



HEADTEACHER'S NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

Headteacher's Message

Dear Parents, Carers, Staff and Students,

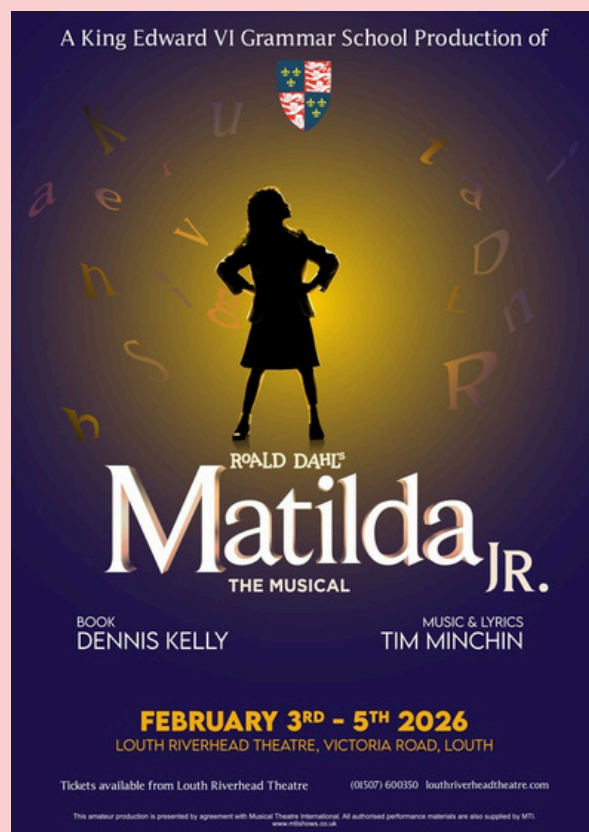
After a busy Autumn Term, I hope you have all had an enjoyable and restful break. The past few months have been filled with achievement, growth and a strong sense of togetherness, and I remain incredibly proud of how our students and staff continue to uphold the values of the KEVIGS community.

This term has included many significant moments, including our moving Remembrance Service and the participation of our students in the town's Remembrance Parade. It was an honour to see our young people represent the school with such dignity and respect as they paid tribute to those who have served.

One of the academic highlights of the term was the Sixth Form and Key Stage 4 trip to Vienna, where students explored psychological concepts through visits to museums, exhibitions and historic sites. They were exemplary throughout the visit and represented the school with maturity and enthusiasm.

Our Year 11 students worked exceptionally hard during their GCSE mock examinations and later attended our Mock Results Evening. It was wonderful to see the progress they have made and to watch them celebrate their achievements as they prepare for the months ahead.

In the Sixth Form, 121 students—the majority of the cohort—enjoyed a festive visit to the York Christmas Markets. Not only was this a chance to explore a beautiful city, but it also offered a valuable opportunity for them to spend time together as a community. It has been fantastic to see our Sixth Form thriving this year, with our current retention figures being the highest since 2002.



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Headteacher's Message

Students and staff embraced our whole school Pyjamas Day with great enthusiasm, raising important funds for the Year 11 Prom. Our charitable work continued throughout the term, with generous donations raised for a number of worthwhile causes including Children in Need.

December also saw our very first KS3 Christmas Disco, which was a wonderful success and brought a great sense of fun and celebration to the younger years.

This was followed by our Celebration Assemblies across all year groups, where students' successes, contributions and achievements were recognised. It was inspiring to see so many young people celebrated for their hard work, resilience and commitment throughout the term.

We also welcomed parents to our first Coffee Morning, introduced this year in direct response to parental feedback, providing a relaxed opportunity for families to share views, ask questions and engage directly with staff. In the same spirit, we were pleased to reintroduce face-to-face Parents' Evenings for Year 12 and 13, again following requests from parents for more opportunities to speak with teachers in person. It was a pleasure to welcome families back on site for these important conversations. This year, we will be offering a variety of Parents' Evenings—some face-to-face and others online—to provide greater flexibility and accessibility for families.

A particular highlight of the end of term was our annual KEVIGS Winter Concert. The performances showcased the exceptional musical talent of our students and brought a wonderful sense of celebration and community to the school.

As we close the term, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our staff, trustees, parents and students for their continued support, hard work and dedication. KEVIGS continues to thrive because of the strength and warmth of its community.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back in January for another exciting and successful term.

Warmest regards,

Mrs Cassidy

Headteacher



Sixth Form Maths Challenge Winners
More on Sixth Form Successes Page

Christmas Disco Success!

Thank you to everyone who came to our Christmas Disco - a fantastic £532 was raised to go back into school life. It was a brilliant night of music and dancing.

Box Clever – A Christmas Carol

As Tiny Tim (almost) said, “An early Merry Christmas present to us all!”

Box Clever’s Performance of A Christmas Carol to Year 8

On Tuesday 11th November, Year 8 were spoilt with a vibrant and joyous production of Charles Dickens’s A Christmas Carol. Theatre company Box Clever, with whom the school has a long and proud working relationship, came in and delivered a dynamic and spellbinding version of Dickens’s festive and spooky tale of life lessons learned and moral redemption gained. Box Clever’s trio of actors fused thrilling action with song, lighting effects, slick staging and audience interaction in a physical performance that captured the heart and soul of Dickens’s novella, presenting Scrooge, the ghosts and the Cratchits with poignant wit and sensitivity. Rarely has a story urging us to be a decent human and reminding us that it’s never too late to change been told with such winning humour and gorgeous harmonies. With references to big businesses’ fat cats and the refugee crisis, the production was also an urgent and salutary rejoinder to us all that compassion is not just for Christmas. Year 8, for their part, were a superb and rapt audience, who participated in the interactive moments with flair and gusto, and the afternoon flew by. To quote badly another Dickens text, “More, please!”

Mr Ellershaw (*Director of English*)



EDA Winter Fair

Thank you again to everyone who got involved in the EDA Winter Fair - your support helped make the event a real success. As many of you know, EDA (Equality, Diversity and Acceptance) plays an important role within our school, promoting inclusion, respect and opportunities for all, and events like this help strengthen that spirit within our community. With live music setting the festive atmosphere, plenty of hot drinks and cake to enjoy, and wonderful homemade crafts on offer, the fair raised £500.00 for a range of Christmas charities supporting those who are struggling at this time of year, as well as raising funds for the Year 11 Prom. The enthusiasm and community spirit shown have encouraged us to begin planning another event for the summer, building on the positive response and success of last year.

Wishing you all a happy, peaceful Christmas break!

From Miss Hunter, Ms Turner and everyone at EDA club 2025/26.



Motte and Bailey Model Competition

Year 7 Motte and Bailey Competition Showcases Outstanding Creativity

The History Department has once again run its annual Model Motte and Bailey competition for Year 7, and this year's entries have been truly exceptional. We were delighted by both the creativity and the attention to historical detail shown across all submissions.

Students produced a fantastic range of models, demonstrating impressive effort, imagination, and understanding of medieval castle design. A selection of these models has been shared below, giving just a glimpse of the high standard of work produced.

As always, judging was extremely difficult due to the quality of the entries, but after careful consideration, we are pleased to announce this year's winners:

- India H (7JRP)
- Jackson V (7LTH)
- Aideen B (7GJH)
- Oscar S (7GJH)
- Amy S (KIS)

Congratulations to all our winners, and well done to every student who took part. The History Department is incredibly proud of the enthusiasm and effort shown by Year 7 this year.



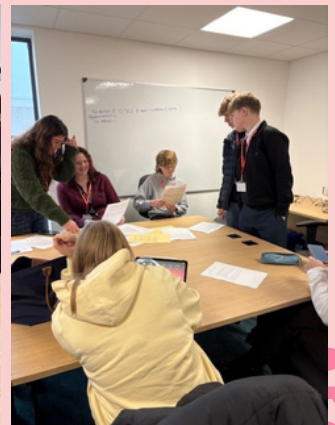
Sixth Form Successes

Debate Competition Winners!

Several members of KEVIGS Sixth Form attended a debate competition at Franklin College, with two teams representing the school. Team 1, made up of Lola B, Rhona and Oli G, and Team 2, consisting of Amelie M, Max S, Oli W and Alfie P, both had a successful day.

Team 1 performed well, achieving one win and two draws, showing strong teamwork and clear arguments throughout their debates, with some tricky motions and passionate opponents. Team 2 had an outstanding performance, winning all three of their debates. This success took them through to the final, where they delivered an excellent performance and won the overall competition out of the 11 teams who took part.

Both teams represented the school with great aplomb and should be proud of their achievements.



Maths Teams Excel at Franklin College Challenge

Three teams of highly talented Year 12 and 13 mathematics students travelled to Franklin College to take part in a competitive Maths Team Challenge. Competing against schools from across the region, our students were an absolute credit to the school and represented themselves with confidence, teamwork, and determination throughout the event.

The competition featured ten teams in total, all tackling a series of demanding mathematical problems under timed conditions. Our students rose impressively to the challenge, with two of our three teams finishing in the top three overall – an outstanding achievement.

The highlight of the afternoon came in the final round, where our top team narrowly edged past Caistor Grammar School to secure first place. Congratulations go to Harry J, Joseph B, Liam W and David S, whose teamwork and problem-solving skills earned them the top spot.

Well done to all students involved for their hard work and excellent performance. Their success reflects both their individual talent and their commitment to mathematical excellence.

During the annual Christmas dinner, some cadets were presented with awards that are donated to the contingent by various previous members of staff or people whom have had great influence or interest in the CCF. Please see below the list of major award winners for the 2025 CCF Christmas Dinner.

Flt/Lt. Webster's Award for Best Turn Out (Army)
Sgt. F Green

Flt/Lt. Webster's Award for Best Turn Out (RAF)
Cpl. A King

Cllr. T Marris' Silva Salva for Marksmanship
C/Sgt. I Lin

Cpt. Ray Davies' Bugle for Endeavour
Cdt. H Blackburn

Major Lill's Trophy for Leadership
CSM. C Stothard-Dickinson

Best Overall CCF Cadet Award 2025
CSM. C Stothard-Dickinson



Additionally, some cadets were presented with a certificate of commendation, some of which were received by a number of Year 9s whom have only just joined the contingent this term and in their short time with us, demonstrating how dedicated to the CCF they are already.



Aside from awards, many promotions are also given to cadets who have proved themselves worthy of moving up the ranks and into more senior positions. Please see below the list of promotees for the 2025 CCF Christmas Dinner.

Cadet to Lance Corporal:
L/Cpl. G Sylvester (Army)
L/Cpl. C Owen (Army)
L/Cpl. H Maltman (RAF)
L/Cpl. A Taylor (RAF)
L/Cpl. D Clarke (RAF)

Lance Corporal to Corporal:
Cpl. K Steel (Army)
Cpl. M Wright (Army)
Cpl. A King (RAF)
Cpl. M Wright (RAF)

Corporal to Sergeant:
Sgt. F Green (Army)
Sgt. O Coxon (Army)
Sgt. H Sit (RAF)
Sgt. N Prentice (RAF)

Sergeant to Flight/Colour Sergeant:
C/Sgt. I Lin (Army)
FS. H Wright (RAF)
FS. H Woollock (RAF)

Sergeant to Contingent Sergeant Major:
CSM. Charlotte Stothard-Dickinson (Army)

During the Christmas dinner, the CCF had a very important guest dining with us, Mr Toby Dennis, the Lord-Lieutenant of Lincolnshire (The king's representative for the county!) along with his wife. Mr Dennis made an inspirational speech to the contingent about his role and the work he does, he also spoke about the commitment of our cadets at KEVIGS CCF and mentioned the hard work and dedication FS. Holly Wright has demonstrated in her role as the Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet for Lincolnshire (CCF).

Earlier on in the term, 18 cadets from across the RAF & Army Section went to RAF Waddington near Lincoln to shoot on the base's 25m outdoor range. Cadets shot the L98A2 GP Rifle and had the opportunity to earn themselves their first shooting badge or improve upon their current shooting rating. Congratulations to C/Sgt. Lin for being the best marksman on the range that day!



Over the last few nights of cadets before the Christmas dinner, cadet JNCOs in the RAF section had the opportunity to step into more leadership positions and ran a night exercise for the entire RAF Section. This included them looking after the section, commanding activities and ensuring the night ran smoothly as a whole, it was great to see them take on more responsibility and some of them have been rewarded with promotions at the Christmas dinner. Furthermore, FS. Holly Wright as Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet for Lincolnshire (CCF) has had her first engagement with the Lord Lieutenant. She was privileged to have met HRH Prince Edward, The Duke of Edinburgh and opened his car door for him upon his arrival in Lincoln. The contingent and school is so proud of the achievements of FS. Wright and the work she does as Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet.



KEVIGS P.E. Department

Sports Hall Athletics Success for Year 8 and Year 9 Team

Our Year 8 and 9 girls' and boys' took part in an exciting indoor Sports Hall Athletics competition, facing strong opposition from three other schools. Throughout the afternoon, every athlete showed outstanding determination, teamwork, and competitive spirit across a range of high-energy events.

Both teams performed brilliantly, securing top positions in multiple races and field events. Their consistency, effort, and enthusiasm paid off as our school was crowned overall champions of the competition.

At the end of the event, the team proudly received first place, and the students were presented with medals and a winners' trophy to mark their fantastic achievement. A huge well done to all athletes involved—you represented the school impeccably and should be incredibly proud of your success!



Year 8 Girls Win Futsal Tournament!

The Year 8 girls put on an impressive display to win the futsal tournament. With strong teamwork, solid defence, and great finishing, they dominated their matches and showed fantastic determination throughout. Their hard work paid off in a well-deserved final victory.

Congratulations to the whole team—an outstanding achievement!



KEVIGS P.E. Department

Cross Country Teams Shine at Superzone Competition

Despite bitterly cold conditions, the school's cross country teams delivered an outstanding set of performances at the Superzone competition held at Louth Athletics Club. Upholding the school's proud tradition of distance running, athletes across all age groups competed with determination and skill, returning with an impressive haul of team victories and individual successes.

The Year 7 girls set the tone for the day with a dominant performance, comfortably winning the team event. Their efforts were further rewarded as five runners secured qualification for the county round at Burghley House. Not to be outdone, the Year 7 boys also showed tremendous grit, claiming victory in their team event and seeing three athletes progress to the next stage.

Success continued in the junior races. The junior girls once again took first place in the team competition, with six runners qualifying for the county round. This achievement was particularly impressive given that many of the athletes were competing up a year. The junior boys also performed strongly, finishing third as a team and qualifying three runners for Burghley.

Both intermediate teams rounded off an exceptional day by winning their respective events, with a total of 11 athletes qualifying for the county round.

There were also several notable individual performances, with Lilly T finishing 1st, Harry O securing 2nd place, Georgia S taking 2nd, and Maisie M finishing 3rd in their respective races.

It was a superb day of racing for all involved. The school extends a huge thank you to Louth Athletics Club and their dedicated helpers for providing such an excellent course and facilities.

The county round will take place on Saturday 17 January at Burghley House. Further details regarding transport will be shared in due course.



KEVIGS P.E. Department

National Success for ESSA Swimmers

The school's swimmers achieved outstanding success at the National ESSA Swimming Finals, held at the Commonwealth Pool in Birmingham on Saturday 15th November.

Following excellent performances at the ESSA qualifying event in Nottingham, two teams represented the school at the national finals. The Junior Girls' team consisted of M Seagroatt, T Whotton, Z Jones and A Pearce, while the Senior Mixed team was made up of M Tomkinson, J Adams, O Anstey and E Smith.

Despite an early start, both teams rose to the occasion and competed superbly against the best school swimmers in the country. The Junior Girls delivered strong performances in both the freestyle and medley events, improving on their qualifying times and finishing an impressive 27th and 21st respectively out of over 300 schools.

The Senior Mixed team produced an excellent display throughout the competition. Led by the experience of O Anstey and J Adams, the team improved on their qualifying positions to finish a remarkable 7th nationally in the freestyle. In the mixed medley relay, a thrilling finish saw the team narrowly miss out on a medal, securing an outstanding 4th place.

These results are a tremendous achievement and reflect the swimmers' dedication, the expert support of Louth Dolphins Swimming Club, and the invaluable backing of parents who supported the team on the day.



KEVIGS P.E. Department

Magic at Maritime

Our ESFA footballers travelled to Ormiston Maritime Academy on Monday to face a strong, physical, and well-organised side in what proved to be a thrilling contest.

Both teams burst out of the blocks, setting an incredibly high tempo that was maintained throughout the first half. Ormiston edged many of the individual battles, but KEVIGS were arguably the better footballing side, moving the ball well and showing real composure in possession.

The second half saw a few subtle changes due to injury, but this did nothing to slow the pace or intensity of the game. The breakthrough came when an excellent through ball released Williams, who was brought down in the box, resulting in a penalty. Forman stepped up and calmly dispatched the spot kick to give KEVIGS the lead.

Williams, who had been outstanding all game despite being tightly man-marked, then added two superb goals to seal the victory. The highlight of the afternoon was the third goal, created by a magnificent 40-yard assist from Bemrose and expertly finished by Williams. This was a fantastic all-round team performance, with several players worthy of Man of the Match. The accolade, however, went to Stanley, who was outstanding throughout—calm under pressure and excellent in dealing with one of Ormiston's most dangerous players.

A superb performance and a well-deserved win. On to the next round. Well done, lads!



KEVIGS P.E. Department

A Fantastic Day at the County Netball Finals

What a fantastic day we had at the County Netball Finals in Stamford. Both our Under 14 and Under 16 teams represented us brilliantly, delivering strong performances and demonstrating real determination and teamwork throughout the day.

The Under 14s finished an impressive 4th out of 8 teams, while the Under 16s also secured 4th place, this time out of 9 teams. The matches were thrilling to watch and showcased some truly fantastic talent, skill and sportsmanship from all involved.

A huge well done to all of our players for their commitment and effort. A special thank you goes to Mrs Thrower for giving up her Saturday to take the teams, and to both Miss Riddell and Mrs Thrower for their excellent coaching and support. We are incredibly proud of everyone involved and look forward to seeing the teams continue to develop and succeed.



Rain, Resolve and a Resounding Victory for Year 10 Football

Even the most horrific rain couldn't dampen the spirits of our triumphant Year 10 footballers, who delivered a commanding performance in the ESFA 2nd round.

Battling through sideways rain, the school team faced a strong and pacey SGS side. With a recent defeat to the same opponents in the Superzone final still fresh in their minds, the boys had something to prove—and they showed it from the very first whistle.

From the outset, our players were first to every ball, playing the better football and moving it quickly despite the challenging conditions. Defensively, the team was superb, limiting SGS to long-range efforts and never looking likely to be broken down. The midfield dominated proceedings, while the pace and movement up front caused constant problems for the opposition back line.

As the match progressed, the outcome never looked in doubt. The boys' intensity, organisation and confidence shone through, culminating in an outstanding 5-0 victory. This emphatic win provides huge momentum and belief as the team now looks ahead to the Superzone final next Wednesday. Once again against SGS. If this performance is anything to go by, the boys will head into the match full of confidence and determination.

KEVIGS P.E. Department



Sporting Success for Years 8 and 10

It has been a fantastic week of sporting achievements for our Year 8 and Year 10 pupils, with excellent performances from both our footballers and netballers.

Our football teams enjoyed a clean sweep, going unbeaten in the league and securing victory in their Superzone Finals at Saltfleetby on Wednesday. Both the Year 8 and Year 10 sides faced strong opposition from John Spendluffe and Skegness Grammar, but showed great determination and quality to come out on top.

The Year 8 victory was sealed with impressive finishes from Jack W (2), George W and Ben G, while the Year 10 goals came courtesy of Barney W, Harlow F and Harrison S. Special mentions also go to Ed K (Year 8) and George A (Year 10) for their outstanding contributions. Both teams remain in contention in the County and National Cups – fingers crossed for the next stages.

On the netball courts, the Year 10 team recorded a convincing win against Skegness Grammar, with standout performances from Lucy F, Eva S, Alyssa S and Izzy S. The Year 8 netballers were involved in a closely fought contest against QUEGS Horncastle, narrowly missing out in a thrilling 15–13 match. The girls battled hard throughout and came agonisingly close to making it a quadruple of wins. Lilly L and Miriam E were standout performers in a superb team effort.

As always, our pupils have done the school proud and continue to be excellent ambassadors for KEVIGS. Congratulations to all involved.



KEVIGS Art Department

Christmas Cards

Each year, we design and create Christmas Cards to give to residents of care homes across Louth - this year we will be sending them to Wolds Care home and The Elms, as suggested by students. I would like to say a huge well done to this years winning designs, created by Phoebe L in Year 7, Molly T in Year 8 and Gabby M in Year 9.

A massive thank you to everyone who put in time, thought and effort into their designs this year, we have had some beautiful work



KEVIGS Art Department

Inktober

The art department has been bowled over with the immense talent and creativity of our students 2025 Inktober submissions. Thank you to everyone that has taken part and congratulations to the winners and runners up!

The winners are;

Elsie H Y13

Alice P Y7

Runners up are;

Minnie M - Y7

Aniya M - Y7

Jessica L - Y8

Ellis W - Y9

Alexandra J - Y9



Winner - Elsie H



Winner - Alice P



Jessica L



Alexandra J



Aniya M



Ellis W



Minnie M

KEVIGS Food Technology

Year 7 and 8 students have been delighted to welcome Food Technology back onto the curriculum at KEVIGS. Led by Mr Wright, lessons have been full of energy, creativity and hands-on learning, with students developing essential kitchen techniques while also learning about healthy food choices.

So far, students have enjoyed making a wide range of dishes, including fruit art (which was then turned into fresh fruit salad), vegetable couscous and shortbread biscuits. These practical sessions have not only built confidence in the kitchen but have also encouraged teamwork, independence and creativity.

Looking ahead to the new term, there is plenty to be excited about, with students set to make fruit crumble, chicken stir fry and sausage rolls. It has been fantastic to see the students in a different light, with many “mini Jamie Olivers” emerging and showing real enthusiasm for cooking.

Food Technology has quickly become a highlight of the week, and we look forward to seeing the skills and confidence of our young chefs continue to grow.



Year Group Messages

Key Stage Three

As we reach the end of the first full term of 2025, it has been fantastic to see the effort, commitment and positive attitude shown by our Year 7, 8 and 9 students.

Starting a new year brings fresh challenges and opportunities, and many of you have embraced these with enthusiasm. Whether it has been settling into secondary school routines, taking on new subjects, or building stronger study habits, your hard work has laid a strong foundation for the months ahead.

Success does not happen overnight. It is built through consistent effort in the classroom, completing homework to the best of your ability, and being willing to ask questions when something feels challenging. This term, teachers have noticed students pushing themselves, showing resilience when work is difficult, and supporting one another to improve. These qualities are just as important as grades and will serve you well both in school and beyond.

As we move into the next term, take a moment to reflect on what you have achieved and where you can continue to grow. Celebrate your progress, no matter how small, and set realistic goals to keep moving forward. Keep remembering that hard work, a positive mindset and perseverance are key ingredients for success, and we are proud of the effort you have shown in the first full term of 2025.

Key Stage Four

Year 11 students have recently completed their mock examination period, which we hope has provided valuable insight into the real GCSE examination process that begins in April. These mocks are an important opportunity for students to reflect on their progress and identify areas for improvement. Following the Mock Results Evening and the Parents' Evening in January, I look forward to continued parental support as we work together to help students maximise their outcomes.

Next term, Year 11 will also begin a programme of lunchtime workshops, with most subjects offering a range of additional sessions designed to support students in achieving their minimum expected grades.

I am delighted to report that Year 10 students have made a very positive start to their GCSE subjects. They have approached this new stage of their learning with enthusiasm and commitment, and we look forward to supporting them on what we hope will be a successful and rewarding journey throughout Year 10.



Year 7 Celebration Assembly

Year Group Messages

Sixth Form

Another busy and exciting term draws to a close. This term has seen Mr Baker's tutor group crowned K6 Quiz Champions—well done to them, and an honourable mention to Mrs Johnson's group, who were the runners-up. Congratulations to all the groups involved, and a special thank you to Mr Jeffery for making it all happen.

As I write, some of our most able mathematicians are representing KEVIGS at the Senior Maths Challenge at Franklin, and we are also taking part in the local Debating Competition.

December also saw the now annual Sixth Form Christmas shopping trip. This year, at the request of the students, we visited York, where students enjoyed taking in the sights, including the Christmas market. A number of students have since said that they are now interested in attending university in York. I wonder where next year's trip will take us?

Our Year 13 students have been busy completing their UCAS applications as they prepare for the next steps in their education. I wonder what exciting destinations we will see them heading to in September 2026.

This half term also saw our Year 12 and 13 students visit Vienna. It was an action-packed trip, with visits to the Sigmund Freud Museum, the Jewish Museum, the Josephinum Medical Museum, the Christmas markets, and a night of classical music at the Vienna Musikverein - Brahms Hall, to name but a few. What a fabulous experience for our students.

We have also welcomed all of our Year 11 students to the Sixth Form block to register them for the new applications system. Applications for September 2026 are now open, and details on how to apply are available via the Sixth Form section of the school website.



Dates and Notices

Tuesday 5th January - Whole School Returns
Thursday 8th January - Year 7 Local History Project at St. James Church
Thursday 8th January - Year 9 Exams Start
Thursday 15th January - Year 11 Parents' Evening (In School)
Tuesday 27th January - KEVIGS Darts Championship Semi-Finals
Thursday 29th January - Parent Coffee Morning
Tuesday 3rd - 5th February - Matilda The Musical
Monday 9th February - Year 9 Parents' and Options Evening (In School)
Wednesday 11th February - Key Stage 3 Valentines Dance
Friday 13th February - Last Day of Term
Friday 13th - 21st February - Italy Ski Trip
Monday 23rd February - Whole School Returns
Tuesday 3rd March - Year 8 Parents' Evening
Friday 20th March - Red Nose Day
Wednesday 25th March - Key Stage 3 Careers Fair
Thursday 26th March - Year 12 & 13 Parents' Evening
Thursday 26th March - Parent Coffee Morning
Friday 27th March - Last Day before Easter Holidays

LOCAL HISTORY PROJECT

Please come and have a look at our Year 7s fantastic work at St. James Church from Thursday 8th January until Sunday 11th January. During normal church opening times



MATILDA THE MUSICAL

Our students are busy rehearsing and learning lines for our annual school show. make sure you get your tickets booked so you don't miss out. All tickets can be booked through Louth Riverhead Theatre website.

You can book tickets [here](#)

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

CREATING FAMILY RULES FOR USING DEVICES

A set of family rules agreed on with children can promote the safe, responsible use of devices like tablets, smartphones, gaming consoles and computers. By developing rules around technology, it opens the conversation regarding boundaries and expectations, ensuring a healthy balance of screentime. This guide will help you to develop an age-appropriate family agreement to suit your household.

1 WORK TOGETHER

Collaborating with children when setting rules around the use of technology is a valuable task that can encourage them to take more ownership. It's important to make rules which reflect your family and are age appropriate. Think about what you all enjoy doing online and what apps, games or devices children use most frequently.

2 AGREE TIME LIMITS AND SUITABLE TIMES

Be realistic when setting screen time limits. These can vary depending on the child's age, whether it's a weekday or weekend, and what they're actually doing online. If they're conducting research for homework, that might require more time than if they were playing games. Consider when screen time begins: does it come after chores and homework? Agree times when technology and phones must be put away.

3 ENCOURAGE HONESTY

Family rules ensure that everyone can have fun with their devices and be safe while doing so. Nonetheless, children may make mistakes as they learn to navigate the online world. Emphasise that if they ever feel worried, unsafe or upset about something they've done, sent, said or received, they should tell you immediately so you can help them resolve the problem.

4 CHARGING AND OVERNIGHT STORAGE

To ensure children get the downtime they need overnight, it's important that devices – especially smartphones – are kept in a common space, where possible. This reduces the chance of pointless late-night scrolling or sleep being disturbed by calls, messages or notifications. There are charging boxes you can purchase, or all gadgets could be charged in the kitchen overnight to avoid distractions.

5 REVIEW RULES REGULARLY

Anything you agree on isn't set in stone. These rules will likely alter as children get older and the way they use technology changes. Take time to review these as a family; discuss what's working, and what isn't. Communication is key – so by doing this, you involve the child in their own online safety while promoting an open dialogue.

6 PROTECT PERSONAL INFO

Discuss and demonstrate the importance of protecting your personal information. Talk about what details you share online and who with. Use parental controls to block children from connecting with strangers, so that any information they do share is among their real friends. Ask a child's permission before posting any photos of them on social media, as this demonstrates positive online behaviour that they should learn and remember.

7 BE RESPECTFUL

Highlight the importance of showing respect to others when using technology. Encourage children to speak kindly to others online – such as on social media, when playing multiplayer games or in group chats (which can often lead themselves to teasing behaviour). Explain that if they aren't treating others considerately, they might be made to stay away from their devices for a while.

8 "NO TECH" ZONES

Designating spaces in the house where technology isn't allowed (for example: bedrooms, bathrooms and at the dinner table) lets you keep an eye on what children are viewing and who they're communicating with. It gives you some quality, screen-free time with them, too. It also helps reduce any impulses to potentially engage with inappropriate content, as they're unlikely to do so in a common space within the home.

9 AGREE ON CONSEQUENCES

As a family, discuss why the rules are important: to balance their screentime, to ensure everyone enjoys gaming or interacting online, and that they are safe when doing so. Therefore, if these rules are broken, there has to be a consequence. Discuss what would be fair for certain breaches of the rules, as this can prevent a disproportionate response in the future.

10 KNOW ALL PASSWORDS

To protect children from inappropriate content, parents should have access to all passwords. Parents should also make it clear that they will check children's devices, should they have any concerns about their use. Emphasise that this isn't due to a lack of trust but is an extra way of keeping them safe.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant at BCyberAware. She has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety workshops and policies for schools in Australia and the UK. Claire has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviours of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



The National College®

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: nationalcollege.com/guides/tips-for-creating-family-rules-for-using-devices



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