



THE ABI UPDATE

ISSUE 15 FRIDAY 19TH JUNE 2026

MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM PRINCIPAL - MR HEARNDEN

It has been a privilege to spend my first week as Interim Principal of Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School. During this short time, I have had the opportunity to meet many of our wonderful pupils, students and staff and I have been greatly encouraged by the positive relationships and strong sense of community that exist across the school.

As we move forward together, I want to be clear about the standards and expectations that will underpin our work. Throughout the week, I have shared a simple message with pupils: Be Ready, Be Safe, and Be Respectful and Kind. These expectations are not new, but they are fundamental to creating a school environment where every child can flourish, learn and achieve their potential.

Being ready means arriving prepared to learn, attending regularly, being punctual, and taking pride in our school. Being safe means making sensible choices and contributing to an environment where everyone feels secure. Being respectful and kind means treating others with dignity, showing good manners, and living out the values that sit at the heart of our Catholic faith.

An important part of these expectations is maintaining high standards of uniform and appearance. We will be consistently enforcing our uniform policy and expectations around presentation. These standards help to foster pride, equality and a sense of belonging within our school community. I ask for the full support of parents and carers in this area. Working in partnership is essential, and we expect support for these standards rather than opposition to them.

During assemblies this week, I also spoke to pupils about an important message: sometimes being told "no" is a sign that you are loved. In a world where young people can often hear only what they want to hear, it is important that they understand that caring adults set boundaries. At Archbishop Ilsley, adults will be the adults, and pupils will be the pupils. There will be occasions when young people are told "no", when expectations are reinforced, or when decisions are made that they may not agree with. This is not negative, punitive or uncaring. Quite the opposite. It is because we care deeply about their wellbeing, their character and their future success.

Our commitment is to provide a school where every child is known, valued and challenged to become the very best version of themselves. High expectations and genuine care go hand in hand, and I look forward to working with pupils, students, staff, parents and carers to ensure Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School is a place where young people thrive and achieve well. Thank you for your continued support as we begin this next chapter together.

“...let your light shine.”

CATHOLIC LIFE

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION: MATTHEW 9:36-10:8

And when he saw the crowds he felt sorry for them because they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers to his harvest.'

He summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits with power to drive them out and to cure all kinds of disease and all kinds of illness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon who is known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who was also his betrayer



These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them as follows: 'Do not make your way to gentile territory, and do not enter any Samaritan town; go instead to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. And as you go, proclaim that the kingdom of Heaven is close at hand. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those suffering from virulent skin-diseases, drive out devils. You received without charge, give without charge.'

How is this relevant today?

This week's Gospel reading reminds us of the importance of seeing others with compassion and responding with love. When Jesus looked at the crowds, he saw people who were "harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd." Rather than turning away, Jesus noticed their struggles and called his disciples to become people of care, hope and action.

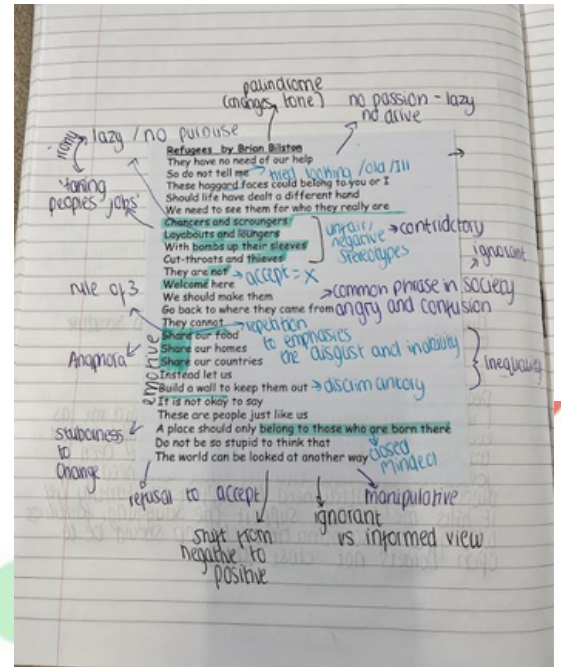
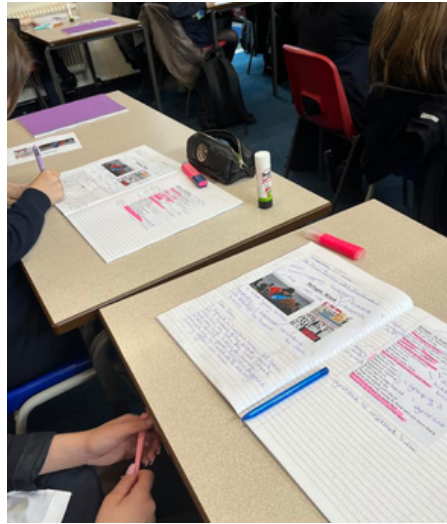
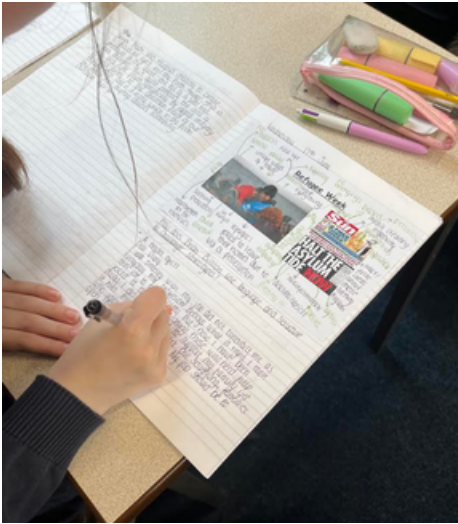
This message remains deeply relevant today. Around the world, many people experience uncertainty, hardship and displacement, including refugees who are forced to leave their homes because of conflict, persecution or difficult circumstances. Refugee Week provides an opportunity for us to reflect on the dignity of every person and to consider how we can welcome and support those who may feel lost or alone.

Throughout the week, our pupils and students have explored this theme through tutor time and in lessons. They have reflected on the experiences of refugees, considered the challenges faced by those who are displaced, and discussed how the values of compassion, hospitality and justice can guide our actions. These conversations help our young people understand that every person has a story, and that small acts of kindness can make a meaningful difference.

Jesus reminds his disciples: "You received without charge, give without charge." This is a powerful call for us all – to share our time, kindness and talents freely with others. As a Catholic school community, we continue to encourage our pupils and students to be people who notice those in need, welcome others and help build a world where everyone feels valued and cared for. We pray that our school community continues to be inspired by Jesus' example: to see with compassion, serve with generosity and be a source of hope for others.

...**"You received without charge,
give without charge....."**

REFUGEE WEEK 2026 IN PICTURES



...“they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd.....”

MATTHEW 9:36

BRONZE DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD YEAR 9

Congratulations to our Year 9 pupils who successfully completed their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh expedition last weekend. This was a fantastic achievement and a great opportunity for pupils to put their training into practice.

Throughout the expedition, pupils developed a wide range of valuable skills, including navigation, route planning, teamwork, problem-solving, campcraft and resilience. They worked together to manage challenges, support each other, and build confidence in the outdoors. We are incredibly proud of the commitment, determination and positive attitude shown by all pupils. Completing the expedition is a significant milestone and reflects the hard work they have put into their DofE journey.

A huge thank you also goes to all the staff who trained, encouraged and supported the pupils throughout the programme, as well as those who gave up their time to supervise and look after them during the expedition. Their dedication and support have helped make this experience a memorable one for our pupils. Well done to everyone involved!



GOLD DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD CEREMONY AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

On Wednesday 20th May, we were delighted to celebrate the achievements of our Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award recipients at the Gold Award Ceremony held at Buckingham Palace. The Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award is the highest level of the DofE programme and recognises the incredible commitment, perseverance and personal development shown by young people. To achieve Gold, participants complete a range of challenges across several sections, including volunteering, developing a skill, taking part in physical activity, completing a demanding expedition and undertaking a residential experience. It is a fantastic accomplishment that demonstrates resilience, independence, teamwork and determination.

We are extremely proud of our students who have reached this milestone and represented the school so brilliantly. The ceremony was a wonderful opportunity for them to celebrate their hard work and the dedication they have shown throughout their DofE journey.

A huge thank you goes to all the staff who have supported our pupils along the way — from training and mentoring to organising activities, guiding expeditions and providing encouragement at every stage. Their time, commitment and enthusiasm have played a vital role in helping pupils achieve this success. Congratulations to all our Gold Award recipients — a truly outstanding achievement!



“let your light shine..”

Since launching our Uniform Drive on 1st June, we have been delighted by the positive response from both pupils and parents. The vast majority of pupils have embraced the initiative, adhered to the school's uniform expectations, and made positive choices that have helped to raise standards across the school. We would like to thank parents and carers for their support. It has been fantastic to see pupils taking pride in their appearance and contributing to a calm, purposeful learning environment. As we continue to maintain these high standards, we would like to remind families of the following key uniform expectations. Click on the image to see our uniform policy in more detail:

- Footwear must be plain black school shoes.
- Trainers and Crocs are not allowed.
- Skirts must be the school-approved navy blue pleated skirt.
- Straight, non pleated and tight-fitting bodycon skirts are not permitted.
- Trousers for boys must be grey.
- Black skirts and black trousers are not permitted
- Flared leggings or leggings of any kind are not permitted.
- Trousers must be tailored school trousers with a button and zip fastening.
- Pupils should wear either a school blazer, school blue jumper, or Duke of Edinburgh jumper.
- Pupils may wear a single, small stud earring in each ear lobe only, piercings in any other part of the ear or body are not permitted.
- All other piercings must be removed before arriving at school.



Thank you for your continued support in helping us maintain the high standards that all Archbishop Illesley pupils deserve.

SCHOOL ENTRANCE VIA VICTORIA ROAD

From Monday 22nd June, all pupils and students will enter and exit the school site via a single access point on Victoria Road. This change is being made to improve safety and consistency.

The Victoria Road pedestrian gate will open at 8:00am each morning to allow pupils and students to arrive on site in a calm and orderly manner before the start of the school day. The gate will also be used for pupil and student exit and will open again at the end of the school day.

Please note the following key points:

- All pupils and students must use the Victoria Road entrance and exit only
- The gate will open at 8:00am each day
- The gate will also open at the end of the school day for dismissal
- All pupils and students should be on site for 8:45am for tutor time
- We ask parents and carers not to park in the bus bays by the entrance
- We kindly ask for your support in reinforcing these arrangements with your child to ensure a smooth transition to this new system.

KEY DATES:

- Thursday 25th June - Yr 11 Silver DofE Qualifying
- Friday 26th June - KS3 Sports Day
- Monday 29th June - Maths Inspiration Workshop; Yr 11 into 12 Step Up Day 8.40am - 3.15pm; Yr 10 and 12 Work Experience Week
- Tuesday 30th June - Yr 11 into 12 Step Up Day 10.00am - 3.15pm; Delayed start to school day. Victoria Road gate will open at 9.30am. Pupils to arrive no later than 10.00 to their tutor base and the day begins with Period 2 at 10.15am
- Wednesday 1st July - Transition Day; Yr 9 Dorset Trip (until Thursday 2nd July)
- Friday 3rd July - Yr 8 Think Tank trips

“let your light shine...”



It has been an incredibly busy few weeks at Archbishop Ilsey since our last Update. We have celebrated fantastic pupil achievements and are now looking forward to a thrilling end to the academic year.

Sporting Success and Academic Excellence

I have felt incredibly blessed recently to see so many Year 7s excelling both academically and in the sporting arena:

Cricket: The boys' cricket team has been training exceptionally hard, showing great dedication.

Girls Football: I was immensely impressed by the girls' football team, who won their match this week. Their hard work certainly paid off, and their determination was written all over their red faces by the final whistle!



Connect Futures: A group of our pupils worked alongside visitors from Connect Futures this week, engaging in vital discussions about the dangers of fake news. From the group, five of our talented pupils will now head to Birmingham City University (BCU) to compete against other schools. They will be debating the fascinating topic: "Has technology negatively affected the intelligence of human beings?" We wish them the very best of luck.



Celebrating Culture Day

One of the absolute highlights of the year is always our school's Culture Day. Seeing so many different cultures represented in our school reminded us all of what a beautifully rich community we have here at Ilsey. It was wonderful to see pupils wearing traditional dress with such pride, and taking part in classroom activities that allowed them to celebrate their heritage and share their unique experiences with others.



Important Dates and Upcoming Events

Next week is **Assessment Week**. Emails have already been sent home containing detailed revision lists. Parents, please do ask your children what they should be revising and take some time to work through the content with them. Finishing the year with superb assessment grades is the ultimate way for them to let their light shine bright!

School Sports Day (Friday 26th June): Next Friday is our annual Sports Day. This is a brilliant event for all pupils to get involved in, even those who aren't competing as they will be actively designing banners and cheering on their teammates.

HEAD OF YEAR UPDATES

Year 7 Disco (Thursday 2nd July, 4:30pm – 6:30pm): Information has now been sent out regarding the end of year disco. Tickets are £4 and can be purchased via ParentMail. Please check your emails for further details.

Final Reflection

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all parents and carers for your continued support. Thank you for helping our pupils reach for the stars (This will probably be played at the disco!) Together, we are helping them learn to become the absolute best versions of themselves. To close, I leave you with a scripture reminder of how much God desires the very best for each and every one of us all. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." – Jeremiah 29:11

YEAR 8 - MRS WAFI

As we enter the final half term of the academic year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and partnership throughout the year. Working together enables us to maintain the high standards that help our pupils thrive both academically and personally.



One area where your support makes a significant difference is in ensuring that pupils attend school in the correct uniform every day. School uniform is about much more than appearance; it plays an important role in creating a positive culture for learning. A smart and professional uniform helps pupils develop a sense of pride in themselves and in their school. It promotes equality, strengthens our sense of community, and helps pupils approach each day with a positive attitude and a readiness to learn. Research and experience show that when pupils are dressed appropriately for school, they are more likely to feel focused, organised, and prepared for the challenges of the day ahead. Uniform reinforces the message that school is an important place where learning matters and where every pupil is expected to do their very best. By supporting our uniform expectations, you are helping your child to develop habits of responsibility, self-discipline, and respect; qualities that will serve them well throughout their lives.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all parents and carers who consistently support us in upholding these standards. Your commitment sends a powerful message to our young people that education is important and that high expectations matter. The strong partnership between home and school is one of the key reasons our pupils continue to succeed.

As we move into the final weeks of the academic year, it can be tempting for pupils to think that the year is nearly over. However, some of the most important learning opportunities still lie ahead. Every lesson, every day, and every minute in school continues to contribute to pupils' progress and achievement. Every minute counts, and every minute matters. Knowledge, skills, confidence, and understanding continue to build right up to the final day of term.

We therefore encourage all pupils to maintain the same high standards of attendance, punctuality, effort, behaviour, and presentation that we have expected throughout the year. By remaining focused and committed, pupils can finish the year strongly and be fully prepared for the opportunities and challenges that await them in the next academic year.

We are reminded of the importance of giving our very best in all that we do. In Colossians 3:23, we read: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters." This verse encourages us to approach every task with dedication, perseverance, and a positive attitude. It is a message that we hope inspires our pupils to take pride in their work, value their education, and make the most of every opportunity they are given.

A great deal of preparation is already going into getting Year 9 ready for the challenges and opportunities that Year 10 will bring. As you move into the next stage of your school journey, there will be greater expectations, increased responsibility and the beginning of important GCSE courses that will help shape your future.



Over the coming weeks and months, we will continue to focus on developing the skills needed for success, including organisation, resilience, independence and effective study habits. The work you are doing now is laying the foundations for next year, ensuring that you are confident and prepared to make a strong start to your GCSE studies.

It is important that everyone continues to work hard in lessons, complete homework to the best of their ability, and make the most of the support and guidance available from teachers. Small habits, such as arriving to lessons on time, being fully equipped and maintaining a positive attitude towards learning, can make a significant difference as you move into Year 10.

Year 9 has been a year of growth and important decisions, from choosing your options subjects to beginning new experiences such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award. These experiences are helping you develop the maturity, confidence and determination needed for the next stage of your education. If you continue to approach your learning with commitment and enthusiasm, you will be well prepared to embrace the opportunities and challenges that Year 10 brings.

Year 9 have now begun their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award journey, and I am incredibly proud of each and every one of you for taking part in this fantastic opportunity. Over the past few weeks, you have shown commitment, resilience and a willingness to step outside of your comfort zones as you have completed the training sessions in preparation for your expedition.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award is about much more than completing an expedition; it is about building confidence, developing character and creating memories that will stay with you for years to come. The training you have completed has laid a strong foundation for success, and I have no doubt that you will continue to support one another and rise to any challenges that come your way.

Thank you to each and every one of you for the fantastic effort you have made with our uniform expectations since returning from the break. It has been wonderful to see so many students taking pride in their appearance, following our school rules and making positive choices every day.

The improvements have been noticeable, and your commitment to maintaining high standards reflects positively on both yourselves and our school community. Wearing the correct uniform demonstrates respect, responsibility and a readiness to learn, helping to create a positive environment where everyone can succeed.

Please continue this excellent work by ensuring that you arrive at school each day in full, correct uniform and take pride in representing our school. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed, and you should be proud of the positive example you are setting. Well done, and thank you for your continued support in maintaining these high standards.



Year 10 pupils have made a fantastic start to their examinations. We have been impressed by the positive attitude, resilience and maturity shown throughout the exam period. A reminder that examinations continue next week. Pupils should ensure they arrive on time for all exams and come fully prepared with the correct equipment, including pens, pencils, rulers, calculators (where required) and any other permitted materials.

These examinations provide valuable preparation for Year 11 and the GCSE examinations ahead. Developing strong revision habits, effective time management and confidence in exam situations now will support future success. Please note that Year 10 pupils are not required to be in school or attend sports activities on Friday 26 June. As communicated previously, this day should be used to prepare for Work Experience placements.

Work Experience - Work Experience begins during the week commencing Monday 29th June. All pupils should be engaged in their placement either in person or virtually. We look forward to hearing about the valuable skills and experiences they gain during this important opportunity.

Duke of Edinburgh Award - The Duke of Edinburgh Expedition will take place from Thursday 9th- Saturday 11th July. There will be a voluntary meeting for pupils and parents on Tuesday 23rd June at 4:00 pm (venue to be confirmed). An online presentation will also be available at 5:15pm on the same day.

Pupils taking part are reminded that:

- Tent groups should consist of 2-3 pupils per tent.
- Walking groups should consist of 4-7 pupils.
- Pupils should submit details of their tent partners and walking groups at the start of next week.

GCSE History Visit to Berlin

A number of GCSE History pupils will be visiting Berlin from Wednesday 15th- Saturday 18th July. This promises to be an excellent educational opportunity, bringing classroom learning to life and providing valuable historical insight.

Wednesday 1st July - The Prom at The Village Hotel - We are very much looking forward to celebrating our Archbishop Ilsley Year 11 Prom. The Prom is at The Village Hotel Shirley (B90 4JG). Dress for this special event will be formal, and tickets should already have been purchased. The evening will include a buffet meal and a disco. Pupils may arrive at The Village Hotel from 6:30pm when there will be an opportunity to take photographs outside. The event will start at 6:45pm, the buffet will open at 7:30pm and the evening will finish at 10:30pm. There will also be an opportunity for pupils to take photos in the photo booth we have booked, which always proves extremely popular.

A polite reminder that parents/carers will need to arrange for their child's safe journey to and from the venue. Please ensure that you collect your child promptly.

Year 11 into 12 Step Up Days

On Monday 29th June and Tuesday 30th June we will hold our Year 11 Step Up To Sixth Form days to include subject masterclass sessions. On these days, Year 11 pupils will be given a wealth of information about our Sixth Form. They will also learn about how to be a post 16 student and what is expected of them over the course of their two years with us in Sixth Form. Pupils will also meet the Sixth Form team, sample a range of A Level and Level 3 lessons and learn more about our Enrichment offer. On these days we expect the following from Year 11 pupils:

- Full attendance across the two days. Monday 29th June 8.40am - 3.15pm
- Tuesday 30th June 10.00am - 1.00pm
- Pupils can wear their own clothes on both days but they are reminded be to dress appropriately for the school environment



We are very much looking forward to meeting our prospective Year 12 very soon!

Year 12 Mock Exams

Year 12 students recently completed their mock examination period, and we would like to congratulate them on their excellent attendance, punctuality and conduct throughout. Students approached the examination process with maturity and professionalism, which reflected the high standards we expect within our Sixth Form.

These mock examinations are an important milestone in the Year 12 journey. They provide students with valuable experience of formal examination conditions and help them develop the knowledge, skills and exam techniques required for success as they progress into Year 13. The results will also help students and teachers identify strengths and areas for development, ensuring that students are well prepared for the demands of their final year of study. The experience gained through these assessments will be particularly beneficial as students begin to prepare for the external examinations and mock examinations they will face in Year 13. Developing effective revision habits, managing exam pressures and refining examination technique are all essential skills that will support future success.

We are proud of the way our Year 12 students conducted themselves during this important assessment period and look forward to supporting them as they build on this experience and continue their journey towards Year 13. Parents/carers and students will receive their child's Assessment Report via email on Wednesday 15th July. Many thanks for your support at this important time.

Expectations - Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance and punctuality remain two of the most important factors in student success. As we reflect on the recent mock examination period, it was pleasing to see so many students attending regularly, arriving on time and approaching their examinations with maturity and commitment. The excellent attendance and punctuality demonstrated during this period, show that students are capable of maintaining these high standards throughout the academic year.

At A Level, every lesson matters. The pace of learning is fast and missing even a small amount of teaching time can have a significant impact on understanding, progress and attainment. Arriving on time ensures that students are fully prepared for learning from the start of each lesson and helps establish the positive habits and routines that are essential not only for academic success, but also for university, apprenticeships and future employment. Developing reliability, punctuality and a strong work ethic now will benefit students long after they leave Sixth Form.

We would also like to remind parents, carers and students that Relaxed Registration remains a privilege rather than an entitlement. This privilege is only available to students who have returned a signed application form and continue to meet the required criteria. To be eligible, students must have attendance of 94% or higher (although evidence of significantly improved attendance may also be considered), fewer than 10% late marks, the support of their teachers and tutor, and be making good progress in line with expectations and target grades. Students who do not hold Relaxed Registration privileges should continue to attend the Study Room for Period 5 registration before beginning their private study. We would like to congratulate all students who have earned this privilege through their excellent attendance, punctuality and commitment to their studies. Their positive example demonstrates the high standards that we encourage all students to aspire to as they prepare for success in Year 13 and beyond.

Year 12 Next Steps Programme

The next half term marks an important stage in the Year 12 journey as we begin our Post-18 Next Steps Programme in earnest. As students look ahead to Year 13 and begin making decisions about their futures, they will take part in a range of workshops, visits and enrichment opportunities designed to help them explore their options and prepare for life beyond Sixth Form.

Whether students are considering university, apprenticeships, higher education, employment or a gap year, this programme is designed to support them in making informed decisions and developing the skills required for successful applications. The experiences planned over the coming weeks will provide valuable insight into the opportunities available after Sixth Form, while helping students to reflect on their aspirations, strengths and future goals.

A key focus of the programme will be introducing students to the UCAS process, supporting them with personal statement writing, and providing opportunities to engage with universities, employers and careers professionals. Work experience will also play a vital role, enabling students to gain first-hand experience of the workplace and further develop employability skills.

Please note the following important dates:

Monday 22nd June – Year 12 visit to the UCAS Discovery Conference at the NEC (all day). The UCAS Discovery Conference, Birmingham at the NEC is one of the UK's largest university and careers events and offers students an excellent opportunity to meet representatives from over 150 universities, speak with major apprenticeship providers and employers, and receive expert advice on applications, careers and next steps. Whether students are already certain about their future plans or are still exploring their options, the conference provides invaluable guidance, useful contacts and information all under one roof. Attendance at the conference is compulsory, and all student tickets have already been booked free of charge. Students will make their own way to the NEC via bus or train. Our Drop-Down session on Thursday supported and prepared students ahead of the event to ensure they make the most of this exciting opportunity. Please use the link here to see more information: <https://www.ucas.com/events/ucas-discovery-birmingham-2026-470276>. Please also discuss travel arrangements with your son/daughter. Students will be encouraged to meet and travel in groups and will be supported to purchase train tickets to the NEC.

Friday 26th June – UCAS Preparation and Personal Statement Day (all day)

Monday 29th June – Friday 3rd July – Year 12 Work Experience Week. Any student that does not have a work experience placement, will attend school where they will support departments, complete independent study and complete a virtual work experience placement.

Monday 6th July – Year 12 visit to Coventry University (all day). More information and letter to follow.

We encourage all students to engage fully with these opportunities. The decisions and preparations made during this period will provide a strong foundation for Year 13 applications and help ensure that every student is well prepared for their chosen pathway after Sixth Form.

We look forward to supporting students through this exciting and important stage of their journey.