



St Benedict's Newsletter 301

12 September 2025



## Catholic Social Teaching

This week within assemblies our focus returns to one of the most important strands of Catholic Social Teaching: **Dignity**. The Church teaches that every single person is made in the image and likeness of God. This means that each of us, no matter our background, talents, or struggles, has infinite worth. Dignity is not something we earn but are given by God.

This week started with The Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary who reminds us of this truth. Mary's birth is celebrated because through her, God's plan for salvation unfolds. She was an ordinary girl, from a small town, yet chosen for an extraordinary mission. Her life tells us that every person, no matter how small or unnoticed, has dignity and value in God's eyes.

Our assembly prompted us to ask the question: *"Who am I, Lord, that you have created me and chosen me?"* Each of us is unique, gifted with individuality, and called to be celebrated for who we are. In turn, we are invited to celebrate the individuality of others, recognising that our diversity enriches our community.

St John Henry Newman reminds us of this when he wrote:

*“God has created me to do Him some definite service... I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.”*

At St Benedict's, we are called to see ourselves and others as precious links in God's divine chain. Each of us contributes something unique to our community through our words, actions, and presence.

In the words of Pope Francis “Every human person is sacred and inviolable. Respect for every person is the cornerstone of peaceful coexistence.” (*Address, 2014*)

Throughout the week we can live out dignity in simple but powerful ways.

- **Wisdom:** Recognising the God-given worth in each person.
- **Compassion:** Showing kindness to those who may feel overlooked or overwhelmed by the start of term.
- **Resilience:** Standing firm in defending our own dignity and the dignity of others.

Jesus reminds us of the Greatest Commandment:

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”* – Matthew 22:37–39

When we love God, ourselves, and others in this way, we are living out dignity, seeing each person as precious and loved by God.

Let us reflect this week on Mary's birth and her “yes” to God's plan. Her life teaches us that every person has value and a role in God's story. Like Mary, we can ask: “*Who am I, Lord?*” and trust that we are created for a purpose. Can we notice the dignity of others in our classrooms, in the playground, or even at home and affirm it with words of encouragement? Can we also celebrate our own individuality, remembering to treat ourselves with dignity knowing that God created us to be a unique “link in a chain” of His divine mission?

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.”*  
– Jeremiah 1:5

### **Loving God,**

We thank you for the gift of life and for creating each of us in your image.

Help us to follow the example of Mary, who lived with humility and faith.

Teach us to treat others with dignity, to speak with kindness,

and to see your face in everyone we meet.

May our school community grow in wisdom, compassion, and resilience,

as we work together to build a world where every person is valued.

Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## Open Morning



# Open Morning

Saturday 27th September 2025



Find out more about our wonderful school at our Open Morning for prospective Year 7 students.  
10am to 12.30pm on 27th September 2025  
For more information about applying for a Year 7 place for September 2026 please visit our website at: [www.st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk](http://www.st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk)



**St Benedict's  
Catholic School**  
*Developing Wisdom, Compassion and Resilience  
through Prayer and Work*



**St Benedict's Catholic School**  
Developing Wisdom, Compassion and Resilience through Prayer and Work

We know that choosing a secondary school for your child is a big decision. At St Benedict's we believe that our community is distinctive and unique and we have worked hard to ensure that our values are evident in all we do. We are incredibly proud of our school and the young people at St Benedict's. We hope that you will get a clear sense of the school and the distinctiveness of our community both from our materials and through visits to the school. Our school is a high-achieving one, with our curriculum underpinned by Gospel values and by our Catholic ethos in practice. Our vision as a school centres particularly on the Gospel values of Wisdom, Compassion and Resilience and our curriculum reflects these values and principles. As a school community we serve a large geographic area and welcome students and families who are supportive of our distinctive ethos from all backgrounds. As a result, our community serves many students who describe themselves as Catholic, those of other faiths and those with no faith. We are an inclusive school where students of all abilities, talents and cultures are nurtured and supported to achieve their potential. St Benedict's students are polite, conscientious, reflective and supportive of one another. We have many opportunities for student leadership including charity work and service in the local community and our students engage with a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. Our values as a school encourage students to see competition as a mutual challenge where all contribute and we take pride in both personal and collective success. As a school we hold the Gold Award for religious studies and ensure that the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of students is a priority.

We also hold the Gold Artsmark and are a Duke of Edinburgh Award accredited centre and encourage our students to develop their understanding of the world through many extra and super curricular activities.

We are very proud of both the 2025 Ofsted report (June 2025) and our Section 48 Inspection (July 2022) which highlighted that this is a school where young people are happy and flourish and where it is 'OK to be different'. (Ofsted report)

Students leave St Benedict's well-prepared for the life that awaits them beyond school through a well-rounded education that goes beyond the confines of the academic curriculum and examinations. We believe that every one of our students should go out into the world ready to make it a better place.

If you are interested in finding out more or visiting our school, please join us for our Open Morning or get in touch.

*Imogen Senior*  
Mrs Imogen Senior Headteacher

## Careers Update

Form the Future's next Webinar for Parents, Carers and their Young People takes place on Tuesday 23rd September from 5.30-6.30pm. The theme is: **"Insights into... Your Child's Future"** Book your free place at: [All-in-one virtual event platform | Zoom Events](#)

### Is your Year 11 child interested in a career with Horses?

The [British Racing School](#) (BRS) is a centre of excellence within horse racing and has been training young people to excel in the sport from their base in Newmarket, Cambridgeshire for over 40 years. [Here](#) is an overview of the courses and career pathways offered at the BRS for 16–24-year-olds, including **apprenticeship**, **post-16** and **Gap Year** programmes.

### RAF World: Mission Ready Webinar - Wednesday 24th September from 7.30-9.00pm

Discover more about Careers within the RAF through Live Q&As with RAF experts and the opportunity to engage with professionals in 11 Team Specialist Rooms: pilots, engineers, intelligence, logistics, and more.

Book your FREE ticket [here](#)

### Student Experience Opportunities - REMINDERS!

**Aspiring Medical & Dental students in years 10-12 ?Register for FREE LIVE VIRTUAL Get into Conferences:**

**Get Into Medicine:**

- Saturday 20th September: 9am - 1:30pm
- Sunday 21st September: 9am - 1:30pm
- Sunday 28th September: 9am - 1:30pm

**Get Into Dentistry:**

- Saturday 27th September: 9am - 1:30pm

Attendance at the conferences will unlock exclusive opportunities, such as scholarships and prizes, and help students make a highly competitive application going forward. **Students and parents** can **register** using the following links:

**Medicine:** <https://airtable.com/appgXnyzN5ZD9lwk6/shry7MZYtt3MGPjvO>

**Dentistry:** <https://airtable.com/appgXnyzN5ZD9lwk6/shrBuiR7SBAC19kE>

[West Suffolk Health Academy programme](#)

**Saturday 18th October - 8th November 2025**

Students (15-18yrs) interested in exploring careers in Healthcare can apply for the latest Health Academy Programme at West Suffolk Hospital (WSH). Sessions will be held on Saturday 18th and 25th October, and 1st & 8th November 2025 from 9.00am - 12.00pm at the WSH Education Centre. Students will need to attend all 4 sessions to receive a certificate of attendance. Please visit the webpage for the agenda: [Health](#)

**Deadline for [applications](#) is 5th October 2025!**

*Ms Hahn*

## Literary Star

Bury St Edmunds Literature Festival – Creative Writing

Congratulations to Alexis Josy in 10S who has won her category in the Creative Writing Competition run by Bury St Edmunds Literature Festival. Entrants were asked to submit a piece of writing of 800 words or less inspired by the phrase “Getting lost in a book”. The judge and author, Ashley Hickson-Lovence, said of Alexis’s story: “A warm, nostalgic, and beautifully descriptive story that really captures the magic of books as a safe haven. Congratulations!”

As part of the prize, Ashley Hickson-Lovence will be visiting St Benedict's on Tuesday 7th October to deliver an assembly to Years 9 and 10 about his inspirational life from Hackney to PhD. An event which we hope students will find engaging and motivating.

My Second Home by Alexis Josy

I curled up on the broken-down, ancient sofa with the moonlit rays seeping in through my window. The soft hum of the radiator filled the room, a familiar sound that melted into the quiet solitude of the night. With a sigh, I set the mug of hot cocoa on the table, steam curling into the air, where unfortunately I lost some marshmallow soldiers along the way, victim to the dusty carpet. Lying back, I tried to decide what to do that evening. I could go to the club with a couple of my mates and have what they would call a night away on party island and meet a tall, dark stranger who would sweep me off my feet, like my overly optimistic friend Ruth dreamed and gushed about. However, my inner introvert reeled at the thought, and I shuddered physically at all the exhausting concepts I would have to mutter about to a random person who wouldn't understand the word "No."

Then my body caught the comforting yet faint aroma of my books scattered invitingly on my towering bookshelf which took up more space than my kitchen. I stepped up and slowly floated like a ghost towards the bookshelf. I stepped on the creaky floorboards, and it woke me up from my trance. I looked in front of me and immediately my mouth stretched wide in a teary smile as I saw my favorite friends. Oh, the troubles, though what book should I pick? Should I pick, The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe? Or Alice in Wonderland? What about Little Women or another of these literary masterpieces that had a special place in my heart?

I settled on my childhood friend though, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. I hurried back to my sofa and the sofa let out a wheeze of annoyance as I jumped excitedly on the makeshift fort of blankets and endless supplies of biscuits and hot cocoa. I opened the book, and my body relaxed as if I inhaled Slughorn's Felix Felicis and my eager eyes read the small print that held the comfort of a little 7-year-old girl who wanted more friends and was too shy to ask. My eyes blurred when the book came to describing Hogwarts, a place where I used to dream that I lived there and went down to Hagrid's hut with Harry, Ron and Hermione and laughed and teased with them three about all the wicked adventures that we had been on.

Sighing contentedly, I glance around the room where I used to envision my time at Hogwarts and various other worlds. Where my dreams became reality and magic was as real as Earth. My eyes

seem to tire out as they are on the last stretch of the book marathon: a contagious yawn rises in my throat threatening to drag me away from the exciting book. I chuckle as I read the last words of my book "I'm going to have a lot of fun with Dudley this summer..."

I make my fort cozier by cranking up the heating as the cold winter threatened to take this moment of comfort away from me. I feel satisfied, as if I've had the medicine to make it all right again in my imagination. I realize that it was a much needed read and a tall, dark stranger can wait as my childlike reading essence had some fixing to do to the present me. So, waiting for tomorrow I welcomed sleep as I visited my literary home.

## New Starters

We would like to welcome the following new teachers to St Benedict's:

Mr Batten - Teacher of Religious Education

After spending two years in a graduate research role, I decided last year to train with a SCITT to be a secondary school RE teacher in Gateshead. After the course finished, my wife and I (with our now two sons) wanted to move back 'down south' to be closer to our families, and I'm very excited to have begun working here at St Benedict's as an ECT1. I'm currently commuting in from Norwich, but we are in the process of trying to buy a home nearer to Bury so there's less of a commute!



Mr Reynolds - Teacher of Mathematics

I have been a teacher of maths for 28 years and was Assistant Head (Pastoral) and DSL at Culford School for 19 years, having started there as a Housemaster in a boy's boarding house. I am excited to have joined St Benedict's as a part time teacher of maths and know the

school through children of friends and ex-pupils. I enjoyed greatly the production of 'Bugsy' last year, especially the encore which was somewhat entertaining! Away from school I am a keen cyclist, rugby supporter and all-round sports fan. I played rugby for many years, and although my boots are now firmly packed away, a team sport helped develop me and my ethos around teaching and learning, and I have been made to feel very welcome by the team here at St Benedict's.



Mr Stubbs - Head of MFL and Teacher of French and Spanish

I've been teaching French and Spanish up to A Level for many years in East Anglia, Milton Keynes, Surrey and Spain and I've headed up the Modern Languages Department in 4 other secondary schools before coming to St Benedict's. Outside of school, I love reading, singing, cooking, a bit of exercise and I am a member of The Magic Circle...!



## Thank You

On behalf of Dambwamkulu primary school, I write this letter to express our overwhelming gratitude for your incredible generosity in donating a printer and laptop to our rural school. Your donation has breathed new life into our classroom spectrums, empowering our students and teachers with the tools they need to explore, create and thrive in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

The impact of your donation cannot be overstated. For learners who have never had access to technological devices, this gift has opened the floodgates of world possibilities. The donation has further bridged the digital divide, connecting our rural school to the global community and unlocking a bright future for our students.

Your kindness to and commitment to education has not only equipped our school with vital resources but have inspired our learners to dream big

We are deeply grateful for your trust in our school and students. Your investment in their future will have a lasting impact. We promise to make the most of this opportunity.

Thank you for believing in the potential of our students and for being a beacon of hope for our rural community

With heart felt appreciation

*Mumpande Edson*



## Bridge the Gap



The poster features a teal background with a white dashed line at the top. On the left is an illustration of a house, and on the right is an illustration of a school building. Two circular inset photos show a child playing with toys on a mat and a child playing with colorful blocks. The text is centered and includes the title, dates, a description of the service, and contact information.

**BRIDGE THE GAP**

**BRIDGE FAMILY HUB  
AUTUMN TERM  
TUESDAYS  
10:30-12:30**

**9 SEPTEMBER  
23 SEPTEMBER  
7 OCTOBER  
21 OCTOBER  
4 NOVEMBER  
18 NOVEMBER  
2 DECEMBER  
16 DECEMBER**

**Do you have a child who struggles with school attendance?**  
'Bridge the Gap' is a drop-in support space for children and their families who struggle to attend school for whatever reason.

**JOIN with other parents and carers**  
**ENJOY** activities for your child including sensory circuits, creative space, lego station, games and separate sensory space.  
**CONNECT** to gain the support and advice you need to overcome the barriers to accessing school regularly

Bridge Community Church,  
68 Queens Rd, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3EW

Please contact Emma Malcolm  
to book a space or make a referral  
emma@bridgecommunitychurch.co.uk  
07501 408608

**BRIDGE COMMUNITY CHURCH**

**Suffolk family hubs**  
Local help for all families

## Confirmation at St Edmunds

The date for Confirmation this year is Thursday 18th June 2026. If your child is in Y9 or above and you wish to register for this year's confirmation programme, you must attend the information meeting for parents on Thursday 23rd October at 7.30pm in the Crypt (at St Edmunds Church) and email [confirmationatstedmunds@gmail.com](mailto:confirmationatstedmunds@gmail.com) to receive the online registration form.

*Mr D'Mello*

## Bury St Edmunds Youth Concert Band

Do you play a musical instrument from the woodwind, brass or percussion families? Are you looking for an opportunity to improve your skills as a musician?

I am a member of the Bury St Edmunds Youth Concert Band. We rehearse on Wednesday evenings from 7:15 to 8:15pm, at Christ Church, Moreton Hall.

When asked why he set up the band, conductor Rob Head said, "I set up this band to be able to give the youth of West Suffolk and surrounding areas the opportunity to be a part of a music ensemble regardless of their musical ability and to have fun." I feel that this is true, as playing in the band is certainly fun, as well as being relaxing and putting a smile on my face.

Not only that, but it has really improved my ability to play the trumpet, by listening and learning from others, and playing pieces which were more difficult than a musician of my ability would usually be attempting. The band also presents amazing opportunities. Typically, we do three concerts a year: Christmas, Last Night of the Proms in early autumn, and even one in the Theatre Royal in early summer!

For more information, contact the band at [bseconcertband@gmail.com](mailto:bseconcertband@gmail.com).

*Mrs Hamilton*

## Uniform and Punctuality

St Benedict's Catholic School prides itself on having a neat and dignified uniform, representing our identity to the community as a whole. High standards of personal presentation reinforce our values of self-respect and pride for our school and in ourselves.

If a student is unclear whether an item of clothing or appearance is acceptable, they should – in advance – speak with their tutor or Head of Year. All clothing must be clearly marked with the student's name.

Please see the website for full details of the school's uniform policy: [Uniform](#)

Thank you very much for your assistance in helping us to maintain our uniform standards.

Please can we also remind all students that they need to be in school before the first bell at 08:50 to prevent a late mark being recorded. Please see the school website for more information about attendance: [School Day](#)

## Data Collection Sheet Updates

It is important that the information we hold about your child is kept up-to-date.

Please remember that as a parent/guardian/carer, you can check, amend and update most of your child's information on Arbor, including changing your mobile number and address or adding information such as religion, family contacts, medical information and transport method.

If you are struggling to do this please email [Arbor@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:Arbor@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk) where we will be able to help you.

Thanks

*Mrs Defew*

## Reporting Absences

### Reporting your child's absence

If your child is unwell or has an appointment e.g. dentist/doctor could you please leave a message by 9.00am including the reason for the absence via:

Phone: 01284 753512 and Choose option 1:

And then choose option 1 for students in year 7-11 and option 2 for students in the sixth form

OR

Email: [attendance@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk)

For information on what to do if your child has COVID-like symptoms please see the following link for NHS guidance:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

**Just a reminder that if you do not inform us by 9.00am or use the above phone/email address, you will receive an email requesting the reason for your child's absence. All unexplained absences will be marked as unauthorised and there will be a follow-up phone call from the Attendance Officer.** Please note the school operates a first-day response to absences.

If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to be absent from school during term time, you should complete a **leave of absence application form (please see link below)**, at least three weeks in advance, stating the reason why the absence must be taken in term time. Please note that the Fixed Penalty Fine is now £80 per legal guardian for unauthorised absences of 10 sessions (5 days) or more.

<https://www.st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=74&type=pdf>

Thank you very much.

*Mrs Wesley - Attendance Officer*

## Dates for your Diary



15-17 September - Year 11 Residential

16 September - Year 7 Information Evening

18 September - Year 12 Information Evening

22 September - Year 11 Extended Assembly on Post-16 Options with West Suffolk College

24 September - Inter-House Cross Country

27 September - Open Morning

30 September - Year 9 Information Evening

2 October - Year 8 Information Evening

7 October - Year 10 Information Evening

6 - 8 October - Year 12 Residential

10 October - PD Day

21 October - Sixth Form Open Evening

[Term Dates](#)

## Contact Us



St Benedict's Catholic School

Beetons Way

Bury St Edmunds, IP32 6RH

01284 753512

[enquiries@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk)

[www.st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk](http://www.st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk)