

# Saint John Wall Catholic School

## A Catholic School For All



### Mission Statement

'To educate each and every unique child in our care to hear and respond to what God calls them to be'



Issue 15

Weekly Information Bulletin

Date: Thursday 21 December 2023

**Catholic Life - This year we are focusing on 'Year of Live Simply'.  
Termly Theme: The Common Good - Live in Solidarity  
Termly SJW Values – Compassionate and Loving**

This week in afternoon prayer... "We prayed for International Migrant Day. This is important because we come together in solidarity and prayer to hope that these individuals find a safe place to live.

We also prayed for Advent and focused on being compassionate and loving individuals. We can do this by donating to charity as we have done this Advent with our form time appeals.

Afternoon prayer provides us with an opportunity to pause and reflect on our school day."

By **Martyna Wrukowska 8REG**

### Message from Chair of Governors

**"Hope of deliverance from the darkness that surrounds us."**

Term is ending a little later than normal with Christmas Day just around the corner. Throughout the last four months governors have been kept busy with such a lot going on at Saint John Wall.

I recently came across a survey of almost 40,000 parents and carers. It showed that clear communication and feeling heard are their most significant concerns. We are more than aware of how important the relationship is between home and school. I hope, therefore, these half-termly reports give you a flavour of some of the work our governors do. Any thoughts or comments you might have are welcome so please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Nationally, school attendance remains a major worry. A recent report from the Children's Commissioner for England emphasised how attendance has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. It was reassuring, therefore, to hear from Mrs Crooks that our pupil attendance is above the national average. This is particularly crucial for Year 11 pupils as the report demonstrated once again how good attendance greatly increases their chances of gaining good qualifications.

On that subject Mr Holder provided governors recently with a comprehensive report of how our Year 11 pupils are currently progressing. With the exception of a few (and indeed it was a very few) individuals the whole year group has bought into what staff are asking of them.

### Goodbye to a Member of Staff

We say goodbye and good luck to Mr Hayaat, who is relocating to another part of the country. Mr Hayaat has been a valuable member of both the science department and the pastoral team, and we wish him all the best for the future. **By Miss Marston**

*"I have been working at SJW as a Science teacher for the last 3 and a half years; it is the school where I did my training and developed not only myself as a person, but my respect for young people and this profession. This school has always lived up to its values, which I have seen in all the pupils I have taught over the past few years, and who I will miss dearly."*

By **Mr Hayaat**



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The pupils are smart enough to appreciate the success their teachers have had over the past few years. It has enabled pupils to achieve great things and in so doing access high levels of education and training. In the depths of winter May feels a long way off but both staff and pupils are already striving to match the high standards of last year and indeed previous ones. Mr Holder also outlined the plans the school is implementing using the pupil premium funding we receive to support disadvantaged pupils.

As well as the impact on pupils' attendance mentioned earlier, the Covid pandemic has also had a negative impact on the well-being of pupils who have returned to school. The effect of the lockdowns has meant some have experienced difficulty settling back to the routine of studying and working with others. There are many reasons for this. The governors were informed by Mrs Breslin of the brilliant work she is doing, along with her colleagues, to find ways of encouraging pupils to find ways of coping better with school life. I'm sure they will benefit greatly from the guidance being offered to them.

At another meeting Miss Timmins reported how the good behaviour of pupils not only in lessons but also around school is being rewarded and leading to them meeting their targets. She highlighted how sanctions are applied to the small minority of pupils who are unwilling to co-operate and so mend their ways. A relatively recent and worrying trend in schools nationally is vaping. You may have heard about it. Miss Timmins has made very clear to pupils that if any are involved in this illegal, unhealthy and harmful activity they will face very serious consequences.

I am delighted to announce that Miss Turner has become a governor here. She brings an enormous amount of experience from a wide variety of schools strengthening even further our governing body. Miss Turner's insight particularly regarding curriculum matters is already proving invaluable. She heard along with other governors at a recent meeting Miss Hanson and Miss Lally outline how the curriculum being offered to our pupils is being remodelled. In so doing it addresses a comment from our recent Ofsted report which stated that: "In a few instances, leaders have not ensured that teachers know precisely how new knowledge draws on what pupils have learned before." It is an ambitious project to be rolled out gradually over the coming years. Governors agreed it will enhance even further the quality of pupils' education.

Mr Lloyd-Price, Mrs Ellis and Mr Lysaght have organised loads of events during this Advent. To discover more about the wonderful work that is being done the weekly Friday Newsletter is always worth reading.

Just one example is the Year 7 Sanctuary Team's work with St Chad's Sanctuary. I'm familiar from my own parish of the incredible work it does supporting refugees and asylum seekers in Birmingham. All that the school is doing will contribute to CAFOD's Live Simply Award which the school is seeking to be awarded next year.

As the year draws to an end and we get the chance to look back at 2023 we can all agree it has globally been a turbulent and troubling twelve months. What a contrast to the year all at Saint John Wall have experienced. Not only were we presented with the prestigious School of Sanctuary Award but we also enjoyed (if that's the right word?!) an extremely successful Ofsted inspection topped off with our best ever exam results. Oh, and I nearly forgot to mention, the stunning refurbishment of our PE facilities – it was worth the 60 year wait!

We owe Miss Marston and her marvellous team of staff an enormous debt of gratitude for all the tireless work they do day-in and day-out. Each has earned a well-deserved rest. So on behalf of all governors, I wish them, yourselves and your families a joyful and peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year. See you in 2024!

Until then I'll finish with this prayer:

***Almighty God through the gift of your Son, our Lord Jesus, we follow you on the path of dawn. Enlightened by your love and wisdom, help us to lead each other back to your open arms. Strengthen our resolve to work for change in our world and to share the hope your Son's birth brings each Advent. Help deliver us all from the darkness that surrounds us.***

***Amen***

***Saint John Wall, pray for us.***

**By Martin Jones, Chair of Governors**

## Dates to Note

- **INSET DAY – School Closed to all Pupils**  
**Friday 22 December 2023**
- **Christmas Holidays**  
**Monday 25 December 2023 to Friday 5 January 2024**
- **INSET Day – School closed to all Pupils**  
**Monday 8 January 2024**
- **School Open to all Pupils**  
**Tuesday 9 January 2024**
- **Year 7 and Year 9 Parents' Afternoon**  
**Thursday 18 January 2024 – 1.30pm to 4pm**



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## Catholic Life

### Year 8 End of Term Mass

On Thursday all Year 8 pupils attended Mass at St. Augustine's. The theme of our mass was 'joy'. Thank you to our readers and to Mrs Crooks for accompanying the singing and playing the keyboard.



### Year 9 and 10 Service

Our end of term service for Year 9 and 10 was held in the hall and focused on the story of the Nativity. Thank you to all our wonderful readers and musicians for your support!



### Travelling Nativity

Throughout Advent, pupils in Year 9 have been taking Nativity scenes from form room, to form room. Each form has displayed this scene for a few days, and taken part in a special prayer, reflecting on the journey taken by Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. These scenes travelled to the Year 7 Carol Service and were blessed by Fr. Subba before returning to school for our final service with Year 9 and 10.



### Year 7 and 8 Chaplaincy Teams

Over the past few weeks, pupils in our Year 7 and 8 Chaplaincy teams have been helping to sort through the many donations that we received for our Advent Appeal. Pupils helped to count all the donations (clothes, food and hygiene products) and then put them into bags and boxes to be delivered to the charities at the end of term. Every week we had more and more donations dropped off to the Chapel and the pupils worked hard to sort through them all. Well done to everyone in our Chaplaincy teams.





After their hard work sorting out all of the donations for the Advent Appeal, pupils in our Year 7 and 8 Chaplaincy teams then spent some time decorating the Chapel's Christmas tree!



Year 8 pupils from the Wellbeing group also looked at the importance of why kindness matters. This was a resource used from the Mental Health Foundation. They looked at the importance of kindness and how being kind to yourself and others can improve mental health and wellbeing.



### Class Mass

This month, we have continued with our class masses at St Augustine's Parish with Year 8. Year 8 pupils have had a lovely mass with Fr Subba each week and then have been able to have a look around the Church and ask questions about the Catholic faith. Thank you to all those from Year 8 who have read each week!



### Year 8 Wellbeing Group

In February, we will be marking Children's Mental Health Awareness Week. As part of this week, the Year 8 Wellbeing group will be leading our Weekly Worships. The theme for this year's Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is 'My Voice Matters'. To help us begin planning our Weekly Worship, pupils in Year 8 made posters that outlined what mattered to them and why. Many of the pupils had similar answers – for example, family and friends. We discussed the importance of their voice and the voices of other young people!



## Lunchtimes

At break and lunch times, pupils have been enjoying some Christmas activities including word searches and colouring. On Monday and Friday, pupils also enjoy being able to play games such as Uno and Jenga. Whilst playing these games, pupils think about the importance of values such as being loving and compassionate and other lessons that they can learn through playing as a team!

Over the last few weeks, pupils in Year 7 have been taking part in a football tournament at lunchtimes. Each week, the different Year 7 forms have played against each other. There has been some great competitiveness amongst the Year 7's – well done to all those in 7HEA for winning.





## Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE)

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) is widely recognised as the world's leading youth achievement award. The DofE has helped to transform the lives of millions of young people in the United Kingdom and across the globe. The award enables pupils to develop life skills and give back to the community, it looks fantastic on your CV for future employers!

Over the last half term, we have been enrolling pupils onto the award. They will spend the rest of the year completing their bronze award. It is broken down into four sections - Physical, Skill, Volunteering and the Expedition section.

Thank you to Chris our operations manager and Mr Patel for running the enrolment session. Another thank you to Mrs Crooks who has offered to be our award verifier and to Mr Price for overseeing the award, alongside the school's manager Miss Young.

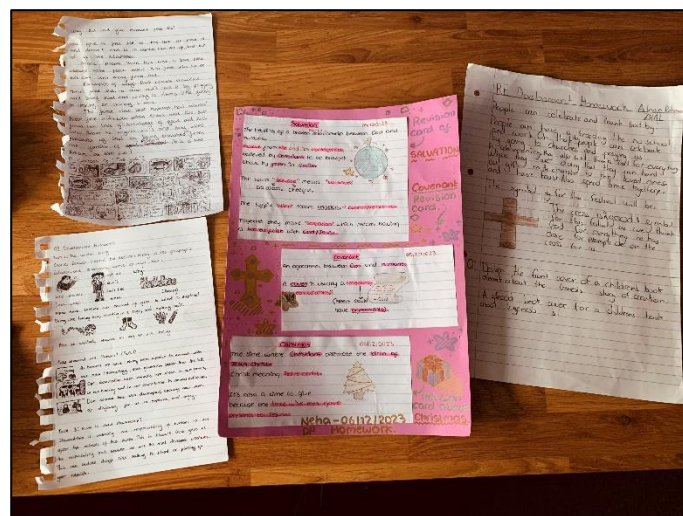
After Christmas, Miss Young will be meeting with the Year 9 and 10 cohort to get them started on each section. I look forward to hearing about what activities each pupil would like to take on to not only impact their future and raise their own self-belief but contribute to the community. There are still some available spaces for pupils, if you would like to be enrolled onto the award and are in Year 9 or 10, please speak to Miss Young!

By Miss Young

## RE Development Homework

The Final draw for the RE development homework for 2023! The top 3 pieces were from Adnan, Lydia and Neha, we look forward to receiving many more development homework entries, so we are able to give out more prizes! Please remember that the development homework helps pupils accelerate independent learning through self-study and self-understanding of the content we go through in our lessons.

By Mrs Begum



## House News

This half term, pupils took part in Christmas form time house activities. Year 7 created a Nativity scene, Year 8 a Jesse tree, Year 9 and Advent calendar and Year 10 created Christmas cards. We had some fantastic entries! You can view the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place entries later in this newsletter. We could see the effort form groups and form tutors had put into submitting lovely pieces of work. This competition was awarding double house points to first place entries from each year group, Well done to our winners!

By Miss Young





## Christmas Show Cinderella

Over 250 pupils contributed to the creation of our Christmas Exhibition of Talent and Cinderella the pantomime. The set, backdrop, music, lighting, costume, hair and make-up, dance, singing and acting; the pupils have blown us all away with their creativity, commitment and gifts. To say we are proud of all of the pupils is an understatement! They all showed fantastic teamwork and camaraderie, and it was a great opportunity for pupils from different year groups to get to know each other and for the staff at school to see them all shine. Well done and we are looking forward to welcoming more pupils to take part next year!

By Mrs Breslin



*"I was the fairy godmother, I really enjoyed playing this part because it's a very fun experience and I was able to improve on my acting skills".* By Lilly-May Harrison 8JAS



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## Christmas Show 'Cinderella'



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## Jolly Jumper Day

Our Wellbeing Group also led on Jolly Jumper Day, focusing on pupil and staff wellbeing. Whilst anyone could come to school wearing their Christmas jumper, the team thought it was important to raise the importance of being comfortable in your own individuality. This meant that pupils and staff could wear any jumper that made them feel good about themselves. Some pupils and staff also brought in donations which will be given to Birmingham Mind and Birmingham Children's Hospital. Thank you to everyone who got involved! **By Mrs Ellis**



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## House Competition – Year 7 Nativity Scene



1<sup>st</sup>

7HEA



2<sup>nd</sup>

7PAL



3<sup>rd</sup>

7BRS



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## House Competition – Year 8 Jesse Tree



1<sup>st</sup>

8LEV



2<sup>nd</sup>

8REG



3<sup>rd</sup>

8RAH



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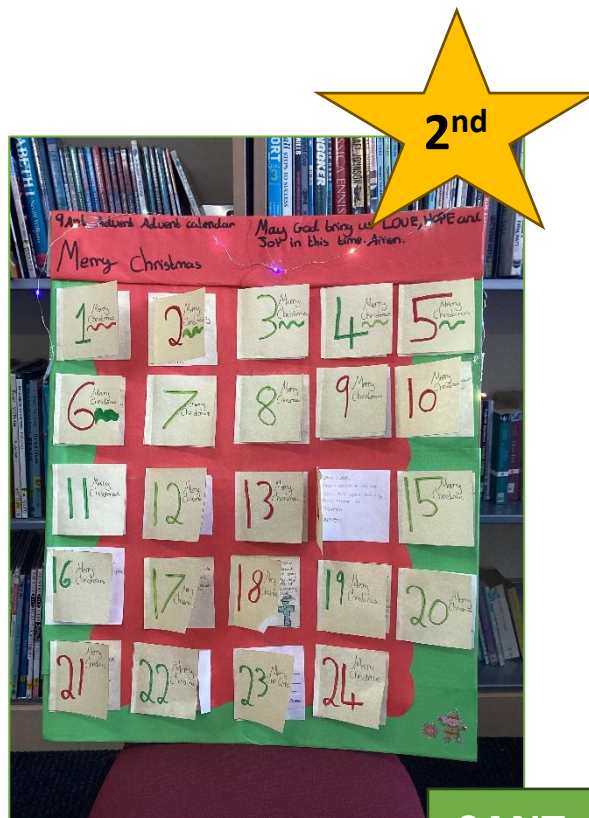


## House Competition – Year 9 Advent Calendar



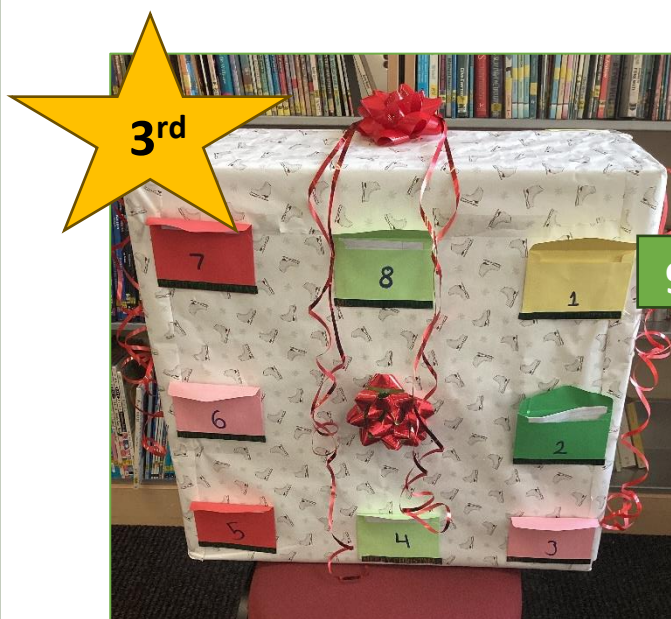
1<sup>st</sup>

9BAK



2<sup>nd</sup>

9ANT



3<sup>rd</sup>

9MAN



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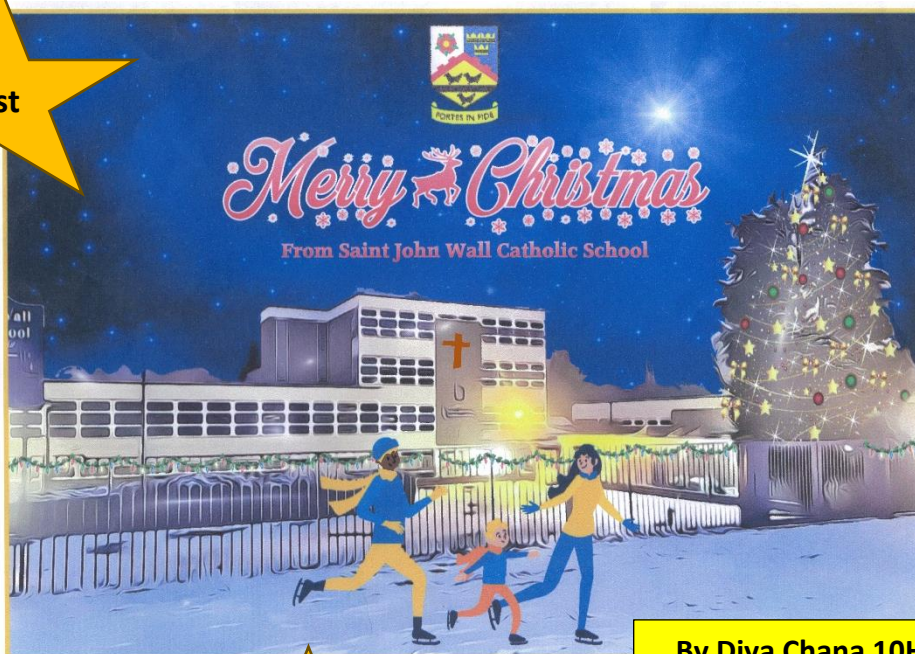
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## House Competition – Year 10 Christmas Card Design

1<sup>st</sup>



By Diya Chana 10HAS

2<sup>nd</sup>



By Mawra Hussain 10BRK

3<sup>rd</sup>



By Kelly Odiase 10WIO



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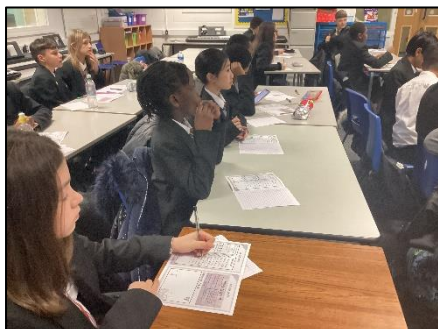
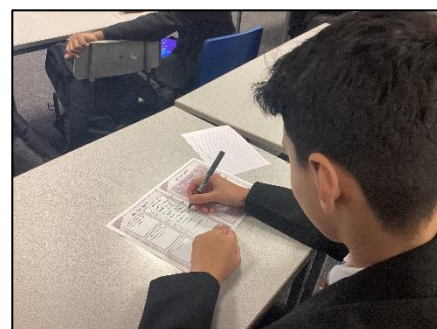
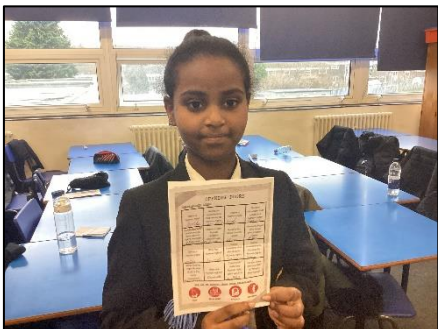
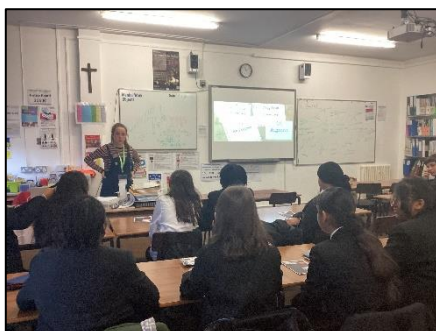


## Year 7 Kenelm Youth Trust

### Year 7 Carol Service

Our Year 7's enjoyed their Carol Service at St. Augustine's Parish Church on Wednesday afternoon alongside the Kenelm Youth Trust. Throughout the day, pupils took part in special activities based on 'Sanctuary' which linked to their charity Advent appeal- St. Chad's Sanctuary. Thank you to everyone who has donated to this appeal this month.

By Mrs Ellis



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## Christmas Card Local Community Delivery

On Friday, we completed our annual Christmas Card delivery to our neighbours in the local area. Throughout the term, we have been praying for our local roads and community during our afternoon prayer. Pupils have had the opportunity to nominate their road or another local road in the area. We value our neighbours and work closely with them to keep the local area safe.

Here are some photos from our card deliveries:



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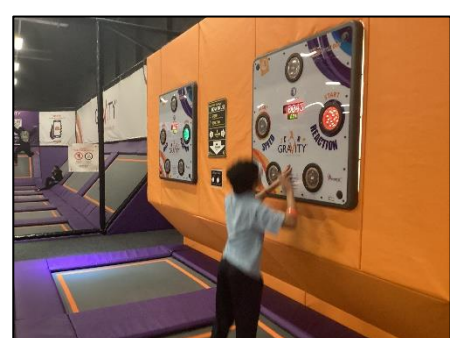
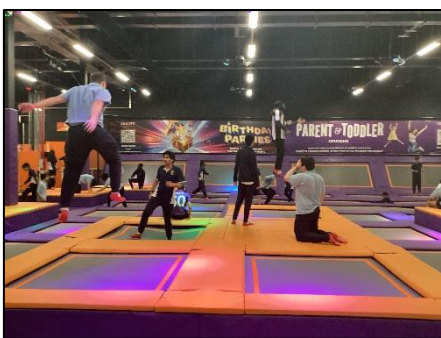
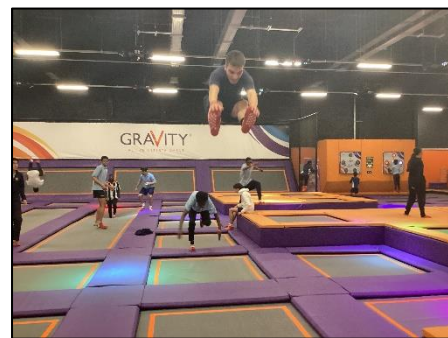
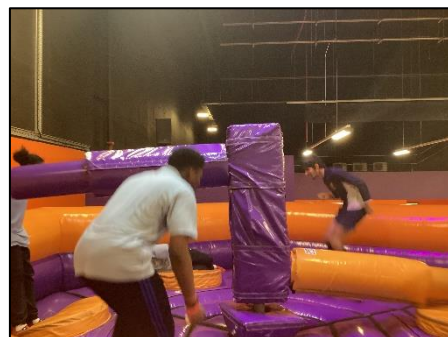
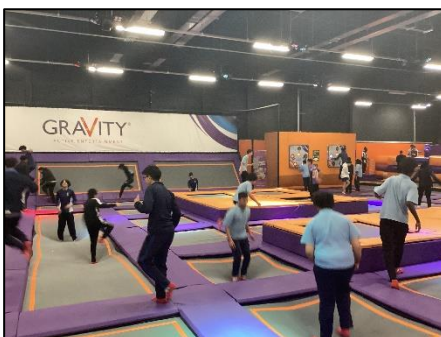
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## Year 11 Trip to Gravity – Star City

Year 11 pupils were treated to a trip to Gravity in Star City today. They had a wonderful time! This year's trip has been used to congratulate and celebrate pupils' Mock 1 results and allow for the pupils to let off steam by jumping around the wonderful trampoline park which SJW were able to hire out just for our pupils to enjoy.



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It's Christmas Time – Parents guide to help keep children safe online

# It's Christmas Time!



**A Parent's Guide to Social Media**



**A Parent's Guide to Sharing Pictures**



**A Parent's Guide to Gaming**



**A Parent's Guide to Online Grooming**



scan the QR code with your phone's camera to see the guides on our website



**A Parent's Guide to Live Streaming**



**A Parent's Guide to Online Influencers**



**A Parent's Guide to Fake News**



**A Parent's Guide to Privacy Settings**

## It's always best to be prepared

Many parents may be planning to give electronic gadgets to their children this festive period.

Our guide is designed to help parents take a realistic approach to help keep their children safe when using the internet, social media and playing online games.

**Scan the QR code to find out more.**

**Online safety is when young people know who they can tell if they feel upset by something that has happened online.**

**Parents** please contact your school to enquire attending their next e-safety workshop or have any concerns.

Working with Home Office 'PREVENT', The Police and Crime Commissioner and Children's Safeguarding Partnerships to help keep children safe online.

**Skips Educational** Email: [info@skipsed.com](mailto:info@skipsed.com) Tel: +44 121 227 1941

**Skips**

[www.skipssafetynet.org](http://www.skipssafetynet.org)

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