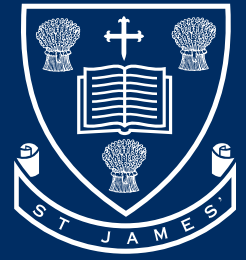


# School Newsletter

Winter 2024



As we approach the close of this year, it's hard to believe how quickly the time has passed. The Autumn term has been incredibly busy, yet we have accomplished so much together, and it has been a joy to see our children consistently embody the values of Family, Faith, and Excellence. We are truly privileged to witness them caring for one another, supporting charitable causes, and striving for excellence in all they do, both inside and outside the classroom.

One of the highlights of this term was our Denomination Inspection on the 13th and 14th of November. The inspection provided a powerful opportunity to showcase the many God-given talents of our children and staff. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone involved for their hard work and dedication in highlighting over five years of progress in the Catholic Life and Mission of our school. The outstanding grading we received across all sections within this area is a testament to the spirit, commitment, and care of all staff, who continually strive to provide an exceptional Catholic education for our school family.

Our Year 7s have settled in beautifully and have already become a credit to you as parents and carers. It has been an absolute pleasure getting to know them, and they are a truly delightful group. I am confident that they will continue to engage positively with school life and go on to achieve great things both at St James' and beyond.

Their Welcome Mass in October was a memorable occasion, reflecting all that is wonderful about our school family. It has been uplifting to see so many Year 7 children involved in a variety of school activities, and their enthusiasm is a strong reminder of the exciting journey ahead for them.

At the heart of our work is our mission to "educate and develop global Catholic citizens," and this term, our children have had many opportunities to contribute to school life, particularly through charity events for our chosen causes. The generosity of our school family has been overwhelming, and we have already raised a phenomenal amount. A key highlight was our fundraising efforts for a village in Borneo that was devastated by fire, a cause close to our hearts following the visit our children made to the village earlier this year.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has supported our Chelwood Foodbank collection—your generosity has been truly appreciated. In addition, our extracurricular activities continue to flourish, with our Faith Prefects currently organising a Christmas party for local parishioners, spreading the joy and spirit of the season with them.

As we prepare for the Christmas season, it is important to remember the true meaning

of the holiday. While we are all familiar with the cultural and secular traditions of gift-giving, festive music, and decorations, we should never lose sight of the profound significance of Jesus' birth. As the prophet Isaiah tells us, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6).

If you haven't already, I encourage you to follow us on Twitter @StJamesCheadle and visit our website at [www.stjamescheadle.co.uk](http://www.stjamescheadle.co.uk) for the latest news and updates. Our term will end on Friday 20th December at 12:15pm. We have various activities planned for the final day, allowing children to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas while spending time with their Form groups.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a peaceful, joyful, holy, and healthy Christmas, filled with love and blessings. We look forward to welcoming staff and children back to school on Monday 6th January at 8:30am.

With warmest regards,

**Mr A Pontifex**  
Headteacher



# CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Faith in Action: A vibrant Term in Catholic Life at St James'

As we have journeyed through this busy and vibrant term, our school family has embraced many opportunities for prayer, reflection, and faith in action.

**Retreats and Prayer**

This term, pupils in Years 11 and 7 have participated in meaningful retreats, taking time to step away from daily routines and deepen their connection with God. In the New Year, we look forward to offering similar opportunities to Years 10, 9, and 8.

Daily prayer has become a cornerstone of our school life. Pupils begin each morning with prayer in their Form rooms or in the Chapel. The entire school community also pauses together in prayer at lunchtime and the end of the day, reminding us of God's presence throughout our busy school day.

**Hymn Practice and Worship**

Our recently introduced hymn practices have been a resounding success, fostering a vibrant culture of worship. These hymns are now a central part of whole school Masses and school events, beautifully supported by our choir. A local parish led a voluntary Rosary session to honour the end of the month dedicated to Mary. We were delighted that 53 pupils chose to attend this moving act of devotion. We also welcomed parents, relatives and governors to celebrate the whole school Mass with us for the first time in over 30 years. This was a lovely occasion and we look forward to joining together to celebrate Mass together again in the coming months.

**Advent Kindness and the Travelling Nativity**

During Advent, we launched the Advent Kindness Challenge, encouraging small daily acts of kindness to bring light into others' lives. Additionally, Key Stage 3 pupils hosted a Travelling Nativity, symbolising the journey towards Christ's birth and fostering reflection on this special season.

**Faith in Action- Fundraising and Service**

Inspired by our mission to be global Catholic citizens, the school has been actively involved in fundraising and service to others- actively living out our Catholic Social Teaching principles. Pupils themselves voted on the charities to support this year, and their efforts so far have been outstanding.

- Funds were raised through all sorts of Form events such as cake sales and penalty shoot outs for CAFOD, Mary's Meals, and underprivileged villages in Borneo
- Contributions to the local Food Bank highlighted our commitment to helping those closer to home
- An incredible £550 was raised for a 7-day emergency appeal to support Rang Bulan, a Borneo village devastated by fire

Our Faith Prefects continue to exemplify servant leadership. They've led a Christmas party for local parishioners, prepared prayers for Remembrance and Advent services, and supported lunchtime Masses. Their commitment to live out the value of Faith is truly inspiring.

**A Christmas Blessing**

We invite you to take a moment as a family to pause in prayer: Loving God, during this holy season of Christmas, we ask for your blessing on all families. Let Mary's openness to your wondrous ways inspire us to place all trust in you. Let Joseph's courage provide hope during times of anxiety and uncertainty. Let Jesus' life ignite all families with a spirit of light and love. May the grace that encircled the Holy Family widen to embrace all families. Amen.

May you and your loved ones have a joyous and peaceful Christmas. Wishing you all the blessings of the season and a wonderful New Year!

**Miss H Purkiss**  
Associate Assistant Headteacher







# YEAR 7



It is hard to believe that the first term has come to an end. We are delighted with the way that Year 7 are settling into life at St James'. Despite a nervous start in September, pupils are adapting to their new routines and our high expectations. It was fantastic to meet our new parents at Parent Tutor Evening and to make that important home-school connection. Year 7 children are already reflecting our school values of Family, Faith and Excellence in all that they do. It has been a pleasure seeing them integrate into school life so successfully.

**Faith and Family**

At the start of this term, each Year 7 form enjoyed a retreat day at Savio House that focussed on our theme of Gifts and Talents. The day was filled with activities which helped pupils to recognise their own unique gifts and talents as well as celebrating the gifts of others. It was a fantastic day providing the opportunity to get to know each other better and has really helped us to unite as a school family.

The work done on the retreat days fed into the Year 7 Welcome Mass that took place at Our Lady's Church, Edgeley. Each form delivered part of the Mass, including serving on the altar. It was so lovely to see pupils' faith in action. Father Martin's homily inspired us all when he spoke of the importance of using our unique gifts and talents. It was a perfect way to welcome new pupils and their families into our community.

Year 7 have experienced two whole school Masses and have enjoyed a travelling nativity which has enriched their spiritual experience of Advent. The nativity has reminded pupils of the real meaning of Christmas and the significance of Advent. 7M led the Yr7 assembly for the first week of Advent. It was so nice to see so many pupils contributing by reading prayers and the gospel and reminding us of the importance of hope.

This term we have really focussed on the importance of respect, care and compassion for others. Pupils' kindness has been evident in the generous contributions to the Christmas foodbank collections and fund-raising activities. Each form received a reward tub of chocolates with 7J and 7E collecting the most items and being invited to a form breakfast. 7E are leading the way with fundraising and have already hosted a charity cake sale raising £65 for Rang Bulan village in Borneo. Each form has nominated a team of form representatives who are doing a fantastic job of co-ordinating the fund-raising efforts.

Every opportunity to impress us has been taken this term. Chromebook Club, Drama Club, Dungeons and Dragons, Choir and Creative Writing Club all see many Year 7 pupils attending. This reflects the genuine enthusiasm that Year 7 pupils have towards school life. A large number of Year 7 children contributed to the European Day of Languages Bake Off Competition and received certificates and prizes in assembly for their amazing bakes. The £150 raised from the sale of cakes went to Macmillan as part of the Macmillan Coffee Morning Week.

We were overwhelmed by the number of pupils who put themselves forward for a place on School Council. An anonymous vote has taken place within Year 7 forms and the pupils with the most votes will represent us on the School Council this year. This is a massive responsibility and commitment which we know our representatives will rise to.

**Excellence**

The huge number of value points received by Year 7 has been celebrated each week in assembly when many pupils have been rewarded with the popular free lunch passes. Ellie C in 7A has received the most value points this term and over 60% of Year7 children have no behaviour points at all. 7S were rewarded with a form breakfast for the lowest number of behaviour points this term. The pizza reward cinema afternoon was a lovely celebration for the children gaining the most value points in the first half term and the best ATL data from the Termly Data Report.

In the termly data Year 7 have shown an incredible attitude to learning, with pupils completing work to the best of their ability and immersing themselves into new and exciting subjects.

85% of Year 7 children received grade 1 or 2 for their positive attitude to learning in all subjects, earning a place in the 1,2 Club. A special mention, however, must go to Celeste A, Wiktoria A, Emily C, Millie C, Orla J, Hendrix M, Louie M, Clodagh O'C, Martha S and Ben T for receiving all ATLs in their classwork. This is a truly amazing achievement.

Sporting excellence has also been evident this term with Year 7 boys and girls representing the school. Eight pupils represented St James' at The Heaton's School at a curling competition and the boys football team played very well against Blue Coat School, achieving a 3-2 victory. The girls' netball team have also been working hard, attending several tournaments.

There is clearly a lot of talent within Year 7 and we are confident that students will continue to show a passion for learning in 2025. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Form Tutors; Mrs Healey, Miss Trainor, Miss Brett, Miss Mylott, Miss Toner and Miss Wilde for their care and support. Their kindness and hard work have hugely contributed to the positive way in which the Year 7 pupils have settled.

We hope that Year 7 have enjoyed their first term as much as we have, and we would like to thank them for showing such positivity and enthusiasm.

Wishing you and your families a peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year. We look forward to welcoming Year 7 back in the New Year.

**Ms Woods & Mr Baggaley**  
Heads of Year 7

**Year 7 favourite memories of this term:**

**J** Our favourite memory was the day at Savio where we all got to know each other better and also the extra curricular clubs we have been involved in; drama club, playing on the football team and also the netball team

**A** Our favourite memory since joining St James is meeting & making new friends in our form family.

**M** Meeting new friends and teachers has been a favourite memory and also exploring new subjects like food technology.

**E** One of our best memories was meeting new friends for the first time and still being friends today.

**S** One of our favourite memories of the term is the day at Savio.

**C** One of our best memories is the Yr7 boys football team coming back from losing 2:1 to finish with a 3:2 win.

Also when 7C challenged the staff at Savio to name a current trend on TikTok and one of the staff responded with "Give me my mooooooney" to the excited uproar of 7C. We will always remember working as a team to pass the hula hoops without breaking the human chain at Savio.







# YEAR 8

It has been really lovely getting to know the Year group. There are so many dedicated and enthusiastic learners, who are becoming more independent now that they are no longer the youngest year group.

A number of pupils took part in the European Day of Languages Bake Off in September. We were very impressed by the level of baking ability and design. Congratulations to Kian (8A), Isobel (8M), Issy (8E) and Darcy B (8S) for their excellent bakes and a special well done to Scarlett E (8C) for winning the Year Group Star Baker. We managed to raise over £100 for Macmillan the following day selling the cakes to the pupils at break and lunchtimes, so thank you to parents/carers for your support in this. Thanks also for all the generous donations sent in for the foodbank. It is really appreciated.

There were lots of volunteers willing to help support the Year 7s using their Chromebooks effectively now that lots of Year

8 are experts! Many thanks to those pupils who visited their corresponding Year 7 form and offered assistance.

We had a really informative and interesting talk from the Knife Crime team, which helped to explain to the pupils that carrying a knife for “protection” often ends up in the innocent party having the knife used on them. Also, that they could end up in severe trouble just by being with someone committing a crime. If they do nothing to help or don't walk away, they could receive the same punishment as the perpetrator. I think this is a really important message for them to learn at school and we always encourage our pupils to walk away when they know someone has made a poor choice, rather than watching or in the worst - case scenario - joining in. A few weeks ago, some of those pupils who said they were interested in a career in sport had a visit from a member of staff from Stockport County who shared with them his journey and also the types of jobs available in sport and the potential salaries. The

pupils listened well and hopefully came out of the talk a bit more knowledgeable. Next week we have a visitor coming in to talk to those students who showed an interest in a job in IT. I am sure this will be just as informative.

I hope that the recent parents' evening was a positive experience and a good opportunity for you to meet and ask your child's teacher any questions.

Well done to Faith L and April G who have achieved 179 and 149 value points respectively with no behaviour points so far this year. Amazing! Keep up the good work! The first round of data was also really pleasing. 13 pupils gained all 1s for their attitude to learning across the curriculum. 2 of these pupils also received all 1s for homework. Well done to Nicole A, Cara B, Hollie C, Devina J, Faith L, Hannah M, Tara M, Rory P, Poppy R, Isabel S, Issy W, Jack W and Eryn W. A special mention for Nicole and Tara who received 1s for classwork AND homework.

Those pupils who performed exceptionally well were rewarded with a movie and pizza lunch. Overall 79% of the Year group gained all 1s and 2s. This is incredible. Well done! For those that didn't, it's never too late and maybe a New Year's resolution could be to join this group.

Be at school, on time, listen and learn and you will achieve excellence.

I hope you have a lovely restful break and a Merry Christmas. God bless.

**Ms Cheshire**  
Head of Year 8







# YEAR 9

I have been incredibly impressed with Year 9 this term, behaviour is superb for our Year group with 38% of children receiving zero behaviour points and almost 52% receiving 1 behaviour point or less. Their approach to lessons has been mature and sensible, and they are extremely talented in all aspects outside of the classroom with incredible achievement in football, rugby, netball and athletics and massive participation and talent in the school drama production. In doing so, it has been really evident that Year 9 children have been following our school ethos of Family, Faith and Excellence.

### Family

Attendance at clubs has been brilliant with many Year 9s enjoying activities such as STEM club, Dungeons and Dragons Club, some of our year 9's have formed a crochet club and are currently developing new skills in several teachers!

We have had 32 girls and 42 boys represent school in various sports so far this year. I was particularly impressed with the Year 9 rugby team who drew 1 game and won the remaining 4 games to win the first rugby festival they competed in. Some of the other schools play rugby as their primary sport so our achievements are all the more deserved. Many of the Year 9 boys have taken up rugby outside of school since, well done, it was a pleasure to be involved in and I was really proud of you.

### Faith

We have had regular Year 9 attenders at lunchtime Mass, I am sure those students find these experiences a contrast to the hustle and bustle of a normal lunchtime. There is strong spirituality running through our cohort, they are the future leaders of our churches, schools and faith.

The Year group have been brilliant at bringing in food and toiletries for the Chelwood Foodbank showing the warmth and kindness that they have for others. Well done to all involved.

### Excellence

In the recent termly data, a fantastic 67% of Year 9 children made it into the 1,2 club for Attitude to Learning, meaning they achieved a grade 1 or grade 2 in every subject. Six of those children received a 1 in every single subject; a terrific achievement. Those students were:

- Hermione R 9E
- Jaxon W 9A
- Emily G 9A
- Seth C 9M
- Ruby R 9A
- Charlotte L 9S

Possessing an excellent attitude to learning is so important because it enables a greater understanding of the content of lessons and allows children to reach their potential. It has been great, therefore, to see lots of teachers praise children for their excellent work.

Since starting the year, the children have shown excellence in all manners of ways. I have been delighted to be able to reward them with 54 free lunch passes so far this year, and I am so proud of their efforts. They show the good humour, politeness and diligence I expect from St James' students and I am sure that they will continue this in the New Year. Our attendance of 95.6%, is the second highest in school and 3.4% above national average. I hope we can hit 97% attendance in 2025. Attendance is so crucial to a child's understanding of topics and to their enjoyment of the social aspect of school. If any children are worried about catching up on work missed or any other obstacles that may impede their enjoyment of school, I am always available for a conversation, as are the Pastoral Team in Emmaus.

Thank you for all your support in ensuring that our children reach these high demands. I would like to express my thanks for the hard work and care shown by my Form Tutors- Mrs Williams, Miss Daly, Miss Adams, Mrs Rigg, Mrs Edwards, and Mr Wilson. Year 9 are so lucky to have such wonderful Tutors. I hope you and your families have a restful and peaceful Christmas.

**Mr Gallagher**  
Head of Year 9







# YEAR 10

**“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;” Ecclesiastes 3:1-8**

Time is so precious and I cannot believe we have finished our first term of Year 10 already. I have been exceptionally proud of the pupils since they returned as Year 10 students in September. I have seen them really embrace the fact that they are now in their GCSE year and I have been super impressed with the commitment that they have shown across their school life. I was delighted to see that 79% of pupils achieved either a grade 1 or a grade 2 in their attitude to learning. This is a significant increase from the data from Term 3 of Year 9. Well done!

As always, our three core values of Family, Faith and Excellence have been evident throughout the Year group.

### FAMILY

Being part of the St James’ family means there are lots of opportunities to represent the school at various sporting events. This term, the boys’ football team have been successful so far and I look forward to watching them play as the year goes on, and a big congratulations to Connie, Ellie, Eve and Celeste who were KS4 Stockport Schools’ runners up and who will be representing Stockport in the Manchester finals.

### FAITH

Every year, as a school community, we collect items of food to donate to Chelwood Food Bank. Our Catholic Social Teachings remind us that we must recognise those in need and help when we can. A big thank you to all Year 10 pupils who donated to the food bank this year. I know that there are lots of plans in place for fund raising activities and as always, I know that a huge amount of Year 10 pupils will help contribute to that.

This academic year we have gathered together to celebrate two whole school Masses and during both, I was thrilled that Year 10s took their hymn singing very seriously and were both prayerful and respectful throughout.

### EXCELLENCE

There has been an upsurge in the numbers of pupils gaining 1s and 2s in their attitude to learning, and I would like to mention in particular, those pupils who have been given all grade 1s in their data. Sadie M, Zuzanna S, Leia H, Natalia J, Florence P, Isla S, Miriam A, Isabella C, Javier K, Abi Q, Lena W, Adam W, Abbie M, Raina R, Annamai R, Kit C, Elizabeth A, Sophie O, Timmy R, Ethan T, Bradley J, Jess J, Tobias J, Archie C, Ella R, Adam R, Oliver S, Gabe K, Joe L, Talia O, Sophia W, May C, Arabella S, Gabrielle F, and Grzegorz M. This is a fantastic number of students and there are also a fabulous number of students with only one grade 2 in their data. Well done to you all.

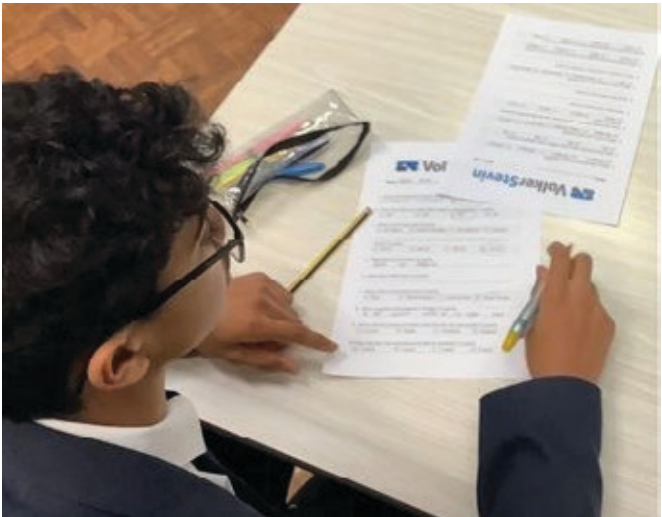
Year 10 have taken part in various activities this term, and they have embraced the opportunities that they have been given remarkably well. Back in October, we held our annual Careers Convention in school and the Year 10 pupils spoke to lots of different colleges and employers as they start to think about their future beyond St James’. It was a fantastic event and I would like to thank Mrs Rarity and Mrs Cooper for all of their hard work in putting the careers events together.

In addition, several Year 10 pupils took part in an interactive workshop delivered by Volker Stevin. It was an amazing opportunity and the pupils got so much valuable experience from it.

As we come to the end of our first term of Year 10, I want to thank the children for their hard work and praise them for the way in which they have embraced any changes that we have had to make. Their resilience has really shone through. I would also like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to the Year 10 team: Mr Nokes, Mrs Bray, Mrs Brown, Mr Cawley, Mr Fanning, Mrs Wear, and Mr Blackburn. They have done so much this term to help and support the pupils and I am forever grateful for the help and support that they give to me as well.

I would also like to thank parents and families for their ongoing support as always, and I would like to wish you and your families a very merry and peaceful Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year, when it arrives, and I look forward to welcoming all the pupils back on Monday 6th January 2025.

**Mrs Linford**  
Head of Year 10







# YEAR 11



As we approach the Christmas break it is with great pride I share with you how well the Y11 pupils have settled into and undergone their mock examinations. These exams have been a real success and it has been extremely rewarding to witness how the Y11s have conducted themselves during the exams and their commitments to extra-curricular revision sessions after school. I am confident that this will be reflected in their grades from their mock exams. It is important to take a moment to reflect and remind ourselves that in just 5 months' time they will sit their first formal GCSE examinations. The work that they have put in, and continue to do, will serve them well in May and June next year.

I can now confirm that the Year 11 Prom will be taking place at the Radisson Blu Hotel (Manchester Airport, Chicago Ave) on Thursday 26th June 2025. This is a date where we will be able to celebrate the hard work and continued pursuit of excellence from all of our Year 11 students. It is important to note that throughout the remainder of Year 11, we continue to expect the same high standards and expectations of all pupils to allow them to attend the prom. The final decision to attend prom will lie at the final discretion of the Headteacher and Head of Year. A separate letter will confirm further details regarding the Year 11 prom.



The 5th and 6th November marked the annual Year 11 Retreat. All pupils across the two days were a credit to the St James' community and having attended both days, it was fantastic to be able to witness all children taking the opportunity to stop and reflect in the midst of the busyness of their final year with us at St James'. Thanks goes to all staff involved from the Shrewsbury Archdiocese who also commented positively on our pupils' behaviour and attention to the sessions across the two days which led to an extremely calm and purposeful atmosphere.

I hope you have a lovely break and a Merry Christmas.

**Mr Reid**  
Head of Year 11





# ATTENDANCE

At St James' we are committed to fostering a culture of learning and achievement. Regular attendance is a vital part of every student's educational journey. Here's the latest update on attendance and how we're working together to keep our students thriving!

## Thank You for Using Our New School App

A big thank you to all families for embracing our new school app to report absences. This streamlined system helps us ensure the safety of our students and maintain accurate records. Your prompt reporting has made a significant difference, and we appreciate your continued support.

## The Impact of Attendance on Success

Did you know: missing just one day of school every two weeks can add up to almost 4 weeks of lost learning time over a year. Here's what the numbers show:

- Students with 95% attendance or higher are 30% more likely to achieve top grades in GCSEs
- Those with 90% attendance or lower miss the equivalent of 19 days per year, which can significantly impact their confidence and progress

Let's work together to ensure every student can make the most of their education.

## Christmas Rewards for 100% Attendance

This term, we're celebrating dedication and resilience with a special Christmas reward to celebrate the festive season for students who achieve 100% attendance.

Thank you for your continued commitment to your child's education. If you have any questions or need support with attendance, please don't hesitate to contact us through the school app or the office.

## Mrs Taylor

Attendance and Family Liaison Manager

Follow us on X:  
**@StJamesCheadle**

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With God all things are possible

Matthew 19:26

