



St Benedict's Newsletter 329

15 May 2026



## Catholic Social Teaching

This week, we reflect on the Catholic feast of the Ascension of the Lord, a significant moment in the life of the Church celebrated forty days after Easter. The Ascension marks the moment when the risen Jesus returned to the Father, completing his earthly mission and opening the way for humanity to share in God's life.

At first, the Ascension may appear to be a moment of departure, but the Church teaches something much deeper. It is not an ending, but a beginning. As Jesus ascends into heaven, he entrusts his mission to his disciples, calling them to continue his work in the world sending the Holy Spirit to help them. In this way, the Ascension reminds us that every Christian is called to live out their faith through action and service. This connects closely with Catholic Social Teaching, which challenges us to work for justice, peace, dignity, and care for creation.

Scripture captures both the meaning and the mission of the Ascension. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells his disciples: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations... and behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." -Matthew 28:19–20 These words remind us that although Jesus returns to the Father, he remains present with us. Through

the Holy Spirit, we are strengthened and guided to continue his mission. The Ascension is therefore a call to responsibility, to live our faith in how we treat others, how we make choices, and how we contribute to the world around us.

During this time of year, many of our students are also facing the challenges of the examination season. The message of the Ascension is especially important here. Just as the disciples were sent out with courage and trust, we too are called to approach challenges with faith, perseverance, and hope. Exam season can feel uncertain and demanding, but the words of Jesus remind us that we are not alone: "I am with you always."

So, as we reflect on the Ascension we are encouraged to: Trust in our abilities and preparation, support one another with kindness and encouragement, remain calm and hopeful in times of pressure and recognise that our worth is greater than any result. This reflects Catholic Social Teaching, reminding us of the dignity of each person and the importance of supporting one another, especially during times of stress. The Ascension calls us to: Respect the dignity of every person, care for the poor and vulnerable, work for peace and justice and protect God's creation. These are not separate from our faith; they are how our faith is lived out in the world.

In school, this reminds us that The Ascension is not just something we remember; it is something we live. Each day, through our words and actions, we are given opportunities to bring Christ's presence to others. We can live out the message of the Ascension through our school values in practical ways:

- **Wisdom:** Making thoughtful choices in our learning and revision, managing our time well, and recognising that we are called to do our best with the gifts God has given us.
- **Compassion:** Supporting friends/family who may feel stressed or anxious, showing patience, kindness, and encouragement during this demanding time.
- **Resilience:** Persevering when learning feels difficult and trusting that challenges help us grow. Like the disciples, we are called to keep going with courage and faith.

As we journey through the week we can ask ourselves, how am I being called to live out my faith through my actions and attitudes, especially during this time of challenge and make a difference to others?

### **Loving God,**

We thank you for the gift of your Son,  
who calls us to continue his mission.

Help us to trust that he is always with us.

Give us wisdom to make good choices,  
compassion to care for others,

and resilience to follow your call.

May we live our faith in action each day.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

## Careers Update

Careers Talk: Roles and Opportunities with the RAF

On Thursday 7th May, Sgt Darren (Daz) Rivers returned to St Benedict's to share an inspirational insight into a life and [career in the RAF](#). We learned about a wide variety of roles ranging from Fighter Jet Pilot (very popular with our audience!), Medical Officer and Intelligence Analyst to Engineer, Police Officer and Physical Training Instructor. Apprenticeships and sponsored degrees are a major draw to applicants, alongside extremely competitive salaries and sponsored living costs.

Sgt Rivers reminded us of the minimum return of service which means you have to repay your training expenses by serving with the Force for a contracted term - the length depends on the amount of training you have done and the position you have been training for. He gave the example of a Pilot, where training is usually 4 years in duration, followed by a mandatory 12 years of service. Not too surprising when recruits are flying craft costing around £100 million, not to mention the cost of the specialised and tailor-made kit that needs to be worn in the cockpit! (Sgt Rivers noted that for those set on becoming commercial pilots, the pathway would need to be civilian rather than military. A conversion course could be completed after RAF pilot training and service, but this would only be possible after 16 years!)

Whilst there are many benefits, Sgt Rivers noted that personal costs are involved in terms of family life. This might mean missing important events and celebrations, and contact can be minimal during actual campaigns and overseas operations.

Nothing seemed to deter our focused audience however, who remained as committed, if not more, to securing a role within the RAF in the future.

Thank you Sgt Rivers - we look forward to seeing you again at our next Careers Fair in October!

### **Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Opportunities**

**For parents and carers of students in Years 7-13**

[Free Hands-on Workshop](#) about **Careers in Construction - from design to delivery**

**Tuesday 19th May, 5:30-7pm**

Location: 1st Floor, Blenheim House, Newmarket Rd, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3SParents and students **register separately**: [Registration Confirmation - Pathway CTM](#)

Year 11-13 students:

Business & Accounting - Virtual May Half-Term Work Experience

Tuesday 26th and Wednesday 27th May, 10am - 4pm

Discover what it takes to thrive at a top firm and start building your professional network from day one -*plus* a **business workshop with Dan Miller from The Apprentice**, and also the CEO and Founder of Young Professionals.

*Miss Hahn*





## PE Celebration

Last July, we were proud to host our annual **PE Celebration Evening**, recognising the fantastic sporting achievements, dedication, and teamwork shown by our pupils throughout the year. It was a brilliant evening enjoyed by pupils, parents, and staff alike. We were delighted to welcome special guest **Darren Ambrose**, former professional footballer for clubs including Newcastle United, Crystal Palace, and Ipswich Town. Pupils took part in an engaging Q&A session, where Darren shared inspiring stories from his football career and spoke about his continued involvement in the sport after retiring from professional football. He praised our pupils for their commitment, teamwork, and sporting success across the year. Throughout the evening, a number of prestigious awards were presented to celebrate outstanding achievement:

### Award Winners

- **James Rylatt Cup** – Charlie Oxborrow
- **Sports Personality** – Mateusz Szczech
- **Sporting Excellence Key Stage 4** – Archie Coogan and Molly Murphy
- **Sporting Excellence Key Stage 3** – Sophie Bolton, Polly Saade and Noah Wilkinson

- **Outstanding Contribution** – Evelyn Scott and Jake McConnell

We also celebrated the achievements of several teams who enjoyed exceptional success throughout the year:

#### **Team Recognition Awards**

- Year 7 Netball Team
- Year 9 Girls' Football Team
- Year 9 Netball Team
- Year 9 Boys' Rugby Team
- Year 10 Boys' Rugby Team
- Year 10 Volleyball Team
- Year 10 Boys' Football Team

We are excited to announce that the **PE Celebration Evening 2026** will take place on **Thursday 2nd July**. The evening will once again celebrate individual excellence, team success, and the many sporting achievements from this academic year and Summer 2025.

**Invitations will be sent out soon** — we look forward to celebrating with you!

*Mrs Wright*

## Suffolk County Championships

It was wonderful to see so many students representing the school with pride at the Suffolk County Schools AA and Suffolk County AA Championships at Beetons Way Arena on Saturday 9th May. Our athletes showcased immense talent and dedication in a high-quality field. Here are the standout performances:

- **Double Champion:** Matijus Juchna was on top form, running personal bests to win both the U18 Boys 100m (11.6s) and 200m (22.8s).
- **Strong Wins:** Jacob Gurrell won the U16 Boys 100m (12.1s) and secured second in the U16 Long Jump (5m42 PB). Molly Murphy took victory in the U18 800m (2:26.2), Amelia Smith in the U16 800m (2:26.8), and Sophie Bolton won the U16 1500m (4:56.9).
- **Podium Finishes:** Bea Harpur-Davies claimed second in the 80m Hurdles (15.6s) followed closely by Skyrah Yarnold Da Silva in third (18.2s). Amelia Smith finished second in the U16 Girls 300m (44.8s) with Alanna Evans taking third (45.0 PB).

A special mention to those who just missed out on medals with fantastic fourth-place finishes: Sidney Astle U14 Boys 1500m (5:15.8), Bea Harpur-Davies U16 Girls Long Jump (4m16) and 200m (28.6s), and Amelia Smith U16 Girls 800m (2:26.8). Well done to all our competitors, including Noah T'Sjoen (5th, U16 Boys 800m in 2.27.0), Solomon Brokenshire-Dyke (5th, U16 Boys 1500m in 5.19.5), Imogen Knight (9th, U16 Girls 800m in 2.45.6), and Lucy Murphy (8th, U16 1500m in 5.30.1). We are incredibly proud of how you all used your talents to shine.

*Mr Murphy*

## Suffolk School's Athletics Cup

On Tuesday 12th May, our Year 9 and 10 students took part in the Suffolk Schools' Athletics Cup at the West Suffolk Arena, delivering an outstanding performance throughout the day. Competing against a very strong field, all students represented the school with pride, determination, and excellent sportsmanship.

There were a number of impressive individual achievements. Just to name a few: Jacob McNee and Charlie Glading secured victories in their 300m races, while Jacob Gurrell sprinted to first place in the 100m. Archie Crisp also achieved a fantastic result, winning the triple jump event.

A special mention must go to both our relay teams, who delivered exceptional performances. The girls' team—Bea Harpur-Davies, Orla Ashen, Amelia Smith and Alanna Evans — claimed victory with a confident display. The boys' team of Jacob McNee, Nana Brobbey, Archie Crisp, and Jacob Gurrell were equally impressive, dominating their race and finishing a considerable distance ahead of the competition in a truly commanding performance.

Finally, a big thanks to Greg Slater, who stepped in at the last minute to join the team and performed admirably in 200m and Javelin.

Full results will be shared once they are available, but we would like to extend a huge congratulations to all involved for their effort, teamwork, and success on the day.

*Mr Bates & Mrs Slater*



## Year 9's take a spin on the sewing machines

This week, our Year 9 textiles students have been completing their sewing machine “driving tests” as part of their upcycling project. Students have been developing confidence and accuracy using sewing machines, learning important practical skills that will support them throughout this term and into GCSE Art and Textiles.

Over the coming weeks, students will apply these new skills creatively by transforming old clothing through appliqué techniques, vinyl decoration, and stencilling. The project encourages sustainability and creativity, giving students the opportunity to breathe new life into unwanted garments while exploring a range of decorative textile methods.

It has been fantastic to see students building their independence, problem-solving skills, and confidence in the textiles classroom.

*Mrs Coldwell*



## Digital Safety Update for Parents/Carers

Technology is increasingly embedded in everyday life; it is important for families to stay informed about emerging risks and set clear expectations.

Social Media: stay safe online

Many young people begin using social media during secondary school years, most social media platforms are 13+. While it can support friendships and creativity, it also brings risks.

- **Privacy matters:** Encourage your child to keep accounts private and avoid sharing personal information (school name, location, contact details).
- **Online behaviour:** Remind them that what they post can be permanent. Discuss respectful communication and the impact of unkind messages.
- **Strangers and scams:** Children may be contacted by people they don't know. Reinforce advice: *don't engage, report, and tell a trusted adult.*
- **Screen time balance:** Monitor screen time usage, set reasonable limits and encourage tech-free time, especially before bed.

Creativity with Caution 3D Printing

3D printers are increasingly accessible in schools and homes, offering exciting opportunities for design and engineering. However:

- **File safety:** Designs downloaded from the internet may include inappropriate or unsafe items. Ensure children only use approved, educational sources.
- **Legal and ethical awareness:** Some files (e.g., weapon components or restricted items) are illegal or unsuitable to produce. Make expectations clear.
- **Supervised use:** 3D printers involve heat and moving parts; students should always follow safety protocols and use them under guidance.

Buying and Selling Items in School

A growing trend among young people is trading or selling items—including snacks, accessories, or even online goods.

- At St Benedict's we prohibit in-school student selling; opportunity for entrepreneurial interest is through school organised events, monitored and arranged with staff presence.
- Informal selling can lead to disputes over money, quality, or fairness. Putting pressure on the most vulnerable in our community.
- **Online selling:** Some young people may attempt to sell items via social media or gaming platforms—this can expose them to scams or contact with strangers.

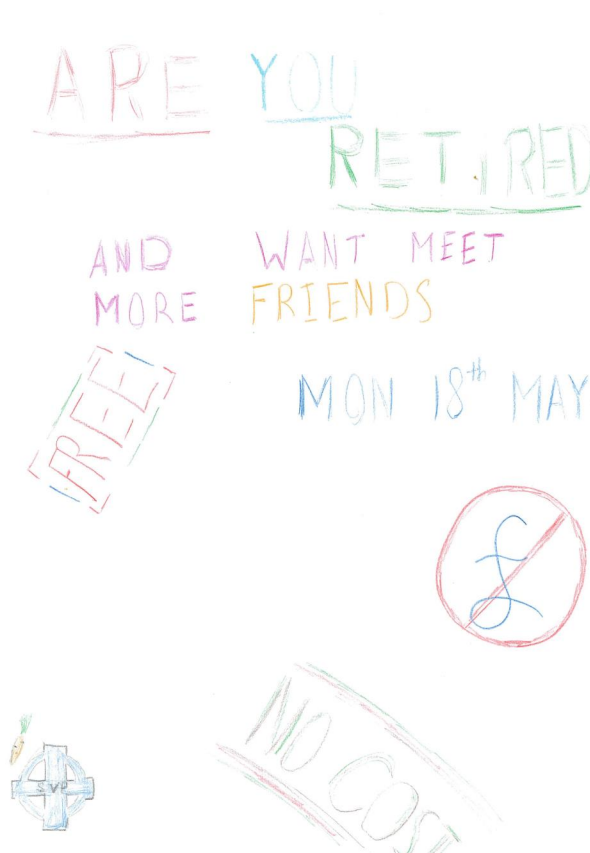
- **Encourage safe alternatives:** Channel entrepreneurial interest into supervised activities such as school fairs or approved projects.

Open conversations are the most effective safeguard. Regularly talk with your child about their online experiences, set clear boundaries, and encourage them to come to you with concerns—no matter how small. If you would like further guidance or resources, please contact our student welfare team. Working together, we can help young people enjoy technology legally, safely, responsibly, and confidently.

## Join Our Youth SVP Talking Table

In the spirit of community and service, our Youth SVP group is hosting a 'Talking Table' on Monday 18th May (12:40 pm - 1:40 pm) in the school chapel. We are looking to bring together our students and retired members of our local community for tea, coffee, and friendly conversation. This is a wonderful opportunity for intergenerational friendship and for us to live out our faith through charity. If you know a retired parishioner, relative, or neighbor who would appreciate an hour of good company, please encourage them to come. Please RSVP to [KMurphy@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:KMurphy@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk) so we can prepare a warm welcome.

*Mr Murphy*



## Year 10 and 12 Mock Exams

Please note that these start in only a matter of weeks once we are back after half term. Please look out for a letter sent out this week which gives the full details.

Many thanks

*Mr D'Mello*

## 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)

**Just a reminder that if you do not inform us by 9.00am using 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*

## 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*

## Dates for your Diary



22 May - Break up for half term

1 June - Summer term starts

19 June - Year 11 Transition Morning

19 June - Year 13 Prom

22 June - Year 11 Prom

[Term Dates](#)

## Contact Us



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