



St Benedict's Newsletter 321

6 March 2026



## Catholic Social Teaching

This week we have marked International Women's Day (8th March), reflecting on this we look towards Catholic Social Teaching calling us to recognise the dignity, gifts, and potential of every woman and girl. In assemblies this week, we took time to speak separately with girls and boys about how each of us has a role to play in building a culture where women are respected, empowered, and able to flourish.

Catholic Social Teaching reminds us that every person is created in the image and likeness of God and is called to live with dignity and purpose. Yet from a young age, society can place expectations or limitations on girls about who they should be, how they should behave, how they should look, or what they should aspire to. In the girls' assemblies, we spoke about how this bias is not right and should not simply be accepted as "the way things are." Instead, girls were encouraged to recognise their worth, believe in their potential, and have the confidence to challenge unfair assumptions.

At the same time, we reflected on the importance of supporting one another. True success should never come from putting others down. Girls were encouraged to celebrate one

another's achievements, encourage one another's ambitions, and build each other up rather than compete in ways that diminish others.

Scripture reminds us of the strength and dignity that God places within women:

**“She is clothed with strength and dignity,” — Proverbs 31:25**

This reminds us that true strength is rooted in dignity, confidence, and faith. God calls women to live with courage and hope, trusting in the gifts they have been given.

In the boys' assemblies, the focus was on the virtue of fortitude. Fortitude is moral courage rooted in reason and faith, enabling us to act rightly in the face of fear, adversity, or pressure. It is both a personal and spiritual strength that helps us live a virtuous life and grow in holiness. Boys reflected on St Joseph and how they can show this courage by standing against disrespectful behaviour, challenging stereotypes, and encouraging others to flourish. When boys show courage in choosing kindness, respect, and fairness, they help build a community where everyone can thrive.

We can all contribute to building this kind of community by living out our school values.

- **Wisdom:** Recognising the stereotypes and assumptions that can sometimes limit people and choosing instead to value the gifts and potential in each person.
- **Compassion:** Encouraging one another, celebrating each other's successes, and supporting those who may feel overlooked or underestimated.
- **Resilience:** Having the courage to challenge unfair behaviour, to support others when they need it, and to believe in our own worth and potential.

This week we should take a moment to reflect: Do I encourage and support the people around me? Do I challenge stereotypes or unfair comments when I hear them? How can I help create a community where everyone feels confident and valued? When we recognise the dignity and strength within each person, we build a community that reflects the justice and love at the heart of Catholic Social Teaching.

**“The world doesn't need what women have; it needs what women are.”**

St. Edith Stein

**Loving God,** You created each person with dignity, purpose, and potential.

We thank you for the gifts, courage, and contributions of women throughout our world and our community.

Help us to support one another with respect and generosity,  
to challenge stereotypes with wisdom and kindness,  
and to build each other up rather than compete or divide.

May our school be a place where every girl feels empowered,  
and where everyone works together for justice and flourishing.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

## Careers Update

Monday 2nd March heralded the start of National Careers Week 2026 (**NCW2026**), during which both students and staff have been introduced to a range of careers resources that support this year's focus: "*Own Your Future*". It is vital for our young people to develop an awareness of their strengths, skills and abilities, alongside knowledge of the ever-evolving careers landscape in order to manage their career journeys effectively. This week helps us all focus on that end!

In addition to information about T Levels, Apprenticeships and Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), your child(ren) has (have) been able to access resources that include:

- Tutor time Exercise - Self Awareness
- About Me (Interests, Skills, Hobbies, Aspirations) Worksheet
- Virtual Careers Fair: [VCF Lobby - NCW 2026 Virtual Careers Fair](#)
- Careers quizzes
- **BBC Bitesize** information about the **top 10 jobs that teens would like** and other resources for NCW2026: [Bitesize Careers Survey 2026: The top 10 jobs teenagers want - BBC Bitesize](#)
- [National Careers Week 2026 | What's on offer on Bitesize Careers? - BBC Bitesize](#),  
and
- [Problem solving in practice | Barclays LifeSkills](#)

Note: [Careers with art history: working with art collections - For Art History](#): **Free online webinar** for students on **Saturday, 7 March 2026 11:00am – 12:30pm**. [Book Now!](#)

It has been a very full and enjoyable week for Careers!

*Miss Hahn*

## Football

On Tuesday 3rd March, the U14 Girls Football Team took part in the West Suffolk Cluster Tournament, competing against King Edwards and County High School. The team produced

two excellent performances, securing a 3–0 win over King Edwards followed by a confident 2–0 victory against County High School.

Their unbeaten run saw St Benedict's crowned tournament winners, earning them a place in the Semi-Final where they will face Breckland.

Congratulations to all the players on their fantastic effort and teamwork throughout the tournament!

*Mr Bates*



## Science News

The last two Wednesday mornings have seen our Science Department take their Primary Liaison “roadshow” to St Edmund's Catholic Primary to educate and entertain their year 6 students. The general theme was ‘*Light*’ – last week's session dealing with ‘*Reflection and Refraction*’ and this week's, ‘*Newton – Light & Colours*’.

The rationale of the roadshow is to not only reinforce the curriculum learning, but also to give the students some ‘extras’ that, hopefully, will increase their knowledge further and stimulate their interest more broadly. Hence, the basics of ‘*Light and Reflection*’ were covered in theory and by practical demonstrations of how to construct ray diagrams; but this extended to an explanation of mirages and how they occur. This was done using a special water tank that could ‘bend’ a laser beam! This was used to explain the inexplicable - a ‘floating ship’. The students were also shown a famous scene from one of the most celebrated films of the 1960s, *Lawrence of Arabia*, duly accompanied by the equally famous theme music. The scene is when T.E Lawrence (Peter O'Toole) and his companion are at a desert well and the bedouin chief, Sherif Ali (Omar Sherif), appears in the distance riding his camel out of a desert mirage.

The following week – “*Light & Colours*” included a biography of one of our greatest scientists, Sir Isaac Newton. In a famous series of experiments that he carried out between 1665 and 1670, Newton changed completely our understanding of white light and colours. He proved

that white light was not pure, as was the belief at the time, but a mixture of all the colours we see in the rainbow, or produced by a prism. The students were shown a demonstration of this famous experiment, although using more modern equipment! The students were then taken on a journey in time, from Newton's revelation about the colours in the visible spectrum to the present day.

In the late 18th century, scientists detected invisible radiations outside the visible spectrum – the infrared and ultraviolet. Then fast forward another hundred years to the discovery of radio waves and X-rays, followed by the gamma-rays. Thus, by the turn of the 20th century, we had our modern-day understanding of the entire 'electromagnetic spectrum'.

To finish, the students were told of how our knowledge of radio waves led to a remarkable invention of the 20th century – one that came about entirely by accident. In 1945 an American scientist, Percy Spencer, who specialised in radio and radar technology, was experimenting with a microwave transmitter. He happened to have a bar of chocolate in his pocket and noticed that, after a few minutes, the bar was getting soft. He immediately realised that it must be something to do with the microwaves his transmitter was generating, so he built himself a metal box with the transmitter inside and found that he could rapidly cook food in it – so, the microwave oven was born!

The Science Department liaison team never fail to be impressed by the students at St Edmund's who give their wholehearted attention to the roadshow, and especially for their intelligent and insightful comments and questions that promote a lively interaction.





## GCSE Historians Step Back in Time at the University of Essex

On Thursday 12 February, 54 of our GCSE History students swapped the classroom for the spotlight, travelling to the [Lakeside Theatre](#) at the [University of Essex](#) for a performance of *The Doctors Show*. This "light-hearted" but educational production, delivered by [School History Scene](#), used a fast-paced TV show format to bring the history of British health and medicine to life. The play guided students through four key eras: Medieval Britain, The Renaissance, The Industrial Period and Modern Britain.

The experience went far beyond just watching a play. Throughout the performance, students were challenged to identify factors of change and assess the long-term impact of various medical developments. Each of the four acts was followed by an interactive workshop session, providing students with advice on how to boost their marks. They found it very useful to step into the shoes of an examiner, marking sample answers to better understand what makes a top-grade response.

The students found the day both entertaining and a powerful way to consolidate their knowledge of the "Medicine in Britain" unit. Beyond the academic benefits, the trip also provided a fantastic opportunity for the group to experience life on a campus university, helping them look ahead to their potential future studies.

*Mr Murphy*

## Reading Week and World Book Day

Reading Week celebrations this week have coincided with the 2026 National Year of Reading, a UK-wide Department for Education initiative designed to reverse the decline in reading for pleasure among children and adults. It aims to inspire the nation to "Go All In" on reading, connecting it to passions like sports, gaming, and food to foster a lifelong, daily habit that improves literacy, wellbeing, and community connection.

As part of our celebrations and to support the National Year of Reading, St Benedict's launched a new reading challenge for each year group. We have selected 8 books per year group that cover a range of genres, cultures and time periods. The challenge is for students to read 4 out of the 8 books by the end of this school year.

There were also a range of activities in the library including a Book Quiz and Treasure Hunt, and tutor groups were invited to complete the door decoration challenge. Congratulations to David Olugbemi in 9A who the Book Quiz and a £10 book token. The highlight of the week was World Book Day, where many staff and students came dressed as book characters. In addition, members of staff recorded and shared videos about why they value reading and read extracts from books that are important to them.

Thank you to all staff and students who supported Reading Week and we hope that it has inspired you to pick up a book and read!

*Mrs Oakes and Mrs Hayter-Gare*





## Year 10 Rome Pilgrimage

Rome Pilgrimage 7th – 11th February

A group of our Year 10 students went on a pilgrimage to Rome in February. The trip included visits to the Basilicas of St Mary, St John and St Peter. We attended mass at Santa Spirito in Sassia and in St Peter's Basilica. We watched the Angelus with Pope Leo at St Peter's square.

The trip also included visiting some famous landmarks such as the Colosseum, the Forum, the Spanish Steps and on the last evening, the Trevi Fountain. We climbed the dome at St Peter's for some amazing views of Vatican City. We were privileged to have tours at the English College where new priests are trained, and the Catacombs of St Agnes where bodies have been buried over many years.

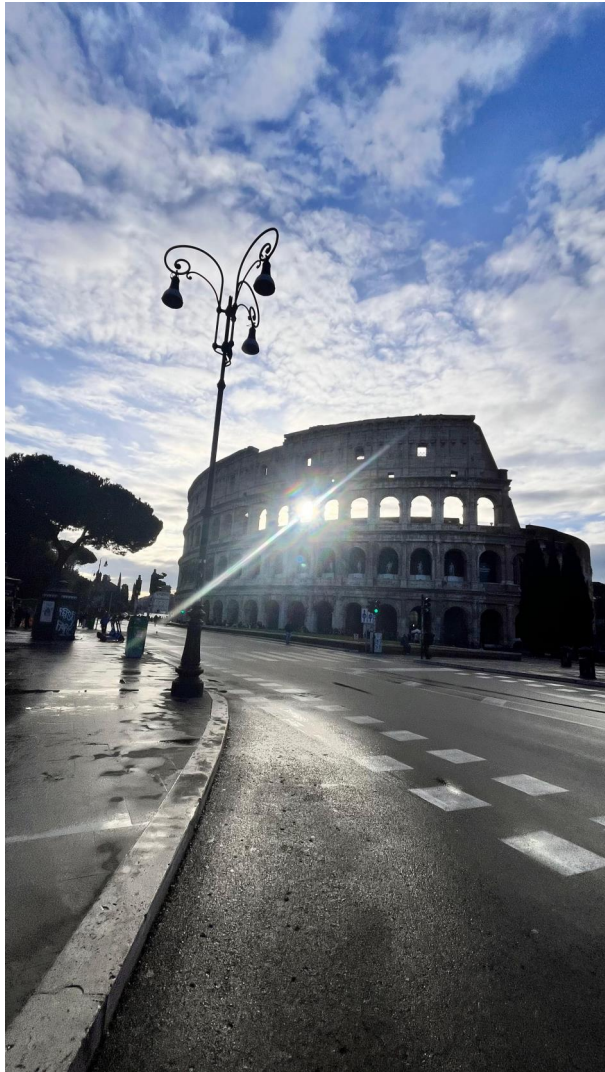
We enjoyed lots of delicious meals of pasta and pizza with added treats of crepes and ice-cream.

The trip was packed with making memories, spiritual moments, and lots of fun. As promised, the photobook is under construction, more details to follow soon.

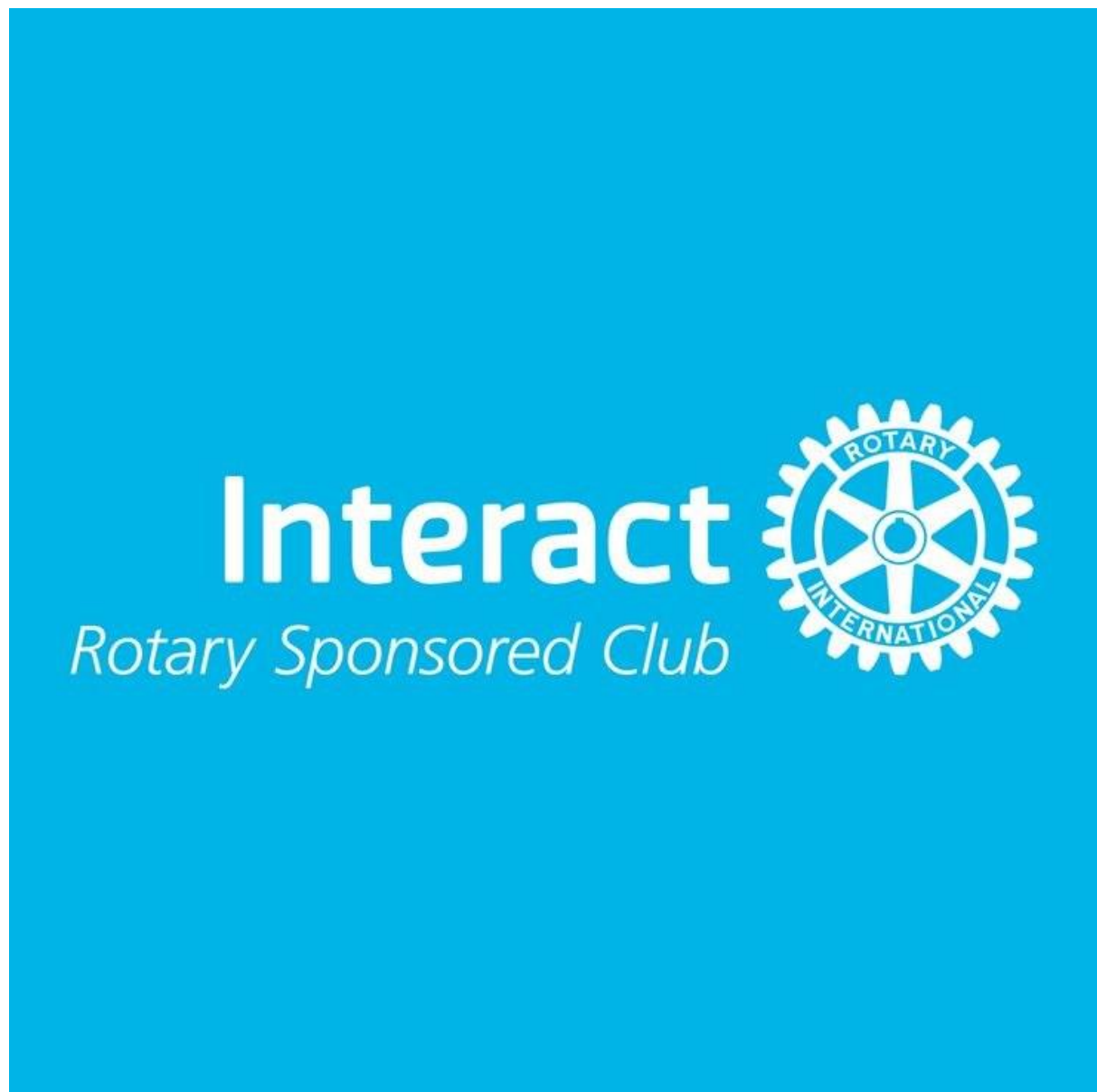
Mrs Eastwood







Interact



We are looking for someone to design the front of the programme for this year's Shrek production!

This could be YOU!

**DEADLINE: Friday 13th March**

**SEND TO: [dhamilton@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:dhamilton@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk)**

**ALSO:** if you are interested in helping out with refreshments, ushering etc at the show, please see Mrs Hamilton in H4 Tuesday breaktime (10th March). Come and offer your service and grow in skills of leadership, communication, hospitality and organisation!

Young Writers Competition

## Category 1

1st place - Daisy Farrant

2nd place - Amelia Selfoss

3rd place - Gray Bervig

## Category 2

1st place - Elizabeth Nicholls

All entries should be commended and praised for effort and creativity - it was difficult to judge!

Agatha- Alice - Dominic - Eliana - Elsie - Gabrielle - Hosannah - Ishaan - Lily all need a special mention!

Next competition: Design the programme cover for Shrek!

Next meeting: Tuesday break time H4

Next opportunity: refreshments at Parents' Evening 10th March

Ushering and refreshments at Shrek! 24th, 25th 26th March

Ongoing: School magazine

Want to get involved? Come along Tuesday breaktimes, H4 or see Mrs Hamilton

*Mrs Hamilton*

Young of  
the  
series

# My Tulip Started Dancing

BY GRAY BERVIG 7P

My tulip started dancing.  
I'm really not sure why.  
All I know is that its  
toes were tapping out a  
jive.



It tangoed out the garden.  
It shimmied out past  
the fence.  
It tap-danced on the  
wheelbarrow until  
there were dents!



But winter started  
coming. Its leaves became so  
still!  
Its pirouetting'd finally  
been frozen by the  
chill.



My tulip's stem was wilting;  
Its petals turning brown.  
But, in the spring, oh yes,  
sure thing, it will boogie down.



## Memory Lane

Let me take you for a walk  
to see the nature down my road  
so I can show you in my mind  
every fox and deer and toad

The way in spring the flowers bloom  
to make dancing bluebell patches  
where flecks of dew are diamonds  
and a sweet young blackbird hatches

The way in summer the sun beams  
the river sparkles at the light  
we splash and play in the heat  
as fish frolic with scales bright

The way in autumn trees grow red  
and plums nestle among leaves like fire  
for crumble we go with baskets  
to pick the berries off the briar

The way in winter hugs you tight  
with a soft white blanket of snow  
with icy puddles on which we slide  
and frosted silver birches glow

The way in which the birds sing  
is a permanent memory  
the fun I've had in nature  
thank you for sharing it with me

Daisy Farrant 9P

## HAPPINESS IN NATURE

A POEM BY AMELIA SELFOSS

Happiness in nature is the sight of a crisp morning sunrise,  
That glows with hues of red and peach, eager to surprise,  
Happiness is the joyful dawn chorus of birds of all size,  
From the finches and sparrows, the cheeky and wise.

Happiness in nature is a walk through some trees,  
With the colours of leaves dappling the sunlight one sees,  
Happiness is also rambling through a meadow with ease,  
With grasses, ox-eye daisies and fuzzy bumble-bees.

Happiness in nature is spotting a hidden deer,  
Burst from concealment and stroll up without fear,  
Happiness is a secret pond that happens to be near,  
Its water filled with tadpoles and perfectly clear.

Happiness in nature is grabbing a book and sitting in the shade,  
With the bright sun on your face as it begins to fade,  
Happiness is also going with friends to a glade,  
And building a den, then playing in what you've made.

Happiness in nature is feeling the cool glow,  
As the light disappears and the wind starts to blow,  
Happiness is watching the subtle stream flow,  
And the beautiful moon and stars appear from below.

Happiness in nature is gazing at stars,  
And lots of planets, Neptune to Mars,  
Happiness is sitting around a fire, away from all cars,  
Enjoying the moment, dreaming of stars as magic reservoirs.



## “Hello, Again”

“Hello, again” you call out now  
Into the vast woodland.  
Greeted by a rustle as  
Leaves fall into your hand.  
Running barefoot through the green  
Free at last from concrete chains,  
No longer scared to trip or fall,  
Finding thrill in place of pain.  
Bury your fingertips in the soil  
Feeling the roots underneath,  
Weaved around your hands now, and  
Bringing a sense of ease.  
Branches curved into a smile  
atop the tallest tree  
Flowers blossoming around you say  
This is how things should be.

Elizabeth Nicholls

## Auschwitz Visit

Before half term, we had the opportunity to take part in the Lessons from Auschwitz Project, which has helped us develop a deeper understanding of the Holocaust and why it is so important to remember it today. As part of the project, we travelled to Poland to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau, where we saw first-hand the place where over a million Jews were murdered during the Second World War.

Before visiting Poland, we attended an in-person orientation seminar where we learned about Jewish life before the war. It was important to understand that Jewish communities across Europe had rich cultures, traditions and everyday lives before the Holocaust began. Learning about pre-war Jewish life helped us see the Holocaust not just as numbers in a history book, but as the destruction of real communities and families.

At the seminar, we also heard the powerful testimony of Eva Clarke, who shared her family’s experiences during the Holocaust. Hearing her story made the history feel very real and reminded us how important it is to listen to survivors and preserve their memories.

Through the project, we also learned that the Holocaust did not begin with violence, but with segregation and discrimination. Jewish people were gradually separated from the rest of society and stripped of their rights long before the killing began. Understanding this process showed us how prejudice can grow if it is not challenged.

During the Holocaust, six million Jewish men, women and children were murdered. Visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau gave us time to reflect on the scale of this loss and the importance of remembering those who were killed.

The visit was a powerful and emotional experience that helped us understand the importance of respect, tolerance and standing up against discrimination. We hope to continue sharing what we have learned with the school community so that the lessons of the past are not forgotten.

*Talia Grant and Jasmine Nelson year 12*

## Supporting Women and Girls – Free Sanitary Products Available

In recognition of **National Women's Week**, we are reminding our school community that we have a supply of free sanitary products available for anyone who may need them.

Thanks to a recent surplus, packets of sanitary products can be collected **free of charge from Main Reception**. These are available to any student who would benefit from them—no questions asked.

We are proud to support the health, dignity and wellbeing of all our students, and encourage anyone who needs products to simply drop by and pick up a packet.

## 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.

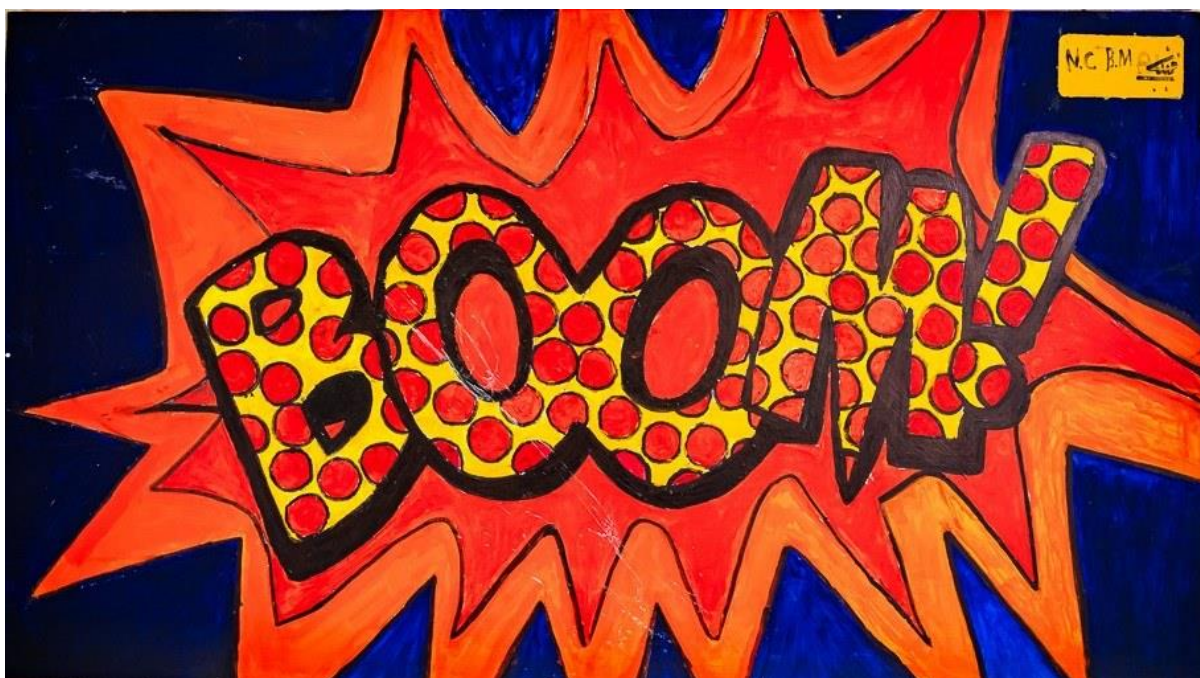
If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to be absent from school during term time, you should complete a **leave of absence application form (please see link below)**, at least three weeks in advance, stating the reason why the absence must be taken in term time. 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



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

6 March - Year 9 Options Deadline

10 March - Inter-House Competition Day

24 March - Year 12 UCAS Discovery Day

27 March - Break up for Easter

13 April - Start of summer term

[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)

[Instagram](#)