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THE ABI UPDATE

ISSUE 5 FRIDAY 6TH NOVEMBER 2026

MESSAGE FROM INTERIM PRINCIPAL - MR HEARNDEN

It has been a really positive start to the half term. We came back to the opening of four new Computer Suites that have replaced the rooms that were in the Holy Souls building that is now closed and they look fantastic!. Phase 2 of re-decoration and re-carpeting of other areas of the school was also completed over half term as we look to continue improving the learning environment for our school community. Many thanks to Mr Hicks our Strategic Business Manager for project managing the improvements and our site team for their ongoing work.

Next week marks a significant milestone in Archbishop Ilsley's journey of improvement. As you will be aware, on Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th November, we will welcome Ofsted inspectors for our first monitoring visit since being placed in Special Measures in May 2026.

We welcome this opportunity with confidence and determination. Since June, we have been relentless in raising standards and transforming our school. From dramatically improved uniform and appearance standards to calmer classrooms, stronger behaviour, improving attendance and a renewed focus on inclusion and SEND, Archbishop Ilsley is a very different school from the one inspected in May.

We know there is more to do, but we are proud of the progress made and excited for inspectors to see the transformation first-hand. Our ambition has never been simply to improve enough; it is to build an exceptional Catholic school that our community deserves. Archbishop Ilsley is on the rise again, and we are determined to keep rising.

Thank you to our parents and carers for your continued support. The partnership between home and school is crucial to our success. Your support with attendance, punctuality, uniform and behaviour expectations is making a real difference. We cannot achieve lasting improvement without you, and I am grateful to those families who continue to work so positively alongside us.

A prime example of great support was evident at our Year 7 Early Review Evening this week. Thank you to those that attended and to the staff that presented really important information. Our Year 7 students have made a fantastic start, and it was lovely to see so many parents/carers in attendance.

Remembering Mr Gratton Mulcrow

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Mr Gratton Mulcrow, a member of our Religious Education department, during the half-term break. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends, colleagues and all those whose lives he touched. We remember Mr Mulcrow with gratitude for his service to Catholic education and his contribution to our school community. Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.

As we begin this important half term, we do so united in faith, ambition and purpose, determined to secure the very best for every young person at Archbishop Ilsley. We will continue to be just and firm of purpose and remain unapologetic about the high standards we have set.

"...just and firm of purpose."

CATHOLIC LIFE • SCRIPTURE REFLECTION
MATTHEW 5:1-12A



When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain. He sat down, and his disciples came to him. Then he began to teach them. He said:
"Blessed are the poor in spirit — those who know they need God — for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
Blessed are those who are sad and grieving, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the gentle, for the earth will be theirs.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right, for they will be satisfied.
Blessed are those who show mercy, for mercy will be shown to them.
Blessed are the pure in heart — people whose hearts are honest and true — for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are treated badly for doing what is right, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
Blessed are you when people insult you, treat you badly and tell lies about you because you follow me.
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven."

How is this relevant today?

In this week's Gospel, Jesus teaches the crowds through the Beatitudes, offering a powerful message about how we should live our lives. He speaks of the importance of kindness, humility, mercy, justice and peace, reminding us that true happiness is not found in wealth, popularity or success, but in the way we treat others and the choices we make.

As we begin our whole-school focus on 'Be Ready' at the start of this new half term, this Gospel offers us an important challenge. Being ready is not simply about arriving at school on time, having the correct equipment or being prepared to learn, although these things matter. It is also about being ready to make the right choices, respond to the needs of others and live out our values each day.

Jesus tells us, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." In a world where disagreement, conflict and division are often part of everyday life, we are reminded of the importance of being ready to choose peace over confrontation, kindness over cruelty and understanding over judgement. He also tells us, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right." This challenges us to be ready to stand up for what is right, even when it is difficult or unpopular. Whether that means challenging unkind behaviour, including someone who feels left out or speaking up when we see injustice, our faith calls us to turn our beliefs into actions.

The Beatitudes also remind us that we do not always know what others may be experiencing. Being ready to listen, show compassion or offer a simple act of kindness can make an enormous difference to someone who may be struggling.

For our students, being ready means approaching each day with a willingness to learn, to grow, to persevere and to make a positive contribution to our school community. For all of us, it means recognising that every day brings opportunities to demonstrate our faith through our words and actions.

As we reflect on this Gospel, perhaps we can ask ourselves: Am I ready to do what is right, even when it is difficult? Am I ready to show kindness to someone who needs it? Am I ready to be a peacemaker and make a positive difference?

The Beatitudes remind us that being ready is not just about preparing for what lies ahead, but about choosing how we respond to the opportunities and challenges we face today.

May we be a school community that is always ready to show kindness, ready to stand up for what is right and ready to make a difference in the lives of others.

"... Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven..."

ATTENDANCE MATTERS AT ABI - MRS BURNHAM

Attendance Matters – A Positive Start to the New Half Term!

Welcome back! We hope all our students and families enjoyed a restful October half-term break. As we begin a new half term, it is the perfect opportunity to re-establish positive routines, refocus and make a fresh start with attendance.

At Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School, we continue to embed our 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice, placing positive relationships, a sense of belonging, early support and working together with families at the heart of everything we do. Our message remains simple: Every day counts and every lesson matters.

Getting back into good routines

After a school holiday, getting back into a routine can sometimes be challenging. Small changes at home can make a big difference to how students feel when they arrive at school each morning.

- Prioritise sleep: Encourage a consistent bedtime and wake-up time, including at weekends. Secondary-aged students generally need 8–10 hours of sleep each night.
- Reduce screen time before bed: Encourage students to put phones, tablets and gaming devices away at least 30–60 minutes before bedtime to help them wind down.
- Prepare the night before: Having uniform, school bags, equipment and PE kits ready can help reduce morning stress.
- Start the day positively: A healthy breakfast and leaving home with plenty of time can help students arrive feeling calm and ready to learn.
- Talk about school: Take time to ask about friendships, lessons and any worries. Listening to your child's voice helps us identify barriers early and provide the right support.

Why does good attendance matter?

Regular attendance is about much more than academic achievement. Being in school every day helps students develop friendships, build confidence, establish positive routines and feel part of our school community. Missing even a few days can result in gaps in learning and make it harder to keep up with lessons.

Did you know that 90% attendance means missing approximately one day of school every fortnight? Over a full academic year, this equates to around four weeks of missed education.

Working together – Support First

We understand that some students experience genuine challenges with attending school. Our approach is always to work with families, listen to students and identify the support needed to overcome barriers. If your child is struggling with attendance, please contact their Form Tutor, Head of Year or the Attendance Team. The earlier we work together, the more effectively we can help.

As we begin this new half term, we encourage every student to set themselves a positive attendance goal. We will continue celebrating excellent attendance, recognising improvements and rewarding the effort students make to be in school.

Let's make this half term one of positive routines, strong attendance and a real sense of belonging. Together, we can make every school day count!

SEND AND INCLUSION - MRS GRANT

Celebrating Inclusion: Every Learner Belongs, Achieves and Flourishes

At Archbishop Ilsley, we are committed to creating a school community where every young person feels safe, valued and proud of who they are.

An increasing number of our students are choosing to wear a sunflower pin badge or green sunflower wristband. The sunflower is a recognised symbol of hidden disabilities and additional needs, including autism, ADHD, dyslexia, speech and language difficulties and sensory needs. For some young people, wearing the sunflower is a discreet way of communicating that they may need a little extra understanding, patience or support.

We are incredibly proud that more of our students are choosing to wear these symbols openly and confidently. This is something worth celebrating. It reflects the inclusive culture we are working hard to build at Archbishop Ilsley – one where differences are recognised, understood and celebrated, and where having additional needs is never something to feel embarrassed about or hide.

True inclusion is about much more than the support we provide. It is about creating a genuine sense of belonging, where every student feels accepted, understood and able to be themselves. We want our young people to recognise that having additional needs does not define what they can achieve, nor does it change the high expectations we have for them.

In a similar way, we have pin badges for some of our students who are newly arrived to the UK and have limited English proficiency. Their badge is intended to help all staff recognise students who may need additional support with communication, understanding routines, and navigating school life as they settle into their new environment. As an inclusive school community, we make every effort to help our newly arrived students feel welcome, valued and supported. A simple greeting, friendly conversation, or check-in can make a significant difference to a student's confidence, wellbeing, and sense of belonging.

Above all, we want every young person to know that they do not need to change who they are to belong at Archbishop Ilsley.

The badges may be small symbols, but they represents something incredibly important about the school community we are building together: Every learner belongs, achieves and flourishes.

SEND Advice Centres and events



SOS SEN run a number of free walk-in and virtual SEND advice centres. Walk-in advice centres run nationally and are spread across the month during school term times. Parents and carers are invited to talk to their experienced volunteers in-person. Virtual Advice Centres are by appointment and run on Microsoft Teams. Virtual advice centres cater for families living in Birmingham as well as a dedicated Adoption virtual advice centre for adoptive families.

Their next event takes place on Tuesday 10TH November. Please pre-register using the link below. Fill in the form and include as much detail as you can about the reason for your visit. Please select Advice Centre visit – FREE under *Services on the form. You will be emailed a security ID. Keep this safe and give it to the volunteer you speak with. If you have used our services before and already have a security ID, please have this ready to give to the volunteer – you do not need to register again.

The event runs for 2 hours from 10.30am to 12.30pm OR 7-9pm virtually. Held online via Microsoft Teams, there is no physical venue. You must book a session in advance.

STANDARDS FOR LEARNING - MR FOLEY

Rights go both ways

This half term, our Catholic Social Teaching focus is "Rights go both ways." Every student at Archbishop Ilsley has the right to learn, to feel safe and to be respected. Each of those rights comes with a responsibility: if I want to learn, I must not stop others from learning; if I want to feel safe, I help to keep others safe; and if I want respect, I show it. The Church teaches that rights and responsibilities belong together. In the Beatitudes, Jesus calls us to "hunger and thirst for what is right" and that means caring about everyone's rights, not just our own.

This week's Ilsley Spirit Etiquette

This week in tutor time, every year group looked at two sections of the Ilsley Spirit Etiquette through the lens of "Rights go both ways":

- My Right to Learn (In Classrooms). Students come into lessons calmly, greet their teacher, start their Activate straight away and listen properly when others are speaking. When one person interrupts a lesson, other students miss learning opportunities. Our reminder: win the first minute, win the lesson.
- My Right to Feel Safe (Moving Around School). Students walk on the left, keep their bags close and walk calmly. A calm corridor is not only something staff enforce. It's something every student protects.
- This links to the British Values, which all students learn about. To help them remember the five values, we use the memory tool DR MIT:
  - Democracy
  - Rule of Law
  - Mutual Respect
  - Individual Liberty
  - Tolerance

This week the focus was on Democracy and the Rule of Law: the same rules apply to everyone, and they are there to protect everyone.

Test your child's knowledge! Ask them what DR MIT stands for. Can they name all five British Values? Then ask them to name their three rights at Archbishop Ilsley (to learn, to feel safe and to be respected) and the responsibility that goes with each one.



Students writing prayers for their forms

Prayer is at the heart of the Ilsley Spirit, and every school day includes it. This week in RS lessons, students learned about five kinds of prayer: Remembrance, Please, Thank You, Sorry and Praise. They then wrote five prayers of their own. These will go into their form's prayer envelopes, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays, each form takes one out and prays it together in tutor time. Students wrote for the whole form, using "we" and "us" so that everyone in the room can join in. Their prayers drew on real things in their lives: their families, our school and the wider world. With November being the month of All Souls and Remembrance, many students have written moving prayers for loved ones who have died.

The gift of quiet time

In a busy, noisy world, many young people rarely get a moment of real stillness. Prayer is first about our relationship with God, but research also shows that regular quiet, reflective time does a great deal for young people's wellbeing:

- Less anxiety and stress. A major review of 47 studies found that regular meditation helped reduce anxiety, low mood and stress.
- A calmer body. Slow, quiet breathing, like the breathing we use in prayer, lowers the heart rate and settles the body's stress response.

- Gratitude lifts mood. People who regularly notice what they are thankful for tend to feel more hopeful.
- Lasting benefits. A Harvard study of more than 5,000 young people found that those who prayed or meditated daily as teenagers were 16% more likely to be happier in their twenties.

That's why we ask students to take prayer time seriously. We ask them to sit still, face the front and pray sincerely. As we remind them, stillness is contagious. On Fridays, forms also pray the Examen, a short Ignatian prayer for looking back over the day.

You can support this at home. Students learned a simple breath prayer: breathe in slowly and say "Jesus…", then breathe out and say "…give me your peace." Repeat five times. It takes less than a minute and works well before bed, before an exam or at any stressful moment. You could also try ending the day by sharing one thing each of you is thankful for. Some quiet time together, without phones or screens, can make a real difference.

Celebrating success: Half Term 1

Our students had an excellent first half term. Staff gave 77,044 Ilsley Standard Awards for being on time, in correct uniform and working well. 1,074 students received at least one, and 203 students received 100 or more.
Top tutor groups and star students for the half term:

Year 7: 7THE - Khaleesi S Year 8: 8MAX · Fajar-Imaan F. and Momina S. Year 9: 9JHN · Zenayah D.
Year 10: 10COS · Princess C. Year 11: 11BAK · Emilia M. Year 12: 12BAK · Mary M. Year 13: 13BAK · Claudia E.

Congratulations to them all. Thank you, as always, for your support at home. May we all be Justus et Tenax Propositi: just and firm of purpose.

PSHE AND RSE - MR BOTWRIGHT

At Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School, Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) are central to helping our young people grow into confident, caring and responsible members of society. Much of this work happens through our tutor time and assembly programme, which celebrates our school community and our Catholic faith, encouraging students to recognise the dignity of every person and to live out Gospel values each day. It also promotes the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

These themes are closely linked to our school rules: Be Ready, Be Safe and Be Respectful and Kind. Being Ready means arriving prepared to learn with a positive attitude. Being Safe includes staying safe online, looking after our mental health and knowing who to turn to for help. Being Respectful and Kind means treating everyone with dignity, valuing difference and showing compassion, following the example of Christ. By returning to these rules regularly, we help students see that these values are lived out in the classroom, the corridor and beyond.

We want to show you how we are making sure every student receives the PSHE and RSE education they deserve, in line with the government's statutory guidance. This guidance sets out what all secondary schools must teach, including healthy relationships, families, online safety, and physical and mental wellbeing. As parents and carers, you are the first and most important educators of your children. We wish to work in partnership with you so that what students learn in school supports the conversations you have at home. As part of this goal, we hope to continue these regular updates explaining parts of our programme to you.

Students are currently following the TenTen programme, an established scheme of work developed alongside guidance from the Catholic Education Service. It is used in Catholic schools across the country and is designed to meet statutory requirements while remaining rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church. Its age-appropriate lessons are carefully sequenced so that students build their understanding year on year. Students explore what it means to be created and loved by God, how to form healthy relationships, how to look after their bodies and minds, and how to make safe, informed choices. Sessions give them space to ask questions, share their views respectfully and reflect on how their faith can guide their decisions. In future updates, we will share more detail about what each year group is studying.

YEAR 7 - MR FRANCIOSO

Year 7 Early Review – Building Our Community

On Thursday, we held our Year 7 Early Review evening, and it was wonderful to see so many parents and carers attending. It was a real pleasure to speak to so many of you and hear such positive comments about how your children have settled into life at Archbishop Ilsley. These conversations are so important, as building strong relationships between home and school is at the heart of helping every child succeed.

One message I would really like to reinforce is the importance of celebrating the positives. When looking at the ClassCharts app, it is absolutely right that we discuss any negatives or areas where improvements are needed. However, let's make sure we give just as much attention to the good things happening every day.



In the first eight weeks of term, over 6,000 positive house points have been awarded to just over 200 Year 7 students. That is an incredible achievement! Behind every one of those points is a student making a good choice, showing kindness, working hard, demonstrating respect or simply getting the little things right time and time again.

Please take the time to celebrate these achievements with your children. Recognise their successes, however big or small, and let them know that their efforts are being noticed. Positive reinforcement can make a huge difference to a young person's confidence, motivation and sense of belonging.



Creating a sense of belonging

One of our biggest priorities this year is to create a genuine sense of belonging within Year 7. We want every student to feel valued, supported and proud to be part of the Archbishop Ilsley community. This doesn't happen overnight. It comes from the relationships we build, the encouragement we give one another and the way we celebrate each other's successes.

We are all part of the same community, working together to help our young people flourish. When school and home work together, we create the strongest foundations for success.

Keep striving!

Finally, I want to remind everyone that the journey through Year 7 will not always be straightforward. Mistakes will happen. There will be occasions when students get things wrong, make poor choices or find things difficult. That is part of growing up.

What matters is how we respond. We learn from our mistakes, take responsibility, make improvements and move forward. We should never allow one mistake to define us but instead use it as an opportunity to become better.

Let's continue to encourage our children to work hard, make positive choices, show kindness and take pride in everything they do.

Keep striving, keep improving and, most importantly, keep celebrating the successes along the way.

YEAR 8 - MR SMITH

It was fantastic to welcome our Year 8 students back after the half-term break and to begin what promises to be an exciting and busy run-up to Christmas. I was particularly excited to return and see our brand-new IT suites, which look absolutely amazing and will provide our students with even more opportunities to develop their skills and learning.

It has been wonderful to see students settle back into school life so positively. Across the week I have visited a number of lessons, and staff have consistently commented on how well Year 8 students have returned to learning. I was particularly impressed by the quality of work I saw in Design Technology, Maths and History lessons. The atmosphere in almost every classroom was one of focus, positivity and determination, with students really pushing themselves to achieve greatness.





There are also a number of exciting opportunities coming up this half term. Our trip to the Birmingham REP to see Peter Pan on 9th December is fast approaching and will be a wonderful festive experience for students. There are 70 places available. As always, good attendance and positive behaviour points will be considered. The trip will be available on ParentPay shortly and an email will be sent out as soon as bookings open.



Whilst talking about attendance, I would like to thank those families who continue to support us in ensuring students attend school every day. However, this remains one area that needs improvement across the year group. Good attendance is vital for academic success, and we can only achieve our attendance targets by working together with the support of parents and carers.

On the topic of being ready for school, the vast majority of students have been superb with their uniform and equipment this week, so thank you for your continued support. As the saying goes, if we get the little things right, the big things often take care of themselves. One area that does need addressing is school bags. A few students have arrived without one this week. Please ensure that your child brings a school bag every day, as it is an important part of being organised and ready to learn.

From next week, any student who requires a report card will have this set up through Class Charts, and parents will receive an email explaining the situation. Whilst most students continue to be excellent ambassadors for Year 8, a small number still need to recognise that their actions can affect not only themselves, but also those around them.

Looking ahead, we have football fixtures for both our boys' and girls' teams coming up. The boys' match is scheduled for 16th November, while the girls' fixture will take place during the same week, with the exact date to be confirmed. We wish all of our players the very best of luck.

I am incredibly proud of the community that Year 8 is building. We continue to focus on using our words and actions to support one another, make positive choices and create an environment where everyone can flourish. Language is such a powerful tool and we should always aim to use it in a way that promotes positivity, kindness and respect.

Finally, there are a huge number of students who are now very close to achieving their Bronze, Silver and Gold Ilsley Standard Awards. I cannot wait to celebrate these achievements at the end of the term and recognise the hard work and commitment shown by so many members of our year group.

Thank you once again for your continued support. "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11. This verse reminds us of the importance of being a strong community, supporting one another and helping everyone to achieve their very best.

HEAD OF YEAR UPDATES

YEAR 9 - MRS WAFI

We hope you have all had a restful and enjoyable break. We would like to extend a warm welcome back to all our students as we begin a new half term.

We have a busy and important few weeks ahead, with Year 9 assessments commencing towards the end of November. It is essential that students are focused, organised and fully prepared for this assessment period. These assessments provide a valuable opportunity to consolidate learning and strengthen the foundational knowledge and skills that will support them throughout their GCSE studies.

We encourage all students to demonstrate a positive attitude towards their learning, make the most of every lesson and take responsibility for their preparation. Every effort made now will contribute towards future success.

As we approach the end of term, we are looking forward to organising reward trips to celebrate students' hard work and positive contributions. Students who demonstrate consistently good attendance and behaviour will be given priority when it comes to securing places on these trips. Further information and trip letters will be shared soon, so please keep an eye out for updates!

As we begin this new half term, let us remember: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."— Colossians 3:23 (NIV)

Let us make this half term one of commitment, perseverance and achievement. We look forward to seeing our students flourish, make positive choices and continue striving to be the very best they can be.

YEAR 10 - MR KENYON

It has been a positive start to the new half term, and I have been encouraged by the attitude Year 10 have shown towards their learning.

With their first round of assessments coming up, there is a real sense of focus and determination across the year group. I have spoken to many students who are genuinely looking forward to the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned and are keen to do well.

All assessments will take place during normal timetabled lessons between Monday 16th and Friday 27th November. We assess students at regular points throughout their time at Archbishop Ilsley as this helps us to see how well they are progressing and where they may need extra support.

It has been pleasing to hear how hard students are working in lessons and at home as they prepare for these assessments. I will encourage them to maintain this approach over the coming weeks. Effective preparation is not simply about the work completed immediately before an assessment; it is about developing consistent habits, engaging fully in lessons, completing homework carefully, and taking responsibility for identifying areas where further improvement is needed.

I want Year 10 to approach this first assessment period with confidence, knowing that the effort they put into their preparation will make a huge difference. I would encourage all students to make good use of the revision materials and guidance provided by their teachers. The most effective approach is for students to establish a manageable daily revision routine that allows them to revisit topics regularly, rather than leaving everything until the last minute. The encouragement of parents and carers in helping students to maintain these routines is greatly appreciated.

I am pleased with the way Year 10 have returned after the half-term break and look forward to seeing them continue to approach their learning with the same enthusiasm and determination. Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

YEAR 11 - MS RUCK

Responsibility, Resilience and the Road Ahead

This half term, our focus for Catholic Social Teaching is "Rights go both ways: Every right we have comes with a responsibility to each other." This is a particularly meaningful message for our Year 11 students as they navigate one of the most important and demanding stages of their school journey.

Our Year 11 mock examinations began this week and will continue over next week. These examinations are a vital experience, providing students with an important opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, develop their examination skills and, crucially, identify areas for further development ahead of their final GCSE examinations. We have been incredibly impressed by the conduct and attitude of students so far. Their behaviour in examinations this week has been impeccable, and we are extremely proud of the maturity, focus and respect they have demonstrated. They should feel very proud of the way they have approached this important milestone.

As we move through the examination period, I would like to remind everyone that examinations begin with line-up. Punctuality is essential to ensure a calm and organised start, allowing pupils to settle promptly and receive important instructions and information before entering the examination room. As per school policy, any student arriving at line-up after the whistle will be required to attend a break detention on the same day. Your support in reinforcing the importance of punctuality during this period is greatly appreciated.

We recognise that this fortnight will be challenging and tiring for our students. It is important that they maintain a sensible balance between revision, rest and wellbeing. A good breakfast, plenty of sleep and a positive routine will all play an important part in helping them perform to the best of their ability. Please also note that there will be no P6 sessions or 6 o'clock club running whilst the mock examinations are taking place.

Following the fantastic takeaway pizza treat enjoyed by students last half term, we have some exciting plans ahead to celebrate efforts and successes this half term! Following student suggestion, we are planning a Christmas movie reward, as well as a special group activity for the highest-performing tutor group. An incentive for continued resilience as we navigate this half term.

A particularly important message for all Year 11 families is that Sixth Form applications are now open. Students wishing to continue their education with us must ensure that they complete and submit their applications. Continuing their seven-year journey with us offers so many benefits, not least the opportunity to progress into the next stage of their education within a familiar environment, supported by staff who know them well. We understand their individual strengths, areas for development and aspirations, and are therefore exceptionally well placed to support them in making the next steps towards achieving their full potential. We strongly encourage all students to consider the opportunities available to them and ensure applications are submitted.

Please make a note of our Year 11 Parents' Evening on Thursday 3rd December. This will be an extremely important opportunity to meet with teaching staff, discuss feedback from the mock examinations, celebrate successes and identify the next steps needed to secure the best possible outcomes. Working in partnership between home and school will be essential in ensuring every pupil receives the support, guidance and encouragement they need during these crucial months.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. Year 11 is a significant and sometimes demanding journey, but we are incredibly proud of the way our students are rising to the challenges ahead. We look forward to continuing to work together to help every young person make the most of the opportunities before them.



Archbishop Ilsley Catholic Sixth Form
Embrace your future

Follow us on @ABIlsley6thform to see all of our pictures and our latest news!

Have a look at all things Sixth Form using the following link: https://www.ilsley.bham.sch.uk/sixth-form/

SIXTH FORM - MRS MCMAHON

It has been lovely to welcome our students back after half term and see them return with such purpose and enthusiasm. I have been particularly impressed by the focus and effort they are already showing, both in lessons and during independent study.

Mock Exams -
Our first mock examination period is fast approaching and is an important point in the Sixth Form calendar. Mocks provide a valuable opportunity to assess current progress, identify areas for development and, most importantly, put strategies in place while there is still plenty of time to act on the feedback and make meaningful progress ahead of future examinations.

Year 13 Mock exams:
Tuesday 17th – Tuesday 24th November
Assessment Report 1 emailed home:
Tuesday 8th December

Year 12 Mock exams:
Monday 30th November – Friday 4th December
Assessment Report 1 emailed home:
Thursday 17th December

Why mocks matter
For Year 13 students, mock results will help inform predicted grades and support university applications. For Year 12, they provide an opportunity to assess how well students are adapting to A-Level study and identify the knowledge and skills they need to develop further. We encourage all students to approach these examinations as they would the real thing. Effective preparation now will strengthen subject knowledge, develop exam technique and build confidence, helping students feel better prepared for their final examinations.

Six ways to help at home

1. Plan together. Help your child organise their revision around the examination dates. Short, focused sessions of 45–60 minutes, with regular breaks, are generally more effective than last-minute cramming.
2. Encourage active revision. Rather than simply re-reading notes or highlighting textbooks, encourage practice questions, timed past papers, flashcards, self-quizzing and explaining topics aloud. These approaches help students remember and apply what they have learned. You do not need to understand the subject to be a wonderful audience!
3. Prioritise challenging topics. It can be tempting to revise familiar or favourite areas first, but the greatest progress often comes from tackling topics students find difficult. Subject teachers can help them identify where to focus their efforts.
4. Create a good study space. A quiet, organised environment, with phones and other distractions put away, can make a significant difference to concentration.
5. Look after sleep, food and downtime. Teenagers need eight to ten hours of sleep, regular meals and opportunities to enjoy fresh air and exercise. Time with friends and opportunities to switch off are also important for maintaining a healthy balance.
6. Keep talking. This can be a demanding time for students, so make time to talk about how they are feeling, rather than focusing solely on grades. A little reassurance and encouragement can go a long way.

Archbishop Ilsley Catholic Sixth Form

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Support in school

Exam guidance for each Year 13 subject is already available on the school website under Curriculum – Exams / Exam Timetables. Year 12 guidance will be added within the next week. Students can also access subject-specific independent study guides in the Sixth Form area of the website. Subject teachers and tutors are available to provide additional guidance and support, particularly for anyone feeling anxious or unsure about their preparation. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. By working together, we can help our students make the most of this important opportunity and approach their examinations with confidence.

Change of Date – Year 12 Tutor Evening

Please note that the date of our Year 12 Tutor Evening has changed. We will now be welcoming parents and carers on Wednesday 18th November, from 3.30pm–5.00pm. This is a lovely opportunity to meet with your child's tutor and discuss how they have settled into Sixth Form. Tutors will arrange individual appointments, which will take place in the Sixth Form Study Room. We look forward to seeing you then!

Sixth Form Applications – Year 11

Our Sixth Form Open Evening was a great success, and it was lovely to welcome so many students and families to find out more about life at Archbishop Ilsley Sixth Form. Applications are now open for September 2027 entry, please complete your online application as soon as possible! If you have any questions, please contact the Sixth Form Team.

Introducing the Pope Leo Centre Peer Support Programme: Giving Back, Leading by Example, Making a Difference

We are delighted to introduce our new Pope Leo Centre Peer Support Programme, an exciting enrichment opportunity for our Year 12 students to give back to our school community by supporting younger learners in Key Stage 3. As part of the programme, Year 12 students are being encouraged to volunteer just one hour per fortnight to work alongside teachers, supporting students who may experience additional barriers to learning, particularly those who need extra help with literacy, numeracy or building confidence in the classroom.

Our Sixth Form students are important role models. Many will remember the challenges of starting secondary school and the difference that a little encouragement, patience or support can make. Through this programme, they will have the opportunity to make that same difference to someone else.

Peer supporters might listen to younger pupils read, help them understand instructions, explain vocabulary, support them in getting started with tasks or simply offer reassurance and encouragement. Their role is not to replace teachers, but to work alongside them, helping younger students develop confidence, independence and a greater sense of belonging.

The programme also provides valuable opportunities for our Year 12 students to develop leadership, communication, empathy and responsibility, while making a meaningful contribution to school life. Importantly, the programme reflects our Catholic ethos and this half-term's Catholic Social Teaching focus, "We all have rights and responsibilities." We want our young people to recognise that the gifts, talents and opportunities they have been given can be used to support others.

At the heart of the Pope Leo Centre Peer Support Programme is a simple message: every young person has something to offer, and even a small act of kindness and support can make a lasting difference. Through this initiative, we hope to strengthen relationships across year groups and continue building a school community where every learner feels valued, supported and able to flourish. The programme begins in the coming weeks!

ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

WISDOM • COURAGE • DIGNITY • INTEGRITY

More Than Lessons

DISCOVER
DEVELOP
BELONG
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

EXTRA-CURRICULAR CLUBS

BE INVOLVED | MAKE FRIENDS | TRY SOMETHING NEW

ART

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Art Club	KS4	Tuesday	Lunchtime	A1
Art Club	KS4	Wednesday	Lunchtime	A2
Art Club	KS4	Thursday	Lunchtime	A3

MUSIC

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Choir Practice	All Years	Mon - Fri	Form Time	PA1

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Coding Club	All Years	Monday	Afterschool	CS04

GEOGRAPHY

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
KS3 Homework Club	Years 7,8 8 9	Monday (Week 2)	Afterschool	HU5

MATHS

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Maths Club	All Years	Tuesday	Afterschool	S10
Chess Club	KS2	Tuesday	Afterschool	2.1

FILM CLUB

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Film Club	All Years	Thursday	Afterschool	1.12

MEET NEW PEOPLE

DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS

TRY SOMETHING NEW

BE PART OF OUR COMMUNITY

A Brighter You Starts Here

PE

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Mindful Movement	All Years	Monday	Afterschool	Fitness Suite
Netball	Years 8,8 3	Monday	Afterschool	Sportshall
Netball	Years 7	Monday	Afterschool	Sportshall
Year 7 Football	Year 8	Monday	Afterschool	Astro
Year 9 Football	Year 9	Tuesday	Afterschool	Astro
Dance	KS3	Wednesday	Lunchtime	Hall
CCD Intervention	Yr 11	Wednesday (Week 2)	Afterschool	TBC
CCBS FE Intervention	Yr 10	Wednesday (Week 1)	Afterschool	TBC
Badminton	All Years	Wednesday	Afterschool	Sportshall
Futsal Football	KS3	Wednesday	Afterschool	Astro
Badminton	All Years	Thursday	Before School	Sportshall
Basketball	All Years	Thursday	Afterschool	Sportshall
Year 7 Football	Year 7	Thursday	Afterschool	Astro

RS & CATHOLIC LIFE

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Debate Club	All Years	Thursday	Afterschool	V2
Catholic Life				
Rosary Club: Join us to pray the Rosary and grow in faith together.	All Years	Monday	Lunchtime	Chapel
Stations of the Cross: Walk with us through the Stations of the Cross and reflect on the Passion of Christ.	All Years	Tuesday	Lunchtime	Chapel
Lectio Divina: Join us for a prayerful reflection on the Sunday gospel.	All Years	Wednesday	Lunchtime	Chapel
Prayer: Join us for a time of prayer, reflection and quiet.	All Years	Thursday	Lunchtime	Chapel
Adoration: Spend some quiet time with the Lord in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.	All Years	Friday	Lunchtime	Chapel

LIBRARY

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Book Club	All Years	Monday	Afterschool	Library
Crochet Club	All Years	Monday	Afterschool	Library
Board Games Club	All Years	Wednesday	Afterschool	Library
Homework Club	All Years	Thursday	Afterschool	Library

JOURNALING & OTHER CLUBS

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Journaling Club	All Years	Friday	Lunchtime	Hub
Lifts Club	All Years	Every Day	Before Get Lunch	Hub
Revision	All Years	Thursday	Period 5	TBC
Science Club	All Years	Thursday	Afterschool	TBC

Opportunities Inside and Beyond the Classroom

LEARN | GROW | BELONG | THRIVE

FAITH | OPPORTUNITY | EXCELLENCE | FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE