social Justice back at school, exploring practical ways to make a positive impact in their community. It was an inspiring day that deepened their understanding of the importance of caring for both people and the planet.

Wishing all our school community a happy, holy and safe Christmas break.



10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/safety-over-the-festive-season>



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