

INSPIRE • ACHIEVE • SERVE

John F Kennedy Catholic School

12th December 2025



“Repent!”



Last Sunday's Gospel reading began:

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight." '

Thus, on this Second Sunday of Advent, we were presented with a continuation of the theme of preparation as we journey towards Christmas. This rather eccentric character, John the Baptist, lived in the desert and 'wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey'. Nevertheless, he drew huge numbers of people 'from Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan' with a compelling message, delivered with passion and absolute clarity. These people were flocking to him to be baptised and to commit to a renewed life in the family of God.

In the spring we will be launching the next Year 9 options process. Students will be asked to start thinking about the GCSE courses they wish to follow in KS4 and ultimately they will have 3 option choices to make. The advice they will be given will be to consider the needs of future careers or future A level choices and to choose subjects they enjoy. Another clear piece of advice will be not to choose a subject because of the teacher they have now or who they think will be teaching them in Year 10. That's because there is no guarantee they will be taught by that teacher - there are so many factors to consider when planning a school timetable. As members of staff providing guidance, we rightly want students to play to their strengths and future interests and we play down the importance of who will be delivering the teaching. However, we do understand that the power of an individual's example is of supreme importance to *us* in *our* adult lives. For instance, a politician's passionate address in a party political broadcast, or a particularly engaging homily by a priest at church.

Just as we look to inspirational people in our lives, so too do our students. My vision for JFK is that we have a fantastic staff who will inspire our students in their understanding and support for the Catholic ethos of our school, demonstrating the key values of our Mission Statement and helping to instil those values in our students. And that begins in the classroom, with engaging lessons, delivered with expertise and passion, and support for all to achieve their own success. That is central to our drive to keep teaching and learning at the centre of our school development. Our recent whole school analysis of the classroom experience of our students shows excellent progress in this respect and classrooms are overwhelmingly places of purposeful work, successful outcomes and the building of community. Unfortunately for Year 9, that makes the options process even harder!

Let us pray for our school community

Merciful God, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the people for the coming of your Son, Jesus. In this season of Advent, help us to prepare for his coming as well. Help us to use this time of waiting to make positive changes in our lives and the lives of others in our communities. We make this prayer through Christ,



DRAMA

Year 8 Matilda Trip



On 26th November, Year 8 had the wonderful opportunity to see Matilda the Musical at the Cambridge Theatre London. They were amazed by the stage and how desks, chairs and platforms of books rose in and out of the stage, whilst the horrifying chokey imprisoned them all with a series of laser lights on the stage and through the audience.

They cheered when Boris Bogtrotter defeated Miss Trunchbull's challenge and ate the remaining chocolate cake and were intrigued as to how this had been managed theatrically. The students clapped and sang along with the cast with the Revolting Children song ridding everyone of Miss Trunchbull and having the Headteacher replaced by the kind and more fearless Miss Honey. They giggled at Rudolpho and Mrs Wormwood's Strictly moments and enjoyed the interval insert led by Mr Wormwood and his TV addict son.

Year 8 were real ambassadors for JFK with members of the public, sitting amongst them, remarking on how good it was to see young people at the theatre and clearly excited and enjoying the show.

Many thanks to colleagues who chaperoned and a special thanks to Mr Neves who allowed us out for this enrichment opportunity with Year 8, which complements their storytelling genre scheme for learning, and for joining us on this trip.

Ms Brewer - Drama Department



DRAMA

Playwright Visit



The Year 12 and 13 English and Drama students had a wonderful morning working alongside a professional playwright: Brian Mullen on 19th November in the Library. The school has again been successful in being selected to be part of this national playwriting competition in which students are encouraged to use writing plays as a vehicle through which to express their ideas, passions and concerns.

In previous years we have entered 17 one act plays and have always had at least one act being put forward to the national competition and gaining a Highly Commended. No mean feat when competing against 400 other schools!

This year we have a small cohort who are excited to work with Brian who used a number of writing approaches to encourage them to find their voice and to write their ideas down. He spoke of 'vomiting your ideas' and to try to write regularly about anything. Also to carry a notebook and to note snippets of conversations you have over heard .

The drama students will continue to meet regularly with Miss Bullen and Ms Brewer and in January they will submit to Brian everything they have written. Brian will then return to spend time with each of them to support them in fashioning their ideas and give them structural insights.

We look forward to seeing what they write in this first 'draft' of ideas and will keep you updated as to how their pieces are progressing.

Ms Brewer - Drama Department



PE



Congratulations to all our Stars of Unit 3 and well done to all involved in House Dance this week. Please see our sporting photos below from this weeks events.





PE



Fixture Results

Netball

- Year 7 JFK 4 v AHS 5
- Year 7 JFK 18 v Tring 3
- Year 8 JFK 6 v Tring 26
- Year 8 JFK 5 v Ashlyns 3
- Year 10 JFK 8 v Berkhamsted 9
- Year 11 JFK 4 v Ashlyns 17

Next Weeks Fixtures

- 15/12 - Senior Netball Game v Hemel A
- 16/12 - Senior Netball Game v Tring H



WE ARE JFK PE

Miss Rooney - PE Department

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CAROL CONCERT 2025

Tickets still available!

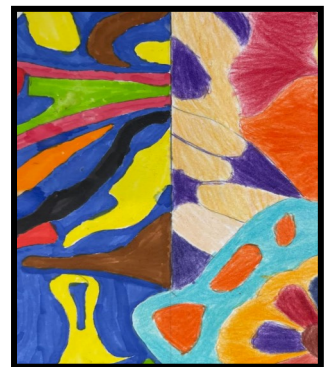
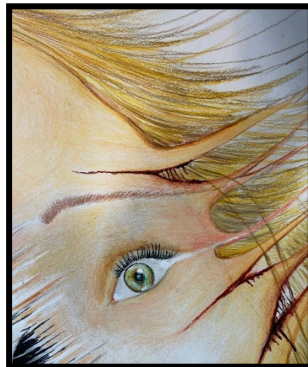
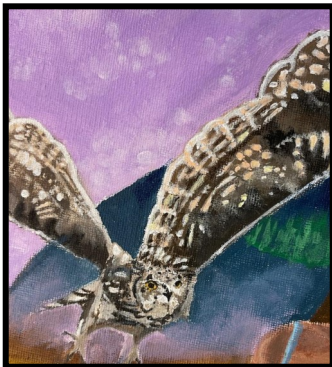
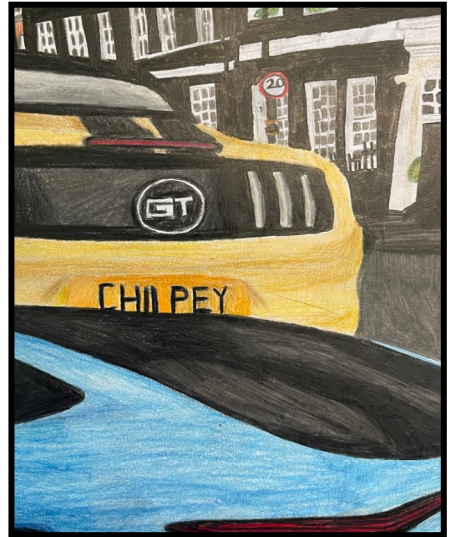
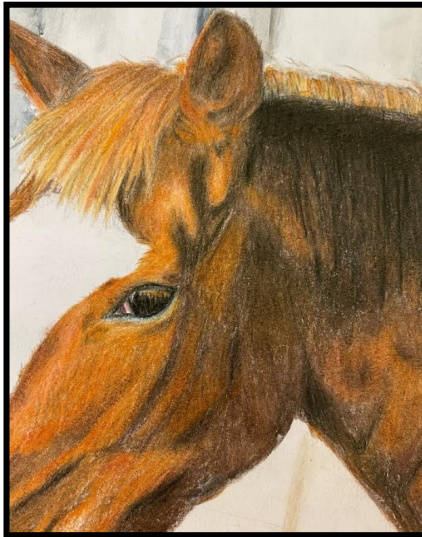
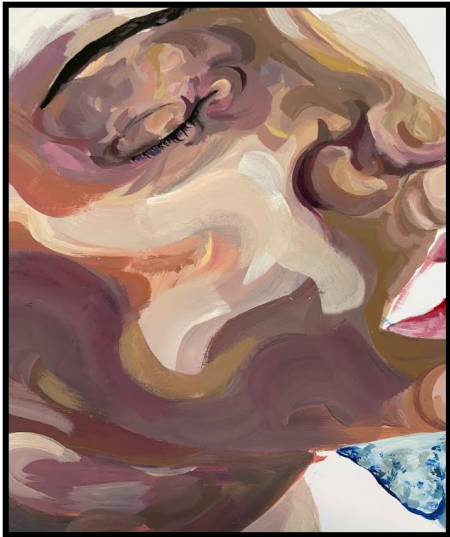


Mrs Metcalfe - Music Department



ART

Well done to our talented Year 11 Art students this week who completed their mock exams.
Some fantastic work produced.



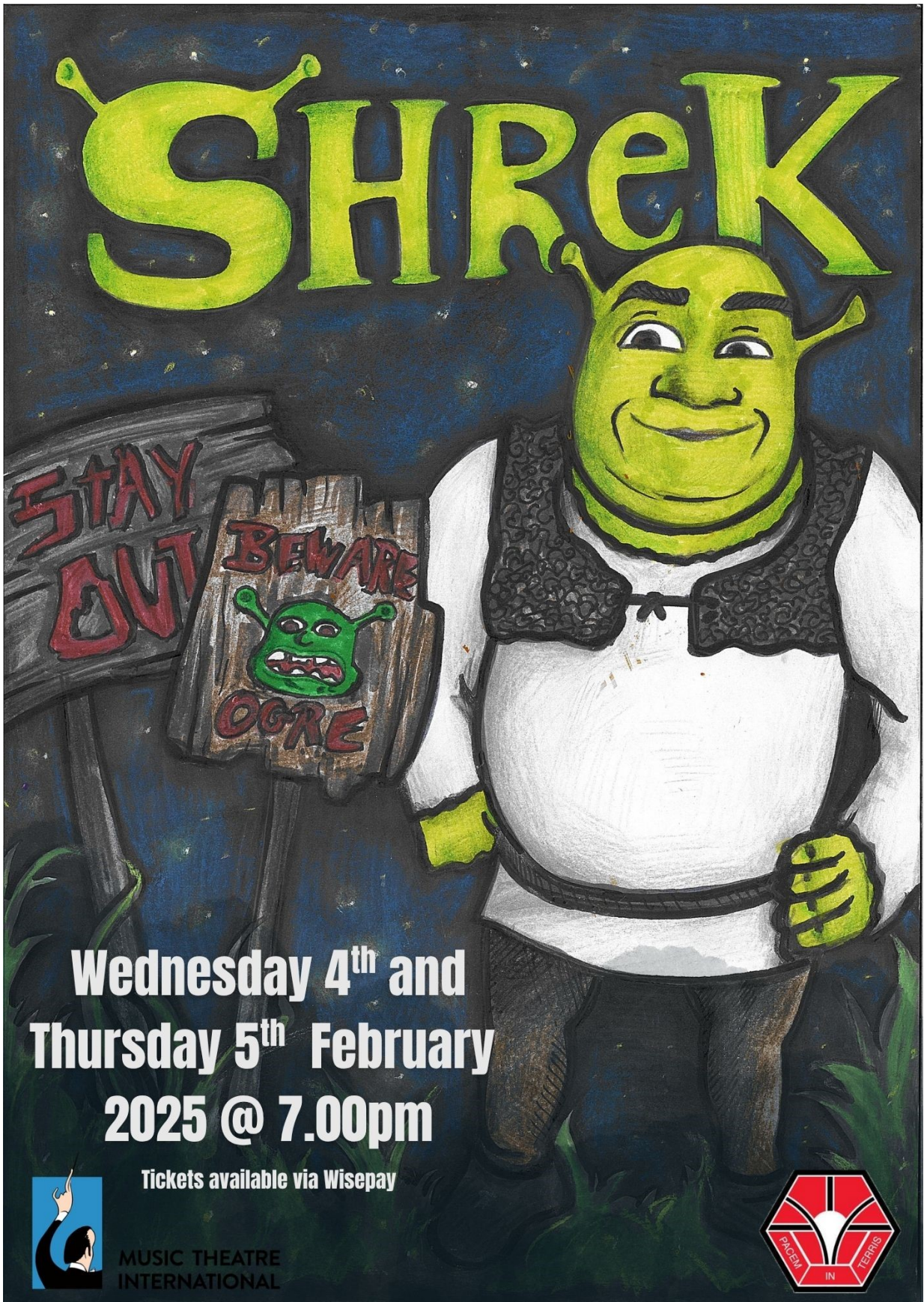
Miss Freed - Art Department

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SCHOOL PRODUCTION

SHREK



Wednesday 4th and
Thursday 5th February
2025 @ 7.00pm

Tickets available via Wisepay



MUSIC THEATRE
INTERNATIONAL





JFK CHRISTMAS TREE 2025



We are very grateful to Christmas Tree Place for donating the wonderful tree that is situated in our main Reception area. They grow all the Christmas trees on their family farm which is located just off the A41 Chesham/Berkhamsted junction - HP4 2SZ.

<http://www.christmastreeplace.co.uk/>



**CHRISTMAS TREE PLACE
BERKHAMSTED**



GROWING & SELLING SINCE 1991





TRIPS 2025 – 2026

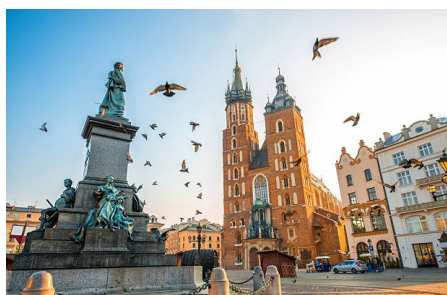
**"A Gentle
Reminder"**

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

- Ski Trip, February 2026
 - Valencia 2026
- Taste of Italy, February 2026

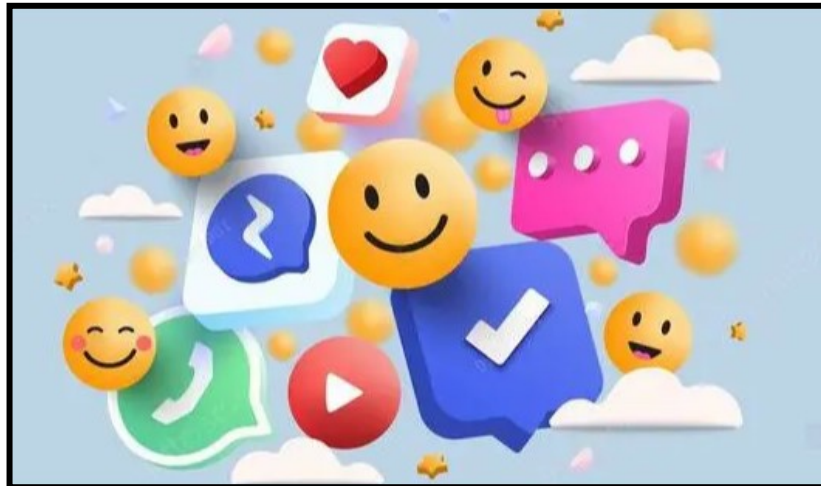
Upcoming trips :

- DofE Bronze and Silver
- Panto , December 2025 - **Year 7** , refreshments are now available to order.
 - Back to the Future, January 2026, **Year 9**
- Senso Licence , payment is due for **Years 7,8,10 and 11.**
 - Paper birds, GCSE Drama





DIGITAL SAFETY



In today's digital world, apps are part of everyday life for secondary-age children. They offer creativity, entertainment, and social connection. However, alongside the positives come risks that parents and carers should be aware of.

Understanding the risks

Many apps collect large amounts of personal data, from location details to contacts, often without children realising the implications. Others expose young people to inappropriate or harmful content, whether through unfiltered videos, anonymous chats, or user-generated posts. Bullying and harassment can also take place within these platforms, sometimes hidden from parents and carers' view.

Another concern is the presence of online predators who may disguise themselves as peers in order to exploit children. On top of this, the design of many apps can encourage overuse through constant notifications and endless scrolling which can interfere with sleep, wellbeing, and school performance.

Financial risks also exist, with in-app purchases or "loot box" style features that can tempt children into spending money without fully understanding the consequences. Some apps may even appear harmless but are designed to hide conversations or bypass parental oversight, adding another layer of complexity for families.



DIGITAL SAFETY

What parents and carers should look out for

When your child asks to download a new app, it's worth considering a few key questions. What age is the app designed for?

- Does the rating match your child's stage of maturity?
- How much personal data does it request?
- Are the privacy settings easy to control?
- Does the platform have strong moderation and reporting tools?
- What is the community culture like?

You may also want to check how easy it is to make in-app purchases and whether parental controls are built in. Exploring these factors together with your child not only helps you assess the risks but also builds digital literacy, encouraging them to think critically about the online spaces they inhabit.

A trusted resource

To make this easier, **Internet Matters** has put together a clear, parent-friendly guide to the apps and platforms most commonly used by children today. It highlights what each app does, its key features, and the potential risks to be aware of.

You can find the full guide here: [Internet Matters – Apps & Platforms \(11–16\)](#).

This resource is regularly updated, so it's a reliable way to stay informed as new platforms emerge and existing ones evolve.

The NSPCC website also contains helpful advice regarding keeping children safe online - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Practical steps you can take

The most effective safeguard is open communication. Ask your child what apps they use and why, and take time to explore those apps together. Set clear boundaries around screen time and "offline hours" such as at mealtimes or after bedtime. Encourage your child to block or report users who behave inappropriately, and make sure location sharing is switched off unless absolutely necessary.

Apps can be positive spaces where young people learn, create, and connect. But without awareness and guidance, they can also present real risks. By staying informed and keeping conversations open, parents and carers can empower children to use technology safely and responsibly.

Mrs McKenzie – Assistant Headteacher



SAFEGUARDING IN FOCUS



We're delighted to let you know that John F Kennedy Catholic School has become a member of The National College – a multi-award-winning online training provider for staff and parents.

What does this mean for you?

As part of our membership, The National College provides dedicated training and resources for parents and carers – particularly, around online safety and keeping children safe online.

Online safety advice on any topic

Of course, staff will continue to teach children about the risks online. But with the internet so readily accessible, the most effective approach to online safety needs everyone involved, including parents and carers.

That's why you've now got access to **hundreds of courses, explainer videos and online safety guides** to support your awareness of the online world. Topics range from understanding apps like TikTok and Instagram to recognising the signs of online harm and what you can do to help.

Signing up is easy

Signing up to the platform is simple. Just follow <https://v2.nationalcollege.com/enrol/john-f-kennedy-catholic-school> and complete your details. You will be asked to enrol and enter some key details. As you enter your details it is important that you sign up as a parent/carer. Once you're set up, you'll get instant access to all training and resources.

Download the app for free

Another fantastic benefit of The National College is its National Online Safety app, which you can download for free. It gives you access to all their parent and carer resources on the go, whenever you want.

You can download the National Online Safety app using the links below:

- [App store](#)
- [Google Play](#)

They're always here to help

The National College has a brilliant support team if you have any questions. Their [help centre](#) provides a comprehensive bank of answers to most FAQs, but if you still can't find the answer you're looking for, you can always get in [contact](#) with them.

Mrs McKenzie – Assistant Headteacher



UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday 15th December, Carol Concert, 7.00pm, Hall
Tuesday 16th December, Year 7 Pantomime Trip
Wednesday 17th December, Year 11 Mock Results Day
Friday 19th December, End of Term, 12.35pm

WE ARE HIRING!

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



FUTURE DATES

Monday 5th January, INSET Day, Closed to students
Tuesday 6th January, Spring Term Starts
Thursday 15th January, Year 11 Consultation Evening, 4.00pm, Hall
Friday 23rd January, JFK Day
Wednesday 4th and Thursday 5th February, School Production, 7.00pm, Hall
Tuesday 10th February, Year 9 Consultation Evening, Online



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



Consultation of St Rose's Catholic Infants School Admissions Policy

St Rose's Catholic Infants School is a part of the All Saints Catholic Academy Trust (ASCAT), and collectively we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. We are contacting all our stakeholders to inform you of our plans to make some changes to the Admissions Policy of the school for the admitting year 2027/2028.

All details regarding our admissions protocol can be found on our school website <https://www.stroses.herts.sch.uk/Key-Info/Admissions/>. If you have any questions relating to any aspect of our admissions policy, please contact Chair of Governors, by email at chair@stroses.herts.sch.uk.

Admissions Consultation 2027/28 Policy

The governing body is putting the [2027/28 Admissions Policy](#) out for consultation between 27th October 2025 and 7th December 2025.

The published admission number (PAN) for 2027-28 will be 180 and this has not changed from previous years.

The changes on which we are asking your opinion are:

- Criterion 2 applicants to provide a Certificate of Catholic Practice (CCP) to confirm children are practising Catholics
- Priority of siblings within criterion 7 - Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church

We would be pleased to receive any comments on this to Ms E Final (Clerk to Governors) at the school address or by email to efinal@jfk.herts.sch.uk by 7th December 2025.



GENERAL NOTICES

Make a Difference Where It Matters Most — Become a Foundation Governor!

Are you passionate about helping children thrive? Do you want to use your skills, values, and experience to strengthen your local community? We are looking for inspiring, committed people to join our Local Academy Councils as **Foundation Governors** — and you could be exactly who we need.

The Local Academy Council (LAC) is responsible for supporting the mission and strategic direction of the Catholic Multi Academy Trust (CMAT) at a local level. Rooted in the values and teachings of the Catholic Church, the LAC serves as a key link between the individual academy, its parish community, and the wider Trust. The primary responsibilities of the LAC include:

- **Faithful Stewardship and Ethos:** Uphold and promote the Catholic identity, values, and mission of the academy, ensuring Gospel principles guide all aspects of school life.
- **Advocacy and Governorship:** Act as advocates of the Trust's vision and strategy while serving as Governors for the local academy within the Trust, parish and wider community to build partnerships.
- **Impact and Accountability:** Provide local support and challenge to school leaders by monitoring standards, inclusion, safeguarding, and ensuring effective implementation of Trust policies.

Why this role matters:

Foundation Governors (practising Catholics) play a powerful role in shaping the future of our school. They help protect and promote our values, support our leadership team, and ensure every child has access to an excellent education. Your voice and your perspective can directly influence the school's direction, priorities, and success. There are limited spaces available for parents in their child's school.

No previous governance experience? No problem.

We welcome people from all backgrounds — what matters most is your enthusiasm, willingness to learn, and commitment to our school's ethos. Full training, guidance, and mentoring are provided.

See next page



GENERAL NOTICES

We're especially keen to hear from people who:

- Care deeply about the wellbeing and development of young people
- Share and support the school's foundation and values
- Can think strategically and ask thoughtful questions
- Bring experience from any profession or community role
- Want to make a meaningful, lasting contribution

What you'll gain:

- A rewarding leadership role with real impact
- New skills in strategy, education, finance, and governance
- Opportunities to work with dedicated school leaders
- A chance to give back and shape the future of children in your community

Time commitment:

Around 6–8 meetings per year, plus some school visits and training.



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



FLU VACCINATIONS



Vaccination UK

Respiratory and flu-like cases are rapidly on the rise. We urge you to ensure your child receives the flu vaccination. You have a choice between the quick and painless nasal spray or the Injection which is porcine & gelatine free. This not only protects your children against being seriously ill but also protects vulnerable members of your family and community.

We have several community catch-up clinics available. Please use the link below to book an appointment.

[Vaccination UK Immunisation](#)

If you previously declined consent for your child when we visited the school, you **can change** your consent. Please call our office on 01462 427008, and we will book a clinic appointment for you.

Thank you for your support.

Hertfordshire Immunisation Team



HOP Into Apprenticeships & T Levels The Hertfordshire Virtual Careers Fair for parents and carers



FREE

Wednesday 21st January 2026
17:30 - 19:00
Online (Zoom)



What is the Virtual Careers Fair?

This free event is for parents, carers, and students to explore apprenticeships and T Levels. Visit different exhibitor rooms on a 10-minute rotation to learn about different programmes and opportunities available.

Who should attend?

This event is for all parents and carers but will be particularly useful for those supporting children in year groups 10, 11, 12 and 13. Students in these age groups are also welcome to attend.

Why attend?

This event offers many benefits, including:

- Free of charge to attend (fully-funded by Hertfordshire Careers Hub).
- Find out more about apprenticeships and T Level programmes with local training providers and colleges.
- Hear from local employers about opportunities and the recruitment process.
- Discover more about the skills and training provision being offered within Hertfordshire.
- Select which breakout room you would like to hear from.
- Ask questions and gather information from the comfort of your own home.

Exhibitors will include:



And many more...

How to attend?

- 1 Register by Monday 19th January, 2026 for your free ticket by clicking [here](#).
- 2 Read the attendee guidance ahead of the event to help you prepare.
- 3 Log on and join the event online on Wednesday 21st January 2026 17:30 - 19:00.

BOOK NOW >>

Further information

Find out about the event by visiting: amapps.uk/HOPIntro

The Hertfordshire Virtual Careers Fair is brought to you in partnership by:



HERTFORDSHIRE
FUTURES

Hertfordshire
CAREERS HUB

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

Bedfordshire
& Hertfordshire
Provider Network

Amazing
Apprenticeships



Hertfordshire's
Holiday Activity Programme



Free Festive Fun this Winter



Does your child get benefits-related free school meals?

You could access FREE HAPPY Camps this Winter.

Get your child's code from their school and scan the QR code or head to sportinherts.org.uk to book

Winter bookings are live from 10am on 27th November 2025.



Display until 05/01/26





SUPPORT OUR SWIMMERS - PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS



Why do we need to raise funds?

- Fund Coaching Qualifications
- Swimming Equipment
- Automatic Officiating Equipment
- Fund training for Officials and Team Managers

Sponsorship opportunities could include:

- Sponsoring our galas
- Appearing in our newsletters & social media
- Large lettering on existing signage around poolside
- Logo on starting block covers / hats / kit

Hemel Hempstead Swimming Club is a family-focused, inclusive club whose swimmers regularly compete at county, regional and national levels. We warmly welcome local businesses to support our club - if you are interested in sponsorship, please get in touch using the email below. Packages to suit all budgets.



For more information email Sponsorship Coordinators
Neil and Amanda Hawkes: vicechair@hhsc.org.uk