



MESSAGE FROM PRINCIPAL

Presence, not presents.

We are now two weeks into advent and preparations for the coming of Christ are well under way. As well as the practical Christmas preparations, we must prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus once again into our lives. His presence is infinitely much more important than our presents, and it is our responsibility to maintain this message in our secular world.



As we approach the end of term, I know many of you will be considering how to thank a teacher, tutor or other member of staff that has helped your child this year. A short note, email or card I know would be appreciated so much by my colleagues. Please do not feel the need to spend money on presents - I know how tough this time of year can be for some families.

Heavenly Father, your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us, a great sign of your love. Guide us as we strive to walk in that love together as a college family this Advent. As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, bring us closer to each other and to your son. Give us the grace and strength we need every day. Help us to always trust in you. Come, Lord Jesus, lead all people closer to you. Come and dispel the darkness of our world with the light of your love. Amen.

ST BEDE'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE SHINES IN THE SUNDAY TIMES PARENT POWER 2026

We are proud to share that St Bede's Catholic College has been named one of the top 10 comprehensive schools in the South West for academic excellence in *The Sunday Times Parent Power 2026* rankings.

The *Parent Power* survey is widely regarded as the definitive guide to the UK's leading secondary schools, providing families with a clear and reliable picture of school performance across the country. Its annual rankings remain an essential resource for parents seeking the highest standards in education.

This recognition reflects the hard work, dedication, and achievement of our entire school community—students, staff, and families alike. We are delighted to celebrate this milestone and remain committed to delivering outstanding educational experiences for every young person in our care.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2025—2026

Tuesday

16th December
Christmas Dinner

Wednesday 17th
December

Advent Service
6.00pm

Friday

19th December
End of Term 2

Monday 5th
January

Start of Term 3

Thursday 8th
January

Year 8 & Year 9
Options Evening

Thursday
15th January

Year 13
Progress Evening

REFLECTION: St. John of the Cross

On December 14th, the Church celebrates the feast of St. John of the Cross, a great Carmelite mystic and Doctor of the Church.

St. John of the Cross was a sixteenth century mystic and poet who worked with St. Teresa of Avila to reform the Carmelite order. He faced opposition and even imprisonment for his work.

His life was marked by suffering, yet he teaches us that it is precisely through the dark night—those times of difficulty and doubt, in our spiritual lives—that God draws us closer to perfect union with Him. St. John reminds us that the journey to God is an ascent, one that requires letting go of earthly attachments so that our hearts can be completely filled with divine love.

Reflection: During his time in prison, he composed a poem called the Spiritual Canticle. Part of this poem goes:

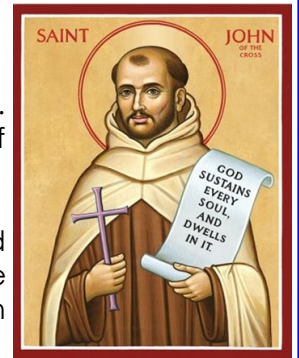
"We must dig deeply in Christ. He is like a rich mine with many pockets containing treasures: however deep we dig we will never find their end or their limit. Indeed, in every pocket new seams of fresh riches are discovered on all sides."

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we thank You for giving us St. John of the Cross as an example of holiness. Help us to imitate the love of You he showed from the time he was a child.

St. John of the Cross, as you grew up in poverty with your family members, you began on the path to holiness. You continued seeking to serve God throughout the rest of your life.

Please bring my petitions before God Whom you sought to serve!



STUDENTS SPREAD CHRISTMAS CHEER

Our singers and instrumentalists have had a festive start to the Christmas season.

On Wednesday 3rd December, members of the College band performed carols at Southmead Hospital. It was a pleasure to play for patients, visitors and staff. It was lovely to see some familiar faces, including former St. Bede's students who are now working at the hospital.

Choir members also visited Blaise Weston Court residential home this afternoon. It was wonderful to sing Christmas songs and spend some time with the residents.

Our band and choir members are now looking forward to next week's events, including the annual Advent and Christmas service and performances at Clifton Down shopping centre.



ST BEDE'S WAY SPOTLIGHT

Work Hard, Be Kind and Do the Right Thing

The St. Bede's Way Spotlight identifies children who stand out as exemplifying one of our three St Bede's Way principles of "**Work Hard. Be Kind. Do the Right Thing.**"

We are delighted to highlight Year 11 student **Alfie** who impressed audiences this week as he demonstrated his fantastic DJ skills at the **Bristol Beacon Winter Showcase**.

Alfie attends weekly DJ sessions with Bristol Youth Studios, and his dedication was clear in his confident and polished performance. His set had the whole crowd on their feet, and he was a standout highlight of a brilliant evening of music and talent.

Well done, **Alfie** your hard work exemplifies one of our St. Bede's Way principles and we are all excited to see where your DJ journey takes you next!



ARE YOU LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES?

St Bede's Catholic College provides a range of career-related events for students and is looking to expand its database of parent/carer volunteers.

We are currently organising our **Meet the Professionals** and **Mock Interview** events. We warmly welcome parents and carers who are interested in sharing their professional career paths with small groups of students or supporting our learners by conducting practice interviews to help them prepare for future opportunities.

Meet the Professionals presentations may include:

- What you studied at school, sixth form, college, apprenticeship, or university
- Why you chose your profession
- The pathways available into your field
- The benefits and rewards of working in your profession
- Career prospects and progression

Mock Interviews:

Question sheets will be provided for your use during the mock interview event.

If you are interested and willing to volunteer, please click the link below.

[VOLUNTEER FORM](#)

TASSOMAI SCIENCE

A huge congratulations to all our students who have been diligently completing their Tassomai science tasks this year. Your consistency and commitment to daily quizzing are really paying off, and the data shows just how much effort is going in across the school.

One of the standout statistics is just how committed you all are at the end of the week. Sunday has emerged as the most popular day for completing Tassomai, with students across most year groups squeezing in their quizzes before the new week begins. There is one notable exception: Year 7, who buck the trend by completing most of their questions on Mondays—a brilliant way to start the week with focus and enthusiasm.

A special mention must go to Year 11, who have shown outstanding dedication to their science revision. So far this year, they have answered an incredible 338,292 questions. This effort will undoubtedly support their understanding and confidence as they move towards their GCSE examinations.

However, while the number of questions completed is impressive, it's important to remember that accuracy matters just as much as quantity. Teachers have noticed that some students are quickly clicking through questions or guessing answers without fully reading them. Tassomai works best when students slow down, read carefully and think before selecting an answer.

Here are a few simple tips to boost accuracy and learning:

- Take your time. A few extra seconds spent understanding the question can make all the difference.
- Look for key words. Many questions hinge on specific scientific terms.
- Learn from mistakes. If you get something wrong, pause and read the explanation—this is where the real learning happens.
- Aim for accuracy first, speed second.

Each week, Tassomai sends out a helpful summary email showing how your child has been getting on with their science quizzes. We encourage all parents to keep an eye out for this update, as it's a great way to stay informed and support your child's learning at home. If you are not receiving these emails, please contact Mrs Powers (powersh@stbcc.org) so we can make sure everything is set up correctly.

Well done again to all students for your hard work so far. Keep up the brilliant effort, stay thoughtful with your answers, and let's see how far we can push those accuracy scores in the weeks ahead!

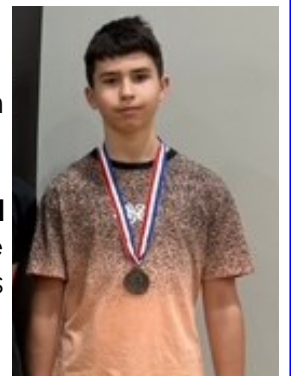
BADMINTON SUCCESS

Year 8 student **Emmanuel** recently took part in his very first badminton tournament at the Bristol Badminton School.

As a regular player at his local badminton club, the event offered **Emmanuel** a fantastic opportunity to put his skills into practice and compete alongside young athletes from across the area. The tournament saw 55 participants competing across the U11, U13, U15, and U17 categories.

We are thrilled to share that **Emmanuel** achieved an impressive third place in his age group. He was delighted with his performance, and we couldn't be prouder of his determination, talent, and sportsmanship.

Well done, **Emmanuel**—an excellent achievement for your first tournament! Keep it up!



PURCHASING FOOD FROM THE CANTEEN

Families are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that their child(ren) have a sufficient balance on their account to purchase food from the canteen and that arrears should be the exception. Emails are regularly sent out to families whose child(ren)'s accounts breach the arrears limit, and any arrears over £1.00 are notified every Friday.

After Christmas if your child(ren)'s arrears exceed our £6 limit, they will have to seek permission from a member of the Leadership Team, before being allowed to purchase anything for lunch or break.

If you do not wish for them to obtain food from the canteen, or want to set a daily limit, please email Mrs Cheshire on 0117 2355623, with the name of your child(ren) and how we should proceed.

Please look out for emails in MCAS in regard to canteen overspends particularly if you child eats from the canteen regularly and you haven't topped up recently.

Thank you
School Business Manager

ENGLAND WOMEN'S RUGBY U18 CAMP

We are delighted to share the exciting news that former St Bede's student **Fiona Njoroge (2020–2025)** has been selected for the **England Women's Rugby U18 training camp**.

This is an outstanding achievement and a testament to Fiona's dedication, talent, and hard work both on and off the pitch. Being called up to a national training camp is a remarkable milestone for any young athlete, and we are incredibly proud to see Fiona progressing at such a high level.

Congratulations, Fiona — St. Bede's community is cheering you on every step of the way!



FREE SCHOOL MEAL VOUCHERS

If your child(ren) is entitled to FSMs, then vouchers for the Christmas holidays will be issued on Wednesday 17th December. The amount will be £15 per child per week i.e. £30 each for the period.

Any questions please contact Mrs Cheshire on 0117 2355623, or by email on cheshirem@stbcc.org. Please check your spam folder, if there isn't anything coming through in your inbox. The email will go out through MCAS.

FREE BUS TRAVEL

Children under the age of 16 will receive **free bus travel** over the Christmas holidays with the Kids Go Free initiative!

From December 20 until January 4 2026, kids up to the age of 15 will be able to hop on nearly any bus in Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire free of charge.

More details can be found here:
<https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/kids-across-bristol-region-can-10684884>

HPV VACCINATIONS

A reminder has been sent to all Year 8 Parents/carers with a link regarding the HPV vaccinations. These are scheduled take place at the college on Thursday 29th January 2026.

VACANCY

School Meals Supervisory Assistant (SMSA)

We are looking for a friendly, reliable, and caring individual to join our team as a School Meals Supervisory Assistant from 12.15pm- 1.30pm (term-time only). You are welcome to arrive a few minutes before the start time to receive a complimentary school meal or drink.

Start Date: as soon as possible

Contract: Part-time

Pay: Actual annual salary of £3,583 (£12.85 per hour, increasing to £13.45 in April 2026)

Key responsibilities include:

Supervising students in the dining hall and playground

Encouraging positive behaviour and ensuring pupil safety

Supporting pupils to enjoy a happy, calm lunchtime environment

If you enjoy working with children and would like to be part of our supportive school community, we'd love to hear from you!

How to apply:

Further information is available here <https://www.eteach.com/careers/stbedescc/job/smsa-1517466/?lang=en-GB> where the application form can be completed online via the fast apply button.

If you have any questions or prefer to receive a hard copy of the application form, please contact Mrs Claire Walker, PA to the Principal at the college walkerc@stbcc.org

Appointment is subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check

Closing date: Noon on 19th December 2025



IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS IN THE LIBRARY!

We are drawing quite a crowd each breaktime as we open our book advent calendar. Students are invited to pop in to the Library at about 11.20am each day next week to see the reveal. Also, if you can't wait until Christmas, we're expecting more new books under our tree from Monday!



Attention Year 7s!
Are you enjoying your Bookbuzz book?
Would you like another one?

When you've finished your book, write a review of it on the library catalogue. All entries of an acceptable quality will receive an achievement point.



One lucky person will win a second Bookbuzz book!

Calling Year 7s!! There is still time for you to review your Bookbuzz book on the Library Catalogue to be in with a chance to win another one of the titles.

Click on Mrs Hayman's reviews for links to the first chapters of the books. Mrs Nick's links as follow: [A Flash of Neon](#); [Echostar is Always Listening](#); [King of Dead Things](#). All of the books are available to borrow from the Library.

Mrs Nicks' top picks! LD

2025

It's very hard to pin down to just one book, there are so many that I have enjoyed this year.



EMMA SHEVAH

MY NAME IS JODIE JONES

One of Mrs Hayman's Top Books of 2025!

I absolutely loved this book. First of all the character's love of words and book quotes had me hooked, but then the plot thickened and I had to just read a bit more (and then a bit more) to discover the twist. I may have stayed up past my bedtime! Categorized as Year 8+ due to complexity and some potentially upsetting scenes.

Mrs Hayman recommends this book

GLASGOW BOYS

MARGARET McDONALD

One of Mrs Hayman's Top Books of 2025!

Winner of the 2025 Carnegie Award for Writing

A really accomplished piece of writing with a protagonist from a group we don't often see highlighted in literature. We follow a dual narrative of a care leaver and a boy in his last year with the support of a foster family as they face navigating the adult world. A very moving read. Year 10+

Mrs Hayman recommends this book

Next week we mark Jane Austen's 250th Anniversary, we celebrate not only her own fabulous work but also the influence she still has on other authors today!

We hope everyone has a lovely Christmas with plenty of time to catch up on their reading pile. If you haven't got one remember to borrow some books from the Library and come back and tell us what books you've enjoyed!

CHILDREN'S BOOKS VERSUS YOUNG ADULT BOOKS – AND BEYOND! A GUIDE FOR THE BEWILDERED

It has come to our attention that children may be gaining access to material that is not appropriate for their age group. Please take a moment to read the guidance here about how to check the content of a book first before recommending to a child.

As the world around us has got more complex, the world of young people's books has evolved to reflect the reality of life for many of our children. This is how it should be - it is very important for all young people to see themselves reflected in the books they read, and also to gain an idea of what life might be like for those around them. Books can be a safe space to explore feelings or actions before being confronted with them in real life. However, issues covered aside, some books might be more explicit than parents might expect and there is no official film rating equivalent for books to help us.

Publishers define young people's books as either Middle Grade (MG) which is aimed broadly at those aged 8-12 or Young Adult (YA). Please don't discount a Middle Grade book for your Year 7 or 8 child or even above, thinking they are aimed only at Primary School pupils. They can be great stories, well written and with real depth.

Young Adult is variously described as aimed at 12-18 or 14-18 and either of those definitions is problematic. The first one gives us a very broad age range which might cover feelings/emotions/activities we might not want to expose a 12/13 year old to, and the second ignores them completely.

'New Adult' is a completely different age range – technically marketed at 18 plus, it can be very explicit but might present as aimed at younger people from its cover.

Here in the Library at St Bede's we have age restrictions on our books at Year 8 and Year 10 (pupils in Year 9 can ask for a parental permission slip to read from the Year 10+ collection or you can email us at librarydesk@stbcc.org from your email address registered with the College)

When making our decisions we start off using some online age ratings. For example, <https://peters.co.uk/> (who supply our books here at St Bede's) <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/>

Other people's opinions can vary quite dramatically so. if we are in any doubt, we read the books ourselves. This obviously isn't an option for parents, so we would suggest asking the bookseller if you are purchasing from a bookshop, or you are welcome to contact us on librarydesk@stbcc.org if you feel we can help.

We would be grateful if you could make sure that the books your children are bringing into school are age appropriate.

Mrs Hayman and Mrs Nicks

SAFEGUARDING SPOTLIGHT **Christmas Wellbeing Pack**

As we draw close to the Christmas holidays, our team has put together a special **Wellbeing Information Pack** to support students and families during the festive season. You can find the full pack here: <https://bit.ly/3KMS45y>



Christmas

Jumper Day

19TH DECEMBER | CASH DONATION FOR CHARITY

No need for a blazer if you are wearing a jumper

