THE EPCHS BEACON

06-11-26

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,

I would like to extend a very warm welcome back to all of our pupils and families following the half-term break. It has been wonderful to see our students return to school rested, refreshed and ready to embrace the opportunities and challenges of the weeks ahead. The positive atmosphere around school this week has been fantastic, and I would like to thank our pupils, staff and families for their continued support as we move towards the end of another busy half term.

Attendance remains one of the most significant factors in ensuring that young people achieve their full potential. Every lesson matters, and even small amounts of missed learning can have a cumulative impact on progress, confidence and outcomes. We encourage all families to continue supporting excellent attendance and punctuality, enabling students to make the most of every opportunity available to them. Being in school every day not only supports academic achievement but also helps pupils develop the routines, relationships and resilience that are essential for future success.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind families of the importance of maintaining our high standards of uniform. Our uniform is an important part of our school identity and helps foster a sense of belonging and pride. Pupils should arrive at school wearing the correct uniform each day, including their blazer, and should wear appropriate school shoes rather than trainers. We greatly appreciate the support of parents and carers in ensuring that pupils are dressed correctly and ready to learn.

Our Year 12 students recently benefited from an informative talk delivered by Alex from Mploy, who discussed work experience opportunities and the range of pathways available to students when they complete their studies and move on from school. The session provided valuable insight into future careers, apprenticeships, higher education and employment options, helping students to begin planning their next steps with confidence.

There has also been plenty of sporting activity this week, with our Year 9 and Year 10 students representing the school with pride in their netball fixtures. Participation in sport provides excellent opportunities for teamwork, resilience and personal development, and we are grateful to the staff who continue to support these valuable experiences.

A reminder that school photographs will take place next Thursday for students in Years 11, 12 and 13. Please ensure that pupils attend in full school uniform and are ready for their photographs.

Finally, I am looking forward to representing our school at the Ellesmere Port Cenotaph on Sunday for the Remembrance Service. This important occasion provides an opportunity for us to come together as a community to honour and remember those who have served and sacrificed for our country. I know many of our families will also take part in commemorations across the local area, and I thank them for supporting this important event.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. I wish all our students a successful and productive week ahead.

Warmest wishes,

Lorraine Henderson - Headteacher

Tim Beesley - Executive Headteacher

Care for creation





Important Dates

- 12th November – Year 11, 12 and 13 – Tempest School Photos
- 16th/17th/18th November – Year 8 and 9 – Paris Maths Trip
- 17th November – Year 7 to 11 – Flu vaccinations (nasal spray)
- 19th November – Year 11 – Parents Evening
- 27th November – INSET day
- 30th November – 11th December – Year 11 and 13 PPEs ('Mock' exams)
- 2nd – 4th December – Year 10 – Savio House Retreat
- 10th December – Year 9 – Parents Evening

ATTENDANCE MATTERS AND SO DO YOU

VERITAS ET SAPIENTIA

Congratulations to all the students who received their 100% attendance awards before half term.

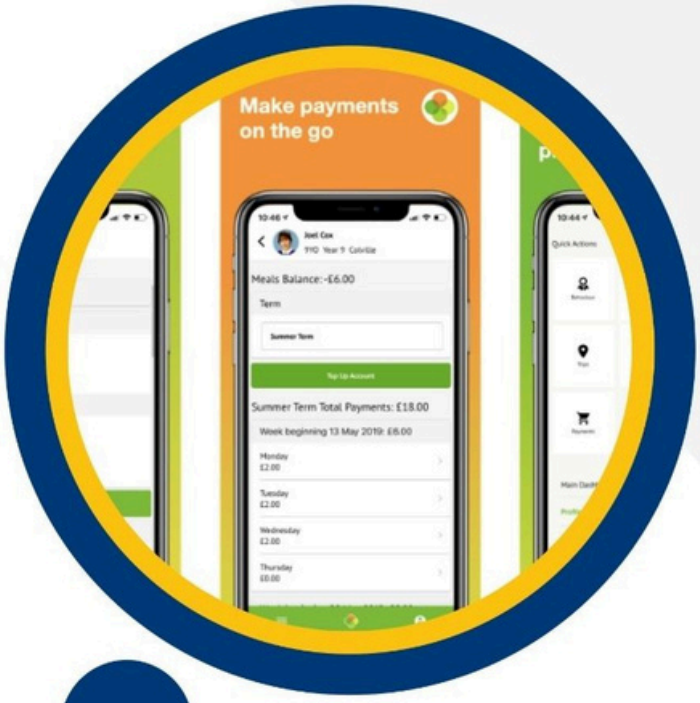
Keep up the great work!



PARENT INFORMATION

Arbor

Arbor Parent App



Please ensure that your contact details and all consents are up to date on Arbor.

This will help us to contact parents and carers when necessary and to know which consents you have approved. If you need any help with this please call Reception or email admin@epchs.co.uk.

We need at least 2 contacts aged over 18 for each child and an email address and a telephone number per person.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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.

If possible please try to make appointments after school or in school holidays.

Absences can be reported by:

- Logging them on the Arbor Parent Portal

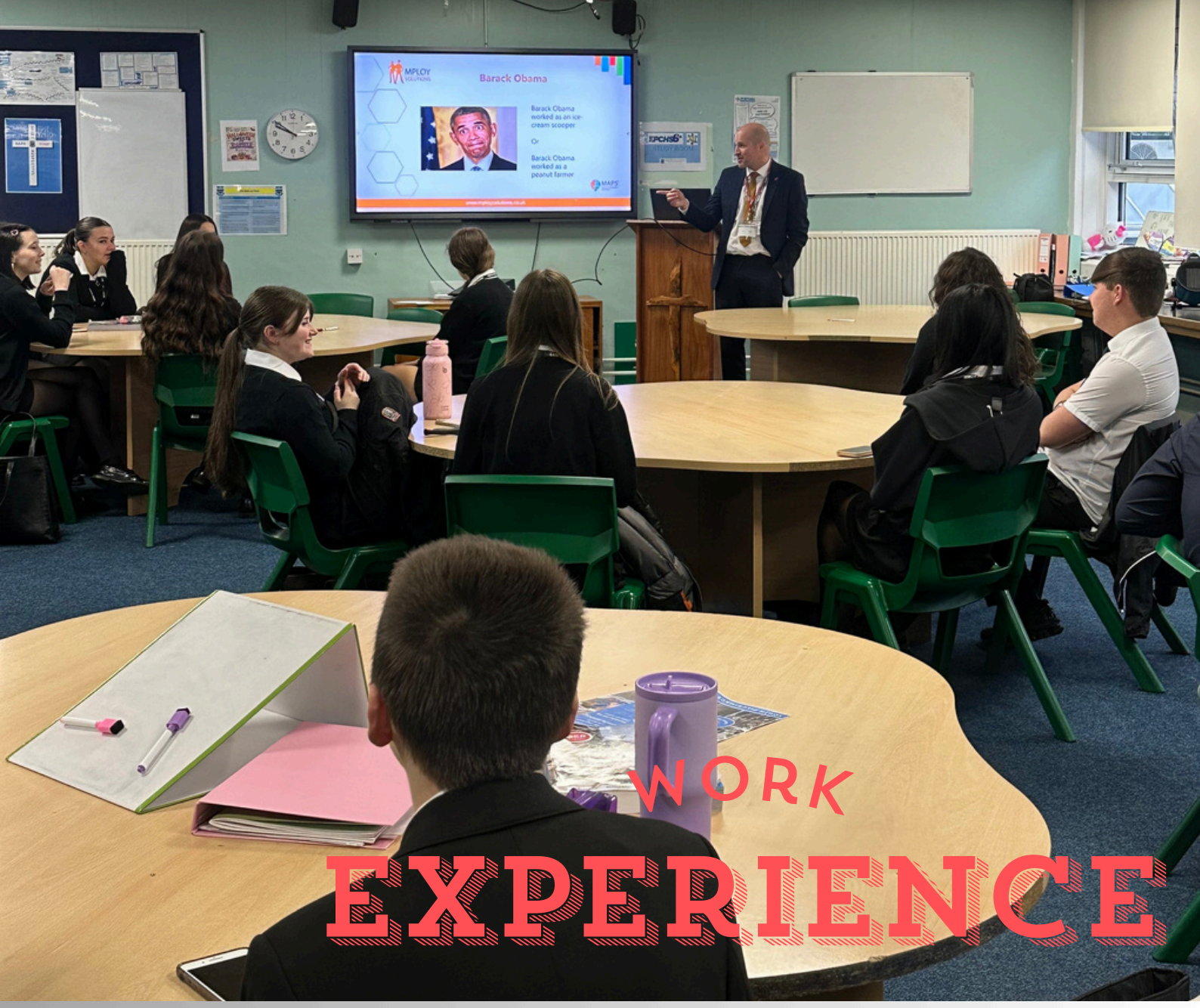
or

- 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.



WORK EXPERIENCE

Our Year 12 students attended a presentation hosted by Alex Mack from MPLOY, focusing on the importance of completing a work experience placement and the valuable skills and experience it can provide as they prepare for their future careers.

Work experience is an excellent opportunity for students to develop their confidence, communication and employability skills, gain an insight into the workplace and explore potential career pathways.

Our Year 12 students will be on work experience from Monday 19th to Friday 23rd April 2027. Please note that students need to source and organise their own placement.

If anyone can help any of our students with a possible work placement please contact laura.howell@epchs.co.uk.

EAT WELL. FEEL GOOD. LEARN WELL.



Enjoy delicious meals prepared fresh each day by our catering team.

✅ Hot meals daily



✅ Fresh wraps & paninis

✅ Vegetarian options



✅ Healthy and balanced choices

TOP UP YOUR CHILDS ARBOR LUNCH ACCOUNT TODAY!

Free Breakfast

At least half a million children in the UK arrive at school each day too hungry to learn. Research has shown a direct link between the breakfast habits of children and their educational attainment, with children in primary schools where breakfast is provided achieving on average up to two months' additional academic progress over the course of a year.



✅ Available from 8.15am



✅ Cereal and bagels

✅ All dietary requirements



✅ Healthy and balanced choices

OTHER ITEMS ARE AVAILABE TO BUY INCLUDING

- **HOT CHOCOLATE**
- **CROISSANTS**
- **HASHBROWNS**

GOLDEN KEY



Golden Key Society Prepares for ESU Mace Debate Competition

Recently, our Golden Key Society held its first practice Mace debate, tackling the thought-provoking issue of whether artificial intelligence should have a place in schools.

Students demonstrated impressive confidence, critical thinking and persuasive speaking skills as they developed arguments, challenged opposing viewpoints and put their debating techniques into practice.

Following weeks of preparation and hard work, three of our students will travel to Liverpool on Monday 9th November to represent our school in the first round of the prestigious English-Speaking Union (ESU) Schools' Mace competition.

We are incredibly proud of their dedication and wish them every success!

GOLDEN KEY STUDENTS EXPLORE FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

We were delighted to welcome a representative from the Social Mobility Foundation's Aspiring Professionals Programme to speak with our senior Golden Key Society students.

The programme provides free mentoring, professional work experience, university and apprenticeship support, and career development opportunities, helping young people build confidence, connections and ambition.

Like Golden Key, the Social Mobility Foundation recognises that potential is everywhere, but opportunity is not. We look forward to working together to open doors and create exciting opportunities for our students.

Find out more: www.socialmobility.org.uk/programme

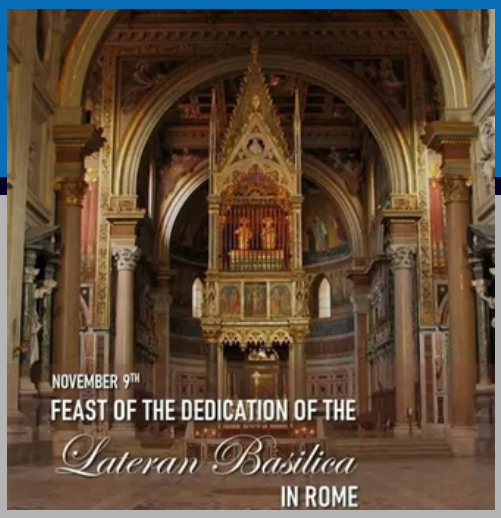


CHAPLAINCY news

November is a special month where we pray for those people who have died. Come to the Chapel to write in the book of Remembrance or place a heart on the tree.

Feast Day of the Week

Dedication of the Lateran Basilica- 9th November. The Basilica is built on land donated by Emperor Constantine and.it is the oldest church in the West. The basilica represents the mother and head of all churches and has its only special feast.



Singing group will be in B11 on a Tuesday lunchtime. We have been invited back to Hollymere so we are now starting on our Christmas songs.

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 25:1-13

This week's Gospel reminds us that we should always be ready because we do not know when Jesus will come.

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.



NETBALL FIXTURE SUCCESS

On Thursday, two netball teams made up of Year 9 and Year 10 students travelled to The Bishops' Blue Coat High School for an exciting afternoon of competitive netball.

Both matches were closely contested, showcasing the girls' determination, teamwork and resilience throughout. One game remained neck-and-neck from start to finish, while the other saw our team produce a fantastic comeback display, demonstrating great character and perseverance.

All of the students represented the school exceptionally well, displaying excellent sportsmanship, positivity and commitment throughout the afternoon. It was wonderful to see the girls enjoying their netball, competing with enthusiasm and supporting one another throughout the fixtures.



WELL DONE TO EVERYONE INVOLVED!

Extra CURRICULAR





Ask Mrs Jones (C1) for more details!

Crochet Club!

Suitable for beginners or advanced crocheters



Monday Lunchtime
C1 – 12:30 ~ 1:15
Hooks and yarn supplied
Bring your lunch
Everybody is welcome! :)





OPEN TO ALL



EPCHS

BASKETBALL CLUB

3.15PM THURSDAY

SPORTS HALL

KEYBOARD PRACTISE CLUB

Monday lunch in M8



Ellesmere Port Catholic High School

HEAD OF YEAR HEROES



Congratulations to all of our Head of Year Heroes this week!



We are celebrating for reasons such as:
✅ Excellent attitude in school, respectful student
✅ Amazing work effort and engagement
✅ Excellent attendance, always works hard, is respectful and kind to others

We are incredibly proud of your hard work, dedication and achievements. Keep up the fantastic work!

COMMUNITY



NEWS

for your information

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

ADVERTISEMENTS AIMED AT CHILDREN

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Children are particularly vulnerable to the persuasive effects of advertising because of their still-developing critical thinking and impulse control skills. Children are regularly and passively exposed to advertising online, whether through influencers, paid advertisements, or sponsored content. Although 92% of 12–17-year-olds felt confident recognising online advertising, only 37% correctly identified sponsored adverts in search results.

INFLUENCER MARKETING

Influencers are an increasingly prominent part of children's online experiences, with four in ten 3–17 year olds who watch online videos reporting that they watch influencer content as entertainment. Influencers can appear credible, relatable, trustworthy and aspirational. Although seven in ten 12–17 year olds recognised a paid partnership, some believed products were promoted because influencers liked or thought they were 'cool'.

PARENTAL PRESSURE TO PURCHASE

Children's exposure to online advertising can pressure parents to buy products they see advertised. When told no, children may feel upset, treated unfairly or left out when comparing themselves with peers. With children potentially seeing up to 40,000 adverts a year, parents cannot meet every request. This can lead to arguments and put strain on family relationships.

UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Advertising often focuses on the positive effects of a product, which can create unrealistic expectations among young people. Children may be particularly susceptible to these claims when they do not recognise the persuasive intent behind them. They may be more likely to believe that a cream will 'transform' their skin, clothing will help them fit in, or protein powders will quickly build muscle. Repeated exposure to adverts such as beauty content can normalise unrealistic expectations and create material dissatisfaction or body image concerns.

HARMFUL ADVERTISING

Children can encounter online advertising through games, videos, social media and links, meaning they may see content that is inappropriate for their age. This can include products or messages that influence attitudes towards body image, health or behaviours such as gambling. Repeated exposure to beauty content can normalise adult-oriented beauty routines and psychological pressure.

UNINTENDED PURCHASES

Online advertising can encourage young people to make purchases. Ofcom found that 58% of 8–17 year olds had spent money online, with 27% saying adverts encouraged them to spend and 22% influenced by influencer content. Despite this, a third of the children regretted an in-game purchase, while almost half said they were unclear about what they were buying. This can lead to children spending more than intended or making purchases without fully understanding the cost or product, adding pressure on parents to spend.

LACK OF ADVERTISING TRANSPARENCY

Advertising is not always obvious to children, particularly when influencers promote brands, products or services without clearly stating that it is an advert, or when advertising is embedded within entertaining content and uses positive language. Children may not realise that the adverts are promoting something, making the recommendation seem more trustworthy and more influential.

Advice for Parents & Educators

TEACH CHILDREN HOW TO SPOT ADS

Help children to recognise when content is trying to sell them something. Teach them to look for signs such as '#ad', 'sponsored', 'paid partnership' as well as promo codes or product links attached. Explain to your child that these adverts can be embedded within videos, social media posts, games or influencer posts and are not always obvious to identify. Helping children recognise these advertisements can make them less likely to be influenced by them.

ENSURE PAYMENT DETAILS ARE LOCKED DOWN

Avoid saving your bank card details on children's devices, games or apps wherever possible. This can help reduce the risk of children making accidental or impulsive purchases following seeing an advert. Check the purchasing settings on games and social media accounts and use parental controls or purchase approval settings where possible. Talk to your child about the importance of asking before making a purchase online.

DEVELOP CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

It is important to encourage children to question what they see online rather than automatically believing it. Encourage them to stop and think before clicking. Have them ask themselves, 'Why am I seeing this?' and 'What are they trying to get me to want/buy?'. Remind them that adverts and influencers only highlight the positive aspects of a product. By developing these skills, children will begin to recognise, question, and respond to manipulative marketing practices.

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

While it is important to set age restrictions on games and social media, inappropriate adverts can still slip through. Talk regularly with your child about adverts or influencer content they see online. Open communication makes it easier for your child to come to you if they have any questions about products or inappropriate content. It also helps you understand what your child is being exposed to online and where they may need support.

Meet Our Expert

Dr. Claire Sutherland is an education consultant and digital safety expert, with a background in primary teaching. She combines her PhD research in cyberbullying with hands-on experience, delivering impactful digital wellbeing workshops and policies for schools across Australia and now in the UK.



#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

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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.

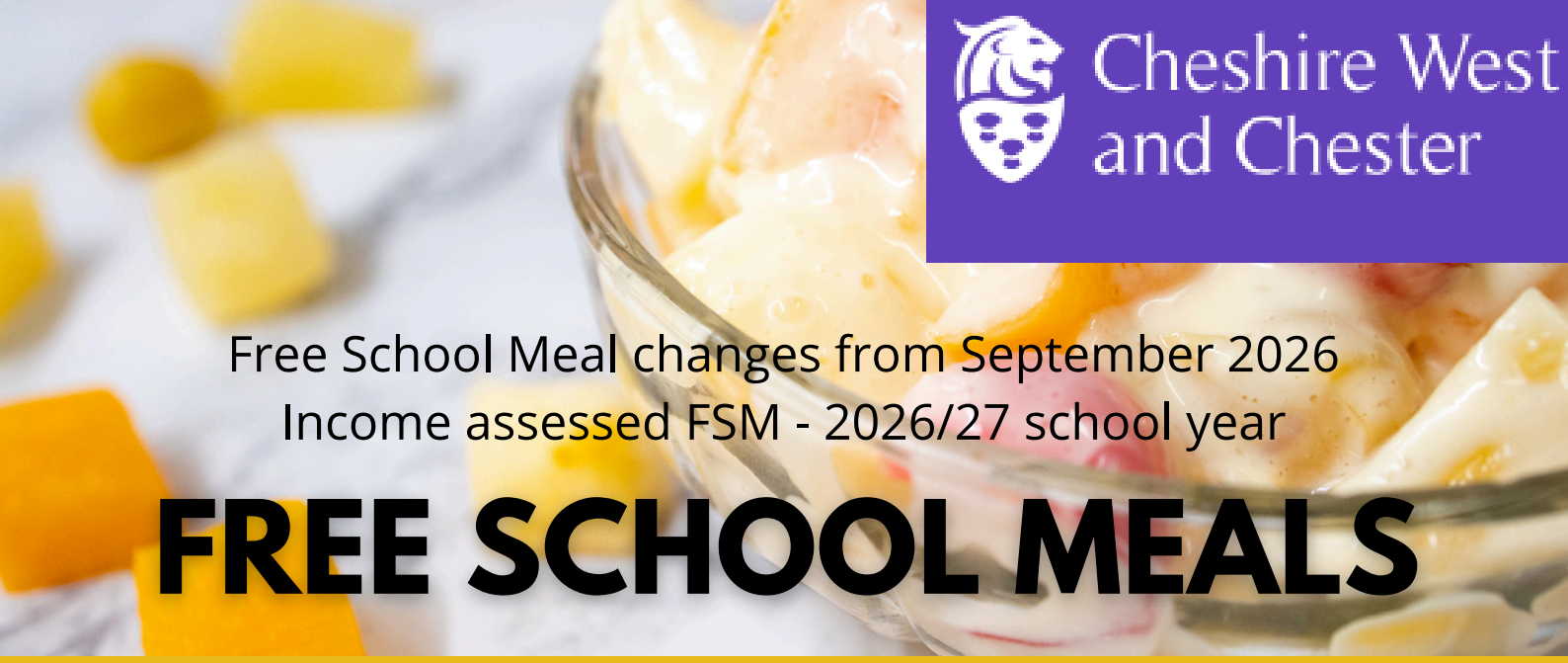
Wysa is a free, confidential app for young people aged 16-17 to chat anytime (yes, even late at night), get tools for exam stress, and much more. No sign-ups, no awkward conversations, just a safe space to sort out what's going on in your head.

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





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

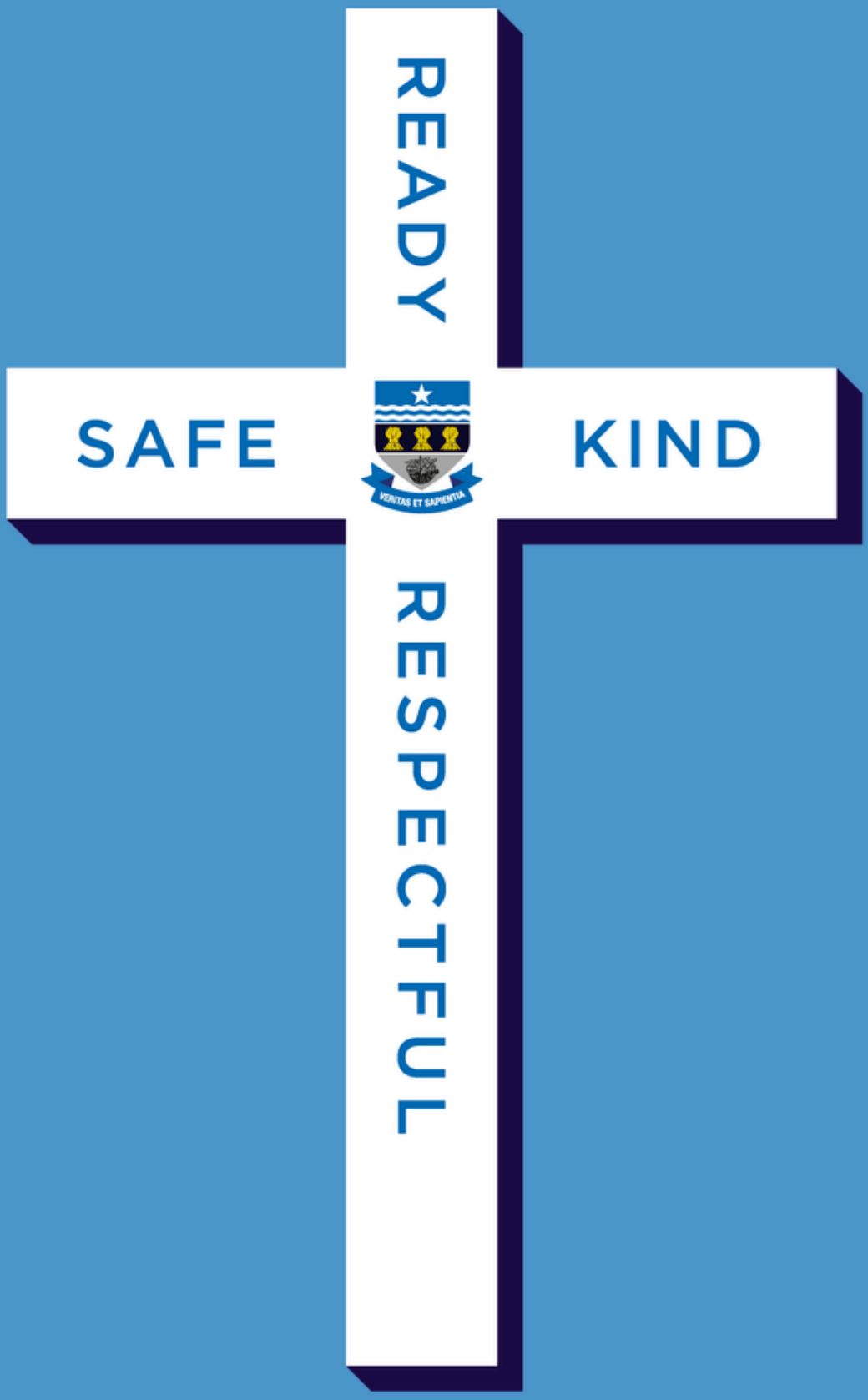
admin@epchs.co.uk

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