09-10-26

THE EPCHS BEACON

The weekly round up of school life



READY - RESPECTFUL - SAFE - KIND

"I Have Come So That They May Have Life And Have It To The Full" – John 10:10

HEADTEACHER MESSAGE



Dear Parent / Carer,

It has certainly been another busy and enriching week in school, with our students embracing a wide range of opportunities both in and beyond the classroom.

On Monday, we were delighted to welcome Dr Guy Sutton back to school to work with our A-Level Psychology and Biology students. His fascinating talks on the workings of the brain provided invaluable insight into current scientific understanding, and students were particularly engaged by the opportunity to dissect animal brains and explore their structure and function firsthand. It was a memorable experience that brought classroom learning to life and inspired great curiosity among our students.

This week, our RE Department took a group of Year 11 students to visit Liverpool Synagogue and Liverpool Cathedral as part of their studies. These visits provided an excellent opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of different faith traditions and places of worship. I was extremely proud of the way our students conducted themselves throughout the day, demonstrating maturity, respect and genuine interest in everything they experienced.

On Thursday, our Year 10 students visited a local Careers Fair at Cheshire College, where they had the opportunity to speak with employers, training providers and apprenticeship organisations. Experiences such as these are incredibly valuable in helping young people consider their future pathways and gain a greater understanding of the wide range of opportunities available to them after school.

We were also proud to see a group of our pupils participate in a Harvest Service at a local care home. The event, which was also attended by the Mayor and Mayoress of Ellesmere Port, was enjoyed immensely by both our students and the residents. It was wonderful to see our young people giving back to the local community and bringing such joy to others through their involvement.

Looking ahead, next week promises to be equally busy. Our Year 11 GCSE Art students will be visiting Ness Gardens to gather inspiration from its beautiful surroundings for their coursework, while our A-Level Law and Politics students will be travelling to London to enhance their studies through a range of educational visits and experiences.

We also look forward to welcoming prospective students and their families to our annual Sixth Form Open Evening on Thursday. This is always a fantastic opportunity to showcase our thriving Sixth Form community, outstanding range of subjects and the enrichment opportunities that help prepare our students for their next steps. We look forward to meeting everyone who attends and sharing what makes our Sixth Form such a special place to study.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. I hope you all enjoy a restful weekend and look forward to another exciting week ahead.

Warmest wishes,

Lorraine Henderson - Headteacher

Tim Beesley - Executive Headteacher

Care for creation

- Common Good
- Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- Dignity of the Human Person
- The Dignity of Work and Education
- Solidarity
- Care for God's Creation
- Family and Community

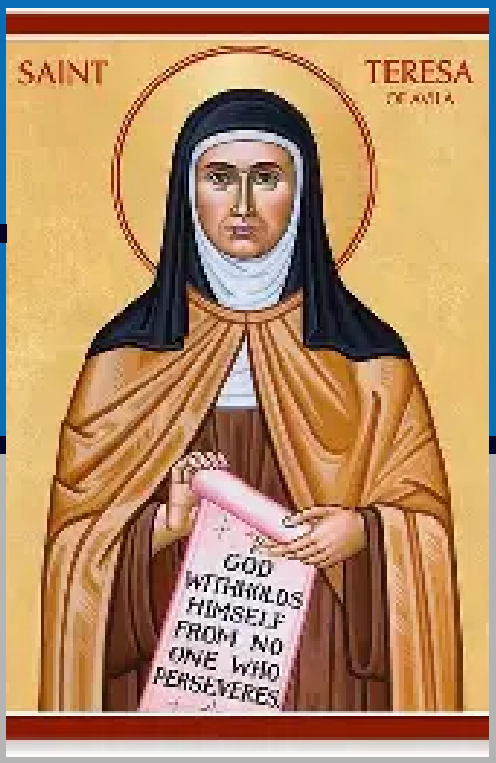


Important Dates

- 12th October - Year 11 - Art trip - Ness Gardens
- 14th October - Year 13 - Politics and Law trip
- 15th October - Year 11 - 6th form Open Evening
- 23rd October - STEM - Innospec Trip
- 2nd November - First day back after half term
- 12th November - Year 11 and 13 - Tempest School Photos
- 16th/17th/18th November - Year 8 and 9 - Paris Maths Trip
- 17th November - Year 7 to 11 - Flu vaccinations
- 19th November - Year 11 - Parents Evening
- 27th November - INSET day

CHAPLAINCY

Saturday 10th October – Eucharistic Adoration will take place in Our Lady's church from 7am until 5pm. As a school we have signed up from 4pm until 5pm so it would be lovely if you could go to church at this time to spend 10 minutes with Jesus.



Feast Day of the Week

St Teresa of Avila -15th October

St Teresa of Avila is a Spanish saint who was named the first female doctor of the church.

Singing group will be in B11 on a Tuesday lunchtime. Last Tuesday we joined the residents of Hollymere to celebrate Harvest with them. It was lovely to be a part of their community and we were made to feel very welcome. The pupils chatted to the residents and to Mr Stockton, the Mayor of Eleesmere Port.

ROSARY IS SAID EACH BREAKTIME IN B11. PLEASE MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO COME ALONG.

PLEASE JOIN US.

INVITATION TO MASS

We will be going to Mass at church every Monday lunchtime, so please see Angela for a letter.

Gospel of the Week

This week's Gospel is **Matthew 22:1-14**

In this week's Gospel, Jesus tells us the Parable of the Wedding Banquet, and he compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a king who hosts a wedding feast for his son. Everyone is invited to the Kingdom of Heaven but not everyone accepts the invite.

COMMUNITY

There are lots of exciting events taking place in our local parishes. Please check out the website. Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church | Roman Catholic Churches of Ellesmere Port and Hootton (rcchep.co.uk) Please contact your Parish Priest if you would like more information on the Parish Sacramental programme.

Youth SVP will be on during lunchtimes on Thursday in B11.





Mini Dash

Year 8 students recently attended the Mini DASH Conference at St Columba's in Chester, where they explored the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and their importance in everyday school life. Throughout the day, students took part in a range of engaging activities focused on leadership, discussing the qualities that make an effective leader within a Catholic school community. They also reflected on how they can develop these qualities themselves and make a positive contribution to school life through service, responsibility and leading by example.



Harvest Service @ Hollymere Care Home



On Tuesday, our students led a beautiful Harvest Service and sang for the residents of Hollymere, as well as the Mayor and Mayoress. It was a wonderful opportunity to come together as a community and celebrate the harvest season.

Everyone had a lovely time, and we were proud to share such a special occasion with our guests.



SVP Harvest Collection

PLEASE DONATE ANY NON PERISHABLE ITEMS



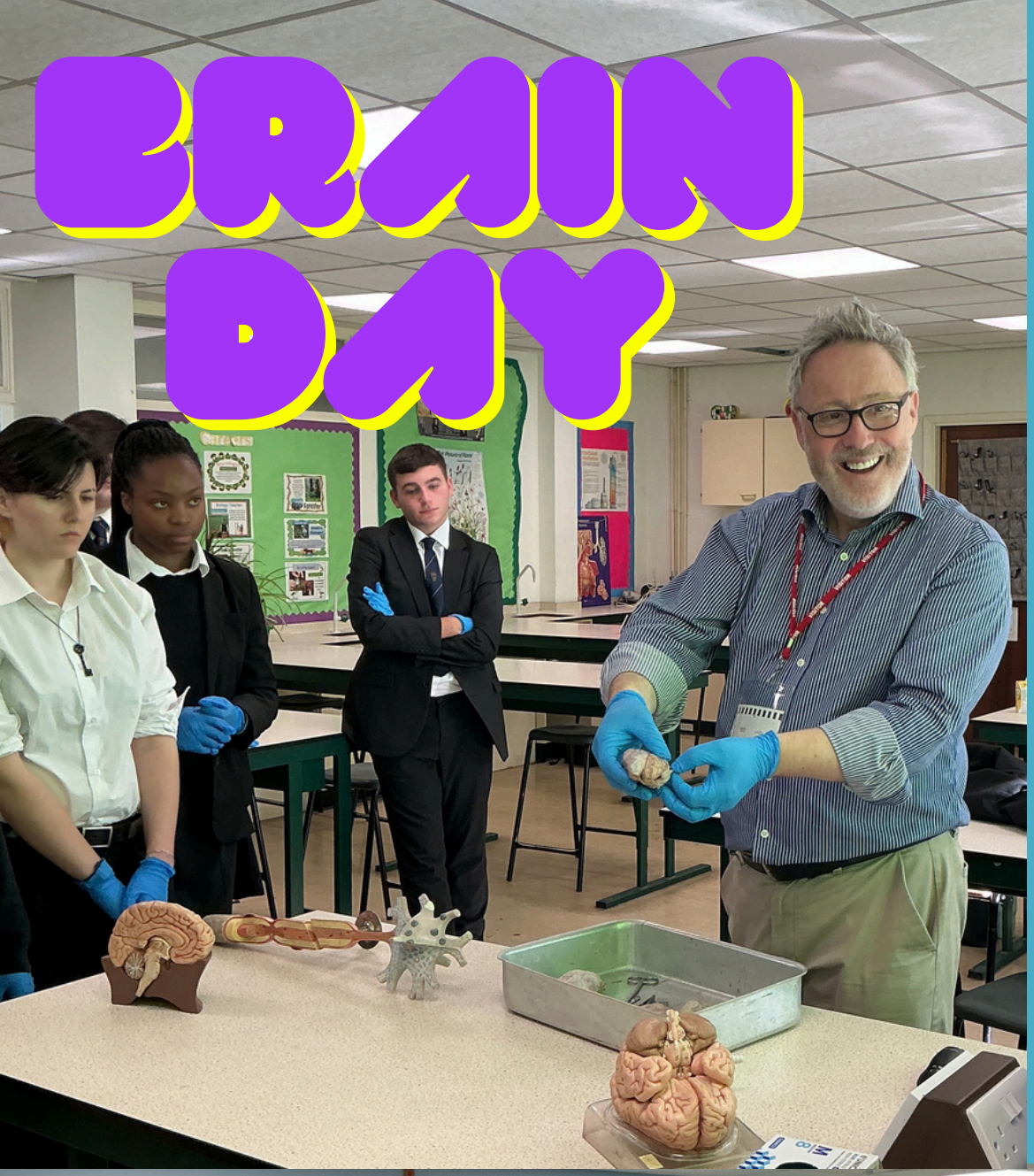
We will also be collecting warm clothes/coats for Refugee Assist





TINS, PACKETS, CEREALS, HOT DRINKS, TREATS, LONG LIFE MILK ETC

BRAIN DAY



Year 13 Psychology and Biology students were delighted to welcome Dr Guy Sutton, a professor, university lecturer and neuroscientist to their annual ‘Brain Day’.



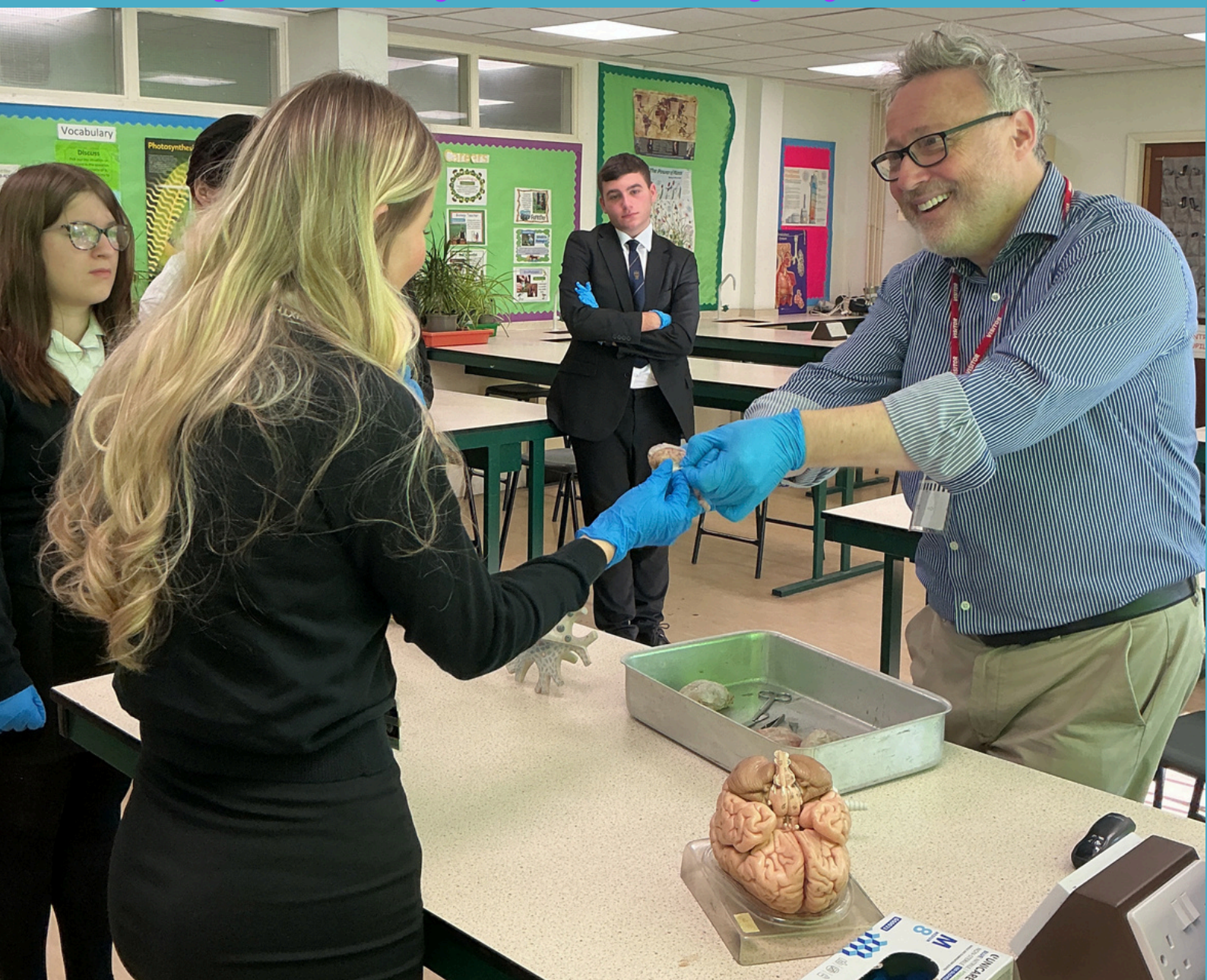
Students thoroughly enjoyed the experience, finding the sessions both engaging and thought-provoking. The day offered a valuable opportunity to deepen their understanding beyond the classroom and inspired many to consider future study and careers in psychology, biology and neuroscience.

BRAIN DAY

THOUGHTS

One of our Year 13 students had this to say -

I found our brain day incredibly fascinating. I think Dr. Sutton's enthusiasm and passion for psychology clearly resonates through how he delivers his lectures. It was an amazing experience to be able to witness a brain dissection in person as well as be able to interact with sections of the brain myself and I have found this is a general consensus among other students as well. I also appreciated how Dr. Sutton chose his case studies to lecture on; ensuring they were fairly recent and cases we may already be familiar with. I can assure that I left the day feeling more intrigued of the workings of the brain than the beginning of the workshop.



Ellesmere Port Catholic High School

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

When youre in school you...

Have fun



Gain qualifications



Make new friends



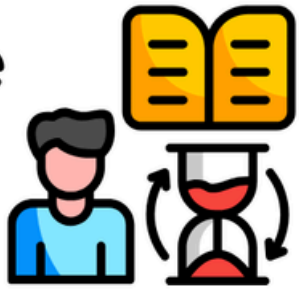
Develop awareness of other cultures, religion, ethnicity, and gender differences



Develop new skills



Achieve



Experience new things



Build your confidence and self esteem



HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE START IN LIFE!

PARENT INFORMATION

Arbor

Appointments during school time



Please be advised that all student absences must be reported to the Attendance Team, including any planned medical or other appointments.

Absences can be reported by:

- Logging them on the Arbor Parent Portal

or

- Calling the school on 0151 355 2373 and leaving a message.



Thank you for helping us ensure accurate attendance records.

Thank you for your cooperation.

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD 2026/27

Are you ready?

DofE
THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

VERITAS ET SAPIENTIA

"In every walk with nature, one receives far more than they seek." – John Muir

ADVENTURE. CHALLENGE. FRIENDSHIP. ACHIEVEMENT. NAVIGATION.

Your DofE journey starts now – take the challenge!



WHO CAN TAKE PART?

- **BRONZE** – Year 9
  30 places available
- **SILVER** – Year 10 & 11
  30 places available
- **GOLD** – **Year 12 & 13**
  Places available

WHAT THE AWARD INVOLVES

- **Volunteering** – giving time to help others or support a community organisation.
- **Physical** – improving fitness or taking part in a physical activity.
- **Skills** – developing a new skill or improving an existing one.
- **Expedition** – training and two successful expeditions.
- **Residential (Gold only)** – a shared activity away from home for 5 days and 4 nights.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE:

- Adventure, teamwork and friendships outdoors
- Build confidence, resilience and leadership
- Learn new skills, take part in physical activity and give back to your community
- Make memories that last a lifetime

TRAINING SESSIONS

- Every other Wednesday (Week A).
- Starting after the October half-term and continuing into March.
- **You must attend ALL training sessions.**

EXPEDITION DATES (PROVISIONAL)

Expedition dates are not confirmed but will be in the following months:

- **Bronze** – Practice: **May 2027** / Final: **June 2027**
- Silver – Practice: **March/April** 2027 / Final: **July 2027**
- **Gold** – Practice: **March/April 2027** / Final: **July 2027**

PLACES ARE LIMITED!

- Only 30 places available for **BRONZE**.
- Only 30 places available for SILVER.
- Places available for **GOLD**.
- Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

This is a commitment to the whole award – not just the expeditions.

HOW TO GET A LETTER & SECURE YOUR PLACE:

1. Letters available from **Miss Lodge** from **Friday 9th October.**
2. I will be based in M9 every lunch time (12:30 – 12:45pm) to receive a letter. **First come, first served.**
3. Completed letters must be returned to Miss Lodge by **Monday 19th October.**
4. Payment will then be available on Arbor from return of your letter until **Saturday 31st October 2026.**

Failure to pay by this date will result in the place being offered to the reserve student.

Take the challenge. It's worth it!

#DofE #AdventureAwaits #GetOutdoors #ChallengeYourself #Leadership

JOB VACANCY



CLICK HERE

FOR NEW

VACANCIES

VERITAS ET SAPIENTIA

COMMUNITY



NEWS

for your information

wysa
Use Wysa, Feel Better

NHS
Cheshire and Wirral Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust

Exams test your knowledge. Stress tests your mind.

Big exams? Big pressure? You don't have to deal with it alone.

Exams can feel like everything. Constant revision, pressure to get good grades, teachers checking in, parents asking how it's going... all while you're trying to have a life outside school. If you're stressed, losing sleep, struggling to focus, or just feeling low about it all, that doesn't mean you're failing. It just means you're human.

Wysa is a free, confidential app for young people aged 16-17 to chat anytime (yes, even late at night), get tools for exam stress, and much more. No sign-ups, no awkward conversations, just a safe space to sort out what's going on in your head.

Looking after your mental health won't replace revision. But it will make it easier to get through it.

Here's how Wysa can help

- 24/7 support from an empathetic AI chatbot trained in evidence-based techniques
- A library of science-backed self help tools for stress, sleep, motivation, and more
- AI-detected crisis escalation pathways gently guide users toward immediate support options
- Daily check-ins to help build mental fitness, and a personal roadmap tailored to your wellbeing goals



Heating Bank

We can help low-income households with their energy costs

Funds are limited for each application window and applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis

To apply scan the QR code or visit www.citizensadvicecw.org.uk/heatingbank



citizens advice Cheshire West

Registered charity number: 1128367

School Admission Appeal Panel Members Wanted

Help Make a Difference to Local Families

Cheshire West and Chester Council is seeking volunteers to join our Independent School Admission Appeal Panels.

Appeal panels consider cases submitted by parents and guardians who wish to appeal against a decision not to offer their child a place at their preferred school. Panel members play a vital role in ensuring that every appeal is heard fairly, independently and in accordance with the law.

No previous experience of admission appeals is required as full training and ongoing support will be provided.

Who Can Apply?

Each appeal panel consists of three members and includes representatives from two categories:

Lay Members

Lay members are people without personal experience in the management or provision of education in a school. You may still qualify as a lay member if you:

- are or have been a school governor
- volunteer or have volunteered in a school

Non-Lay Members

Non-lay (education) members are people with experience or knowledge of education, including:

- teachers
- teaching assistants
- former teachers or teaching assistants
- individuals familiar with local educational conditions
- parents of registered pupils at a different school

What Does the Role Involve?

As a panel member, you will:

- read appeal papers and written submissions before hearings
- attend appeal hearings as a member of an independent panel (virtually)
- listen carefully to the case presented by both parties
- ensure parents feel they have received a fair hearing and have been given every opportunity to present their case
- consider all of the evidence presented
- work with fellow panel members to reach fair and balanced decisions
- provide clear reasons for those decisions

Skills and Qualities

We are looking for people who:

- have good communication and listening skills
- demonstrate integrity, impartiality and fairness
- can work effectively with others
- can make balanced and well-reasoned decisions
- have an awareness of equality and diversity issues
- are reliable and able to honour agreed commitments
- are willing to learn about admission appeal legislation and procedures

Training and Support

Successful applicants will receive:

- comprehensive initial training
- regular refresher training
- ongoing support and guidance
- updates on changes to admissions legislation and appeal procedures

Cheshire West and Chester

Why Volunteer?

- This is a rewarding opportunity to:
- contribute to an important public service
- make a positive difference to children's and families' lives
- develop new skills and knowledge
- gain experience in decision-making and quasi-judicial processes
- meet and work alongside new people
- While the role is voluntary and unpaid, an allowance is available to help cover reasonable expenses.

Time Commitment

You can volunteer as often or as little as your availability allows.
We maintain a register of trained panel members and will contact you to request advanced availability and when appeals are scheduled to check your availability.
Appeals take place Monday to Friday and are usually held:
as half-day or full-day hearings between 9.00am and 5.00pm
throughout the year

The busiest period is between May and July, when a larger number of 'block' appeals to reception and year 7 are often arranged over several consecutive days.

Interested?

If you would like to find out more about becoming a School Admission Appeal Panel Member, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact Darren O'Neill for more information and an application pack.

Darren O'Neill
School Admission Appeals Team
Tel: 01244 972227
Email: specialistdemocraticservices@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Next *Gen* Travel

Exclusively for 16 - 19 year olds

Bus travel for just **£1**



Free to join

Apply today and start saving on every journey.

What is NextGenTravel?

NextGenTravel is a discount scheme for young people aged 16 to 19 who travel on bus.

Users must apply for the pass to be eligible for discount. The NextGenTravel pass is presented to the driver to enable 16 to 19 year olds to travel for just £1 per single journey across all local participating bus services.

NextGenTravel is part of a 2-year trial led by Cheshire West and Chester's Enhanced Partnership and funded by the Department for Transport.

Where can I use the pass?

On all participating local bus services including itravel (excluding park and ride) as long as the journey is within, starts or ends in Cheshire West and Chester.

When can I use the pass?

At any time, including evenings and weekends.

Eligibility for the scheme

Anyone aged 16 to 19 who lives in Cheshire West and Chester can apply for their free NextGenTravel pass.

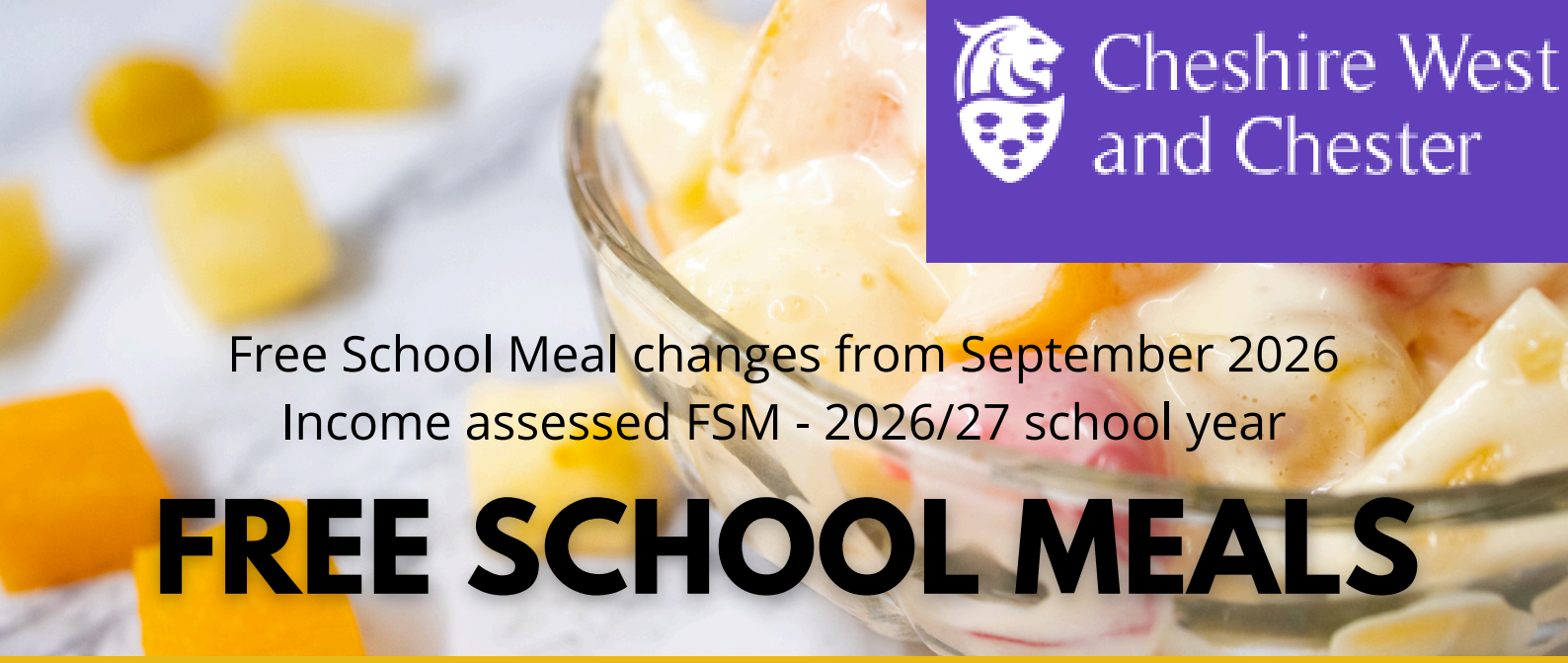
How to apply

Apply at: **www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/NextGenTravel** or scan the QR code.

Scan me to apply

Funded by UK Government

Cheshire West and Chester



Cheshire West and Chester

Free School Meal changes from September 2026
Income assessed FSM - 2026/27 school year

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

As you will be aware, Central Government has changed rules regarding Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility effective from September 2026.

Since 1 April 2018, all existing FSM claimants have continued to receive free school meals whilst Universal Credit is rolled out, regardless of any change in household circumstances that would have normally ended eligibility. However, this protection will end at the close of the 2025/26 school year, and households must meet the new eligibility criteria for FSM to continue receiving this support.

From the start of the 2026/27 school year, all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit will be entitled to receive FSM. However, there will be 2 categories of Universal Credit based FSM :
Targeted FSM: which continues to be based on the existing threshold, covering pupils who are in households in receipt of Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less
Expanded FSM: a new category covering pupils who do not qualify for targeted FSM, but who are in households receiving Universal Credit with annual household earnings above £7,400.

Cheshire West and Chester Council have completed checks over most existing FSM households to determine their eligibility and which category they may fall into. Each of these households will receive a letter informing them of the outcome of this check (or inviting them to reapply if their details could not be checked).

If you receive Universal Credit and do not currently qualify for FSM due to earning over the threshold of £7,400, but would now qualify from September 2026, you can now apply in advance

To apply for free school meals please follow the link

https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/education-and-learning/free-school-meals

Immediate help and support for young people

If young people are in need of immediate support please sign post, or help to access the following:

List of services: Home Page - Directory of What Works

Further services:

Koala North-West – Provides early-help family support, similar to a family intervention worker. Families can access this service without a referral to Children's Social Care. Support is offered to families with young children.

School Nurse – Attends once a month and can support pupils with self-harm, exam stress, emotional health, low mood, healthy relationships, anxiety, body image, and issues relating to social media.

Cheshire Young Carers – A referral can be made if a child has additional responsibilities at home that are impacting their wellbeing or attendance at school.

Headspace is an easy-to-use app that helps make meditation and mindfulness simple. By spending just a few minutes a day on the app, users can learn practical skills to support their wellbeing. Headspace offers hundreds of guided meditations covering topics such as stress, anxiety, sleep, and focus.

Calm is an app that supports people experiencing stress and anxiety through guided meditations, sleep stories, breathing programmes, and relaxing music.

MindShift is designed specifically for teenagers and young people, offering tools and strategies to help manage anxiety.

Bereavement-specific bank of resources:

Traumatic Bereavement - UK Trauma Council

Home SUPPORTING BEREAVED CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE - Grief Encounter

Hope Again

About us - Amparo (suicide specific support)

Family members in prison:

Banardo's offer support for children and young people regarding family imprisonment: Barnardo's | Children's charity | Barnardo's

PSS offer support for anyone who has a relative in prison or in the past: While their parent is in prison in Merseyside (Prisoners' Families) | PSS

Post-16 help and support:

https://www.talkingtherapies.cwp.nhs.uk/self-refer

They offer self-referral to people aged 16 and over, registered with a GP in Central, South and West Cheshire.

The service exclusively offers evidence-based, short-term talking therapies designed to help with common mental health concerns, such as:

Low Mood
Anxiety or worry
Stress
Depression

TERM DATES

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School

Term Dates 2026-27

Autumn Term 2026	
Inset Day	Tuesday1st September 2026
School Opens	Wednesday 2nd September 2026
School Closes	Friday 23rd October 2026
Half Term	
School Opens	Monday 2nd November 2026
Inset Day	Friday 27th November 2026
School Closes	Friday 18th December 2026
Christmas Holiday	
Monday 21st December – Friday 1st January 2027	

Spring Term 2027	
School Opens	Monday4th January 2027
School Closes	Friday 12th February 2027
Half Term	
School Opens	Monday 22nd February 2027
School Closes	Thursday 25th March 2027
Easter Holiday	
Friday 26th March (Bank Holiday) – Friday 9th April	

Summer Term 2027	
School Opens	Monday 12th April 2027
Bank Holiday	Monday 3rd May 2027
School Closes	Friday 28th May 2027
Half Term	
School Opens	Monday7th June 2027
School Closes	Friday16th July 2027
Summer Holiday	
Monday 19th July – Tuesday 31st August	

Inset Days: Monday 19th July - Wednesday 21st July

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School

Term Dates 2027-28

Autumn Term 2027	
Inset Day	Wednesday 1st September 2027
School Opens	Thursday 2nd September 2027
School Closes	Friday 22nd October 2027
Half Term	
School Opens	Monday 1st November 2027
Inset Day	Friday 26th November 2027
School Closes	Friday 17th December 2027
Christmas Holiday **Monday 20th December – Monday 3rd January (Bank Holiday)**	

Spring Term 2028	
School Opens	Tuesday 4th January 2028
School Closes	Friday 11th February 2028
Half Term	
School Opens	Monday 21st February 2028
School Closes	Friday 31st March 2028
Easter Holiday **Monday 3rd April – Monday 17th April (Bank Holiday)**	

Summer Term 2028	
School Opens	Tuesday 18th April 2028
Bank Holiday	Monday 1st May 2028
School Closes	Friday 26th May 2028
Half Term	
School Opens	Monday 5th June 2028
School Closes	Tuesday 18th July 2028
Summer Holiday: Wednesday 19th July – Monday 4th September **Staff Inset: Wednesday 19th July – Friday 21st July**	

CONTACT US

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, Capenhurst Lane, Whitby, Ellesmere Port CH65 7AQ

0151 355 2373

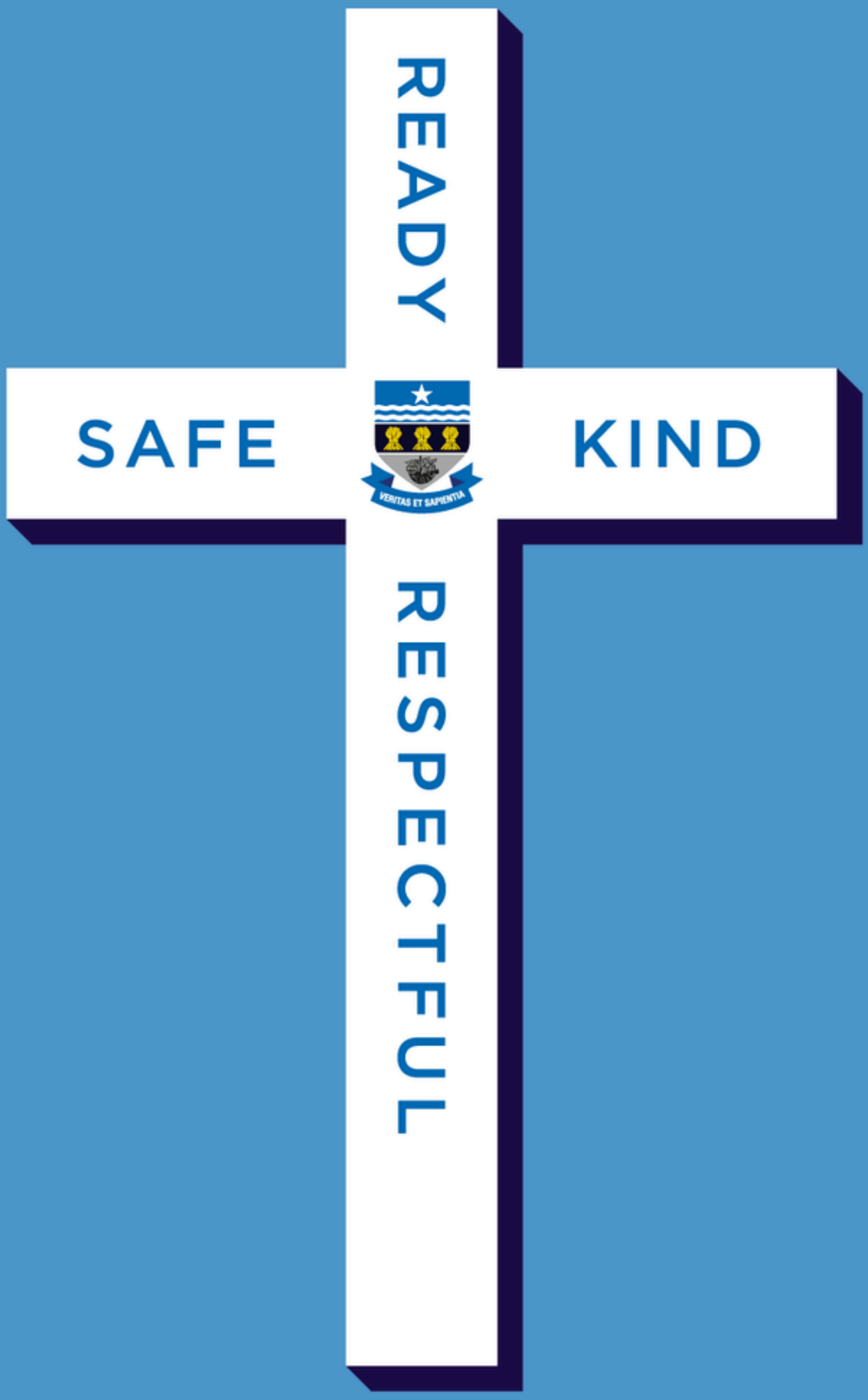
admin@epchs.co.uk

Monday – Thursday: 8:00 AM – 3.30PM

Friday: 8:00 AM – 3.15PM



Our Lady Help of Christians
Catholic Academy Trust



"I Have Come So That They May Have Life And Have It To The Full" – John 10:10