

Dear Parents, Carers & Students,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the Summer edition of our school's Newsletter.

Firstly, a huge thank you to the great many parents, students and staff who have been so kind and thoughtful throughout my battle with ill health this year. I know that so many members of the St John's community have been thinking of me, asking after me, and keeping me and my family in their prayers, for which I am incredibly grateful. I feel truly blessed to be in a position to say that your prayers and generosity of spirit have helped my recovery to such an extent that my six months in hospital are now but a distant memory. I am delighted to be fully back home with my family, and across this last term I have thankfully had the strength and stamina to enjoy being back in school full time. I am one very lucky man!

Returning to St John's after my prolonged absence, it has been incredibly heartening to see that the school has continued to go from strength to strength through the hard work and dedication of our amazing staff body and the support that we continue to receive from our Parents and Carers.

### **A plea to Parents/Carers to Email in your thanks to staff**

Just a thought as we start the summer holidays: it is sometimes the case that we can find it a little easier to make the time to complain rather than to show our appreciation for the positive actions that have made a real difference to our (or our children's) lives. On that note, I am incredibly grateful to those parents who have taken the time to email in their thanks to staff for the excellent education or pastoral support that their child(ren) has received across the last year. I know that staff are incredibly appreciative when receiving messages of this nature; I can assure you that it is always heartwarming and motivational for teachers and support staff to hear from parents that they have made a positive difference.

With that in mind, if you or your child has noticeably benefitted from the support and guidance that they have received from a member (or members) of St John's staff over this last year, can I encourage you to email in your thanks to our office email account: [office@stj.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@stj.kent.sch.uk). I know it would make a huge difference to our staff if they were to receive a positive message of this nature just before or on their return to school in September.

Throughout this newsletter you will see just a few examples of the incredible work that has taken place in our school - what a fabulous year we have enjoyed together; congratulations to all those students who have got a mention.

May I wish you all a restful and happy summer, during which you will hopefully be able to spend quality time with family and friends. I very much look forward to seeing our students return renewed and refreshed in September!

Matt Barron  
Headteacher

## GOODBYE YEAR 11!

After a tough and challenging academic year, Year 11 threw themselves enthusiastically into celebrations to mark the end of their examination period before they officially departed for a well-earned break. It is always a bittersweet occasion saying farewell to our leavers after all the hard work that Year 11 entails. Needless to say, we are immensely proud of them all for their conscientious efforts and dedication throughout this year; the students have been a real credit to St John's.

Our leavers were sent off in true St John's style; students were invited to a Leavers' Mass and celebratory BBQ on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June, and of course the highlight was the Year 11 Prom held two days later at the Mercure Brands Hatch Hotel and Spa.

Mass is an important occasion for students to give thanks and reflect together on their personal journey through St John's and we are very grateful to Fr Moses Amune MSP and Mrs Gibbons who led this celebration for us. The celebration assembly, which followed Mass, was an emotional one but it also gave the opportunity for staff to show their appreciation to Year 11 for the commitment to their studies by 'letting their hair down' in the well-received staff video. Students then headed outside in the sunshine to participate in the ritual 'shirt signing' and for a BBQ with staff; it was a glorious afternoon and one which was enjoyed by all!

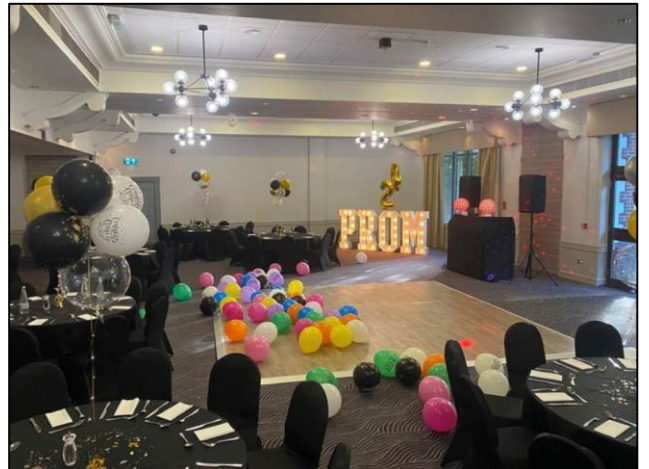
Prom 2024..... Year 11 students looked amazing in their new attire, and the staff didn't look too bad either! It was a lovely occasion to mark the students' time at St John's with a hot finger food buffet followed by throwing some shapes on the dancefloor. We would like to thank our students for a wonderful evening and their exemplary behaviour.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of our Year 11 students for their hard work and determination this year; we very much hope that this is reflected when their results are released in the Summer and we look forward to sharing their successes with them as we recognise all that they have worked so hard to achieve.

We wish them the best of luck in their future pathways and look forward to welcoming very many of them back to the Sixth Form next year.

Finally, always remember as you move into the 'big wide world' that you will always be part of a much bigger community - the St John's community.

*The Year 11 Team.*



**St Clare win Sports Day and House of the Year**



At the end of June the sun was out for our annual sports day on the field. With the teams picked a few weeks before, many students took the opportunity to attend athletics club before the event to improve their performance, knowing also that a place in the School squad for the District Games was at stake.

We had our traditional athletic events combined with arrow ball, welly boot throw, wacky races and the tug of war. The morning saw many of the events take place and the scores were pretty even with Ambrose and Patrick sharing individual Year Group victories, but a consistent Clare were 2<sup>nd</sup> in each category. Into the afternoon which saw the 200m and 4x100m relay and mixed relay. Here St Clare



really took a stranglehold on the day - taking a number of maximum points which turned their 20 point margin into something more significant.

Winning both the Year 8 and 9 events turned the tide in their favour and a creditable 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Year 8 sealed the deal. Well done to all the students who performed and to those that retained their titles from last year and won medals.

	Ambrose	Clare	Patrick
<b>Year 7</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>241</b>
<b>POSITION</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Year 8</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>274</b>
<b>POSITION</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Year 9</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>305</b>
<b>POSITION</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>939</b>	<b>820</b>

With the winning of Sports Day came 1000 Super Six points to be added to the House Point totals. What an amazing competition it has been this year with the Houses so close in points gained from events such as the Super 6 Competitions, Inter House Games, good comments and participation in various Inter-House events. Sports Day was always looking like a “winner takes all” event and so it proved to be with St Clare claiming a 6<sup>th</sup> title in 7 years. Congratulations to all in purple. Next years totals have already started with rollover!

House	Total
St Clare	33871
St Ambrose	32811
St Patrick	32585

## District Athletics success

We took over 60 students to this event at the beginning of July to compete against some extremely strong teams in Gravesend and Dartford. The girls did well with Year 7 (7th overall) Year 8 (8th) Year 9 (6th) and Year 10 (3rd) putting in a tremendous effort across all the disciplines. Year 10 Girls gained an incredible 3rd place with Holly B putting in an unbelievable performance in the 1500m finishing 2nd. Holly has been injured for a long time and so it was even more amazing when she became the first female at St John's to run under six minutes breaking the 21 year old school record with a time of 5 minutes 52 seconds. The Year 9 Girls smashed the relay and took gold with a great display of speed and teamwork against some of the elite School teams across the local area.

In the Boys competition, the Year 7 team (5th) Year 8 (4th) Year 9 (2nd) and Year 10 (4th) did remarkably well. Charlie H in Year 7 became the overall District Shot Put champion setting a new school record in the process. The Year 9 team put in a great shift scoring double-figure points in 6/10 disciplines. Erikas K won gold in the Shot Put and silver in the 200m whilst Jack T jumped close to the school record in the Long Jump, being only the second boy to jump over 5 metres as he gained a silver position. Year 9 also came 2nd in the 4x100m relay. Bruno A in Year 10, who won both the Shot Put and Javelin in Year 9, did so again winning double gold and setting two new school records along the way. Well done Bruno for becoming a double double champion and holding four school records – an incredible achievement!!!

Well done to everyone who participated.

*Mr S Ward. Head of St Clare House.*

## Gymnastics Showcase

On the evening of Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June, St John's Gymnastics Squad were joined by pupils from St John's Primary School and The Leigh Academy Dartford to put on a showcase to display the exceptional gymnastics talent of the students across these schools.

These pupils are to be congratulated for the effort and dedication they have applied throughout the academic year both after school and during the weekends towards training and competing for their respective schools and the South East Region. Our show, "Coda", demonstrated just how talented these gymnasts are, and was thoroughly enjoyed by the gymnasts and their friends and family who came to support this wonderful event.



Thank you to Istead Rise Gymnastics Club for the loan of the air track for the showcase, and generating a school-club link to provide additional opportunities for students at St John's.

## Gymnastic Rewards Trip



St John's Gymnastics Squad were treated to a 2-hour session at Gravity Trampoline Park, Bluewater on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024 to thank them for their commitment and contribution to the wider school experiences provided at St John's.

The gymnasts train twice weekly throughout the whole academic year, often completing additional training at the weekends prior to competitions and showcases. They also compete at both Regional and National level at a number of venues across the UK during the weekends - representing both St John's School and the South East Region. What better way to celebrate their dedication and success than 2 hours of turning themselves upside down even more than usual!

*Mrs L Weller. Assistant Headteacher (Teaching & Learning).*

## Dance Photoshoot



We were fortunate to be able to offer some of our GCSE and BTEC students the opportunity to participate in a professional dance photoshoot with *Ellie Thomas Creative* at Shorne Country Park.

Ellie was able to capture some really creative and beautiful images of our dancers, and all students worked professionally and enthusiastically throughout the day.



*Mrs R Steadman. Dance Teacher.*

## Criminology Trip – The True Crime Museum, Hastings



On the 14<sup>th</sup> June, the Criminology Department took our current Year 13 Criminology students on a tour of The True Crime Museum in Hastings. Students were led by the Main Curator who gave them insights into some key criminal cases throughout history.



With many criminal artefacts, students were able to see items from hundreds of cases. This included the boxing gloves of the Kray Twins, replica skulls of the Lizzie Borden Murders, as well as a scene recreation of the prolific 'Acid Bath Killer', John George Haigh. The students saw many different crime-related items, as well such as a genuine lethal injection table and electric chair used during death penalty executions in the USA. They also had opportunities to take their own photos against a suspect wall, look at how

blood and fluids can be picked up by UV light, as well as hear the voices of some of the most prolific killers such as Dennis Nilson.

Students enjoyed the day and found it insightful looking at the wide range of crimes on show at the museum. They were intrigued at the number of different cases featured in the museum and everything they learnt about not only crimes in Hastings but also around the world.



Miss L Cutting. Teacher of Criminology.

## Lego Workshop

In Term 5, the Maths department hosted a Lego house building workshop for the top Year 7 Good Comment scorers. It was a great success. Students not only enjoyed the event but learnt so much about elevations, planning, budgeting and building. The winning team was Marcin M, Saerd B, George J and Douglas H; congratulations to you!



## Draughts Championship

Year 7s and 8s have enjoyed their annual Draughts Championship. Many have learnt the game for the first time and others have honed their strategic skills as well as simply having enjoyed competing against each other; learning how to win, lose, reset the pieces, have a plan and start again.

Below are the list of our winners for 2024 and to the left, a photo of our triumphant 'Champion of Champions', Stefano.

Year 7 and KS3 Champion of Champions: Stefano M

Year 7 Class Champions: Douglas H, Jenelle, Saul S, Logan W, Jack W, Ratmir C, Riley D

Year 8 Champion: Aydaan B

Year 8 Class Champions: Cayden S, Poppie R, Nathan C, Conor H, Veer R, Ben C

*Mrs S Taylor. Key Stage 3 Maths Co-ordinator.*



## Children's Author Michael Rosen visits St John's

During the recent KCSP Children's Conference held at St John's, Year 9 student, Madeline S had the opportunity to present the children's author Michael Rosen with an incredible 3D painting she created based on her favourite childhood story - Michael's famous book, "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" (pictured right).

Mr Rosen LOVED the painting and was particularly touched by the message that Madeline had written on the back of her work: "Bear Hunt" was my favourite bedtime story, thank you Mr Rosen for creating such happy memories for me."



## Art Department



Charlie P's Creation

The Art department are delighted to hear that two of our students (**Charlie P (Year 10)** and **Ruby W (Year 8)**) have been shortlisted for a prize in the annual [YouCreate: Competition](#). This year's theme was 'Chaos' and UCA University were very impressed with how these two students interpreted the theme in their art work.

Charlie and Ruby's work will now go on display in a special exhibition at UCA Canterbury, New Dover Road, CT1 3AN.

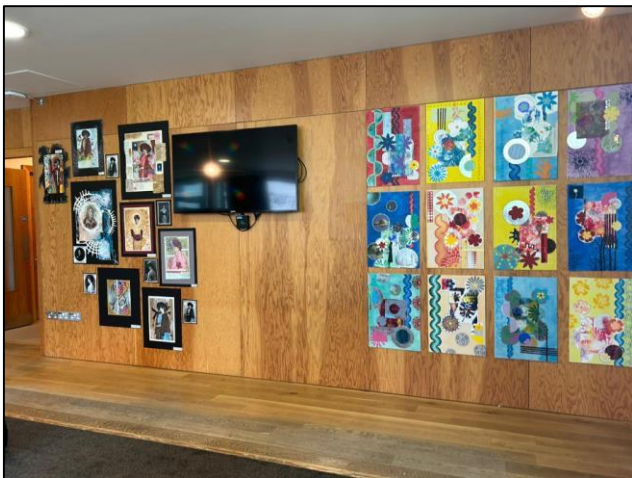
St John's would like to wish Charlie and Ruby the very best of luck in the final of this competition; the winners will be posted on UCA's website in the summer.

*Mrs D Lal. Art and Design Technician.*



Ruby W with her art work

## Gulbenkian Gallery



St John's KS4 and KS5 students recently took part in a solo exhibition at the Gulbenkian gallery at the University of Kent. Many thanks to Mr Self for making the contact, Mrs Lal for organising and Mrs Burgess for helping to transport five of our lovely Year 12 students who curated and mounted the show.

The exhibition forms part of "Genfest", a festival run by the University of Kent to celebrate the creativity of the young people of Kent. Here you see abstract panels inspired by the Beatriz Milhazes exhibition at the Turner Contemporary gallery by GCSE students and mixed media work inspired by old darkroom prints of famous paintings.

*Mrs A Stone. Head of Art and Design.*

## Larkin Farm Rural Activity Centre

Some of our Year 8 pupils enjoyed an exciting opportunity, gaining first hand experience of caring and working with animals, on our visit to Larkin Farm's Rural Activity Centre.



Pupils experienced life on the Farm, meeting the animals, learning about animal care, clearing stables, feeding the hens, as well as grooming and bringing hay to the Shetland Ponies.



Pupils worked alongside each other, and represented our School very well, with our students being described by staff at Larkin Farm, as "exceptionally polite, interested and fun." Well done to all those pupils who took part and for representing St John's so well.

*Miss T Ficchi. SEND Manager.*

## Old Clothes for Own Clothes – Year 9 Charity Day



Year 9 students organised and supported a charity day where students and staff bought in clothes that they had grown out of instead of making the usual monetary donation to wear their own clothes instead of school uniform.

The students felt that as everyone is feeling 'the pinch' recently, this would be a good way of raising money for the local charity whilst also being sustainable. Three of our students Aidan G, Aaron G and Akashdeep S along with Mr Murray, Head of Year 9, helped deliver the enormous amount of clothing to the Ellenor Charity Shop in Swanscombe plus over £400 in cash that was also collected thanks to the generosity of parents, students and staff.

A competition was run in school for Year 9 students to design a poster to promote the event. The winning poster (left) was created by Xian S.

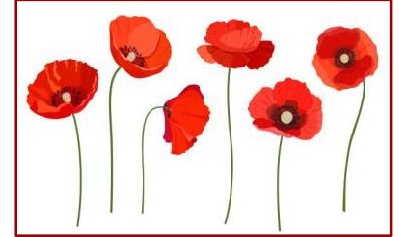
As this event was such a success, Mr Walton has confirmed that this will be an annual event on the school calendar.

*Mrs H Rooke. Year 9 Pastoral Manager.*



## D-Day Remembrance Assembly

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, our school held a D-Day assembly that left a strong impression to all students and staff present, with very positive feedback afterwards from those local dignitaries that attended this most reverential of occasions. The focus wasn't just on the historical events of June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944, but the spirit of remembrance for those who sacrificed so much. The highlight of the assembly were the student speakers.



The assembly was further enriched by the presence of esteemed guests. The Mayor of Gravesend delivered a powerful address, and we were also blessed with the attendance of local veterans and royal engineers. Once again, the feedback from those in attendance was very positive indeed, which serves as a reminder of the strong bonds between the school and the local community.

The overall message of the assembly was clear: through unity and collaboration, even the most daunting challenges can be overcome. Against all odds, the Allied forces on D-Day stood together, proving the strength that lies in collective action. This message resonated deeply with everyone present, reminding us of the power of working together towards a common goal.

This assembly marks the beginning of a series of assemblies that will continue the work that Mr. Murphy started with his dedication to remembrance.

*Mr S Lam. History Teacher.*

## Canterbury Fieldwork

Year 12 Geography students visited Canterbury City centre in June to conduct fieldwork as part of their A Level course. The students explored the question 'has tourism had a positive impact on Canterbury'. During the day, the students conducted a range of data collection methods such as environmental quality investigations, pedestrian counts, 'clone town survey' and questionnaires of the public and residents.

Thankfully, the weather held up and we enjoyed a dry and sunny day, unlike last year! The students will now use what they have learnt to help them plan their own fieldwork during the summer holidays and complete the subsequent write up for their coursework.

*Mr B Thilthorpe. Head of Geography.*



## Classical Civilisation A Level Taster Session



Next year St John's will be offering Classics A Level! In our taster session this term for new Year 12 students we considered 'What makes a hero?'

We looked at three stories in which a heroic figure battles a beast – and then we ate the corresponding cookie!

Classics is the study of the history, religion and literature of Ancient Greece and Rome. It is fun, you can do anything with it, and the A Level is highly regarded by universities.

*Mrs C Bishop. Co-Head of English.*

## National Gallery Visit



Our Year 7 Transition groups visited the National Gallery in London during June. It was a day for art appreciation, learning context, techniques and linking that to work undertaken in school. It was also a day for experiencing new things and socialising with friends and getting some exercise. In short, something for everybody.

We started the day with an invigorating walk to Gravesend station and then journeyed to London by train. For some of the students, that was a first, but for them all, it was a time to look out the windows, chat to friends and eat! I was so proud that, despite the early raids on their packed lunches, the area occupied by our students lacked the litter that other areas displayed.

In the gallery, we split into groups and scoured the rooms for the most famous paintings we could find. It was a chance to admire the brushwork of some of the masters, see if we could see the 3-D effect of the skull when viewed from an angle, marvel at the ornate frames, admire the architecture of the building and simply to sit on the benches and watch the reactions of others viewing art.

Obviously, no visit is complete without a visit to the shop. Unfortunately, the students soon realised a few economic realities - Central London is very expensive! Another lesson learned.

After a picnic under the watchful eye of Lord Nelson, we then returned back to school. It was great that members of the public took it upon themselves to compliment the students on their behaviour. We know they are well behaved but it's always good to hear that from a neutral's perspective.

All tired, but enriched by the experience, the day came to an end.

*Mr P Coode. Head of Transition.*

## Coming Soon!

Get Ready to download the new Reach More Parents App!

Dear Parents/Carers,

Here at St John's, we are always looking for new ways to improve communications with our parents and carers. In the next school term, we are delighted to be launching Reach More Parents - a new digital communication tool specifically designed for parent and school staff communications.

Reach More Parents allows you to see live updates about your child's education, meaning you will never miss a moment of your child's learning Journey.

You will receive alerts and keep updated with School News, Trips, Learning Activities, Important Announcements, Key Dates and Events, Attendance Information and much more!

Just as soon as we are ready to launch this in the new academic year, we will contact you with further information.



Rear Admiral Steve Dainton (left) with Mr Thackery (right)

We were delighted to learn that one of our former long-serving members of staff, Mr Thackery, who taught at St John's from 1973-2009, recently received the prestigious Lord Lieutenant's Meritorious Service Award in recognition of the excellent work that he has undertaken with the Sea Cadets over many years. Mr Thackery was presented with his award by Rear Admiral Steve Dainton at a lavish ceremony at the Royal Institute of Defence Studies in Belgravia. Congratulations, Mr Thackery, on being recognised for your 'Service to Others' – all at St John's are very proud of you!



Dear Parents/Carers,

Please see below resources that you may find useful:

- The award-winning Health for Teens website is now available to young people in Kent. It has bite-sized information on a range of physical and emotional health topics including healthy eating, body image, managing stress, advice on relationships, puberty and sexual health alongside a directory of local news and services suitable for 11 to 19-year-olds.

Health for Teens has been co-designed with young people and forms part of a suite of websites that support our public health programme for children, young people and families alongside Kent Family. This will replace the Kent Youth Health website.

Your teens can get tips and advice to support them through the exam season and results day.

- Student Health Guide (SHG) is the holistic health and wellbeing resource for teens and young adults aged between 14 and 18 that helps make the good bits better and the hard bits easier.

<https://family.kentcht.nhs.uk/student-health-guide-for-14-18-year-olds/>

- Mind and Body in Kent supports young people aged 13-25 who are self-harming, at risk of self-harming or struggling with their mental wellbeing. We help them to find positive ways to manage difficult thoughts and feelings. They deliver the programme both in educational settings and the community - supporting them with a blend of small group and 1:1 sessions.

Mind and Body in Kent recognise that parents, carers and other people close to a young person, can be concerned about their wellbeing and may have questions, particularly around self-harming behaviours. With this in mind, they wanted to make you aware of the offers available to them, so that you can signpost and share where appropriate:

**Option 1:** About Mind and Body: Information for Parents / Carers (30 Minutes): The aim of this online short session is to introduce them to the Mind and Body Programme. We will provide a programme overview and how we can support their young person on their journey with us. Furthermore, they will have the opportunity to explore other support options available to them via the Mind and Body: Parent Programme. They can access this session here: About Mind and Body Session.

**Option 2:** Information Session (2 Hours): This option is for attendance of a one-off online session - Supporting Young People who Self-Harm: Information for Parents/Carers which they can book by following the link here. The aim of this longer session are to recognise the signs and understand motivations behind self-harming behaviours. During this session we will also explore helpful approaches and coping strategies all within a safe and confidential space.

- The Emotional Wellbeing/Support Team will be facilitating an online workshop for Young People, parents, and carers over the summer holiday.



The workshop will be on **Understanding the Amazing Teenage Brain** and will be taking place on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> August, 5.30-7.30pm.

- **Snapchat Updated Safety Features**

At the end of June, Snapchat updated the app with further safety features, including updates to account blocking functionality and enhanced friending safeguards, such as: -

- Block new friend requests sent from bad actors who were already blocked by the user, but sent from a different account from the same device.
- More frequent reminders about which friends they share their location with on Snap Maps.
- Further pop-up warnings if users add a friend who doesn't share mutual friends or is not a part of their contacts.

- **Kids, Puberty and Tech**

When it comes to children growing up, they face unique risks online, and when sexual exploration and technology mix, this can be particularly difficult for parents. However, those conversations between parents/carers and their children become so important.

Thorn have got some excellent information and conversation starters for parents of children of all ages as well as some virtual flip-cards for parents of children aged 8-12.

- There are also a number of resources on the Kent Resilience Hub that you may find useful:

<https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/supporting-your-child/>

- The Anna Freud website also have resources for parents and carers

<https://www.annafreud.org/resources/family-wellbeing/>

If any



Kent Emotional Wellbeing Teams  
Medway Emotional Support Teams

## Online Workshops

These workshops are aimed at supporting young people and parents/carers of young people in secondary school.

### Understanding Your Amazing Teenage Brain

Tuesday 13th August 5.30-7.30pm

Parents/carers and young people are invited to a workshop **Understanding Your Teenage Brain**. It will help you to understand **your amazing brains and the changes that come with adolescence**. We will also discuss **strategies that you can use to improve communication and understanding between you and to regulate emotions**.

If you would like to join, please **ctrl + click link below or by entering the Meeting ID and Passcode within Teams**:

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 382 499 992 624

Passcode: vFuncM

You do not need an account to join. You will need access to the internet. If you have any questions, please speak with your school. If you require materials in another language or have any other access needs then please email:

[EWTanESTenquiries@nelft.nhs.uk](mailto:EWTanESTenquiries@nelft.nhs.uk)

**We look forward to meeting you!**



[www.nelft.nhs.uk](http://www.nelft.nhs.uk)

parents/carers or other adults would like support with their emotional health KOOH have another platform that is dedicated to adults and supporting them.

*Mrs O Kelham. Senior Assistant Headteacher (Safeguarding & Child Protection).*



## Exam Results 2024

### **THURSDAY 15TH AUGUST 2024 = Yr13 & Yr12**

For results, please enter the school via the main doors and proceed to the HEART SPACE.

- 9.00am to 12.00pm = Yr13 A Levels & L3 BTEC/vocational
- 10.30 am to 12.00pm = Yr12 – A/AS Levels & L3 BTEC/vocational

### **THURSDAY 22nd AUGUST 2024 = Yr11 & Yr10**

For results, please proceed to the SPORTS HALL by walking past the front of school, onto the service yard road, and to enter the Sports Hall via the rear door by the PE Office.

- 9.00am to 11.00pm = Yr11 GCSEs & L2 BTEC/vocational
- 10.30 am to 12.00pm = Yr10 GCSEs & L2 BTEC/vocational
- **Sixth Form Enrolment 9.00am-1pm**

## Chaplain's Corner



At 8 o'clock on Sunday 14th July, I am sure that most of you, as I did, settled in front of your television screens ready to watch the 2024 Euro final. England's time to deliver had arrived!

With anticipation building over the three days following the semi-final, as we witnessed Ollie Watkins creating magic to make Harry Potter gasp in awe. That 90<sup>th</sup> minute goal defeated the Netherlands in battle. However England had not yet won the war!

Around the streets of Gravesend, houses were being draped in their finery of red and white. As the breeze of hope rippled over the St George's flags, we could almost hear them whisper "It's coming home!"

Alas. It was not to be. We will now have to wait another two years for our hopes and dreams to be fulfilled.

*HOPE! – A feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen.*

As a teenager and young adult, I hoped for many unobtainable life goals. I hoped to be an actress. I wanted to marry John Taylor of Duran Duran or Tom Cruise (I wasn't too fussed either way), and for Charlton to reclaim their home at the Valley. The later hope, I am delighted to inform you, was fulfilled; one out of three ain't bad!

As an adult, my hopes are less whimsical, less selfish.

We probably share similar hopes. Hope for good health and happiness for ourselves and our families; rest alongside peace for our hearts and the world. My greatest hope is for a bright, fulfilling future for all our children. For them to live in a world where war belongs to the history books. A world without famine and hunger, where we equally enjoy the fruits of God's creation. A world without injustice and discrimination.

No one can live without hope. If we do not have hope, we are incapable of dreaming and striving for a better future. Not only for ourselves, but for the world.

Our young people are overflowing with hope. I listen with delight to the dreams, ambitions and hopes our young people - your sons and daughters - have for the future. Their compelling cry is for a world of

peace, tolerance, acceptance and love. They feel responsible for the plight of the earth. Our young people yearn for a better future for us all. I am humbled by their compassion and optimism.

December sees the Catholic Church enter into a Jubilee Year of Hope. Pope Francis prays that this year will be a year of forgiveness and reconciliation, in which we are invited to come back into a true relationship with God, with each other and creation. The Holy Father appeals for an end to all wars around the world.

This is where I give you a tiny amount of homework for the summer. I hope (that word again) you manage to rest and refresh your minds, hearts and bodies this summer. During the quiet times, consider your hopes for the future. Extend your hopeful desires past your own lives to our global family. There is much unrest, sadness suffering and hopelessness in the world. Conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East rumble on. Hunger and famine in North Eastern Nigeria, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen. Please do keep all those in need of healing, justice and peace in your prayers.

Please also pray for our young people. Their youth is a time full of hopes and dreams. May their hopes, dreams and ambitions serve God's world where we see change for good, rather than selfishness. You can find Pope Francis' prayer for hope below.

God bless you this summer. May your summer be filled with love, peace, joy and of course hope.

Finally, celebrate your sons and daughters. They are beacons of God's hope for our world.

Susanne Gibbons - Chaplain.

