

# INSPIRE • ACHIEVE • SERVE

## John F Kennedy Catholic School

12th September 2025



### Saint Carlo Acutis 7th September 2025



During the past two years I have spoken in assemblies about Carlo Acutis. He was lined up to be the first millennial saint in the Catholic Church, and last Sunday a canonisation ceremony took place at the Vatican, for Carlo, a normal teenager who developed at a young age a devotion to going to Mass each day and receiving the Eucharist, and going on to build websites to spread Catholic teaching, earning him the nickname “God’s Influencer” after his death, aged 15, from leukaemia. Also made a saint on Sunday was Pier Giorgio Frassati, another young Catholic activist who died a century ago. I hope Carlo can be an inspiration to our students for his commitment to his faith. On the Year 11 and Year 13 leavers’ days in the summer I referred to Blessed Carlo Acutis, as he was known then, and I shared one of his famous quotes: **All people are born as originals but many die as photocopies.** I went on to reflect on this quote: Perhaps this resonates with what we see today? A teenage culture that often makes young people feel that they need to fit in, with certain fashion trends - clothes, hairstyles, behaviours influenced by social media. But the fact is, we are all different - as our Catholic faith states quite clearly: each of us a unique individual, known and loved by God and with a part to play in God’s dream for the world; all with our different gifts and talents, interests, likes/dislikes - in other words, all originals. The one thing that I have always liked about JFK is the fact that everyone can be who they want to be - because of a culture of acceptance and welcome. This in turn makes for a strong community, for which JFK has always had a great reputation.

For me, one of the measures of success of our school is seen in the reaction of past students when meeting staff. So last Saturday I was plodding round my Park Run course when I passed another runner, who turned to me and said hello - he is one of the ASCAT Directors, who I have got to know over the past couple of years. A quick chat about being back at school and he wished me well, as I slowly moved ahead of him, only to hear a voice saying, “Hello sir, I thought I recognised that voice!” There was a male ex JFK student, who I recognised instantly. “Sasha’s right behind you as well” he said. I turned my head to see another familiar face. After a brief exchange I moved on ahead, pleased to be focusing all my energy on running rather than conversation. About 10 minutes later, following a last exertion of effort, I crossed the finish line, and immediately heard another voice say, “I kept up with you Mr Neves - that must be a pb for me!” There, finishing directly behind me was Aileen, a student who left JFK some 10 years ago, and who I have seen at Park Run before. Having logged my finishers token I chatted to the pair of runners I had passed earlier. They were so happy to chat about what they’ve been up to since leaving JFK, which was only a couple of years ago. It didn’t end there. Walking back to the cafe and the post-run coffee ritual, Aileen was stood with another female runner, who smiled and waved, and guess what...?... was another former JFK student. The coincidence in seeing these people is one thing, but for me, the lovely thing is their happiness to chat and the enthusiasm they show when asking about how things are at JFK. I know that many colleagues have experienced a similar reception from past students. I am grateful to all the staff who develop the positive relationships that make for our strong JFK community.



## SAINT CARLO ACUTIS

### Prayer for the intercession of Saint Carlo Acutis

O God our Father,  
we thank you for giving us Carlo,  
a model of life for young people,  
and a message of love for all.  
You made him fall in love with your son Jesus,  
making the Eucharist his "highway to heaven."  
You gave him Mary as a beloved mother,  
and you made him, through the Rosary,  
a cantor of her tenderness.  
Receive his prayer for us.  
Look above all upon the poor, whom he loved and assisted.  
Grant us too, through his intercession, the grace  
that we need for a successful school year.  
And make our joy full, raising Carlo among  
the saints of your Church,  
so that his smile shines again for us  
to the glory of your name. Amen.

"To always be  
close to Jesus,  
that is  
my life plan."

—  
VENERABLE CARLO ACUTIS

**Mr Neves - Headteacher**



## MEET SOME OF OUR NEW STAFF



### Ms Rooney

Hello, my name is Ms Rooney, and I am absolutely delighted to be joining Team PE at JFK.

Over 20 years, both in the UK and abroad, I have had the privilege to see the incredible impact that PE can have on young people. PE has always been more than just a subject to me, it's a chance to inspire resilience, teamwork, and a lifelong love of movement. I'm passionate about creating lessons that are inclusive, exciting, and motivating, where every student feels they can achieve and enjoy.

Whether competitive sport, fitness, or discovering new activities, I love helping young people find their spark and realise their potential. I can't wait to share my passion with students, work closely with colleagues, and contribute to our school community.

### Mr Fan

Hello! My name is Mr Fan, and I'm excited to join the team at John F Kennedy Catholic School as a Science and Mathematics teacher.

I've been teaching for more than 15 years, and I'm passionate about creating a positive, engaging learning environment where all students can thrive. I hope my students can love learning Science and Mathematics.



### Miss Turner

Hello! My name is Miss Turner, and I'm excited to be joining John F Kennedy Catholic School this year as a PE teacher. Alongside teaching PE, I'll also be teaching the GCSE Dance course – something I'm particularly passionate about. Dance has been a significant part of my life for many years, and I'm excited to share my experience, creativity, and love for the subject with all the students. I'm really looking forward to being involved in the school's annual gym and dance show to showcase the students' talent and hard work. With a background that combines both competitive sport and performance, I'm looking forward to supporting all students to do their best – whether that's on the field, in the gym, or in the studio. I'm excited to join the JFK community and look forward to getting to know all the students. Here's to a fantastic year ahead!



## SCIENCE

### The JFK - Southampton University Bean Growing Project



We are currently undertaking some research in collaboration with Professor Mark Chapman from the University of Southampton. As part of a large project on climate change and food security, he wants to find out which beans grow best across the UK; and thus we are working with almost 100 schools spanning the whole of the UK, from Jersey in the south up to Fife in the North.

We were sent 6 different species of beans and peas, ranging from the common garden pea to the more exotic Lablab and chickpea. They were planted on the 14th May and we've been watering them and recording data on how the plants have developed since that date.

Maizie Bevan and family looked after the plants at home over summer and continued to gather data; the plants will be returning to school soon! We look forward to contributing our results and hearing the conclusions from the nationwide data collection. If you're interested to find out more follow the link: <https://research.soton.ac.uk/sotonbeans/blog-posts/>



Welcome to the Brilliant Beans Squad!

Your mission: to discover which beans grow best. You will photograph to track and measure! Like all good scientists, you'll need to record and share your findings. For every different type of bean you grow, record the date you sowed them and the date of every time you water, how many water, (pouring a bucket is good!) and how many.

Share your findings! Once you have completed your findings, email them to [science@jfk.ac.uk](mailto:science@jfk.ac.uk) or upload them to the online Bean Growing Project website.

Bean/Pea	1st planted my seeds	My seeds have sprouted	My plant has grown a leaf	My plant has 4 leaves	My plant has a pod
Broad Bean	Date: 14/5/2015	Date: 23/5/2015	Date: 26/5/2015	Date: 28/5/2015	Date: 14/6/2015
Chickpea	Date: 14/5/2015	Date: 23/5/2015	Date: 26/5/2015	Date: 28/5/2015	Date: 30/6/2015
French Bean	Date: 14/5/2015	Date: 23/5/2015	Date: 26/5/2015	Date: 28/5/2015	Date: 16/6/2015
Lablab	Date: 14/5/2015	Date: 23/5/2015	Date: 26/5/2015	Date: 28/5/2015	Date: N/A
Lentil	Date: 14/5/2015	Date: 23/5/2015	Date: 26/5/2015	Date: 28/5/2015	Date: 17/6/2015
Pea	Date: 14/5/2015	Date: 23/5/2015	Date: 26/5/2015	Date: 28/5/2015	Date: 20/6/2015

Test your soil's pH before you plant! Did you know that your soil is full of life? There is a microscopic world under the soil, and for these tiny organisms to live they need healthy soil. A good way to work this out is to test how acidic or alkaline your soil is with pH paper. For your seeds to get the best start possible, you'll want your soil to be between 5 and 8. Let's get testing!

- Take a teaspoon of soil and mix it with 100ml of water.
- Dip the pH paper strip (you'll find it in your growing kit) in the muddy mixture to test the paper.
- Wait one minute for your strip to change colour.
- Match the colour of your paper strip to the colour on the pH scale. Record the pH number that matches your colour on your chart.

My soil is: 7

Soil is best for beans and peas when it is: 7

Royal Society of Biology | University of Southampton | Winchester School Centre | Wonderschools





## SIXTH FORM

### Experiencing Prime Ministers Questions



One of our Year 12 students, Emilia, recently had the incredible opportunity to attend Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) in the House of Commons.

They described the visit as *"the best experience and one that has only strengthened my desire to be more involved in politics and the world around me."*

The day began with entry through Cromwell Green, where they received a visitor's badge and passed through security. After walking through the historic Westminster Hall, they collected a special Galley West ticket, which provided a front-row seat to watch proceedings in the Commons.

Before the session began, students witnessed the traditional procession of the Speaker, before being ushered in to observe the 45-minute debate. The session was described as *fast-paced, exhilarating, and inspiring, offering a first-hand look at the debating style of Members of Parliament and the Prime Minister himself.*

After the proceedings, Emilia had the chance to meet David Taylor, MP for our constituency, and even took a photograph with him to mark the occasion.

They concluded: *"I thoroughly enjoyed it and am very thankful for the opportunity."*

**Mr Wainman – Sixth Form Team**





## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



Congratulations to Thomas, Liam and Lily Kelly who on Saturday 2nd of August walked 31.5 miles from Windsor castle to Buckingham palace and raised just over £5400 for cancer research. An incredible achievement, well done!



Congratulations to Summer Bradbury (centre) who has been placed 4th in wakeboard and 5th in wakeskate at Europeans in Poland during the summer holidays. Summer has also become double UK champion in wakeskate and wakeboarding.



## LIBRARY

**Welcome Back!**



We've had a fantastic start to the new term with keen borrowers borrowing over 100 books already!

Each break and lunch the Library has been visited by many of the new Year 7s as well as familiar faces from the older year groups. I'm always keen to see newcomers from all years!

A very keen and able set of Library Ambassadors began their duties this week so it was great to see them in action, assisting with issuing and returning books, shelving books and answering students' questions. I know they will be a fantastic help as the Library becomes busier during the Autumn term.

It was great to have Mr Sibbald back on Friday lunch time reading to students. Other teachers have expressed an interest too so there will be plenty of opportunities for the students to enjoy some fantastic books this year.

If your child is new to the school and hasn't visited the Library yet, do encourage them to visit.

**Mrs Powell - Librarian**

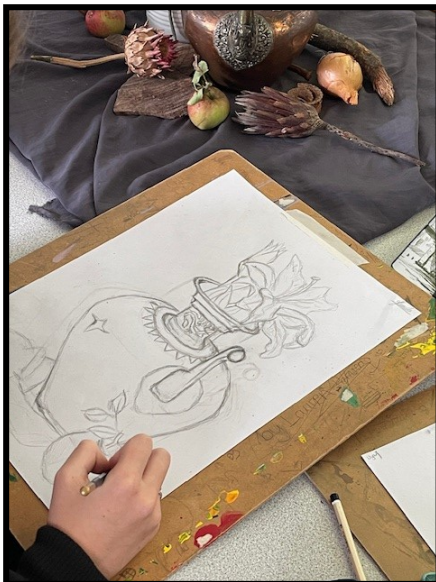


## ART

### Year 10 GCSE



The Year 10 Art students have made a fantastic start to their GCSE course this week. During their first lesson they have been drawing still life displays from observation which forms part of the Growth and Decay coursework unit.



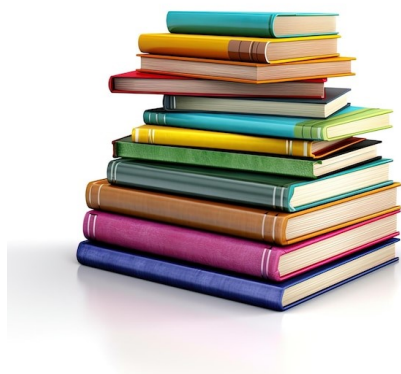


## ENGLISH



Students in Years 7-11 have been completing their start of year SparxReader test. This gives us a measure of their current reading age and allows SparxReader to tailor their reading more fully. Regular homeworks have now started for Key Stage 3 classes, with an increased number of points in Year 8 and 9 this year; this reflects the time they have in form time to complete some reading. Students are asked to complete 30-45 minutes of careful, accurate reading each week, with Sparx assessing their comprehension with regular questions. Students will benefit from a quiet space to complete this work, and should remember that rushing often means they will get answers wrong and therefore take longer to earn their points. Regular reading helps students to improve their skills and make progress towards the sort of demands which will be made of them at GCSE.

Thank you for all of the support we know you give your children with this!



**Miss Bullen – English Department**



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday 15th September - Year 8 Information Evening, 6pm Hall  
Tuesday 16th September - Year 9 Information Evening, 6pm Hall  
Wednesday 17th September - Year 10 Information Evening, 6pm Hall  
Tuesday 23rd September, A Level Geography Field Trip  
Tuesday 23rd September - Berlin Parent Information Evening, 6pm Hall  
Wednesday 24th September - Year 11 Careers Fair

## WE ARE HIRING!

[Click here for the latest vacancy information](#)



## FUTURE DATES

Tuesday 7th October, Open Evening , 6pm – 9pm  
Wednesday 8th October - INSET Day, School Closed to students  
Thursday 9th October, Year 7 Welcome Mass, 7pm Hall  
Monday 15th October , Open Morning, 9.30am  
Thursday 23rd October, Year 13 Consultation Evening, 4pm  
Monday 27th October - Friday 31st October, Half Term  
Thursday 6th November, Sixth Form Open Evening, 6pm



## GOVERNOR RECRUITMENT

# All Saints Catholic Academy Trust

The All Saints Catholic Academy Trust (ASCAT) is currently seeking to recruit Governors for a number of our Schools local Governing Boards, across the Trust, to ensure high standards of achievement for all children and young people in the school by setting the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction; holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

The Trust has vacancies for Foundation Governors; Co-opted Governors and Community Governors. This is an exciting opportunity to play a role in a vibrant and collaborative Trust that is in the process of expansion and development.

The role of Governor is incredibly rewarding and the benefits include:

- **Professional development**
- **Supporting the local and wider Catholic community**
- **Gaining insight into the Education Sector**
- **Management & Leadership experience**
- **Being able to have a significant impact on the Schools in the Trust**
- **Build your professional and personal network**

If you are interested in supporting our schools and Trust please contact Christina Reffold, Director of Governance and Compliance at [governance@ascat.co.uk](mailto:governance@ascat.co.uk) or complete the below form.

<https://forms.gle/9XHc98pgQCjgNfG7A>



## TRIPS 2025 – 2026

**"A Gentle  
Reminder"**

***Monthly Instalments are due on the 1st of each month for the following:***

Berlin, October 2025

Ski Trip, February 2026

Valencia 2026

Taste of Italy, February 2026

***Upcoming trips :***

Year 7 Retreats, September

Year 11 Careers Fair

DofE Bronze

Panto , December 2025 - New Year 7

Punch Years 10, 12 and 13 Drama

Matilda, November 2025, Year 8

Back to the Future, January 2026, Year 9





## ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS 2025

At John F Kennedy Catholic school, we believe that student performance, behaviour and attendance are fundamentally linked. Our ethos is to maximise the full potential of each student and in order to achieve this, high attendance rates are essential.

**Our expectation is that individual student attendance should not be below 95%.**

Section 7 of The Education Act states that 'parents are responsible for making sure that their children, of compulsory school age, receive a suitable full time education'.

Section 444 of The Education Act clearly states that 'if a child is absent without authorisation, then the parent is guilty of an offence'. This is a strict liability offence - i.e. all that needs to be shown is a lack of regular attendance. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £1000.

### Holidays during Term time

Authorisation of absence for Holidays during term time is at the discretion of the Headteacher and is granted only in exceptional circumstances.

Fines are enforceable for a child being absent from school without permission. This is currently £80 per child for each parent, rising to £160 if paid after 21 days.

### Lateness

As stated in the school Attendance Policy:

- Students should attend school "full time" and they should remain in school attending all timetabled lessons. This means that students should arrive in time for registration. In practice school buses may be late and in this case students should sign in at Reception so they can receive their mark.
- Avoidable lateness beyond 10.00 am constitutes unauthorised absence and can legally be the basis of an offence by the parent/carer
- Those students who arrive very late (after 10.00 am) without a good excuse will not be credited with an attendance. Their absence will therefore be unauthorised and a different mark (U) will be used to distinguish them from those who are "unpunctual". Steps will be taken by the school with the support of parents/carers to correct those students who are persistently unpunctual



## GENERAL NOTICES



### Home School Agreement

Further to Mr Neves' letter on 5th September 2025, Parents and carers are requested to sign the home-school agreement, which can be found following this [link](#).

In relation to behaviour, by signing the home-school agreement, this confirms your understanding of what we expect of behaviour in school and that you will support the school's approach to managing behaviour.



**St Cuthbert Mayne**  
Catholic Junior School

### St Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Junior School Open Evening

Open Evening for prospective parents and children on **Tuesday, 11th November 2025, from 6.00pm to 7.00pm** at St Cuthbert Mayne School.

If your child does not currently attend St Rose's, we kindly ask that you email [admin@cuthbertmayne.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@cuthbertmayne.herts.sch.uk) to confirm your attendance.



## GENERAL NOTICES

### Road Safety

Parents/Carers are reminded about the importance of road safety and we highlight a number of points you may wish to discuss with your child:

- The importance of crossing the road at a safe place. Using either a zebra or pelican crossing where possible
- Avoid crossing behind parked cars
- Never run out into the road
- Be aware of your surroundings – take out earphones and stop talking with friends or on the phone when crossing the road
- Have reflective items on jackets or bag.
- If cycling, follow the same instruction and make sure you have lights on your bike and wear a helmet at all times.



### Disabled Parking Zones

Please can we ask that the disabled parking bays located along Hollybush Lane be kept clear . They are marked on the path and are needed to be accessed by local residents.



JFK enjoys good relationships with our neighbours and local community. Please be mindful of driveways and access in Hollybush Lane and neighbouring roads if dropping off/picking up your child from school. **Please also try and avoid leaving your car engines running outside of school.**



## GENERAL NOTICES

### Appointments During School

Please try to avoid making medical appointments during the school day. If this is not possible, please alert the Year Team via email with a copy of the appointment letter/email/screenshot at least 24 hours in advance.

If your child does need to leave for a pre-arranged medical appointment please ensure that they are aware of the time and date of the appointment and are instructed to be ready in reception to be collected. There have been a number of occasions recently whereby the office staff have had to search for a student in order for them to be picked up.

### Illness During the School Day

We have seen an increase in students calling parents prior to seeking medical attention at school. Any student feeling unwell during the school day should report to Student Services where they will be seen by a medically trained member of staff. Please do impress upon your children the importance of the school contacting home if it is required during the school day. It can cause parents unnecessary worry which we would like to avoid.

#### ABSENCE

If your son/daughter is going to be absent due to illness please telephone the school absence line by 9.00am on each day of absence.

Year 7 01442 229105 (year7@jfk.herts.sch.uk)  
Year 8 01442 229124 (year8@jfk.herts.sch.uk)  
Year 9 01442 229131 (year9@jfk.herts.sch.uk)  
Year 10 01442 229132 (year10@jfk.herts.sch.uk)  
Year 11 01442 229136 (year11@jfk.herts.sch.uk)  
Sixth Form 01442 229137 (6thform@jfk.herts.sch.uk)

Students should bring a letter explaining their absence on their return to school.



Public Health  
England

### Guidance from Public Health England

Diarrhoea and vomiting: exclusion period: whilst symptomatic  
and 48hours after the last symptoms



[Is my child too ill for school?](#)

NHS advice about when to keep your child off school



## Parent & Carer Support TALKING ASD & ADHD Workshops Autumn 2025



Workshops are FREE to parents and carers living in [Hertfordshire](#) of children aged 2-25yrs with suspected or diagnosed Autistic Spectrum Disorder and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

← [Eventbrite Page](#)

### RESPONDING to ANGER



- Healthy & unhealthy anger.
- How to spot the signs early.
- Our own and our children's triggers.
- Techniques that stop angry and aggressive behaviour escalating and when to use them.
- How to respond to our child in meltdown, keeping ourselves, our child and siblings safe.

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 9.30-11.15am**  
Workshop SL781 book via Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/asd-adhd-responding-to-anger-781-for-parentscarers-in-herts-registration-1413258727899?aff=oddtcreator>

### THE TEENAGE YEARS



- Teenage brain development and how it affects a child with ASD/ADHD.
- Reducing conflict by learning how to respond effectively to difficult situations.
- How to agree appropriate boundaries and teach risk assessment.
- Help teens develop independence skills.

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> October, 7.30-9.15pm**  
Workshop SL782 book via Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/talking-asd-adhd-the-teenage-years-782-for-parentscarers-in-herts-registration-1417376895449?aff=oddtcreator>

### SCHOOL AVOIDANCE



- What is Emotionally Based School Avoidance and is this what your child is experiencing?
- Common causes and triggers of school avoidance.
- How EBSA is affecting you and your family.
- Practical steps you can take to support your child and look after yourself.
- How to work with your school in your child's best interests.

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 7.30-9.15pm**  
Workshop SL783 book via Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/talking-asd-adhd-school-avoidance-783-for-parentscarers-in-herts-registration-1417463965879?aff=oddtcreator>

### TECH USE



- Keep your child safe online.
- Help your child to switch their device off.
- Support behaviour difficulties when playing.
- The effect of using devices as a reward or consequence.
- Teach children to develop their own methods of regulating device use and staying safe.

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November, 7.30-9.15pm**  
Workshop SL784 book via Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/talking-asd-adhd-tech-use-784-for-parentscarers-in-herts-registration-1417436894909?aff=oddtcreator>

Follow us on:



Contact via:

[info@supportinglinks.co.uk](mailto:info@supportinglinks.co.uk)  
[www.supportinglinks.co.uk](http://www.supportinglinks.co.uk)

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