

NEWSLETTER

COMPASSION – ASPIRATION – RESPECT – EXCELLENCE – DETERMINATION – FAITHFULNESS – OPTIMISM – RECONCILIATION

FROM THE HEADTEACHER



Friday 5th
December 2025

Dear Readers,

Thank you for joining us for the latest edition of our Newsletter. Welcome to the season of Advent, the period of spiritual preparation for the joy of the Christmas period. This week, I asked all members of our school community to look forward in hope for Christmas and the joy it brings.

On the theme of joy, we are delighted to report that Miss Stobbs and Mr Weightman are celebrating the birth of their baby boy Ezra. We could not be happier for them, and we wish them all the very best as they embark on the next adventure of their lives – a world of sleepless nights and nappy-changing, but also, a world of joy and happiness too.

On Thursday evening, we were joined by last year's Year 11 students and their families for our annual GCSE Certificate Evening. It was a wonderful evening, and it was so lovely to be joined by so many students and their families for their 'moment' to celebrate their successes last year. It was also wonderful to have been joined by Dominic Penna, a former student, who is now the Senior Political Correspondent for The Telegraph. He spoke beautifully about the things he has taken from our school, his memories and the lessons he learned that prepared him for the rest of his life. From the school's point of view, we are so proud to see the man he has flourished into and to hear about the impact of our school in his life.

More next week... Garde ta Foi! Guard your Faith!

Mr S Brogan, Headteacher

Important Dates:

- Last day of term –
Friday 19th December
2025 – closing at
1.30pm
- Christmas break -
Monday 22nd
December 2025 –
Friday 2nd January 2026

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Telephone:
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Nut Allergies:

We have several students within school who have severe nut allergies. We aim to be a nut free school and kindly remind parents/carers and students that nuts and food containing nuts must not be brought into school.



Respectful Communication Reminder:

We kindly remind all parents and carers of the importance of treating our staff with courtesy and respect, be that on the phone or in person. Our team is dedicated to supporting the learning, wellbeing and safety of every single student, and positive, respectful communication helps us work together effectively.

Last Day of Term – Friday 19 December 2025:

School will be closing at 1.30pm on Friday 19 December 2025, lunch will be early on this day. The school buses will be collecting students at 1.30pm, apart from the No.11 bus which will not be running that day, apologies for any inconvenience caused.

No. 11 Bus – Monday 15 – Friday 19 December 2025 & Monday 5 January 2026:

As Kirk Hallam Community Academy is closed Monday 5 – Friday 19 December 2025 and Monday 5 January 2026, the No. 11 bus will not be running during that time, therefore, students will need alternative transport during that time. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.

BUS SERVICE UPDATE



Headlice:

We have been informed of a case of headlice in school, we ask that parents/carers check their child's hair regularly and treat accordingly.

Lost Property:

Please be aware we have a lot of lost property in our medical bay. If you recognise anything in the photo, please send students to come And collect before Friday 12th December (please ignore the sign on the table). Any items not collected will be given to charity.



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Message from Derbyshire Alert – Advice regarding WhatsApp and group settings:

We are aware of warnings circulating online regarding groups on WhatsApp encouraging users to add everyone they know to the group. These groups often contain explicit and harmful material.

Unfortunately, the default setting in WhatsApp allows anyone to add a number to a group chat, *without* needing permission. We advise disabling this option, here's how:

Open WhatsApp and follow these steps :

Go to Settings

- > Privacy
- > Groups
- > Under 'who can add me to groups', select 'My contacts'

Although the minimum age for WhatsApp is set at 13+, we are aware that many children under 13 use WhatsApp. We advise parents/carers whose children use WhatsApp to check the settings on the app so that they cannot be added to groups by unknown third parties. We also advise Parents/carers to talk to their children and advise them not to view the chat if they have been added to the group and to block, delete and report the group to WhatsApp via the platform reporting tool.

When talking to young people about online risk and challenges, it is best not to mention the names of groups or challenges, as it can prompt interest, encouraging the young person to seek out these groups and challenges.

It's also important that children understand that they should not be sharing or passing on information such as mobile phone numbers, email addresses, home addresses of others and the safety implications in relation to doing this.

Attached is some further great advice from our friends at [Wake Up Wednesday](#) (please see the next page)

***** Parents, members of the public and schools are always welcome to reach out to cyber@derbyshire.police.uk regarding online safety, questions about warnings they have seen, and for any advice about cyber safety and fraud. *****

SAINT JOHN HOUGHTON CATHOLIC ACADEMY

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At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to have an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many apps which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about WHATSAPP

With more than two billion active users exchanging texts, photos, videos and documents, as well as making voice and video calls, WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service. Its end-to-end encryption only allows messages to be viewed by the sender and any recipients - not even WhatsApp itself can read them. This privacy issue has been in the spotlight recently, as the UK's Online Safety Bill proposes to end such encryption on private messaging. WhatsApp is unwilling to do so and has reportedly considered withdrawing its service in the UK should this legislation go ahead.

AGE RESTRICTION
16+
In UK and Europe, rest of the world 13+

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

EVOLVING SCAMS

WhatsApp's popularity makes it a lucrative hunting ground for scammers. Recent examples include posing as the target's child, requesting a money transfer because of a spurious 'emergency'. Plus a scam where fraudsters trigger a verification message by attempting to log in to your account, then (posing as WhatsApp) call or text to ask you to repeat the code back to them, giving them access.

CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

To start a chat, someone only needs the mobile number of the WhatsApp user that they want to message. If your child has ever given their number out to someone they don't know, that person could then contact them via WhatsApp. It's also possible that your child might be added to a group chat (by one of their friends, for example) containing other people that they don't know.

FAKE NEWS

WhatsApp's connectivity and ease of use allows news to be shared rapidly - whether it's true or not. To combat the spread of misinformation, messages forwarded more than five times on the app now display a 'Forwarded many times' label and a double arrow icon. This makes users aware that the message they've just received is far from an original - and might not be entirely factual, either.

'VIEW ONCE' CONTENT

The facility to send images or messages that can only be viewed once has led to some WhatsApp users sharing inappropriate images or abusive texts, knowing that the recipient can't re-open them later to use as evidence of misconduct. People used to be able to screenshot this 'disappearing' content - but a recently added WhatsApp feature now blocks this, citing increased privacy.

CHAT LOCK

Another new option allows users to store certain messages or photos in a separate 'locked chat' folder, saved behind a passcode, fingerprint or face ID authentication. The risk here is that this function creates the potential for young people to hide conversations and content that they suspect their parents wouldn't approve of (such as age-inappropriate material).

VISIBLE LOCATION

WhatsApp's 'live location' feature lets users share their current whereabouts, which can be helpful for friends meeting up or parents checking that their child's safety on the way home, for example. However, anyone in your child's contacts list or in a mutual group chat can also track their location - potentially letting strangers identify a child's home address or journeys that they make regularly.

Advice for Parents & Carers ...TYPING...

EMPHASISE CAUTION

Encourage your child to treat unexpected messages with caution: get them to consider, for example, whether the message sounds like something a friend or relative would really send them. Make sure they know never to share personal details over WhatsApp, and to be wary of clicking on any links in messages. Setting up two-step verification adds a further layer of protection to their WhatsApp account.

THINKING BEFORE SHARING

Help your child to understand why it's important to stop and think before posting or forwarding something on WhatsApp. It's easy - and all too common - for content to then be shared more widely (even publicly on social media). Encourage your child to consider how an ill-judged message might damage their reputation or upset a friend who sent something to them in confidence.

ADJUST THE SETTINGS

It's wise to change your child's WhatsApp settings (go to 'Privacy', then 'Groups') to specify which of their contacts can add them to group chats. That's not needing approval; you can give permission to 'My Contacts' or 'My Contacts Except...'. Additionally, if your child needs to use 'live location', emphasise that they should enable this function for only as long as they need - and then turn it off.

CHAT ABOUT PRIVACY

Some parents like to check in with their child about how they're using WhatsApp, explaining that it will help to keep them safe. If you spot a 'locked chat' folder, you might want to talk about the sort of chats that are in there, who they're with and why your child wants to keep them hidden. Also, if your child has sent any 'view once' content, you could discuss their reasons for using this feature.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various residential papers and content and research for the Australian government on engaging internet use and writing textbooks for young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

...HEY OSCAR...

NOS National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday

Sources: <https://blog.whatsapp.com/on-open-letter> | <https://faq.whatsapp.com/107798839562332> | https://faq.whatsapp.com/360098988345?hgid=the_privacy
<https://www.whatsapp.com/security> | <https://blog.whatsapp.com/chat-lock-making-your-most-secure-conversations-even-more-private>
<https://www.ons.com/learn/whatsapp-scams>

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Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 20.09.2023

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A New Look for The Wellbeing Ambassadors:

The Wellbeing Ambassadors are now recognisable around school by their lovely, new, bright yellow lanyards! Students are encouraged to approach the wellbeing ambassadors if they are struggling with their wellbeing in school and need some friendly advice and support.



Attendance Matters:

As we head into the Christmas build-up, excitement is definitely growing around school — from festive activities to end-of-term celebrations. It's a lovely time of year, but it's also important to remember that regular attendance still matters. These final weeks are full of valuable learning, routines, and opportunities that help children finish the term feeling confident and prepared for January.



Quote of the Week

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started." — Mark Twain

Wellbeing Tip

With the busy festive season approaching, try building a simple evening routine at home — a calm wind-down, a consistent bedtime, and a bit of preparation for the next day. It helps children feel settled, reduces morning stress, and supports good attendance right up to the end of term. If you need any support with attendance, please get in touch — we're always here to help attendance@sjh.srscmat.co.uk

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Attendance is vital for academic success, fostering strong social skills, building crucial life skills like responsibility and punctuality, and preparing individuals for better future opportunities in higher education and employment:

At SJH, pupils must arrive in school by **8:45 am** each school day. Coming late is disruptive to the pupil who is late, and other students in the school. For some pupils, this can cause embarrassment and anxiety.



Registration takes place at 08:45am, and is kept open until 9:10am.
The second session is taken at **2:15 pm**.



Leave of absence is only granted by the headteacher in certain circumstances.

TERM TIME ABSENCES:

Circumstances allowed:

- Taking part in a regulated performance
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- Visit to a prospective new school/college
- Bereavement
- Religious observance

Not Considered "Exceptional circumstances":

- Family holidays if families are unable to afford in school time
- To visit family abroad
- To spend time with family visiting from abroad
- Parents/carers unable to get time off work during school holidays
- Family traditions of holidays at a certain time of year
- Going away for birthdays, including the students birthday
- Flight delays unless evidence supplied
- Illness after a school holiday or trip

ILLNESS:

Unauthorised attendance:

All absences will be marked as unauthorised on day 4 and onwards unless medical advice is sought/given. Arriving after the register has closed will affect students attendance. Medical appointments without evidence are also unauthorised.

Reasons that will be unauthorised:

- | | |
|---|---|
| - Period pains / cramps unless under medical care with evidence | - Missed bus |
| - Common colds | - Family or own birthdays |
| - Headaches unless under medical care with evidence | - "Unwell" - you must give an explanation |
| - Headlice | - Oversleeping |
| | - Parent too unwell / unable to bring student to school |

Please try and make medical appointments out of school time, and daily contact is required for absences if more than 1 day is required.

If your child has diarrhoea and/or vomiting they must not attend until they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours (the '48 hour rule') and feel well.

If no contact is made, absences will be marked as unauthorised.

Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

PLEASE BE AWARE: due to the advice of the local authority we have to send a letter to each person with parental responsibility regarding attendance, and not a joint letter.

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NEWSLETTER

CHAPLAINCY

**Friends of Saint John Houghton Catholic
Academy**

"Be still and know that I am God."

Psalm 46:10

We would love for you to join us for coffee and
conversation on:

~~Date: 19.09.25 Time: 11.30am-12.30pm~~

~~Date: 21.11.25 Time: 11.30am-12.30pm~~

Date: 18.12.25 Time: 11.30am-12.30pm

Date: 24.04.26 Time: 11.30am-12.30pm

Date: 25.06.26 Time: 11.30am-12.30pm

This is taking place at **Saint John Houghton
Catholic Academy, Abbot Road, Kirk Hallam,
Ilkeston DE7 4HX**

Contact – schooloffice@sjh.srscmat.co.uk



**St Ralph
Sherwin**
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

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Friends of Saint John Houghton Catholic Academy

"Be still and know that I am God."

Psalm 46:10

Mass in SJH for staff and students.

~~Date: 05.09.25 Yr 7 - 2.15pm~~

~~Date: 25.09.25 All welcome - 8.45am~~

~~Date: 01.10.25 Yr 8 - 9.10am~~

~~Date: 24.10.25 Whole School 8.45am~~

~~Date: 14.11.25 Bereavement, all
welcome - 8.45am~~

Mass in Advent - SJH will join St
Thomas CVA

Date: 09.12.25 Yr 11. Reconciliation

Date: 06.01.26 School Captains to St
Thomas CVA

Date: 27.02.26 Mass in Lent, all
welcome - 8.45am

Date: 18.03.26 Yr 9 - 9.10am

Date: 22.04.26 All welcome - 8.45am

Date: 8.05.26 Yr 11 - 9.10am

Date: 17.06.26 Yr 10 - 9.10am

Blessing

Blessing of the Eco Garden 25.06.26

This is taking place at **Saint John
Houghton Catholic Academy**, Abbot
Road, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston DE7 4HX

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NEWSLETTER

CHAPLAINCY

CAFOD

Catholic Agency for Overseas Development

CAFOD is a whole school Charity.

CAFOD Club meet each Monday lunchtime.

~~4th October 2025 CAFOD National Activity Day – SJH
Chaplain leading.~~

~~10th October 2025 CAFOD Harvest Fast~~

**19th December 2025 CAFOD national Christmas
Video with SJH family**

**23rd January 2026 CAFOD and vocations with
CAFOD raffle**

**27th February 2026 Mass for CAFOD & Family Fast
in SJH**

**7th March 2026 SJH lead the Diocese in The Big Lent
Walk**



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NEWSLETTER

CHAPLAINCY

Saint John Houghton Catholic Academy

“Love means doing what God has commanded...2 John 1:6...and He has commanded us to love one another.

Missio Charity Work

~~—Date: 18.09.25 Collecting small—
—change.~~

~~—Date: 07.10.25 Yr 7 Cake Sale—~~

~~—Date: 28.11.25 Yr 8 Sponsored silence—~~

Date: 16.04.26 Whole School Bake Off

Date: 12.05.26 Yr 9 Rosary for missio

Date: 02.06.26 Yr 10 Sweet sale for missio

This is taking place at **Saint John Houghton Catholic Academy, Abbot Road, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston DE7 4HX**

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USEFUL LINKS

Safeguarding concerns please email safeguarding@sjh.srscmat.co.uk

Homework :

<https://www.stjohnhoughtonilkeston.srscmat.co.uk/curriculum/homework/>

School lunch menus:

<https://www.stjohnhoughtonilkeston.srscmat.co.uk/students/school-meals/>

Free School Meals: Derbyshire -

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/education/schools/your-child-atschool/meals/school-meals/free-school-meals.aspx>

Link to School Calendar:

<https://www.stjohnhoughtonilkeston.srscmat.co.uk/news/calendar>

NEWSLETTER

DATES FOR THE DIARY

2025-2026 School holidays and Inset days:

Christmas holidays	Monday 22 December 2025 – Friday 2 January 2026
February half term	Monday 16 – Friday 20 February 2026
Inset Day (Trust) 4	Monday 23 February 2026
Easter holidays	Monday 30 March – Friday 10 April 2026
May half term	Monday 25 – Friday 29 May 2026
Inset Day 5	Friday 3 July 2026
Last day of term	Thursday 23 July 2026

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DATES FOR THE DIARY

2026-2027 School holidays and Inset Days (3 Inset days to be confirmed):

Inset day 1	Friday 4 September 2026
Inset day 2	Monday 7 September 2026
Years 7 & 11 return to school	Tuesday 8 September 2026
All years return to school	Wednesday 9 September 2026
October half term	Monday 26 - Friday 30 October 2026
Inset day 3	TBC
Christmas holidays	Monday 21 December 2026 – Friday 1 January 2027
February half term	Monday 15 – Friday 19 February 2027
Inset Day 4	TBC
Easter holidays	Friday 26 March – Friday 9 April 2027
May half term	Monday 31 May – Friday 4 June 2027
Inset Day 5	TBC
Last day of term	Monday 26 July 2027