

Dear Parents, Carers & our whole St John's Community: a very warm welcome to our Easter Newsletter.

As we approach the Easter holidays, let me take a moment to reflect on what has been a truly special term in the life of our school. Each day, I am reminded of the joy, energy, and compassion that our students bring into our school community, and this term has been no exception. I am immensely proud of every single one of them.

One of the most inspiring aspects of this term has been the generosity shown through our charitable works; especially fitting as we are in the season of Lent. Our Colour Run was a wonderful example of how our school family comes together in such vibrant unity—raising an incredible £2,800 for the Elliott Holmes Memorial Fund; demonstrating our complete commitment to 'Service to Others' in the process. Thank you to every student, parent, and member of staff who helped make it such a memorable event.

We also celebrated the rich tapestry of cultures that make our school such a special and inclusive place through our St John's Cultural Day. The pride with which students shared their heritage, traditions, and stories was truly moving. It was a day that beautifully reflected our commitment to tolerance, understanding, respect, and the belief that every person is made in the image and likeness of God. Students and staff absolutely loved the occasion and are already making plans for next year's Cultural Day!

Another highlight of the term was our Catholic Schools Inspection, in which we received an outstanding report. The inspectors captured the heart of our school's mission with comments such as:

- ✚ "The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school is Outstanding."
- ✚ "It's a wonderful school where dedicated teachers work tirelessly to help our children flourish in every aspect of their faith and learning."
- ✚ "Christ is at the heart of this community."

These words affirm what we already know—that our school is a place where faith is lived, learning is cherished, and every child is valued. I am deeply grateful to our staff, students, and families for the part each of you plays in making our St John's community so exceptional. I would encourage you all to visit our website: [www.stjohnscs.com](http://www.stjohnscs.com) in order to access the whole report; it makes wonderful reading.

I would also like to extend my warmest congratulations to all the students whose achievements are featured in this newsletter. Whether academic, artistic, sporting, or acts of kindness and leadership, your accomplishments truly enrich our school and inspire others.

As we now turn our hearts toward Easter, the most joyful season of our Christian faith, I pray that each of you finds time for rest, renewal, and celebration. May the risen Christ fill your homes with peace, hope, and happiness.

Wishing you all a very happy and holy Easter.

Matt Barron - Headteacher

## Colour Run 2026



Congratulations and thank you to all those students (and staff!) who participated in last Friday's Colour Run, particularly those that obtained sponsorship for the event. It was a really joyous afternoon and a wonderful occasion for our school community.

The students raised an amazing £2800 which will be donated to the Elliott Holmes Memorial Fund; a wonderful local charity that supports vulnerable secondary school children in the Gravesham area who are experiencing challenges with their mental health.

Well done and thank you once again to everyone involved. STJ

## Gymnastics Achievements at National Finals

Across Friday 6<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2026, our St John's Gymnastics Squad travelled to Fenton Manor Leisure Centre in Stoke-on-Trent to represent the school and the South East Region at the National Finals of the Milano Team Trio competition.

Despite it being their first experience of a National competition for many of the gymnasts, our pupils performed exceptionally well, and achieved some excellent results, including:

Under 13 Mixed – Ella, Ayla, Teyte – 4<sup>th</sup> place and regional 2<sup>nd</sup> place

Ella also achieved the highest vault score among all Under 13 mixed team competitors from 12 different schools – well done Ella!

Under 16 Mixed – Eva, Emily, Camden - 7<sup>th</sup> place and regional 2<sup>nd</sup> place

Under 19 Mixed – Imogen, Jenelle, Bruno – 5<sup>th</sup> place and regional 1<sup>st</sup> place

Under 19 Boys – Beau, Blake, George – 3<sup>rd</sup> place and regional 1<sup>st</sup> place

A huge congratulations to all involved. Good luck to the Under 19 Mixed team that will be travelling to Stoke-on-Trent on the weekend of the May Bank Holiday to represent the school and the South East again at the National Finals of the Floor and Vault competition.

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



## Year 10 Tennis Girls



**CONGRATULATIONS** to our Year 10 tennis girls, who were victorious at Saturday's Kent LTA Awards in Gillingham, resulting in St John's being crowned 'Kent Tennis School of the Year 2025!!!'

Five of the girls, Hallie, Evie, Amaya, Kelsey and Alysha, were selected to represent the school at Saturday's LTA Awards Ceremony, out of the 27 who were involved in this project.

They participated in a demonstration of cardio tennis, alongside the other 2 schools who were shortlisted, and then were invited up to the stage to receive the award on behalf of the school and say a few words; a very proud moment for everyone involved.

*Miss H. Thomson. Physical Education Teacher.*

## St John's Careers Fayre 2026

What a fantastic event our Careers Fayre was on the 29th January! An absolute pleasure to host so many companies and educators who allowed all students across Years 7-13 the opportunity to meet with professionals and explore possible future pathways.

Our Sports Hall was a constant buzz of activity and positivity and, across the last few days we've already had so many students feedback to us about the various roles they learnt about and the future plans they are hoping to pursue. Even our younger students have learnt a little about what universities are and about new roles they were unaware of. The older students have been able to explore possible post-18 pathways and develop their knowledge of requirements and entry processes.

Well done to everyone who engaged so well and asked such fantastic questions, and for your politeness and respect throughout the day. And a very big 'thank you' to the various individuals, companies and institutions who kindly gave up their time to support us on the day.

*Mr T. Self. Careers Leader.*



## Hastings Fieldwork

All Year 11 Geography GCSE students attended a day of fieldwork on Hasting's coastline this term. Students were able to apply their learning of coastal erosion and transportation to the environment to investigate whether or not Hasting's coastline was impacted by longshore drift.

During the day, student's collected data on beach height and width, as well as conducting a wave count and completing a field sketch of the area. Student's will use this experience, and the data they collected, to answer questions in their Paper 3 examination in June. Despite weather across the 3 days being mixed, we managed to avoid the rain and all remained dry, except for a couple of students whose feet got a little soggy after a rather large wave hit the beach!



*Mr B. Thilthorpe. Head of Geography.*

## English Theatre Trips.



This term, students in Years 9 and 10 had the fantastic opportunity to visit The Woodville Halls to watch live performances of Macbeth and Jekyll and Hyde. These trips provided valuable enrichment as both productions are key GCSE texts, allowing pupils to see the characters, themes and dramatic techniques brought to life on stage. Experiencing the plays in performance deepened their understanding and will support their analytical work back in the classroom.

Our students represented the school brilliantly throughout both visits. Their engagement with the productions, enthusiasm for the subject, and excellent behaviour were praised by staff and venue staff alike. It was wonderful to see so many pupils inspired by live theatre, and we look forward to offering more opportunities like this in the future.

*Miss L. Harwood. (2<sup>nd</sup> i/c of English).*

## St John's Cultural Day



Cultural Day was a wonderful celebration of the diversity and inclusivity across our school, and it was hugely appreciated by our students. It was lovely to see so many students showcasing their own nationality or culture with such pride in front of their peers, whilst also being so respectful and celebratory of other students' nationalities and cultures. It was also fantastic to see students embracing the different activities they were afforded throughout the day both inside and outside of lessons.



## John Downton Exhibition

Finn stands proudly in front of his artwork at the private viewing of the John Downton exhibition at County Hall, Maidstone. Congratulations Finn!

## Tate Modern Visit

This photo is of A level Art and Photography students enjoying themselves after visiting the Tate Modern and the South Kensington museums on the 5<sup>th</sup> March. It was their last school trip and the sun shone brightly. They will be very much missed and the art loft will not be the same



without them!

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



## Spring Chicks

Once again this year the science department took delivery of eggs to hatch. We had 9 chicks successfully hatch.

Students thoroughly enjoyed getting up close to the chicks, and assisting with the care of the chickens as they grew. It is amazing how fast they grow and by the time they were collected to return to their happy free range farm they were all big and strong.



*Mrs H Miller. Laboratory Technician.*

## Peaky Blinders

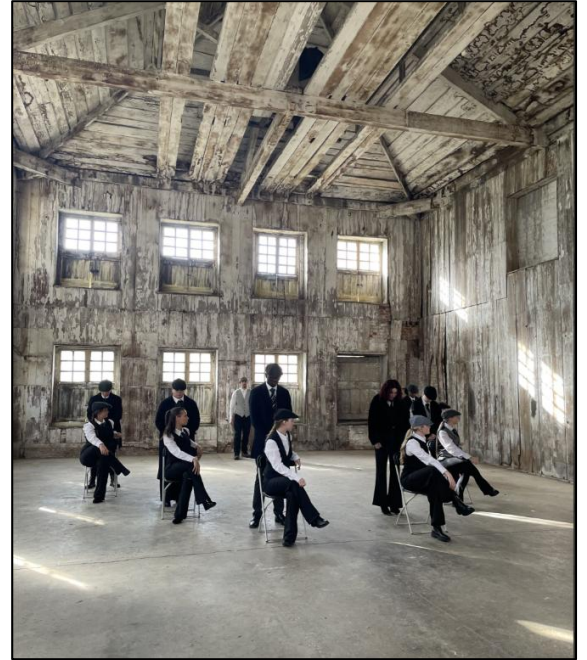
Our Year 12 and 13 Drama and Dance students stepped into the gritty world of *Peaky Blinders* as they filmed their physical theatre project *Razor's Edge* on location at Chatham Dockside with a professional videographer.

The historic dockyard became the perfect atmospheric backdrop for their stylised movement sequences, inspired by the show's raw energy, industrial aesthetic, and sharply defined characters. Students worked collaboratively to bring their choreography and devised scenes to life, experimenting with camera framing, dynamic group work, and the physical storytelling techniques they've been developing throughout their lessons.

Filming with a professional gave them a unique insight into screen performance, directing for camera, and how physical theatre translates beyond the stage. The experience was both challenging and exhilarating, and the students rose to it with creativity and focus.

We are extremely proud of the final edit, which can be seen on our school's website.

*Mrs C. Comiskey. Drama Teacher.*



## Faith in Action at St John's - Chaplaincy. Lent 2026



The Holy Spirit is alive and active at St John's. We have enjoyed many events and trips allowing students to transform their faith in action, and in the midst of that grow closer to God.

Although, not directly connected to faith, Year 12 and 13 pupils enjoyed a trip to The Royal Opera House. Pupils joined other schools from London and the Southeast for a unique performance of Puccini's *Turandot*.

Lent has been a particularly busy time. Pupils and staff are encouraged to spend time in quiet

and stillness to allow Jesus to speak to their hearts.

The Wednesday Word, using the Hallow App has proven to be a real hit. Staff and pupils are invited to steal themselves away from the pressures of the week to recentre and refocus their hearts and minds. I hope that more staff and pupils take advantage of this much needed peace in the future.



The school continues to strengthen our links with the St Vincent de Paul Society. We are delighted to see our pupils included in the national SVP Lenten resources.

The Lent Talking Table has proved to be a success too. This is an area provided for pupils every Friday in Lent to socialise, meet new people and be creative. Visitors to the Talking Table made bunting for Easter, St Brigid's crosses and decorated eggs, a Polish Easter tradition.



### Year 8 Retreat.

Year 8 pupils, pilgrims for the day, immersed themselves in the history of Canterbury Cathedral. Following lunch, we all thought about the world we would like to live in by creating a brand-new country. Pupils, inspired by Catholic Social Teaching explored the need for justice, tolerance and peace in our world.

### Year 9 The CAFOD Big Lent Walk

Following on from the Year 8 retreat, Year 9 pupils walked 8 miles to raise money for our Global Family in need. The weather was beautiful. Thankfully no rain or blisters! Pupils raised £150 for CAFOD; well done to everyone involved!

Susanne Gibbons – Chaplain.



over

## Year 7 & 8 Easter Drama



Our Year 7 and 8 Drama Club, of Izzy, Carlyle, Ava, Isla, Eva, Harry, Carmel, Lily, had audiences smiling from start to finish with their vibrant performance of *The Great Easter Egg Hunt*, presented especially for an invited Year 7 onlookers. The performance was bursting with energy, laughter and plenty of Easter spirit, as the cast worked together to bring the story to life on stage.

The pupils showed great confidence and creativity, using expressive characterisation, clear storytelling and excellent teamwork throughout. From comic moments to exciting plot twists, the audience was thoroughly entertained and supported their peers with plenty of laughter and applause.

A huge well done to everyone involved — a truly egg-cellent performance that left us all in the Easter mood!

*Mrs C. Comiskey. Drama Teacher.*

## Safeguarding

Please see below some useful resources from the Kent Emotional Wellbeing Team magazine. If you would like any further information, please visit the website or their facebook page:

🌐 Visit us: [KentResilienceHub.org.uk](https://KentResilienceHub.org.uk)

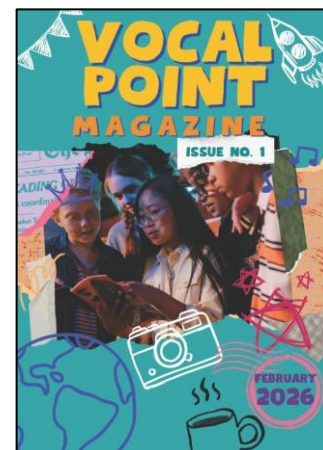
📱 Follow us on Facebook: Kent Resilience Hub for Schools

### Vocal point

Not on Mute is a Kent Youth Voice group for home-educated young people 11-18 years old, running online sessions fortnightly with in-person activities each term.

The group have been designing and writing a new magazine 'Vocal Point' for young people, with content contributions from the wider KYV groups too.

'Vocal Point' is about sharing experience, celebrating uniqueness, and showcasing some of the things they are passionate about. We hope you'll find the magazine a little community highlighting the incredible things we can achieve, together.



## Kent Youth Mental Health Forum



Are you aged 11–17 and passionate about mental health? Do you want to make a difference, meet new people, and be part of something impactful? The Kent Youth Mental Health Forum is your space to speak up, get creative, and help improve mental health services for young people across Kent.

What we do:

- Run monthly sessions (online or in-person).
- Explore topics like self-harm and coping strategies
- Create videos, develop projects and share feedback with professionals.
- Work with organisations like different mental health services and Kent County Council.

Why join?

- Shape real change in mental health services.
- Build confidence and leadership skills.
- Make friends and have fun.

Sign up using the following form link: <https://forms.office.com/e/She2DXmXME>

## Kent Family Hub



Family Hubs are offering the Togetherness Programme - Understanding Your Child: Toddler to Teenager, giving parents confidence to deal with challenges to support their children with issues from sleep to friendships to big emotions.

To book onto one of these courses, please visit

[https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub/activities-courses-and-groups-near-](https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub/activities-courses-and-groups-near-you/courses-available-in-family-hubs/understanding-your-child-from-toddler-to-teenager)

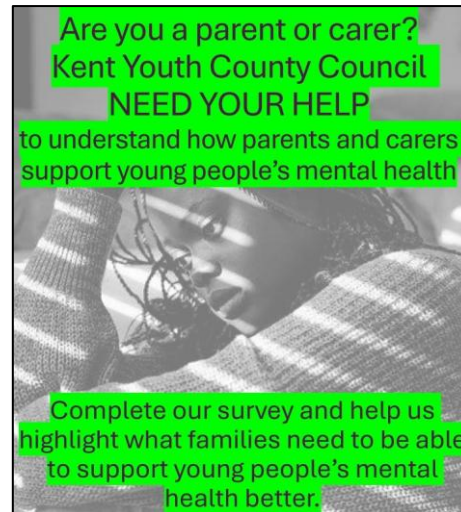
[you/courses-available-in-family-hubs/understanding-your-child-from-toddler-to-teenager](https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub/activities-courses-and-groups-near-you/courses-available-in-family-hubs/understanding-your-child-from-toddler-to-teenager)

Kent Family Hub are also offering 2-hour workshops to parents who would like to reduce the impact their conflict has on their children. These are run in Family Hubs across the county.

To book please visit <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub/mental-health-and-family-relationships/reducing-arguments-and-conflict-between-parents/strengthening-family-relationships>



## KYCC Mental health survey for young people and parents and carers



### Your voice matters!

Recently a report from Young Minds showed that only 38% of young people feel comfortable talking to parents/carers about mental health; meanwhile 35% parents worry they'll make things worse by talking about it.

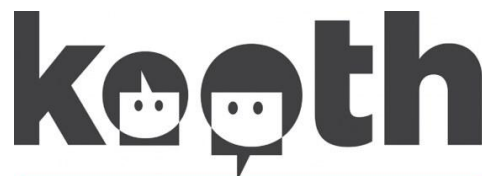
We created two surveys to find out if these statistics hold true in Kent by testing if parents and young people feel comfortable discussing mental health with each other. We hope to use this data to better target support for children and young people and demand better resources to help and encourage parents to start these difficult conversations with their children.

### Kooth

Kooth is pleased to invite you to the April programme of free webinars for professionals. All of which are free to attend:

How Kooth & Qwell support SEND/ ASN and neurodiverse people.

Join Kooth for a free 45 minute webinar to hear from one of our community engagement team, alongside a clinician from Kooth.



They will offer expert tips on:

- The impact of SEND/ASN and neurodivergence on young people and adults
- How you can support their mental wellbeing
- Why Kooth & Qwell are uniquely placed to provide support for the neurodivergent community.

## Take off

### FAMILY SUPPORT AT

We are here to help you understand each other better, improve communication or help to resolve difficulties and 'stuck-ness'.

We offer a safe, respectful, and collaborative space for everyone. With no set-number of sessions, give us a call if you want to meet, with no obligation to continue.

We provide a space for your family to express and explore your feelings in a safe and non-judgemental environment, please get in touch if you would like to meet.

Welcoming:



of any generational combination and including separated couples, blended families and children in care.



### MORE ABOUT THE SESSIONS

#### Sessions are a space to:

- ✓ Talk together about what feels difficult
- ✓ Hear each other safely and respectfully
- ✓ Explore new ways forward

#### We can work with:

- ✓ Children and adolescents
- ✓ Adults
- ✓ Older adults

#### Presenting difficulties may include (but are not limited to):

- ✓ Arguments or communication difficulties
- ✓ Parenting challenges
- ✓ Family transitions
- ✓ Adjustment to life changes (separation, illness, bereavement)
- ✓ Anxiety
- ✓ School avoidance
- ✓ Mild to moderate emotional or behavioural difficulties

#### We are not able to see you if you:

- Are at risk of harm and are waiting for or already getting help from social services.
- Are experiencing abuse or in a controlling relationship.
- Are experiencing severe mental health crisis requiring specialist support including waiting for or working with Child and Adolescent, or Adult Mental Health Services.
- Have experienced complex trauma and it is affecting your emotional well-being or daily life.

SESSIONS ARE IN  
CANTERBURY  
BUT WELCOME  
ANYONE FROM  
EAST KENT



If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact with Ellie at

07486 448 260  
or scan the QR code:



Please see below for some resources for online use:

#### For Parents - YouTube Kids

One of the biggest frustrations I hear from parents of younger children is that the content on YouTube Kids is too childish or the content isn't what their children want to watch. The end result is that only a tiny minority of young children use YouTube Kids, with the majority on the main YouTube site.

A feature that has been within YouTube Kids for years, but so very few parents know about, is called 'Parent Allowlisting'. This does a number of things, but one of the most important and useful is that parents can keep their younger children within the safer environment of the Kids app, and parents can approve individual videos from the main YouTube service to that particular child's YouTube Kids account. This keeps younger children away from the dreaded recommender algorithms and allows parents to moderate what their children can or cannot see.



## **New YouTube Feature**

One of the most common concerns from parents when it comes to YouTube is the lack of parental management features, in other words the videos their children can and should not see. Many parents I speak to don't know that there are features within both the main YouTube app and the YouTube Kids app. As such I have shared these features in this newsletter a few times in the past.

But Google have now released another feature, specifically this allows a parent to set up a Supervised Experience account on the parents device. This is important because many younger children will watch YouTube videos on their parents device, where it is likely there are no restrictions in place. So this new feature is a welcome addition.

## **What is Monetisation**

Monetisation is how content creators earn money through social media and video-sharing platforms, with some creators using dishonest practices to receive more activity on their posts.

## **Starting the Conversation**

The Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI) have produced a great new, simple guide aimed at helping parents start those conversations which can be very difficult. This is specifically for young people rather than teenagers as it covers online dating safety, digital consent and boundaries.

Link: <https://fosi.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Starting-the-Conversation-Digital-Safety-in-Young-Peoples-Relationships.pdf>


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

## **Chaplain's Corner**

### **A Time for New Beginnings**

Holy Week and Easter is my favourite time in the Liturgical Year. Being part of a theatre group, I love the sheer drama of it all. The twists, turns, highs, lows, moments of goodness and betrayal, and the very best and worst of human nature. For any EastEnders fans, there are plenty of “doof doof” moments in this week's Gospel readings!

Yet, like any great story, after the tension and heartbreak of Good Friday, we are given a beautiful ending, one filled with hope and light.



In the Easter Sunday Gospel (John 20:1–9), we begin in darkness. Mary of Magdalene goes to the tomb “while it was still dark.” It’s a place we recognise, in times of confusion, worry, or sadness, when life doesn’t quite make sense.

And yet, everything changes. The empty tomb is not the ending, it’s the beginning.

Easter reminds us that no darkness is final. The Risen Christ brings light into our lives, not just in big, dramatic ways, but in our everyday struggles, doubts, and chances to start again. Peter and the beloved disciple, our own St John, run to the tomb unsure of what they will find, but already something new is beginning. HOPE!

That is the gift of Easter. The chance to begin again.

And we all need that. Whether it’s after a mistake, a difficult time, or simply the feeling that we could do better. Easter tells us that new life is always possible.

But we cannot ignore the reality of our world. As we celebrate Easter joy, there are still places overshadowed by conflict, including Ukraine and Iran. Too often, our world is marked by division and anger, rather than peace and understanding.

This is where Easter becomes not just comforting, but challenging.

Christ rises not as a ruler of power, but as the Servant King. Leading through love, forgiveness, and self-giving. His victory is not about winning, but about restoring.

Imagine if that example shaped our world more deeply.

Easter invites us to be part of that change.

In our school community, this might be seen in simple acts. Choosing kindness, offering forgiveness, and bringing light into someone else’s day. These small moments matter. They are signs of Resurrection in action.

So, this Easter, may we remember: the stone is rolled away, the tomb is empty, and a new beginning is always possible.

Christ is risen, bringing light to our world, and to each one of us.

Alleluia!

I would like to set us all a challenge.

This Easter, ask yourself, where can I bring light, hope, or kindness into someone’s life today?

I hope you all enjoy a happy and Holy Easter. May the light of Christ shine upon us all.

God Bless.

Susanne Gibbons – Chaplain