



## St Benedict's Newsletter 319

13 February 2026



### Catholic Social Teaching

This week our focus within Catholic Social Teaching has been **Solidarity**. Solidarity reminds us that we are deeply connected to one another, even when we feel distant or different. It calls us to recognise that our lives are linked, and that we are responsible for supporting one another, especially in times of need.

In our assemblies this week, we explored the poem *“Love You More”* by James Carter. The poem draws on a powerful image from nature: the moon, which moves slightly further away from the Earth each year, yet remains held in place by gravity. Despite the growing distance, the connection remains strong. This image became a metaphor for love and solidarity, reminding us that even when people feel far away, disconnected, or alone, the bonds between us can still hold.

We were challenged to think about the distances that can exist between people, emotional, social, or even physical. Sometimes these distances are created by loneliness, misunderstanding, or fear of being vulnerable. Solidarity invites us to reach across that distance, offering support to those who may be struggling, while also having the courage to accept help ourselves when we need it.

St Paul reminds us of this shared responsibility: *“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.”*— Galatians 6:2 Carrying one another’s burdens is an act of love. It reminds us that we do not walk alone, and that giving and receiving support are both signs of strength. At the heart of solidarity is Jesus’ commandment:

*“Love one another as I have loved you.”*

This love is not limited by distance, difference, or difficulty. It is a love that stays connected, just like gravity holding the moon in place. Even when we feel unsure, overwhelmed, or alone, God’s love never moves away from us. It remains constant, faithful, and strong, drawing us back when we feel adrift.

We are invited to live out solidarity in practical ways within our school community:

- **Wisdom:** Recognising when someone may need support and understanding that connection and care are essential for wellbeing.
- **Compassion:** Choosing to reach out to those who may feel lonely or overlooked, and responding with kindness, patience, and empathy.
- **Resilience:** Having the courage to accept support ourselves, trusting that asking for help is not a weakness but part of being connected.

As we move through the week, we can reflect: Who might feel distant or alone, and how can I reach out? Am I willing to accept support when I need it? How can I trust more deeply in the constant presence of God’s love? Like the moon and the Earth, we may drift at times, but we remain connected, to one another and to God, whose love never lets us go.

### **Loving God,**

You created us for relationship and connection.

Help us to reach across distances

with kindness, understanding, and care.

Give us the courage to support others  
and the humility to accept support when we need it.  
Remind us that your love holds us always,  
steady and faithful, even when we feel far away.  
May our school community grow in solidarity,  
reflecting your love in all that we do.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## Careers Update

### **Project Management in Nuclear Energy - Alumni Careers Talk**

On Tuesday 10 February, we welcomed former student, Dan Bourne back to St Benedict's to speak with students about his career path and current graduate role in Project Management with [Mace Consult](#) at [Sizewell C](#) - the *only* giga project in the UK currently worth more than £40bn!

After completing A Levels in Business, Psychology and Sociology at St Benedict's, Dan studied Business at Nottingham Trent University, gaining a first class degree in this subject. He then decided to work part-time and travel, even devoting time to compete in MMA in Thailand! Once back in the UK, Dan entered a competitive selection process to secure his current graduate apprenticeship role with Mace. Since October 2025, Dan has been overseeing the earthworks at the Sizewell C construction site in Leiston, north of Aldeburgh in Suffolk, whilst also studying for a degree level qualification in project management. The latter will support his progression to chartership (recognition of advanced knowledge, experience and excellence) in this field.

Dan introduced us to Mace Consult, their global services and career opportunities with the company. He also explained how important Sizewell C is, not just because it will bring energy to 6 million homes and deliver on the government's zero carbon emissions target for 2050, but because the project will create 70,000 new jobs and 1500 apprenticeship opportunities with the resultant positive economic impact for the local and regional population. Interestingly, the lifespan of Sizewell C will be only 60 years, so the construction of additional nuclear power plants is already on the cards.

In addition to gaining specific knowledge related to his work, Dan emphasised the importance of developing skills in teamwork, communication and problem-solving - skills that our students are already honing during their classroom activities! Our 30-strong

audience ranged from Years 7-13, and Dan was keen to praise our younger students for attending his Talk, encouraging them to continue exploring their options during their time at St Benedict's. *Have no fear, Dan... I am already booking in our next guest speakers!*



## Year 10 Careers

On Monday 2 February, Mr Harrison and I followed up the Year 10 Next Steps assembly with a Q&A session. Students wanted to know about:

- **Entry requirements for St Benedict's Sixth Form**

A pass or higher in GCSE English and Maths is *usually* required as a basic qualification. For information about entry requirements for individual subjects, please see the school website [Choosing Your Courses at St Benedict's](#)

- **Apprenticeships in... Palaeontology/ Interior design**

I spoke about apprenticeship entry requirements and levels, and the need to be proactive in finding an apprenticeship vacancy. I suggested students also research those who have been successful in these fields and find out how they got there. In terms of interior designers, students could look into what their preferences in design styles and decide what their USP might be.

- **How interviews work**

We talked about the range of interview formats, from short, informal interviews for part-time jobs to the varied approaches used in assessment centres (group tasks, tests and

individual interviews) to gauge a candidate's suitability for a career role. I encouraged students to consider their individual strengths and skills and noted the importance of 1:1 and face-to-face interactions to give an insight into their personality and how they think.

It is important to remember that employers don't expect a student to be the finished article... if entry requirements for job roles are met, an employer wants to see enthusiasm and potential!

## **Student Opportunities**

### **Apprenticeships with British Sugar**

Local employer, British Sugar have opened up the following post-16 and post-18 roles at their sugar factory in Bury St Edmunds, which they are keen to promote to local students:

- [Process Engineering Apprentice, Level 3](#)
- [Electrical Engineering Apprentice, Level 3](#)
- [Electrical Engineering Apprentice – Customer Supply, Level 3](#)
- [Mechanical Engineering Apprentice, Level 3](#)
- [Control Engineering Apprentice, Level 4](#)

The starting salaries for the apprenticeships range from £25,000 - £27,000.

All candidates will need to be able to travel to the workplace. **Applications close on 5th April 2026**

### **Sixth Form IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance)**

To learn more about degree apprenticeships and opportunities, click on the following link: [The Sixth Formers' Guide to Degree Apprenticeships 2025](#)

### **Interested in Biomedical science?**

West Suffolk Foundation Trust are offering a **Pathology Summer School** to gain valuable knowledge and experience in this field:

- Dates: Tuesday 21 - Friday 24th July 2026
- Venue: West Suffolk Hospital - Education Centre

Sessions will include laboratory and hospital tours, example practicals, and fun, interactive learning. A Certificate of Attendance will be awarded on completion of the programme (all 4 sessions).

**To register your interest, see Mr Stafford or Miss Hahn**

*Ms Hahn*

## U14 Girls Football – 2nd round of Suffolk Cup

### County Upper 0 – 9 St Benedict's

The U14 girls football team delivered an outstanding performance on Thursday 5 February as they progressed to the quarter-finals of the Suffolk County Cup with a commanding 9–0 victory over County Upper.

Following their first-round success at Mildenhall last term, Bennies approached the second-round fixture with confidence despite difficult playing conditions. Cold temperatures and persistent rain made for a challenging afternoon, but the team rose to the occasion with an impressive display of skill, teamwork and determination.

The goals were plenty, and shared across the team, highlighting the depth of attacking talent on display. Sophie Bolton, Imogen Knight, Sophia Collins, Bea Harpur-Davies, Genevieve D’Mello, Niamh Biggin and Mabel Stafford all found the net, while Patrycja Golonka produced an especially impressive performance, scoring twice.

It was a superb all-round team performance in difficult conditions, and one that sees Bennies deservedly progress to the quarter-finals of the competition. Congratulations to the entire squad on a fantastic result and an excellent display of football.

**Player of the Match:** Patrycja Golonka



## Intermediate Maths Challenge (IMC) 2026

The IMC is a 60-minute, multiple-choice competition aimed at high ability Maths students across the UK. It encourages mathematical reasoning, precision of thought, and fluency in using basic mathematical techniques to solve interesting problems. Every year we enter 30 students in the nationwide maths challenge competition with the hopes that around 15 of our students will receive certificates.

We are delighted to announce that students at St Benedict's achieved 4 golds, 6 silvers and 10 bronzes in this year's IMC! To recognise the highest performers in the Challenge, UKMT awarded the top-scoring 50% of participants Bronze, Silver and Gold certificates in the ratio 3:2:1. Please see below for those who secured certificates!

### **Bronze**

Rebeca Bagutiu, Lukas Barisius, Ellen Beckwith, Serena Bergin, Oscar Bialis, Jacob Gurrell, Caylen James, Linduli Jayaneth, Vanessa Jonczyk, Leja Lukosevicuite, Tawney Savage and Josh Woodroof

### **Silver**

Rufus Atkinson, Zuzanna Bulacz, Sean Dersley, Lily Georgy, Alexis Rose Josy, Leon Maloba, Tomasz Pilchowski, Eliza Rowley, Nina Siarkowska and Izzy Wakes

### **Gold**

Benjamin Baldock, Michael Knight, Hannah Thomas and George Wightman

This year our four gold winning students scored high enough to get into the next round, (Pink Kangaroo), this puts Hannah Thomas, Michael Knight and Ben Baldock in the top 8000 students in the UK. However George Wightman scored in the top 500 students in year 11, (out of approximately 80,000 entrants) and will therefore go on to compete in the Maclaurin's Olympiad. We are so proud of the achievements of all our pupils that took part in the Intermediate Maths Challenge.

From this question onwards students started to lose marks for incorrect answers, how would you perform in the Intermediate Maths Challenge?

Mrs Nicholls

17. Two identical  $1 \times 2$  rectangles overlap as in the figure on the right.

What is the area of the common (shaded) part?

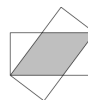
A  $\frac{5}{4}$

B  $\frac{4}{5}$

C 1

D  $\frac{6}{5}$

E  $\frac{1+\sqrt{5}}{2}$



## [Y11 Revision Book Pop Up Sale](#)

On Thursday 6 February we held a Y11 Revision Book Pop Up Sale in the new Sixth Form Common Room. The books had kindly been donated by our current Y12 cohort and were sold to Y11 students at the bargain price of £1 per book. As there were a few books remaining the sale was opened up to Y10 students the next day, and in the end there was hardly any stock left. In total we raised £174.48 for the St Vincent de Paul Society, as the posters advertising the event had been designed by the Youth SVP. It was lovely to see how much demand there was for the revision resources and we hope that they prove useful. We

would also like to extend a huge thank you to the sixth form for allowing their new space to be used, and for helping out to arrange and sell the books.

*Mr Murphy*

## Gold Award Articles

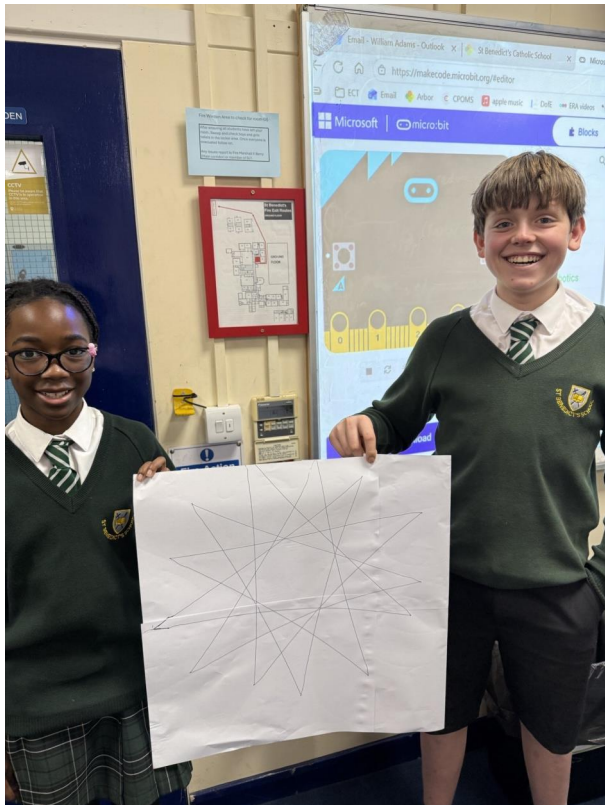
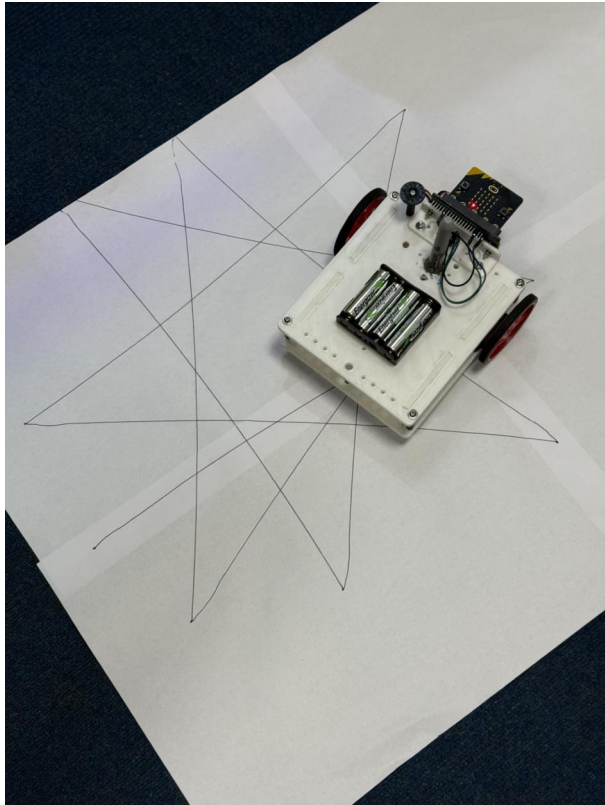
### **Micro:Bit Star Makers**

During Computer Studies, we were asked to create a square, but we had already finished after a few minutes. Then we were challenged to make a star which was a lot harder however, around 15 tries later we managed to get a rough design of the star. We first tried to use the square code and adjusted the angles to make it more pointed and sharper. But that failed, so then we tried to use a 72 degrees angles on each point (since each point of a star adds up to 72 degrees). But that didn't work either.

Next, we thought it was easier to make a star with a continuous line, and so that is what we did. Once we put the code into the robot, we attached a pen to it and came out with a star.

*Temí Yewon & Charlie Jackson 8P*

```
forever
  show leds
  set Servo 1 to 180 degrees
  set Servo 5 to 0 degrees
  pause (ms) 2000
  set Servo 1 to 0 degrees
  set Servo 5 to 0 degrees
  pause (ms) 500
```



## Youth SVP Litter Pick - Operation Clean Up the Klondyke

The Youth SVP Big Litter Pick was a great success and a chance to help out the local community around the school. The wonderful kids who helped with the litter really made the world a better place. The incredible students who participated and organised this brilliant event did an impressive job.

Some key litter removed from the environment included a shoe, a spoon, acrylic bathroom tiles, bin bags, tennis balls and another shoe.

We cleaned up the Klondyke and around the County Upper School. We had a very good time and enjoyed ourselves. The litter pickers really deserve a pat on the back.

A big thank you to the organiser Mr Murphy (and Youth SVP), none of this would have been possible without them.

By Ralph Rice, James Knight, William Dobson



## Uniform Expectations

We wish to remind all parents and students of the uniform policy at St Benedict's.

### Expected Uniform

- School jumper with embroidered school logo, purchased from the school supplier
- School tie, purchased from the school supplier
- White collared shirt(not a polo shirt)
- Trousers - contemporary or classic fit black school trousers
- Shorts – Boys, from Summer term tailored black school shorts are allowed
- Skirts – Kelso tartan skirt, purchased from the school supplier
- Socks or tights must be plain and of a dark colour

- Shoes should be black and of a material that can be polished
- Green gingham dress for Summer term only

### **Clothing not accepted**

**Body con stretch trousers that cling to the body shape is not acceptable** for boys or girls

- Trousers that expose underwear because they are low cut
- Denim, corduroy, canvas, patterned items, non-tailored shorts, culottes, jeans, **trousers that appear like jeans, leggings or jeggings**, extremes of style; ostentatious belts
- A non-uniform jumper/hoodie is not allowed to be worn in school
- Any items of extreme style such as paramilitary or gang related clothing

### **Footwear not accepted**

- Coloured trainers
- High boots
- Boots or High heels
- Plimsolls or similar made
- Canvas shoes

Our uniform expectations are not optional, we have spare uniform to support all students to be correctly attired; students persistently wearing incorrect clothing or shoes to school despite our support to comply will be dealt with according to our Conduct policy.

For more information about the school uniform standards, please see the school website:

[School Uniform Page](#)

Should you require assistance to meet our uniform standards, please contact your student's form tutor. We will assist all to meet our uniform standards.



## No Chewing Gum

St Benedict's is a chewing gum free school to prevent damage being done by careless disposal of chewing gum, alongside protecting students from gum on clothing and shoes. Students chewing gum in school will receive a behaviour point and students bringing gum into school will have it confiscated. We would be grateful to parents for their support and understanding of our stance on chewing gum.

*Ms Coogan*



## 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



23 February - Back to school

23 - 27 February - Year 11 mocks

2 - 7 March 2026 - National Careers Week (NCW2026)

6 March - Year 9 Options Deadline

24 March - Year 12 UCAS Discovery Day

[Term Dates](#)

## Contact Us



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