



St Benedict's Newsletter 340

25 September 2026

Catholic Social Teaching

This week's focus is on the Catholic Social Teaching theme of **Solidarity**. Solidarity is about recognising that we are connected to one another and that we have a responsibility to care about what happens to others.

Solidarity does not mean that we have to agree with everyone or be friends with everyone. It means recognising the dignity of others, listening to people whose experiences may be different from our own, and being willing to stand alongside those who need our support.

Jesus gives us a powerful example of this in the Gospel: "Love one another as I have loved you." — John 15:12 Jesus' command is about much more than simply being kind when it is easy. Solidarity is about putting these words into action. It challenges us to make choices that show genuine care for other people. Sometimes solidarity might mean noticing that someone is struggling and offering support. It might mean including someone who is alone, standing up when someone is being treated unfairly, listening rather than judging, or simply being the person who chooses kindness when others do not, remembering that what seems like a joke to us may hurt someone else.

St Paul gives us another important reminder: “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.” — Galatians 6:2 We all experience times when life feels difficult. Sometimes we need to be the person who offers support, and sometimes we need to be brave enough to accept support ourselves. Solidarity means understanding that we do not have to face everything alone.

Solidarity can sometimes feel like a huge idea, connected to world events or helping people far away. But it begins with the choices we make every day. Solidarity is therefore also about becoming the best version of ourselves. The choices we make each day help shape the people we become. We can choose patience over anger, encouragement over criticism, courage over simply following the crowd, and kindness over indifference.

Living this out in school can be in simple ways;

- **Wisdom:** To think beyond ourselves. Before we speak or act, we can ask: *How might this affect someone else?* We can make thoughtful choices rather than simply following the crowd.
- **Compassion:** Noticing when someone needs support and make the choice to reach out.
- **Resilience:** Having the courage to do what is right, even when it is difficult. We may sometimes need to stand apart from our friends, challenge unfair behaviour or ask for help ourselves. Resilience helps us to keep choosing what is right.

As we reflect on this theme this week, we might ask ourselves: Who might need me to reach out to them? Do my choices help other people to feel valued and included? Am I willing to listen to people whose experiences are different from my own? When I see something that isn't right, do I have the courage to act? What choices can I make this week to become the best person I can be?

Solidarity reminds us that we are never completely separate from one another. Our words, choices and actions can affect the people around us in ways we may never fully realise. We don't have to change the whole world to make a difference. Sometimes solidarity begins with something very small: a conversation, an invitation, an act of kindness, a moment of courage or simply choosing to notice someone who might otherwise go unseen.

When we make those choices, we help to create a school community where everyone has the opportunity to feel valued, supported and able to flourish.

Loving God,

Thank you for the people who walk alongside us

and for those who support us when life is difficult.

Help us to care for one another

and to recognise when someone needs our support.

Give us wisdom to make good choices,

compassion to be kind,

and resilience to do what is right.

Help us to love one another

as Jesus taught us.

Amen.

Careers Update

Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Opportunities

For Students in Years 9-11:

The National Saturday Club is an established UK-wide network, that gives 13-16-year-olds the unique opportunity to study subjects they love for **FREE**, on a Saturday at their local university, college or cultural institution. The Club provides a welcoming space for young people to build their skills, develop their confidence, and discover pathways to further study and future creative careers.

Applications for the 2026-2027 National Saturday Club programme are now open. Follow this link to find out more and/or register for this Club: [The Offshoot Foundation](#)

[Film&Screen Saturday Club](#)



For Students in Years 10-13:

NHS Allied Healthcare Virtual Work Experience Day

Focus: Pain Management and Mental Health

Sunday **4th October** from 9am to 5pm

This virtual work experience links to the following careers:

Nursing

Midwifery

Paramedicine

Physiotherapy

Occupational Therapy

Dietetics

Radiography

Prosthetics and Orthotics

Speech and Language Therapy

Pharmacy

Students will follow 2 patients from their initial presentation to recovery. They will gain a unique insight into how patients interact with a variety of healthcare professionals and what it's like to work in an NHS multidisciplinary team. Attendees will also have the opportunity to interact with healthcare professionals.

Register at: <https://alliedhealthmentor.org/nhs-healthcare-careers-virtual-work-experience/>

Once registered, students will be emailed links to their virtual work experience portals (check Spam folder too). Attendance must be marked on the day to receive the Work Experience Certificate

Note: If you do attend, **please give permission** for a copy of your certificate to be sent to me too at **AHahn@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk** so that I can add it to your Careers record. *Thank you.*

For those interested in a career in law, global Law firm **Mayer Brown** are offering a **Solicitor Apprenticeship** in London. The apprenticeship will focus on the knowledge, skills and experience needed for a successful legal career, alongside valuable workplace experience from the outset. If you would like to know more about this opportunity, follow the links below:

Useful links for further research:

- Learn more about the Mayer Brown Solicitor Apprenticeship programme: [London Solicitor Apprenticeship | Careers | Mayer Brown](#)
- Hear from current apprentices about their experiences and career journey: <https://www.instagram.com/talk2mayerbrown/>
- Discover more about life and careers at Mayer Brown: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/mayer-brown/>



Reminder:

Weekly Careers Guidance Drop-in for Y12 & Y13 students - Raven Centre Common Room No booking required.

See last week's Newsletter for:

- West Suffolk Health Academy programme Oct - Nov 2026
- Ipswich Town FC Foundation - Post-16 Football and Education Programme Event
- Upcoming Get Into Medicine conference dates
- Next Get Into Dentistry Conference date

Have a lovely weekend.

Miss Hahn

[U16 Boys Football Tournament](#)

On Tuesday 22nd September, the St Benedict's U16 Boys Football Team competed in the West Suffolk Football Tournament. Drawn in a cluster alongside County High, Newmarket Academy and Mildenhall College Academy, the format saw an initial play-off match, with the winners progressing to the final and the defeated teams contesting the 3rd/4th place play-off.

St Benedict's opened their campaign against Mildenhall on a tight and compact pitch that made it difficult to settle into a rhythm. The boys started slowly and took time to adapt to the playing conditions, although they still created several promising opportunities. The closest they came to opening the scoring was through Oscar Barrett, whose free kick struck the post and agonisingly rolled across the goal line before being cleared to safety.

Mildenhall took the lead following a corner kick, with an unmarked player rising to head the ball home. The second half began in disappointing fashion for St Benedict's, who switched off from the restart and allowed a simple pass through the defensive line, leading to Mildenhall's second goal.

The setback finally sparked the team into life, and they began to play with greater urgency and purpose. Sam Dockrill proved a threat down the right flank, using his pace to repeatedly trouble the opposition full-back. His persistence earned St Benedict's a penalty after a late challenge inside the area. Oscar Barrett confidently converted from the spot to reduce the

deficit to 2-1 and set up a tense finish. Despite creating further chances in search of an equaliser, the boys were unable to find a second goal and narrowly lost the match.

Determined to finish the tournament strongly, St Benedict's faced Newmarket Academy in the 3rd/4th place play-off. Following a firm and focused team talk, the boys responded superbly with a much-improved performance.

St Benedict's dominated the opening stages and took an early lead through Kacper Kolodziej, who powered home an excellent header from a corner kick. The second goal soon followed after some outstanding attacking play. Oscar Barrett cleverly deceived the defence with a backheel pass, allowing Ellis Turner to race onto the ball and finish first time into the bottom corner.

The second half was more evenly contested, but St Benedict's remained solid defensively, with Charlie Glading producing an assured display at the heart of the defence. Further chances followed, including an audacious bicycle kick attempt from Ellis Turner that narrowly cleared the crossbar.

In the closing minutes, Rupert Stafford capped off an impressive team performance by heading home at the back post from another corner, sealing a deserved 3-0 victory and securing third place in the tournament.

Player of the Tournament: Oscar Barrett

Mr Bates



Year 12 Politics Trip – A Day at the Heart of British Democracy

On Tuesday 15 September, twelve Year 12 Humanities students set off bright and early – meeting at school for a 7:00am departure – for an exciting Politics trip to London. Spirits were high from the start, with games on the school minibus helping the journey to Redbridge station fly by. From there, the group hopped on the London Underground, heading straight for Westminster.

The first stop was the Supreme Court, housed in the former Middlesex County Hall. After navigating airport-style security, the students enjoyed a guided tour of the building,

including all three courtrooms. In Court 1, they even took the seats of the justices to stage a light-hearted mock trial for a classmate who had arrived two minutes late that morning. Despite a spirited defence, the “accused” was found guilty and sentenced – with much laughter – to six or seven years in the Tower of London.

From there, the group strolled up Whitehall, passing the Cenotaph and several government departments, before peering through the gates of Downing Street in the hope of spotting Andy Burnham. Along the way, they paused at the Banqueting House – the site of King Charles I’s execution in 1649 – and admired the mounted guards at Horse Guards Parade. A quick detour to Trafalgar Square was followed by a whistle-stop tour of the Tudor and Stuart gallery in the National Portrait Gallery, before breaking for lunch.

The afternoon was spent exploring the **Palace of Westminster**. While the House of Lords chamber was closed for the swearing-in of Sadiq Khan as Lord Khan of Tooting, students were able to visit the public gallery of the House of Commons. There, they witnessed a lively debate sparked by an ‘Urgent Question’ on the definition of “single malt whisky”!

The day concluded with an engaging workshop on elections, leaving students with a deeper understanding of how our democracy functions – and plenty of stories to share.

Mr Murphy







Library Update



Library Newsletter

September 2026

📅 This Month in the Library 📅

Welcome to September's library newsletter!

Join us as we explore some of the most interesting and important events taking place this month including Start the Year Strong, International Literacy Day, Roald Dahl Day, Hobbit Day and National Coding Week. Whether they are moments from history, key religious dates, cultural celebrations or awareness days, we will be highlighting them via engaging displays and book recommendations. Also, don't forget, we will have plenty of fun and creative activity sheets available too. You can complete them during a quiet moment in the library alone, with friends or take them home for later.

Looking for your next great read? We will also be sharing a range of reading recommendations chosen by students and staff for all ages and interests. They are perfect for discovering something new and inspiring.

Next month we will be celebrating Black History Month, Dyslexia Awareness Week, World Poetry Day and many more.

Mrs Hayter-Gare, the library helpers and the English Department.

'At the moment that we persuade a child, any child, to cross that threshold, that magic threshold into a library, we change their lives forever, for the better.'

Barack Obama.

Welcome to St Benedict's Library

Our library is a safe space to read, play chess, play games, chat with your friends, study and research.

Whether you are looking for your next favourite book, help with research, a space to study, chess pieces or activity sheets we are here to help.

Food and drink are allowed in the **lower area** but please keep it clean and tidy.

No food or drink to be consumed in the **upper (computer) area**. **Computers for academic purposes only.**

Go to the main desk to check out/return books or, if Mrs HG is absent, use the forms provided on the desk.

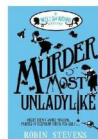


Book recommendations

Student Recommendation:

Murder Most Unladylike, Robin Stevens, (Fiction, genre: Crime and Thriller, red dot)

A year 9's summary: Someone is murdered at their school and they are the only ones who know about it. Can they convince everyone else? First, they will need some proof. I would recommend this book because it is a mystery so you always want to know what will happen next and it has some plot twists.
Rated: 5/5 Stars. Link: [goodreads](#)



Start the Year Strong:

All the Pieces of Me, Rebecca Westcott Libby Scott (Fiction, genre: Modern Relationships, pink dot)

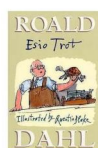
Year 8 can be tough for everyone, but for Tally it feels even tougher. Everything seems to be changing as she and her friends get older. Make-up, boys, social media, GCSE prep - why is it all starting to feel so different? Tally has always known that being autistic means some things are harder for her than they are for other people. But becoming a teenager has left Tally feeling like she has no idea who she even is anymore. Link: [goodreads](#)



Roald Dahl Day:

Esio Trot, Roald Dahl, (Fiction, genre: Adventure, green dot)

Mr. Hoppy is in love with Mrs. Silver, but her heart belongs to Alfie, her pet tortoise. Mr. Hoppy is too shy to approach Mrs. Silver, until one day he comes up with a brilliant idea to win her heart. If Mr. Hoppy's plan works, Mrs. Silver will certainly fall in love with him. But it's going to take one hundred and forty tortoises, an ancient spell, and a little bit of magic. Link: [goodreads](#)



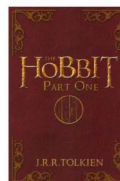
Contact Mrs HG with any questions. rhayter-gare@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

Hobbit Day:

The Hobbit, J.R.R. Tolkien, (Fiction, genre: Fantasy, orange dot)

Smaug certainly looked fast asleep, when Bilbo peeped once more from the entrance. He was just about to step out onto the floor when he caught a sudden thin ray of red from under the drooping lid of Smaug's left eye. He was only pretending to be asleep! He was watching the tunnel entrance!

Whiskered from his comfortable hobbit-hole by Gandalf the wizard and a band of dwarves, Bilbo Baggins finds himself caught up in a plot to raid the treasure hoard of Smaug the Magnificent, a large and very dangerous dragon. Link: [goodreads](#)



Start the Year Strong:

Be Happy Be You: The teenage guide to boost happiness and resilience. Penny Alexander, Becky Goddard-Hill (Nonfiction)

This positive and insightful guide gives you the tools to build your confidence, eliminate negative feelings and boost happiness in all areas of your life.

Being a teenager has its own unique challenges, but it's also the perfect time to shape your own mental wellbeing and happiness. Scientists reckon 40% of your happiness is within your control, that's A LOT of happiness and this book will help you to harness it...

There are tons of ideas to try from creating an anxiety toolkit, to planning a digital detox and meditating, plus you'll learn the science behind why they work. Carry out the activities by yourself or with family and friends and take your happiness into your own hands! Link: [goodreads](#)



Library Hours

Monday to Thursday: 8.15am-4.30pm
Open at morning break, lunch break **and** after school
Friday: 8.15am - 4pm

Book Club Wednesday after school
Chess Club Tuesday lunchtime



Reading Challenge

Available to all year groups.

Check out the posters in the library and around the school or talk to Mrs HG and the Library helpers.

This month's winners:

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

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

ARBOR Parental Information Verification



Please could we ask all parents to log onto their ARBOR accounts to ensure that you still have access to the system.

Once on the system, please check that the information that we hold is correct and up to date for each child that you have at the school. If it is not then please make any changes that are needed directly on the system.

If you are unable to make changes or would like some help then please email the school Arbor Support team on:

Arbor@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

Mrs Defew

Dates for your Diary



29 September - Year 9 Information Evening

1 October - Year 8 Information Evening

2 October - Year 8 & 9 Youth SVP Sleepover

6 October - Year 10 Information Evening

8 October - Lunchtime Careers Talk "Here I am, Lord - Don't Send Me!" with Fr. Dick. All Welcome

8 October - InterHouse Sports Day

9 October - PD Day

20 October - Sixth Form Information Evening

[Term Dates](#)

Contact Us



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