

St Benedict's Newsletter 344

5 November 2026

Catholic Social Teaching

This week our focus is on the Catholic Social Teaching theme of Dignity of Work and Participation. This theme reminds us that everyone has gifts, talents and abilities that are valuable. Work is not simply about earning money or completing tasks; it gives us opportunities to develop who we are, contribute to our community and make a positive difference to the lives of others.

In school, this is reflected in the effort we put into our learning, the responsibilities we take on and the opportunities we choose to get involved in. Whether it is completing homework, participating in lessons, helping someone else or taking part in an extracurricular activity, everything we do gives us an opportunity to grow and contribute.

St Paul reminds us in a letter to the Colossians 3:23 “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.” This Scripture encourages us to approach everything we do with commitment and purpose. It is not about always being the best or getting

everything right. It is about making the most of the opportunities we have, putting in our best effort and recognising that our contribution matters.

St John Paul II explored this in his encyclical Laborem Exercens (Through Work), writing: “Work is a good thing for man — a good thing for his humanity.” He reminds us that through work we develop our abilities and become more fully ourselves. Our value, however, is never measured simply by our achievements. Every person's contribution has dignity and worth.

We can show that we are living this out through simple ways;

- Wisdom: Making the most of learning opportunities, take responsibility for your progress and think about how you can use your abilities positively.
- Compassion: Valuing the contributions of others. Encouraging those around you, offer help when someone is struggling and remember that everyone's efforts deserve respect.
- Resilience: Keep trying when learning becomes difficult. Be prepared to make mistakes, learn from them and put in the effort needed to improve.

This week, take a moment to consider and ask yourself Am I making the most of the opportunities I have been given? Do I put effort into my work, even when it is challenging? How can I use my gifts and talents to help others? Do I recognise and value the contributions other people make?

Our challenge is to remember that every contribution matters. We do not all have the same talents, but we all have something to offer. By making the most of our opportunities and using our gifts to support others, we help ourselves and our community to flourish.

Lord of all, you have graced us with many different skills and talents.

Using these many gifts,

may we work together

each in our own special way

respecting everyone's contribution

to build up Christ's body

grounded in faith, hope and love.

Amen.

Reading Week

Reading Week 2nd-6th November 2026

This week has been the first Reading Week of the new academic year. As part of the National Year of Reading campaign, the government is giving schools money to buy books to encourage reading for pleasure. St Benedict's has been given £1,300 to spend and we wanted students to have a say on which books to buy. So, we ran a book ballot, where each tutor group got the chance to submit suggestions for books they want to buy for the library.

On Thursday, all students in Years 8 and 9 attended an author talk by local, award-winning author, Ashley Hickson-Lovence, this was followed by a creative writing workshop for some keen writers in Years 9-11.

Author Visit – Ashley Hickson-Lovence

"When life's off-track, put pen to paper and find your way back"

This is a relatively famous quote by the author Dr. Ashley Hickson-Lovence, who came into St. Benedicts on Thursday 5th November. Hickson-Lovence has written many books, such as *392* and *Your Show* for adults and *Wild East* for young adults. These have been both awarded and nominated for numerous awards.

Students in years 8 and 9 attended a talk by Hickson-Lovence after lunch. Hickson-Lovence talked about his life and therefore some of his inspiration for characters and plots. He said that the best stories are the ones with a balance of hardships and heartwarming. He discussed his common use of free-verse poetry for his narratives, and the notion of writing from the heart. Hickson-Lovence also told us about the difficulties he had been through getting published and how he worked on his first book whilst having a job, and although it took five years, he managed to achieve his goal of seeing his book in a shop. This was then followed by some questions, revealing one of his favourite authors to be Benjamin Zephaniah. The person to ask him the best question was then presented with a prize of a free signed copy of his book!

After the talk, a group of students selected from years 9, 10 and 11 had the opportunity to attend a workshop led by Hickson-Lovence in the library. There we took part in multiple activities in which we practiced free-verse writing with short lines and writing about what we saw in a picture then delving deeper. Although I personally found this more difficult than my usual style of writing, it was a very interesting and fun experience. We were also given some tips on writing, such as you can't leave a blank page, because then there is nothing to go off of and improve. I found the afternoon highly enjoyable and a great chance to improve my writing techniques.

Amelia Selfoss 9L

Raffle Prizes

As you are aware, we are collaborating with the Bury St Edmunds Youth Concert Band for a concert on Sunday 13th December 4PM-5PM, followed by refreshments.

All money raised will be split evenly between supporting the youth band, and our global charity Children and Families in Need in Zimbabwe (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN NEED IN ZIMBABWE - Home).

To help raise further support, we are seeking some raffle prizes. If you think you have anything suitable, please could you provide to the office, for the care of Mr Kevin Murphy ref. Concert Raffle.

If you wish for your child to participate, please complete the form link Christmas Concert 13th December 2026 – Fill in form.

Best wishes,

Mrs Hamilton

The Jab Bus

Today saw a first for us at school with a visit from the *Jab Bus*. When we were told a bus would be arriving, we were picturing something a little larger than the small van that eventually pulled up!

The immunisation team had the mammoth task of administering flu vaccinations, via nasal spray, to almost 600 students. As you can imagine, coordinating an operation of this scale is no small feat and requires a great deal of planning and organisation behind the scenes. Thankfully, the weather stayed on our side and the rain held off for the day.

We are delighted to report that the majority of vaccinations were completed , thanks to the hard work, efficiency, and professionalism of the team involved.

A huge thank you goes to everyone who helped make the day run so smoothly. Staff were busy throughout the day escorting and supervising students, ensuring everything remained calm and well organised. It was a fantastic team effort and a great example of our school community working together to support the health and wellbeing of our students.

Well done to everyone involved!



Charity Non-Uniform Days

I can not believe we are mentioning Christmas already but here we are and it will soon be upon us. It is a St Benedict's tradition that for the 3 Fridays in December we hold non-uniform days to raise essential funds for 3 charities, St Nicholas Hospice, CAFOD and Children and Families in Zimbabwe.

Friday 4 December - Christmas Jumpers for St Nicholas Hospice About us - St Nicholas Hospice Care website

Friday 11 December - Pyjamas for CAFOD CAFOD - Catholic international development charity

Friday 18 December - Sparkly for Children and Families in Zimbabwe CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN NEED IN ZIMBABWE - Home

We thank you as always for your support and generosity.

St Benedict's Hardship Fund



Newmarket and Kirtling Parish



St Edmunds Church News



Homestay Hosts



Parish Contact Details



Is your child a Young Carer?

Suffolk Family Carers
Living Fuller Lives

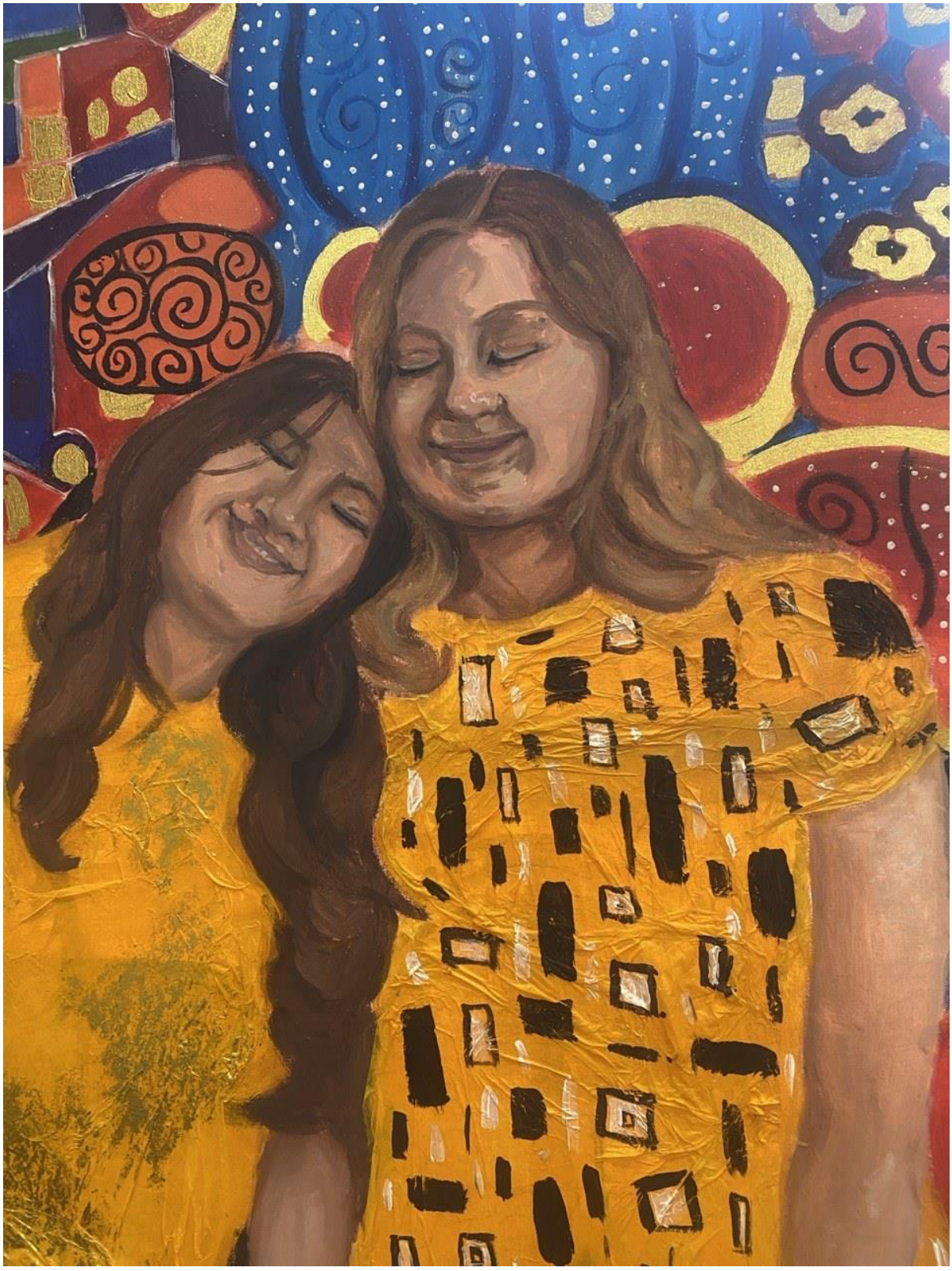
Young Carers
Young Adult Carers

A young carer is a child or young person aged between 5 to 25 years old whose life is in some way different or restricted because they provide, or intend to provide, practical or emotional support to someone else.

The person they provide care for is often a parent, a relative who is physically or mentally ill, frail elderly, disabled or misuses alcohol or substances. Young carers could also be supporting and caring for a disabled brother or sister.

If you think your child is a Young Carer, please call Ms Bourne on 01284 753512 to discuss, or contact Suffolk Young Carers directly at www.suffolkfamilycarers.org or 01473 835477

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



9 November - year 13 Mocks start

10 November - Year 8 Parents Evening

12 November - Year 11 Mocks start

18 November - BAE Roadshow year 7 & 8

25 November - Year 13 Parents Evening

26 November - Year 12 & 13 London Trip

27 November - PD DAY - students not expected in school

Term Dates

Contact Us



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