



Head Teacher's Message

Dear Reader,

Welcome to our Christmas newsletter. It is wonderful to be able to share the details of some of this term's events, including our preparations for Advent, the Carol Service and the sporting successes that the school has enjoyed. Inside you will also find some important safety announcements from Medway Council about staying safe this winter season.

Most of all, though, I wanted to share with you this latest aerial photograph of our City Way site, which is nearing completion. I am thrilled to say that the new school will be open to students on 31st January 2023. This is, quite simply, the Christmas present our school community deserves, and I can hardly wait.

In the meantime, I wish you all a very joyful Christmas.

God Bless,
Mrs. Lennon



Mission Statement:

'St. John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School inspires students, spiritually and educationally forming them through Faith so that they can achieve their aspirations and contribute to their community'
St John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School, Ordnance Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 6SG
Ph: 01634 543123 e-mail: office@stjohnfisher.school





Move to City Way

As you know, work has been progressing at speed on our whole school rebuild on City Way. (Please see our website, <https://stjohnfisher.school/new-build/>, for a flythrough of the design).

We are pleased to share the exciting news that the City Way site will be opening to students on 31st January 2023. This is ahead of schedule, and we are incredibly grateful to Wates, the company delivering the build, who have worked so hard to make sure that we can move out of our present facilities earlier in the winter season than planned. We are also very grateful to our staff and governors, who have done so much to get us to this point.

In order for our staff to pack up to move out of Ordnance Street and Maidstone Road, and into City Way, there will be a period of time during which students will not attend school and will instead access learning resources at home. The only exception for this is planned external exams, which will go ahead as normal. Final details are being confirmed, but we wanted to give you as much notice of this as possible, as we anticipate that students will need to work at home for some of the time between 16th – 27th January 2023. (Please note that students' attendance will be unaffected by this closure, as they will be marked as 'working from home' on our registers).

I apologise in advance for any disruption this may cause. As you know, we will keep the school open wherever possible, but this is a once-in-a-generation, unavoidable closure that will mean our children finally have the educational facilities that they deserve.

We will write again to you in the coming weeks once the plans have been finalised.



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Sports Round-Up

It has been another busy term for sport at St John Fisher. Students completed the last of round 1 Medway football League fixtures, with the highlight being a fantastic 6-1 victory for the Year 7 team against Robert Napier. Football continues to be extremely popular at St John Fisher and our girls and boys continue to develop and improve. We look forward to resuming home football fixtures on our new 3G pitch at City Way when round 2 of league fixtures commence in February.

Our Year 8 netball team completed fixtures against Robert Napier and Brompton Academy. Although not coming out on top, the girls performed brilliantly in both, with the Brompton Academy PE teacher commenting that they were the most sporting team she has umpired this year! Our Year 10 GCSE PE team played 2 fixtures against Rochester Girls Grammar and Fort Pitt Grammar. These are excellent opportunities for our GCSE PE students to develop their practical skills against high quality opposition. The team were defeated by Rochester Grammar, but were victorious against Fort Pitt, and the level of improvement the group are showing as a result of these fixtures is the most important outcome. Netball continues to grow at St John Fisher and we look forward to hosting many netball fixtures in 2023 in our new, state of the art sports hall.

In the Medway Schools Games, students in Years 7 to 10 St John Fisher have competed in badminton, handball and futsal in term 2. These have been extremely competitive events, in which our students have performed well. These events are valuable opportunities for our students to experience competitive sport against the other schools in Medway, in high quality external facilities. We look forward to further Medway Schools games events in 2023, with Sports Hall Athletics up next!

Our Year 7 and 8 students have been completing a unit in sports leadership. Students have been empowered to lead a 3-stage warm-up for their peers, for which they can receive a bronze, silver or gold award. The PE staff have been truly astounded by the quality of leadership on show. The creativity, confidence, planning and communication of the students has been of an exceptional standard and we hope that the students have gained a great deal from the experience, and can utilise the skills displayed in all areas of their futures.

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We would also like to offer our congratulations to Mia in Year 8. In December, Mia took part in the Kent County Sportshall Athletics Championships (Individual) in Ashford.

Out of the four events she was entered for, she obtained a Gold, Silver & Bronze and just missed out on another Bronze in her fourth event. We are now just waiting to hear if she will be selected to represent Kent at county level!



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Religious Education Update

This term, Year 7 have been learning about the importance of prayer for Christians. They have studied four different types of prayer that people may say, and how prayer is an important way of connecting with God. Students have also learnt what Advent is, why it is important for Catholics, and how it is practised. They discussed the differences in preparing for the birth of Jesus for both Christians and non-religious people. By the end of the term, they will have studied the annunciation of Mary, Joseph's visitation and the birth of Jesus, fitting with the Catholic Church's liturgical calendar.

Year 8 have spent the term learning about the different parts of the Catholic Mass. They have studied the importance of seeking forgiveness – not only in Mass but in their own lives. They have discussed the importance of hearing the Word of God, participating in the Nicene Creed and analysing the meaning of the Lord's Prayer. Students have also looked at the importance of preparing for and receiving the Eucharist.

Year 9 have finished studying the GCSE topic of the different ways Catholics express their faith. They have moved on to learning how Catholics practice their faith. Year 10 have studied the festivals of Judaism; they have considered why Jews celebrate festivals; for example, Pesach (Passover) recalls the time when the Jews escaped slavery and what that means for Jews today. They have also looked at other festivals that celebrate the receiving of the holy scripture as well as the harvest.

Year 11 began the term with their PPE; the exam paper covered aspects of the Catholic Christianity paper (paper 1 of 3). Targeted intervention sessions will begin in January; these will take place either Tuesday after school or Thursday morning. Specific students will be contacted. Students can access revision material via Teams, senecalearning.com, kerboodle.com as well as using their own revision guides at home.

In A Level Religious Studies, students in Year 12 have been studying the philosophies of Aristotle and Plato, Kantian ethics and utilitarianism. Year 13 has been studying the challenge of secularism, meta-ethics and liberation theology.

During this Holy Season, I would like to wish you and your family peace, health, joy, and hope for the coming year. Merry Christmas.

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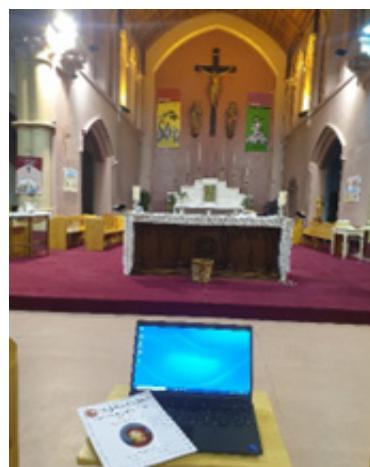
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Chaplaincy Update

All Saints Feast Day

We began this term by coming together as a school community to celebrate the feast of All Saints Day. This whole school Mass was live-streamed from St. Michael's Church, celebrated by Fr. Peter Ehinmiro. Years 7, 12 and 13 were in attendance in the church, with all other staff and students able to access the livestream simultaneously. Fr. Peter spoke about how we could all be saints and reminded us in song, of the verse from the book of Revelation 3:16 about our strength of faith and goodness.



Memorial

November in the Church is traditionally a time to remember those that have died. On All Souls Day, which falls in the first week of November, a staff memorial service was held with an opportunity to light candles and pray for those who have gone before us. Students were also able to add names and light candles in a separate service. These candles were then lit weekly throughout November. Sadly, we also came together to mark the death of a student. Students chose music to mark the occasion and lit candles in remembrance and celebration of her life. Mrs. Lennon read a farewell poem and Mr. Oni read from the book of Wisdom: Chapter 14. Students, staff and family were able to take a prayer card from the service created by Mrs. Bennett.



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Chaplaincy Update (continued)

Remembrance

On the 11th November, the whole school fell silent, to pay respect to those that have died in wars and conflicts across the world.

The reflection began with the reading of The Exhortation, and the Last Post played by Mr. Kallend on his trumpet.

During the silence, students and staff were able to reflect on slides relating to the fallen, and the centenary of the burial of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey in 1920. Following the silence, the words from the Kohima Epitaph were read.

**When you go home, tell them of us and say,
For your tomorrow, we gave our today.**



Carol Service

On Friday 2nd December, our annual SJF Carol Service was launched on the school website for all parents and carers to view. Our hard working and jolly student choir singers and readers joined together to perform for the service. This service will be viewed by the whole school on Friday 16th December as part of our final Christmas preparations.

As ever, our students performed to their best and we are incredibly proud of their services to the school. Special thanks to Miss. Laurent for leading our choir and Mr. Salamonczyk, for being our pianist.

St. John Fisher
CATHOLIC COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Carol Service December 2022

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Chaplaincy Update (continued)

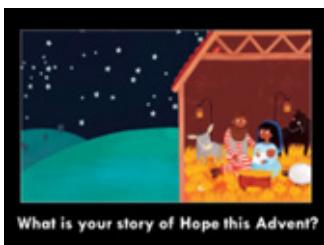
Advent

Throughout Advent, our Advent Wreath candles were lit, with the first of the purple candles reminding us of the hope that the birth of Jesus our Saviour brings at Christmas. All students attended Advent Services and were asked to reflect on: 'What is your story of Hope this Advent?'

Additionally, we launched our charity appeals. This year we have been supporting CAFOD World Gifts, Huntington's Disease Association and Gillingham Street Angels. Special thanks to Mrs. A. Walker for our two spectacular Advent Wreaths.

On two Friday mornings during Advent, we were fortunate to welcome Fr. Tom McElhone and Fr. Arbo Lekule to celebrate Mass for us in our chapels. Students and staff were able to participate in these early morning Masses, which offered welcome moments to pause and reflect on our Advent journey during this busy season.

Thank you to all staff, parents/carers and students for your generosity in making donations of goods for the homeless. Mrs. Simpson has delivered these to Gillingham Street Angels, where they will be given to those in need.



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Museum of Brands Curriculum Visit

This term, Year 11 and sixth form Business students visited the Museum of Brands in London where they were able to explore how marketing and branding has evolved from the Victorian era to the present day. Students used the displays and worksheets provided to learn how businesses have adapted to external influences such as technological innovations, political factors and shifts in social trends, and attitudes to cultural diversity.



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Elite Army Skills Careers and Teambuilding

The BTEC Level 2 Public Services group would like to say a huge thank you to Corporal Yorke and the Army Outreach team for delivering an interesting and informative careers and teambuilding session. Students in 12N learnt about the range of training and career opportunities in the Army, understood how to apply as well and found out first-hand about Army life.

As part of their assessment, our Public Services students enjoyed participating in the problem solving and teambuilding exercises. These activities enabled students to practice what they have learnt in the classroom by demonstrating their working and teamwork skills. Here are some photos of them in action!



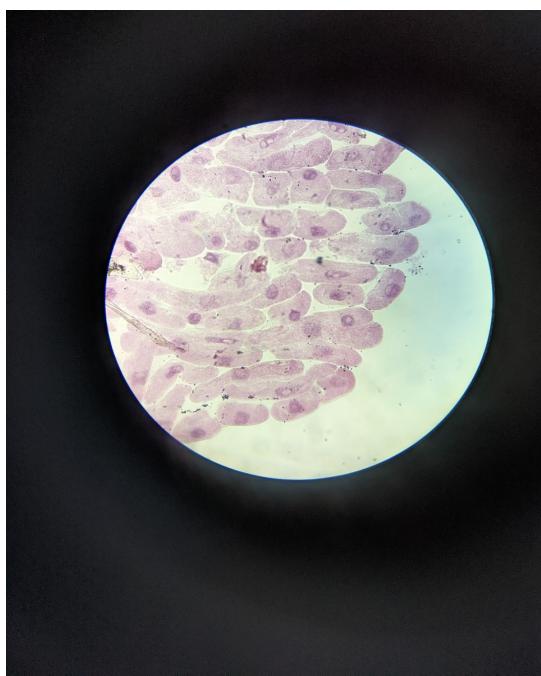
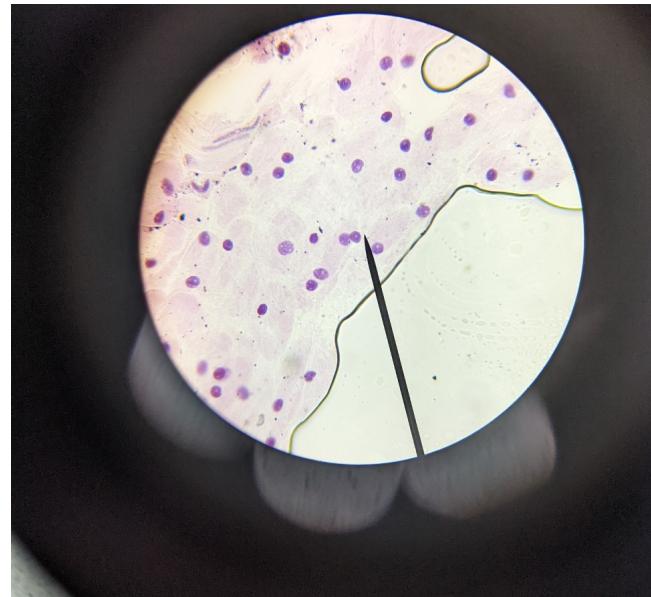
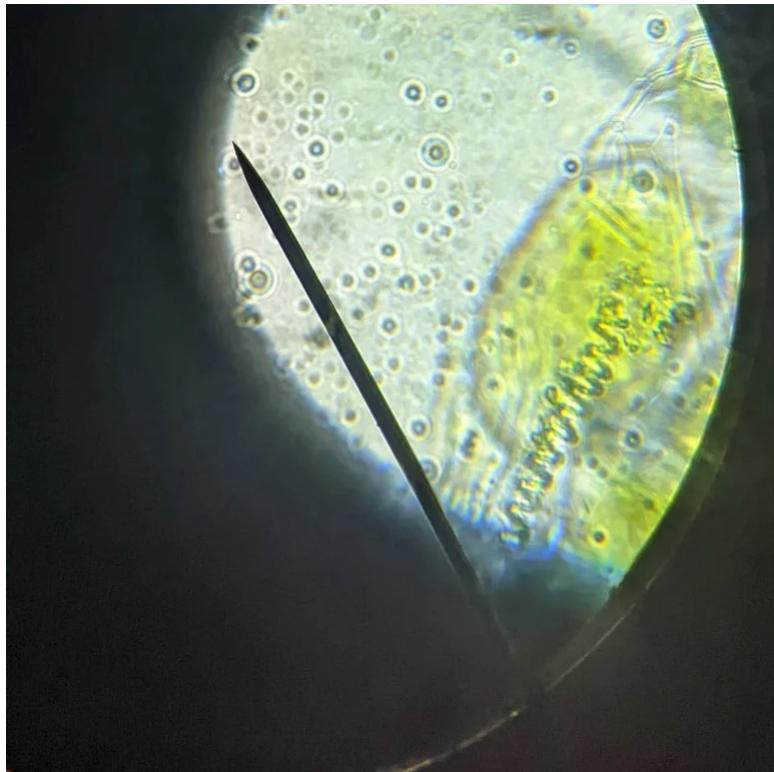
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Year 12 Biology: Microscopy

Year 12 Biology have recently done a microscopy Required Practical investigating the rate of mitosis in a garlic root tip. The aim was to find the different stages of mitosis from interphase to telophase. During their practical, the students took the following images - fascinating!



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SJF Student Performs at Dickens Festival, Rochester

Congratulations to Year 7 student Shaylee, who took part in the Dickens Festival in Rochester, on both Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th December. Shaylee appeared in the performances by the castle and the parades through the High Street, with her dance school, Dance Alley.



Christmas Fair and Goodbye to Ordnance Street Event



On Saturday 6th December, it was a pleasure to once again welcome former SJF staff and students to Ordnance Street to say goodbye before we move into our new build on City Way.

Visitors toured the site, discussing recollections of years gone by and also taking the opportunity to drop in to our Christmas Fair to shop at a number of craft and activity stalls, run by the community as well as current SJF students.

Congratulations to all Christmas Fair competition winners, and thank you to everyone who has visited Ordnance Street to say goodbye this year. We would also like to thank Mrs. Owen, Ms. Deans and Mrs. Bennett for organising this event.

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A Message from Medway Public Health Directorate

Our ref: JW/NJT/PH126

Medway Public Health Directorate
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham
Kent ME4 4TR
Telephone: 01634 338564

Date: 6th December 2022 james.williams@medway.gov.uk

Dear Parents and Carers

SCARLET FEVER- ADVICE FOR PARENTS

You will be aware of the increased media coverage about Strep A, a bacteria called group A streptococci, commonly known as Strep A. Scarlet fever is caused by Strep A.

Strep A can also cause other respiratory and skin infections such as strep throat and impetigo. In extremely, rare occasions, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive Group A strep (iGAS). While still very uncommon, there has been an increase in invasive Group A strep cases this year, particularly in children under 10.

Scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, but it is highly infectious. Therefore, look out for symptoms in your child, which include a sore throat, headache and fever, along with a fine, pinkish or red body rash with a sandpapery feel. On darker skin, the rash can be more difficult to detect visually but will have a sandpapery feel.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if you suspect your child has scarlet fever, because early treatment of scarlet fever with antibiotics is important to reduce the risk of complications such as pneumonia or a bloodstream infection. If your child has scarlet fever, keep them at home until at least 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others.

There are lots of viruses that cause sore throats, colds and coughs circulating. These should resolve without medical intervention. However, children can on occasion develop a bacterial infection on top of a virus and that can make them more unwell.

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There are lots of viruses that cause sore throats, colds and coughs circulating. These should resolve without medical intervention. However, children can on occasion develop a bacterial infection on top of a virus and that can make them more unwell.

As a parent, if you feel that your child seems seriously unwell, you should trust your own judgement. Contact NHS 111 or your GP if:

- your child is getting worse
- your child is feeding or eating much less than normal
- your child has had a dry nappy for 12 hours or more or shows other signs of dehydration
- your baby is under 3 months and has a temperature of 38°C, or is older than 3 months and has a temperature of 39°C or higher
- your baby feels hotter than usual when you touch their back or chest, or feels sweaty
- your child is very tired or irritable

Call 999 or go to A&E if:

- your child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- there are pauses when your child breathes
- your child's skin, tongue or lips are blue
- your child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake

Good hand and respiratory hygiene are important for stopping the spread of many bugs. By teaching your child how to wash their hands properly with soap for 20 seconds, using a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes, and keeping away from others when feeling unwell, they will be able to reduce the risk of picking up or spreading infections.

Yours sincerely

JAMES WILLIAMS
Director of Public Health

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THE DANGERS OF FROZEN WATER

TOP TIPS TO STAY SAFE

NEVER GO ON THE ICE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES

This includes attempting to rescue another person or animal who may have fallen through the ice.

ONLY USE WELL LIT AREAS

Try to take walks in the daylight but if you must walk in the evening, only use well lit areas and avoid anywhere with water.

KEEP AWAY FROM THE EDGE OF THE WATER

Never go close to the edge or lean over to touch the ice. You may over balance or trip and fall in.

ALWAYS WALK WITH AN ADULT OR A GROUP OF FRIENDS

Look out for each other and if someone does fall through the ice there will be others around to raise the alarm and get help.

Every year children are at risk when they are tempted to play on the ice formed on open waters and adults find themselves at risk as they attempt to save them. Over 50 % of ice related drowning involved an attempted rescue of another person or a dog.

Areas with frozen waters can be beautiful to look at but they are also extremely dangerous.

Here are some useful tips to help you enjoy these areas safely.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FALL THROUGH THE ICE

Keep calm and shout 'help'

Spread your arms across the surface of the ice in front of you

Try to kick your legs and pull yourself out of the water and on to the ice

Lie flat, spreading your weight across the surface and pull yourself to the bank, you may find it easier to roll.

If you cannot climb out, wait for help and keep as still as possible. Keep your head above the water, press your arms by your side and keep your legs together

Once you are safe, it is important that you go to hospital immediately for a check up



WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE SOMEONE FALL THROUGH THE ICE

Shout for 'HELP' and dial 999 or 112 if you can

DO NOT walk on to the ice to attempt a rescue

Shout to the person to '**KEEP STILL**' and offer reassurance.

If they are close enough, **LIE DOWN TO AVOID OVERBALANCING** and falling onto the ice, and try to reach them with a tree branch clothing tied together or anything else which can extend your reach.

If you cannot reach them, **SLIDE SOMETHING** which floats across the ice, such as a plastic bottle or a football, so that they can hold on to it to stay afloat whilst help is on the way.

If they are too far away, **WAIT FOR THE EMERGENCY SERVICES** and reassure the casualty from the safety of the bank.



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Term Dates for Academic Year 2022 – 2023

	START	TO	FINISH
TERM 1	Friday 2nd September 2022: Years 7 and 12. Monday 5th September 2022: Whole School	to	Friday 21st October 2022
Autumn Break	Monday 24th October 2022	to	Friday 28th October 2022
TERM 2	Monday 31st October 2022	to	Friday 16th December 2022
Christmas Break	Monday 19th December 2022	to	Friday 30th December 2022
TERM 3	Tuesday 3rd January 2023	to	Friday 10th February 2023
February Break	Monday 13th February 2023	to	Friday 17th February 2023
TERM 4	Monday 20th February 2023	to	Friday 31st March 2023
Easter Break	Monday 3rd April 2023	to	Friday 14th April 2023
Good Friday – Bank Holiday			7th April 2023
Easter Monday – Bank Holiday			10th April 2023
TERM 5	Monday 17th April 2023	to	Friday 26th May 2023
Bank Holiday			Monday 1st May 2023
May Break	Monday 29th May 2023	to	Friday 2nd June 2023
TERM 6	Monday 5th June 2023	to	Wednesday 19th July 2023

STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAYS/SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

TERM 1	Thursday 1st September 2022 – CPD in school

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