

### Welcome Message

The end of term is finally upon us and, as I write this, we have just announced the winners of the Christmas Cake Competition (more details below). Congratulations to all our bakers for their amazing creations.

This has been a term where we have all been challenged in so many unexpected ways, more lockdowns, tiers and further restrictions to get our heads around and the uncertainty of what will be happening at Christmas.

However, we are finally here, and what has struck me most about what we have been through this year has been the adaptability of pupils, staff and parents in coming to terms with all that we have had to endure.

The pages that follow will share the many incredible activities that have gone on, despite not being able to do the things that we would normally do. I am very grateful to all staff who have made this happen, and pupils who have adjusted to the new ways of operating.


We look forward to getting back to some kind of normality in 2021; certainly the signs are more hopeful than they were. In the meantime, enjoy this read; the sense of the strong community that is St Gabriel's is clear for all to see.

Have a very restful and safe Christmas.

**Mr Ricki Smith, Principal**

### Christmas Cake Competition

#### Senior Winner - Kara, Year 7




View Gallery of all cakes

Congratulations to Kara, Year 7, who was our Senior School Christmas Cake Competition winner with her amazing creation of a Christmas panda duo, with presents, atop a snowy inspired cake.


Highly commended were Emily, Year 11, who created stunning handmade models including a Santa and reindeer; Evie, Year 12, produced a lovely snowman scene that delighted the judges, and Holly, Year 11, who impressed with a polar bear peering out from inside an igloo.

Pupils throughout the whole school have embraced the festive challenge, putting a lot of thought into their cake designs, resulting in a fabulous array of Christmas cake show-stoppers.


#### Highly Commended



Emily



Evie



Holly

### Christmas Tree

Sixth Form students, took on the tradition of decorating the school Christmas tree, which has pride of place in the Reception Hall.



### Christmas Card



Jorja, Year 12, recently painted a beautiful Robin, using oil paints on slate, which featured on Principal, Mr Smith's, 2020 Christmas card. Well done, Jorja.

**Family Fun  
Holiday Activities  
See Page 8**

### Armistice Day



To mark Armistice Day, the Senior School observed a two minute silence on 11 November and Mrs Chapman held an assembly, which focused on the role of women in the First World War.

Miss Halstead created a commemorative display in The Square Hall that featured war poetry, photographs and knitted poppies that pupils had fun creating in Knitting Club.





Christmas Celebrations



On Thursday, 10 December, the Christmas spirit was abundant throughout the school with Christmas Jumper Day and the annual fun run. However, this year pupils ran at set times in their year group bubbles. Following the sprint around the lake, pupils enjoyed Christmas Lunch, so it was a really festive and fun end to a busy term.

Music

Despite the challenges of this term, the Music Department has been a happy and busy place, with students attending their one-to-one lessons remotely and making live music in class with great enthusiasm. GCSE and A level composers have been hard at work creating music in a wide array of styles, from pop ballads and musical theatre scenes, to Baroque concerto and Classical sonata movements. Lower School classes have worked on a range of projects including the blues, variations, The Planets, the Year 7 Play and song writing.

Earlier in the term, around 50 students across Senior and Junior Departments took part in this term's virtual lunchtime concert recordings, with some outstanding performances, especially from those preparing to take ABRSM examinations on 14 December. More recently, it has been a delight working with scholars' groups and the Sixth Form Choir to produce some fitting Christmas performances for the end of term. All students and their music teachers are to be congratulated on their perseverance and enthusiasm through this term.

Dr Tebbs, Director of Music





House Football Winners

Well done, Chad, who were the Year 9 winning team on 26 November.



Year 10

Year 10 pupils were captured enjoying Friday gymnastics and football during a recent PE lesson.



Equestrian Team Win

Congratulations to our talented equestrian team, Clare, Year 8, Daisy and Araminta, Year 9, and Olivia, Year 12, who won the 90/95 NSEA Eventers Challenge Qualifier against strong competition.



Sixth Form Lunchtime Runs

The glorious weather in November meant Sixth Form students were able to enjoy lunchtime runs through the woods.



Ensuring PE safety



Health and Safety is our number one priority in school and, currently, lots of additional precautions are in place to minimise any risk of infection.

Mrs Brazendale ensures all netball bibs are washed daily, onsite, at 60 degrees. Following the soaking, they are hung out to dry on the Sports Hall apparatus, ready for pupils to use, once again, the next day.

12 Days of St Gabriel's Christmas Sports

During December, the St Gabriel's Sports Department ran a 12 Days of Christmas campaign. View all posts on Twitter for more details:

@StGabsSport



One  
A level PE Student



Two Twin  
Footballers



Three  
Arabesques



Four  
Gymnasts Tumbling



Five  
Treasure Hunters



Six  
Star Jumpers Leaping



Seven  
Netball Players Training



Eight  
Swimmers Swimming



Nine  
GCSE Students



Ten  
Christmas Runners



Eleven  
Dodgeball Players



Twelve  
To be revealed







A Level PE



Ebony, Year 13, who is studying A level PE talked to us about her passion for sport.

“PE is a fantastic subject, there is a practical element alongside a strong focus on the theory behind PE. I have learnt about the bones and muscles, how they work and injuries that can occur through sport.

PE A level, has given me a solid foundation for my studies. I am hugely enjoying the psychology part of the course, in particular learning about personality and aggression and how they can affect sporting performance. Psychology with PE is a great combination, I am really enjoying the different aspects of the course.”

**“ I have particularly enjoyed learning PE theory. How quickly the body can rehabilitate from injuries is amazing. As I find this subject so fascinating, I have decided to further my interest and have applied to study Physiotherapy at university. ”**

Ebony

CHARITY

West Berkshire Foodbank



Thank you to students and staff ,who have once again supported the West Berkshire Foodbank this year. Decorated donation boxes were filled with food and groceries for delivery to this worthy charity in our local area.

Young Minds



Following the successful colour-themed days earlier in the term, November saw students dressed in yellow for the charity Young Minds, which supports young people in maintaining and improving their mental health. Thanks to all those who supported this cause which raised £108.

Mrs Rayner, Charity Representative

Interview - Mr Mannion



Head of Computer Science, Mr John Mannion, started his own Sixth Form education with a bit of a stir by asking to do A level History without actually having sat the O level. Fortunately for St Gabriel's, they allowed him to do so, and he went on to achieve grade A which led to a History degree at Sheffield and then the start of his teaching career in 1986.

**What inspired you to become a teacher?**  
I came to St Gabriel's as Head of ICT in 1998 and, with my passion for History, developed a close working relationship with the different Heads of History. I was invited to help out in their department and, teaching history at St Gabriel's grew from there.

**What do you like about teaching History?**  
I enjoy the interaction with pupils. History gives us the chance to explore questions and form ideas. I love to help pupils develop complex answers to open questions. It is an important life skill helping them to spot and develop links between different reasons; it is great fun and hugely rewarding.

I also laugh a lot in my History lessons. For Tune Up Tuesday I played the trailer for the musical Six to my Year 11 group, who are currently studying Henry VIII and his ministers. Quick as a flash they suggested that, after lockdown, we should head for the West End to see the musical and check it out for historical accuracy! That made me laugh!

**Do you have a favourite period in history?**

**“ The Spanish Civil War has inspired me since studying it at degree level. I often wonder about the choices I would have had to make as an 18 year old at that time. I lived and worked in Spain as a teacher for three years and loved visiting key locations to learn more about the period. ”**

**Has much changed over the years teaching at St Gabriel's?**  
Mainly the technology, we have had a fully functioning virtual learning environment



at St Gabriel's since 2006. Portals are now ubiquitous and have proved invaluable during the pandemic throughout school.

**What recent global events do you think will be covered in History lessons in the future?**  
This pandemic has thrown into sharp focus the inequalities that exist in the world and they must be addressed with honesty and justice. It will inevitably feature in history courses in years to come as a source for analysis and debate. I can see the questions forming now! “Lockdown demonstrated the spirit of the British people at its best.” Do you agree with this statement? And “Boris Johnson's role in the 2020 pandemic: Genius or Buffoon?”

**What would you say to students interested in studying history?**  
History is a wonderful subject, we have a great team in the History Department, Mrs Shillaw, Mr Lewis, Mrs Hammons, Miss Halstead and myself. We really look forward to results' days each August and have seen many students go on to study history at degree level.

For those students interested in History, own the decision, study, and love every minute of it!

Read full interview





University Offers

University	Degree
Bath Spa University Rose Bruford College	Acting
University of Manchester	Cognitive Neuroscience and Psychology
University of Edinburgh	Cognitive Science
University of St Andrews	Computer Science
University of York Aberystwyth University	Computer Science (year in industry)
Keele University	Computer Science and Neuroscience
University of St Andrews	Computer Science and Psychology
University of Bath University of Exeter	Computer Science with Placement
University of Birmingham University of Bristol University of Exeter Royal Holloway, University of London	English
Cardiff University	English Literature
University for the Creative Arts	Film & Digital Art
University of the Arts London	Fine Art: Photography
University of York	Global Development
University of Stirling	International Politics
University of Leeds	International Relations
University of Edinburgh	International Relations and International Law
University of Sheffield	International Relations and Politics
University of Salford	Media and Performance
Liverpool John Moores University	Media Production
Bangor University Cardiff University Edinburgh Napier University Oxford Brookes University	Midwifery
Durham University Lancaster University	Natural Sciences (study abroad)
Cardiff University University of Edinburgh University of Southampton	Neuroscience
Cardiff University University of Exeter University of Warwick	Neuroscience with Professional Placement
Arts University Bournemouth University of Brighton Falmouth University University of the Arts London	Photography
Bournemouth University University of Brighton Oxford Brookes University University of Winchester St George's, University of London	Physiotherapy
University of Bath University of Exeter Loughborough University University of Manchester University of Southampton	Politics and International Relations
University of Southampton	Psychology
University of Nottingham University of Sussex	Psychology and Neuroscience

It is UCAS season, and all of our students have sent off their applications for 2021 and are receiving solid offers; a month and a half ahead of the deadline. A number of students already have offers from all five of their choices.



“ It is one of the best parts of my job to be able to facilitate students’ access to their choice of university courses in the top institutions. These offers, in a very competitive climate, are a testament to their applications, which carefully evidence the skills required for each course and is the result of a dialogue between student, tutor and myself which began in Year 12. ”

The wide range of courses, across many disciplines and indeed countries, show the variety of interests that we have currently in the Sixth Form. From Neuroscience to Journalism or from English to Production Design, this cohort have all disciplines covered.

Mrs Trevis, Head of Sixth Form

“ I have applied to study Physiotherapy next year at university. The application process for this course has been complex and challenging as interviews were held online, due to the pandemic. However, school has helped so much with preparation and I already have offers from Winchester and Brighton Universities. I also have interviews coming up at Oxford Brookes and St George’s University of London. ”

Ebony

“ I have applied for a number of different courses: Cognitive Science, Computer Science and Neuroscience, Computer Science and Psychology and two Natural Science courses. Despite all being slightly different, the aim is to further study computing as well as the understandings of the brain. I am pretty sure that I would like to have a computer science related job, but I personally think that in order for technology to be moved further into the future with a positive impact on humanity, a deeper understanding of the human brain and nature is required. I have also been lucky enough to receive two offers so far. ”

Ellie

“ The process of applying to university, from writing a personal statement to receiving offers, has been such a rewarding experience. I could not have achieved this without the help of Mrs Trevis and the Sixth Form team. ”

Olivia D

View the degree courses and universities our Sixth Form leavers went on to study from 2015-2019 at [www.stgabriels.co.uk/examresults](http://www.stgabriels.co.uk/examresults)





Sixth Form Play



It is again the season when the extraordinarily talented Sixth Form, take to the boards to delight us with a traditional Christmas production. This year the Players present: 'St George and The Dragon', a traditional Mummers' Play.

The players are called on stage, two actors engage in combat and a doctor is called to revive the vanquished. Much hilarity ensued in the making of this

delight as contemporary references abound from our support of the NHS to the use of hand sanitiser to revive the vanquished. The clown managed to engage in a little, 'Oh no he isn't; oh yes, he is,' to pay homage to pantomime. Basingstoke, strangely, seemed to figure prominently as did mince pies.

Traditionally, the play also involves a sword dance which the St Gabriel's Players have

executed in their own original way with overtones of Morris Dancing, involving both swords and rolling pins.

The dragon was particularly ferocious, but St George held the day, and much fun was had by all: a delightful balance to the rigours of academic life and the excitement of university offers.

**Mrs Archer, English Department**

Sixth Form Taster Day

On the Sixth Form Taster Day, Year 11 enthusiastically embraced A level literature skills. Mrs Wellard-Hughes and Mrs Archer introduced the groups to some critical perspectives; each theory was assigned a coloured pair of glasses which represented the lens through which we would view a text. We firstly applied these theoretical lenses to classic Disney fairy tales. We considered:

- Cinderella through a Marxist lens
- Pocahontas through a Postcolonial lens
- The Little Mermaid through a feminist lens
- Sleeping Beauty through a Psychoanalytical lens



To finish, our budding literary critics prepared their own critical reading of 'Where the Wild Things Are' by Maurice Sendak, and presented these to the group, of course still wearing the coloured glasses which represented their chosen theory. Well done, Year 11, we were so impressed!

**Mrs Wellard-Hughes, Head of English**

Tune Up Tuesday



On Tuesday, 24 November, St Gabriel's took part in 'Tune Up Tuesday'. The day was aimed at giving students the opportunity to develop their artistic skills in a range of lessons across the school, and to explore how the arts can help students expand their own mental well-being.

The day started with an assembly, led by Mrs Chaplin, which explored careers and how the arts play a role in any career path. The girls had the opportunity to listen to Junior Doctor Davika Patel speak about her experiences of using the arts to understand her patients, while also writing poetry to help her cope with the

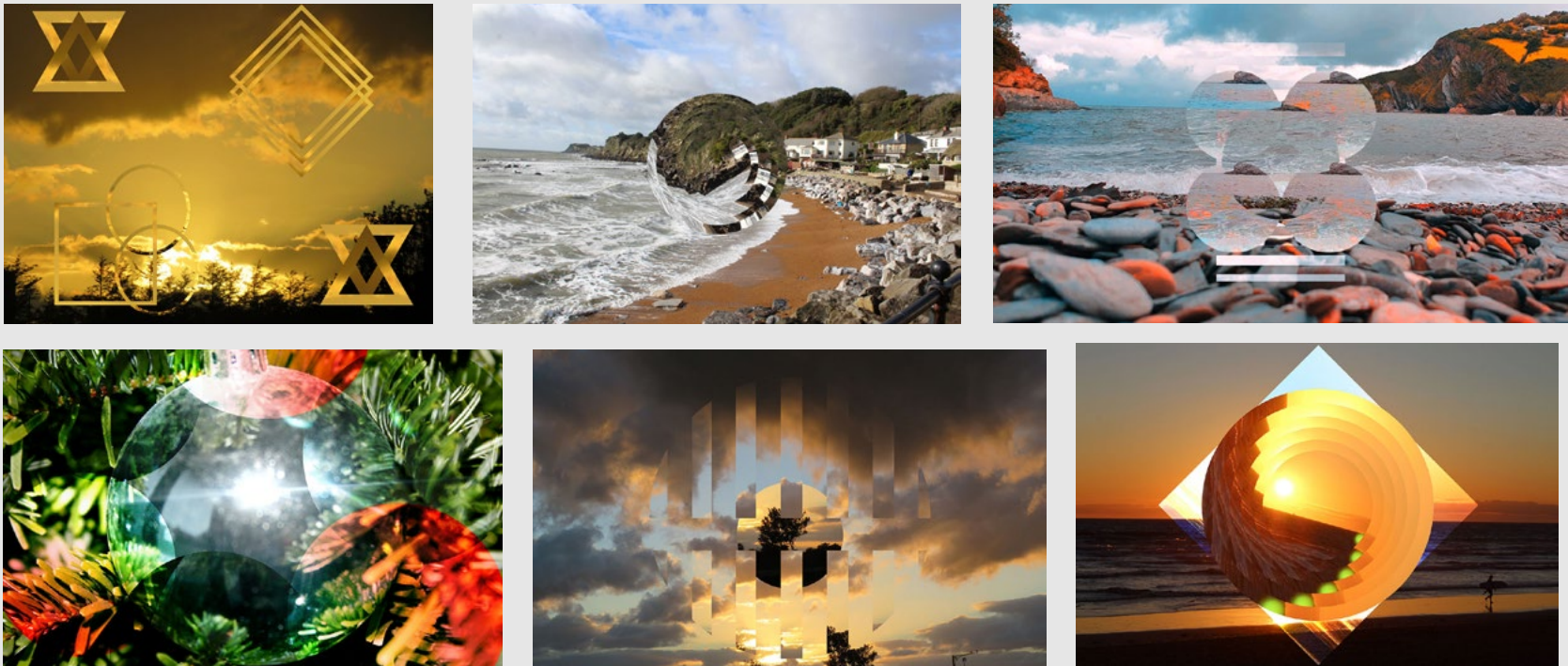
demands of her job during the Covid pandemic. The day was a fantastic opportunity for staff to collaborate using an array of skills.

We saw Mr Mannion using the historical based musical 'Six', while Mrs Chicken created limericks to solve equations. During the day, Year 7 also had the opportunity to go on a virtual theatre trip. Using the power of the internet the girls saw 'The Railway Children' in our very own theatre set up. Much fun was had by all during this experience, especially the imaginary journey to the theatre via our creative train.

**Mrs Chaplin, Head of Drama**



Photography Edits



Year 10, photography students, Millie, Minty, Lara, Kate, Henna and Moggy were set a task by Mr Spurrett to create an outcome using the cutting, pasting and blending tools in Adobe Photoshop. Their efforts resulted in these fantastic edits!

Music Inspired Art

Ms Keenleyside’s recent graphics-based project with Year 8 began with them listening to music and looking at synaesthesia and the work of Kandinsky for inspiration. The pupils then explored CD covers, music event posters, promotional material and responded with mark making and colours, to the sounds and rhythm.



Elsy, Year 8, chose to develop a vibrant poster to advertise Glastonbury, and is continuing to work on her final outcome.

Spanish

Learning Spanish the Modern Way

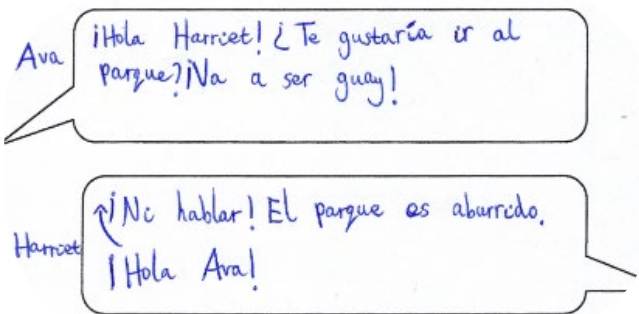
Year 9 pupils enjoyed learning Spanish in a modern way by applying it to text messages during a recent lesson. Pupils created Spanish texts in different formats from video, using Textingstory.com, and a web-based app, iphonefaketext.com, to more traditional methods including a printed paper text message template.

“ I found writing the text messages fun, I liked that we could make it up. ”

Maddie, Year 9

“ All the Spanish lessons we have had throughout the term have been engaging. We do quizzes, group activities, songs and practise speaking with our foreign language assistant. Recently, we have written a text dialogue about going out. This has been really good, as we got to practise the new vocabulary. ”

Ava, Year 9



“ I found the activity fun and valuable because now I can speak in Spanish when we are going out somewhere. ”

Olivia, Year 9

Advent Calendar



Mrs Tyler, Spanish teacher, made a digital advent calendar to offer Year 11 Spanish pupils a bit of light relief in December. Pupils clicked open a door for a peek at places and customs in Spain and Latin America, along with some songs and music, ‘how-to’ videos for Christmas crafts and treats.

[View Calendar](#)

Tara Talks in Assembly

Tara, Year 12, presented in a recent assembly on Rabbi Lord Sacks, who was Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth (1991 - 2013). He was a philosopher, politician, author and is known as a “light unto this nation” given his powerful and positive statements.

“ I was inspired to do an assembly on Rabbi Lord Sacks as he had a great impact on my life and I wanted to share a bit about him with the school to honour his memory. ”

Tara, Year 12



Rabbi Lord Sacks’ Words of Wisdom

Accept and celebrate difference  
Be true to yourself  
Realise your worth  
Learn to question  
Be generous and kind





## FAMILY ACTIVITIES



This year you can still support small businesses, visit a virtual Christmas market and **Shop Online**.



From the Royal Opera House to your house, watch live performances. **See What's On**.



Hedgehogs need shelter, why not try to encourage one into your garden **Build a Hedgehog a Home**.



Many local businesses are operating in some form throughout the festive period. **Find Out More**.



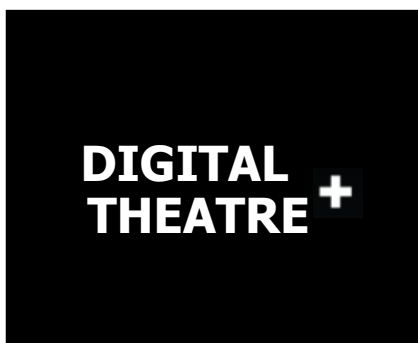
Our budding mathematicians and keen scientists will enjoy the Royal Institution **Christmas Lectures**.



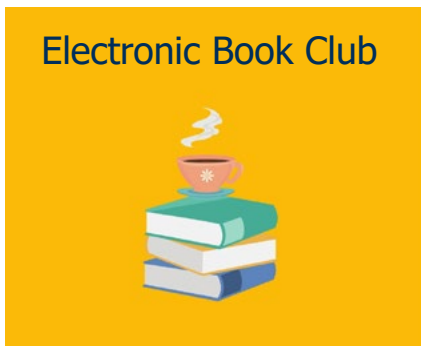
Lots of **fun activities** collated by Berkshire Mummies are worth a visit during lockdown.



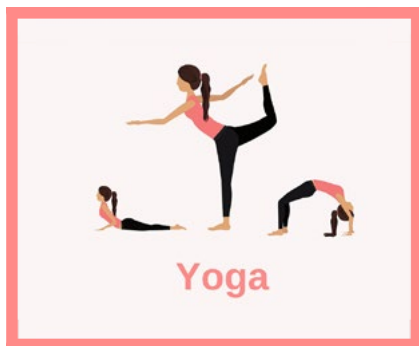
See how to make **Pine-cone Elves** and other fun, festive decorations. **National Trust**.



Access a wide range of shows: visit **Digital Theatre +** and sit back and relax.



Set up an **Electronic Book Club** with friends and enjoy sharing book reviews together.



Boho Beautiful have created lots of **Yoga** videos online, to help with flexibility and relaxation.



Learn about the history of emojis and have a go at **Designing Your Own Emoji**.



A variety of **Outdoor Resources** provide extra inspiration for time spent outside.



If you are baking over the festive period, **View Gallery** for inspiration from our cake decorating competition.



Full of virtual drama, dance, tours and music events, visit London virtually. **Learn More**.



Walk around Shakespeare's Globe Theatre via a 360 degree virtual tour for free. **Be Inspired**.



Collate all your best photographs from the year and use them to create a **Personalised Calendar**.



Check out **#AdventuresAtHome** for lots of fun, creative, craft ideas to pass the time.



Play fun quizzes in the knowledge that free rice gets donated to help those in need. **Play Quizzes**.



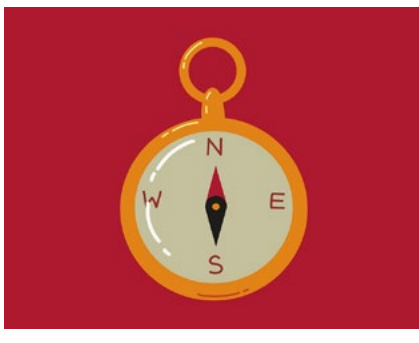
Enjoy baking these cute Reindeer Christmas cupcakes during the festive season. **View Recipe**.



If you are interested in restoring nature in our local area, learn more via **Berkshire Wildlife Trust**.



With over 5,000 geocaches around Newbury join the world's largest hunt to **Find The Treasure**.



Join the Scouts sponsored challenge. There are four groups that are actively **Racing Round The World**.



Improve and practise your listening skills, by filling in the lyrics to your favourite songs. **Play Now**.



Try Podcasting, it is a popular way to share your messages, useful guides will help **Get You Started**.





His Dark Materials



Year 7 have been studying Philip Pullman's 'His Dark Materials' which they have thoroughly enjoyed. To end the term, they designed their own Advent Calendars using characters and settings from the text, including some of their families' choices of daemon.

Mrs Archer, English Department



Term Dates 2021

Spring Term 2021

Nursery Re-opens Monday 4 January  
Term Begins Tuesday 5 January (Term time only nursery children return)  
Half Term Monday 15 February - Friday 19 February  
Term Ends Wednesday 31 March (12.30pm finish)

Summer Term 2021

Staff Inset Monday 19 April  
Term Begins Tuesday 20 April  
May Bank Holiday Monday 3 May (school closed)  
Half Term Monday 31 May - Friday 4 June  
Term Ends Wednesday 7 July (12.30pm finish)  
Nursery Closure Monday 2 August - Friday 6 August (inclusive)

Autumn Term 2021

Term Begins Monday 6 September  
Half Term Thursday 21 October - Friday 29 October (inclusive)  
Dame Betty Day Friday 26 November (school closed)  
Term Ends Friday 10 December (12.30pm finish)  
Nursery Closure Friday 24 December - Monday 3 January (inclusive)

SECONDHAND SCHOOL  
UNIFORM SHOP

Thank you to all supporters who donated uniform; our secondhand shop is now well stocked. Unfortunately, due to Covid restrictions, the shop is still unable to open to parents, however, it will be offering a personal shopping service.

2ndhandshop@stgabriel'spta.co.uk

Facebook

Join our Facebook Community for the latest pictures and updates from around school.



www.facebook.com/stgabriel'snewbury

Open Morning  
Saturday  
6 March 2021