



Newsletter



Ashfield Girls' High School is delighted to be one of the first post-primary school in Northern Ireland to achieve the Gold School Mental Health Award, awarded by Leeds Beckett University. Established in 2017 by the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools, the award focuses on eight key competencies.

- Leadership and Strategy
- Structure and Culture – Staff
- Structure and Culture – Pupils
- Support for Staff
- Support for Pupils
- Staff Professional Development and Learning
- Working with Parents and Carers
- Working with External Services

FOCUS ON SUCCESS

The direct link between the impact of mental health and educational outcomes has been identified through many reports, including the Children and Young People's Strategy. The award has enabled Ashfield Girls' to continue to build upon the existing wellbeing practices and provided a framework to identify areas for further development, to ensure everyone in the school community is supported.

It has been an exceptional year for the school in terms of being formally recognised for all of our achievements. In March, Mrs Caddies received a prestigious Blackboard Award at the Europa Hotel for her service and commitment to Ashfield Girls' as a classroom assistant for over 17 years. In April, Angelika Dzenite, Year 13, received the Volunteer of the Year award. at the Eastside Awards, where the school was also honoured with the Community Impact Award. Last month, at Titanic Belfast Mrs Roberta Lyons received a Gold Hero award in conjunction with Families First NI.



“Each different. Each talented. All valued.”

Wellbeing Funding



Getting in touch with our musical talents

The Department of Education provided schools with funding to promote both pupil and staff wellbeing. Using information from surveys, focus groups and meetings with Student Council the areas of focus and improvement were identified. The aim was to further improve the school environment, develop social and emotional wellbeing and encourage positive activities, especially during break and lunch.



No phones here! just having fun

A class set of ukuleles was donated to the Music Department, and new exercise mats were purchased for the PE Department.

The sensory garden was created with new lights, insect houses and bird feeders purchased, to be used as a relaxing and calming space. Items for staff wellbeing included the purchase of coffee machines, water coolers and a microwave. There has also been a great atmosphere at lunchtime whenever pupils are playing the new games, Jenga, Connect4 and Lego are great items to help promote social wellbeing.



Additional counselling was sourced from uHub and pupils were able to benefit from this. In promoting positive mental health fourteen staff participated in Life Coaching sessions and Mrs Cripps undertook a Level 3 Qualification in Mental Health First Aid with St John Ambulance.



Greenhouse

After being unused for the past two years, the greenhouse has enjoyed a clear out and is getting ready to grow plants for our sensory garden and planters.



Picnic Tables

As well as ditching the mobile phones in pursuit of more active endeavours, a number of picnic tables and benches have been purchased for the outdoor areas. These tables provide an area to sit and chat at lunchtime. Over 24 picnic tables were purchased. We are delighted that our outdoor base is moving into the planning stage with Todds Architects. We are awaiting delivery of the two gazebos to finish this outdoor area.



8T IN THE GREENHOUSE!





Extended Schools

LAshfield

LAshfield Lashes is one of the newest clubs that started in 2021 whereby Year 10 pupils learned the basics of applying fab foundation, nailing nails and creating exceptional eye make-up under the supervision of our make up expert, Mrs Lemon. LAshfield Lashes is helping to build the skills for the emerging film industry.

Art Club (Junior)

Art Master Classes (senior)

Athletics Club

Badminton Club



Duke of Edinburgh

Year 11 and 12 pupils practising their tent pitching skills in preparation for their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh expedition on 27th and 28th June in the Mourne, Co Down.



Lunch Time Craft Club

Netball Junior

Netball Senior

Photography Club

Project Lunch Club (Junior School)

Project Lunch Club (Senior School)

Reading Gang

Rebel Readers

Rugby Club

Scripture Union

String ensemble

Tennis Club

Trampoline Club

Band

Buddy Reading Scheme

Choir

Cook-e-Club

Drama Club

Dress Making Club

Drone Academy +

Duke of Edinburgh

Eco-Schools

Film Club

Fitness Suite Activities

Football Club

Hockey Club

Love Our Library

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Literacy Paired Reading

If it takes a whole village to raise a child, then it takes a whole school to raise a child's literacy levels. This year saw the introduction of the Paired Reading programme, an initiative that paired a Sixth Form Senior Librarian with a Year 8 pupil to read for 20 minutes once a week. Sixth Form mentors had things like this to say about the programme: 'I like... watching their love for reading flourish.' 'I feel like this programme has really helped. I feel like my mentee has become more confident with reading and word pronunciation since our first session.' Mentors also noted that "it has helped with my own confidence and my ability to help people." They embraced this level of responsibility and rose to the challenge.

Numeracy

This has been a busy year for numeracy in Ashfield Girls' High School with several new initiatives introduced to help and support our students in the development of numeracy skills. One of these, 'The Recovery Curriculum' programme, which started in October 2021, was designed to give our new Year 8 pupils the opportunity to focus on key numeracy skills. The programme included activities to build upon skills, such as use of the four operations, rounding, using money, and mathematical worded problems. To celebrate all the hard work in June, our Year 8 pupils will be taking part in a 'Ashfield Does Countdown' event. So, keep your eyes peeled for Mr Moore in dictionary corner and Mr Clements with his high-spread calculations.

Sharing Their Story

BBC presenter, Phil Taggart and Radio 4 presenter and journalist, Proinsias O Coinn joined a number of students earlier in the year when they had the unique opportunity to present their personal stories to over 300 students in school as part of the BBC's Share your Story tour in preparation for celebrating the BBC's 100 year history. At a time when Covid-19 has had huge repercussions on the mental health of young people, the project aimed to inspire students to tell their story and to learn from others who have overcome setbacks. The radio presenters shared their own personal stories which both enthused and inspired the groups of students.



“Each different. Each talented. All valued.”

ICT - Ada Lovelace Day



ADA LOVELACE
*{world's first computer



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On 12th October we celebrated Ada Lovelace Day. Ada was a brilliant mathematician who lived in the 19th century. She worked on Charles Babbage's first computer – the Analytical Engine. This is where our modern-day computer originates from. Ada Lovelace Day celebrates inspirational women in ICT and STEM. To start the day we hosted a virtual assembly for all form classes with Sixth Form ICT Prefects telling the story of Ada Lovelace, as well as the stories of other remarkable women in IT.

The many prizes for the competitions organised throughout the day were kindly sponsored by Kainos, Bring IT On, Fujitsu NI, Telefonica Tech, AllState, Instil Software and Andor Technologies.

We welcomed speakers from the IT Industry who delivered presentations to our Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 ICT students, via MS Teams, about careers in IT. Megan and Catherine from Citi were very inspiring and spoke about their journeys in the IT industry. Diana from PWC also delivered a very inspiring presentation about the opportunities available for women in IT.

We finished our celebrations for the day with an interactive ICT showcase for all of Year 8 students organised by our ICT Prefects. Activities included coding, AR, Spheros, racing Bit Bot cars, flying drones, creating simple circuits and many puzzles.





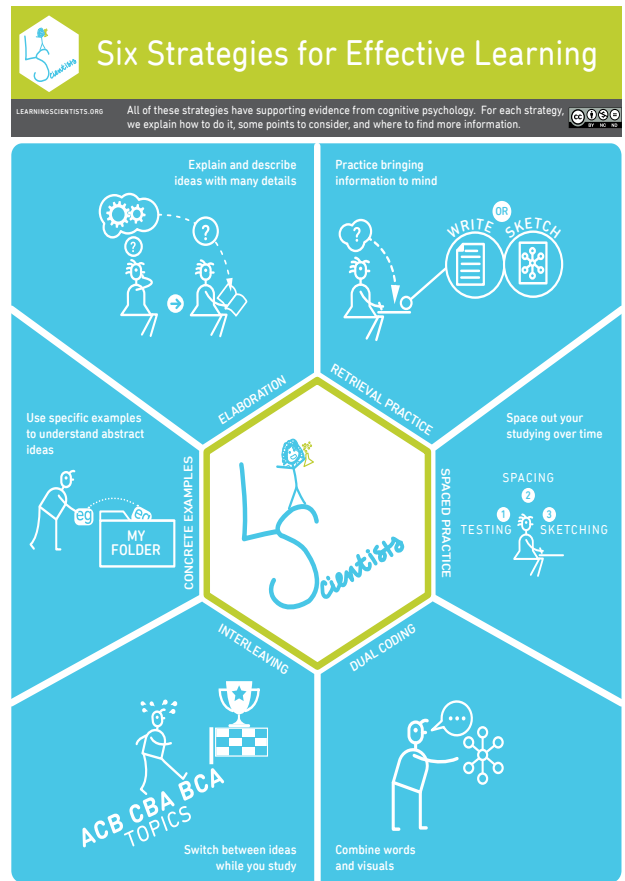
Ashfield Girls are Revision Ready

After two years of lockdowns and missed exams this year has seen us focus considerable efforts as a school in supporting the development of revision skills in our students. We began by introducing our learning community to some wonderful research carried out by the Learning Scientists on the Six Strategies of Effective Learning. Staff and students have embraced these strategies and can now be seen creating colourful revision cards using dual coding and elaboration in preparation for the summer exams.

Students have also enjoyed spending time with Inspire Education as each year group has had the opportunity to participate in an evidence-based, interactive programme designed to enhance their study skills. These have ranged from the Sixth

Form Maximise workshop which helps students plan, prepare, and perform in exams to the Year 8 Ignite programme which is designed to enable our youngest students to develop the mindset and study habits to be successful.

I have a **GROWTH MINDSET**.
 I am in charge of how smart I am because I can **GROW** my **BRAIN** like a muscle by learning hard things.
 I can achieve **ANYTHING** with **EFFORT** and **RIGHT STRATEGIES**.
 And when I fail or make a mistake, it is a **GREAT** thing, because I can **LEARN** from them and **I GET BETTER!**



Geography



FOCUS ON LEARNING

Titanic Trip

Year 13 and 14 Travel and Tourism classes visited the Titanic Visitors Centre and interviewed the CEO Judith Owens to help gather information for their BTEC Level 3 UK Visitor Attractions Unit.



Magilligan Trip

Year 12 went to Magilligan in September to carry out a river study to help them prepare for their GCSE Geography Controlled Assessment.

“This was great fun and it was good to be able to see what we have learnt in class actually happening in the river. It made me really understand what I have learned.”

“I loved being able to see what really happens in the river and how it changes downstream.

I have been able to use what we learned to help me answer the questions in the exam. I could easily remember what we had seen.”





Reading with Royalty

Top readers in 10T were delighted to receive an invitation to meet The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall in March. After presenting the Duchess with a bouquet of flowers, the girls quickly overcame their nerves and discussed characters featured in C.S. Lewis Square, their shared love of literature and the Duchess's book club 'Reading Room'. It was a day that Grace, Paige, Rebekah, Nicole, Hope, Katie and Alex will never forget!



UCAS Discovery Exhibition

On Wednesday 9th March, 41 pupils in Year 13 attended the annual UCAS Discovery Exhibition held at the Eikon Exhibition Centre in Lisburn. With a total of 117 Universities represented, as well as major employers such as PwC and the Armed Forces, the event offered students the chance to explore not only a wide range of academic routes open to them, but also a range of alternative career pathways.

Throughout the day, pupils were able to attend UCAS Personal Statement workshops, live application clinics, course and career taster sessions, student talks, Q&A sessions as well as meeting representatives from universities, colleges and employers face-to-face. Pupils enjoyed this interaction and the opportunity to discover the many career options open to them, finding it invaluable

in making more informed decisions about higher education and employment to discover a future that's right for them.





Magic Media Moments

The Year 11 Media and Moving Image Arts students and senior Film Club pupils were privileged guests at the premiere of the Oscar nominated film, 'Belfast' where the director himself, Sir Kenneth Branagh, and actor Jude Hill joined the girls for the screening. The girls had been invited because of Ashfield Girls' long standing involvement with Into Film who also delivered a 'takeover' day in school with special effects make-up workshops along with several hands-on animation sessions.

Expert Experience

The Year 13 Media students have gained a wealth of practical experience this year with Chelsea McNeill and Mia Warrington undertaking Screenwork placements in Animation and Costume Design whilst Mia also graduated from the Cinemagic BFI Film Academy. We were also delighted to be involved in a four month cross-community filmmaking project in the evenings, in conjunction with Priory College, where the students gained hands-on experience both behind and in front of the camera, which involved working collaboratively to create the script for a short film, acting and operating lights, camera and sound to produce the finished piece. We are pleased to announce that the premiere screening will take place in school on 23rd June with both schools, cast, crew and director in attendance. Steven Spielberg-watch out!

Not to be outdone by the seniors, the Year 11 Moving Image Arts girls undertook a filmmaking project with acclaimed film director Aidan Largey whereby all planning and discussions took place via Teams over an eight week period. This was followed by a day's filming and another editing to create two short films which were screened at Into Film's headquarters in London. This was the perfect preparation for the girls who are embarking on creating their own GCSE film pieces.



Strand Cinema Trip

To coincide with our annual 'Read On' week and 'Love Our Library' Christmas Carol theme, our Year 8 and 9 pupils attended the Strand Cinema to see Disney's 'A Christmas Carol'. As a gesture of good will, and to add to the Christmas spirit in Ashfield, the school paid for every pupil so that they were able to enjoy the experience together. To foster community connections and build awareness of our local history, Strand Cinema delivered an excellent presentation about the origins of the cinema and its historical importance to East Belfast. The day was a hit with all pupils and teachers involved.





Approval of the Development Proposal to increase Year 8 admissions

As a school community we were delighted to have received communication from the Minister for Education that the Development Proposal submitted in January 2020 was approved. We are now permitted to admit 130 Year 8 pupils each academic year.

Building Capacity to Support Pupils



Mrs Cripps took up her new role at Vice Principal for Pastoral Care in December 2021.

Mrs May was appointed in June 2022 as Literacy and Numeracy Learning Support Assistant. This vital role will enable individual learners to access one-to-one or small group literacy and / or numeracy support. Mrs May has a wealth of experience as both a teacher and as a literacy and numeracy support co-ordinator.



Mr Burns, Miss Lee, Mrs McClintock, Mr Cuttle and Mrs McNeill have all recently taken up their new positions as Assistant Heads of Progress. Their key roles will be supporting the development of positive attendance habits towards school and supporting pupils and families when attendance at school is a barrier to learning. This will complement the already established and critical role of Home School Liaison Officer that Mrs McGuigan has undertaken for many years. The Assistant Heads of Progress will also take over the role of Heads of House.



Pupil Welfare Auxiliary



We welcomed Mrs White as our Medical Pupil Welfare Auxiliary in January 2021. We are delighted to welcome Mrs Lemon into her new role as Pastoral Support Pupil Welfare Auxiliary (Safeguarding).

Mrs Lemon will assist with multi-agency meetings and many aspects of the pastoral support referral processes.



Mrs Ball has settled well into her new role as Senior Clerical Officer (Pupil Services).

Mrs Ball is responsible for home/ school communications (letters), updating pupil records and admissions and pupil external examination administration.



Investment in Learning



Following a four phase roll-out over the academic year we are delighted to have state of the art 'Clevertouch' interactive boards in every classroom. Pupils and teachers are reporting on the ease of useability and functionality.

Music Department

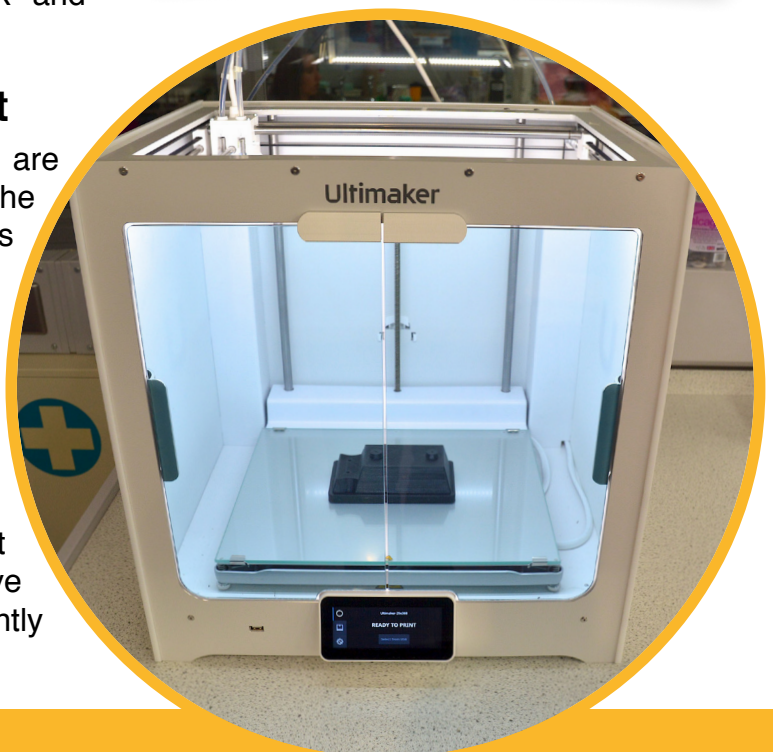
Mrs Lyons and the Music Department are thrilled to have almost completed the installation of the iMac Suite. The iMacs will promote the effective use of IT in music using numerous applications including Garageband.

ICT Department

Mrs Walker and the IT Department received a new top of the range computer suite to enable both GCSE and A-Level classes to complete classwork and assessments with lightning speed computers.

Technology & Design Department

Mr Carr and the Technology Department are participating in a few practice runs using the new 3D Printer before the new technology is integrated into the curriculum provision. Mr Carr is also working hard to build resources for the launch of the new Environmental Technology A-Level. Mr Carr stated that this exciting new qualification is a hybrid of Technology, Science and Geography. The qualification is designed to provide the knowledge and skills for the exponentially increasing labour market surrounding the need to use technology to solve the environmental challenges humanity is currently facing.



FOCUS ON THE FUTURE



Sixth Form – Getting Ready for Life

We offer Sixth Form students a holistic Personal Development journey as they progress through Year 13, developing skills which they will draw on throughout their lives. This year we were once again able to offer a



Induction Programme incorporating First Aid, Safe Motoring, Team Building with Pathways Adventure Activities, an Action Mental Health programme and much more. This was further developed with online courses in Personal Finance provided by Nebula Learning and University Preparation provided by the University of Ulster.



workshop), Cara Friend (antibullying workshop) and the Secondary Students’ Union of Northern Ireland who provide our pupils with a platform to engage with issues that affect students across Northern Ireland.

East Belfast Area Learning Community

On 4th March a group of Year 13 pupils were inspired about their career choices when they were given the opportunity to attend a Catalyst Impact Day at Our Lady and St. Patrick’s College Knock, alongside pupils from schools throughout the East Belfast Area Learning Community.



An initial presentation to find out what the Impact Day offered was followed by creative icebreakers and fun games, after which pupils began work with local innovative companies to help prepare them for IT jobs of the future. As well as being able to collaborate with other schools, the girls were able to develop design, teamwork, critical thinking and soft skills.

Tasked with choosing a target customer for whom to design an app, Rachael reflected, “It was great for developing numerous skills, mostly teamwork, communication and presenting.” Describing the event as very informative and engaging, Rachael went on to say, “In our group we worked to each other’s strengths.” Angelika, too, was quick to comment, “I enjoyed the teamwork, creating your own business idea,” and added, “I also enjoyed hearing from other companies and seeing their inventions.”

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Ukraine

We were completely overwhelmed by the show of support from our pupils towards the people of the Ukraine. The media images helped strengthen our resolution to help, so we initially held a “wear something blue and yellow” day, raising just short of £900.

Fundraising efforts did not stop there though. 14W and Mrs Walker came up with an amazing idea to hold a ballot, to further try and build on our donation to the DEC Ukraine Appeal. A lot of hard work behind the scenes resulted in some fantastic prizes including a two-night stay at the Hilton Hotel Belfast, dinner for two at Leighinmohr House and Malmaison Vouchers. 14W set to work selling tickets throughout our extended school community, and with the help of Mrs Walker the girls raised a phenomenal £1800 to add to our total for the DEC Appeal.

Prince’s Trust

The 12S Prince’s Trust class enjoyed their Halloween sale so much they decided to plan another event before Easter. Under the supervision of Mrs McDermott they made quite a few Easter nests and sold these along with cupcakes kindly donated by mums of the students, as well as bags of Easter themed sweets. The class really enjoyed the activity and understandably sold out in a short space of time.

Sweet Sale – Cancer Focus

Our annual ‘ReadOn’ event was hosted by the English department and is a superb way to engage Junior School pupils with their reading. The event allows pupils to spend more time across the curriculum building on their reading skills whilst supporting their personal advancement through the Accelerated Reading Programme. It also provides Junior school pupils with the opportunity to support a fantastic charity who we have been proud to partner with for over 10 years raising over £25000 to help to support children and families living with cancer. This year we were delighted to donate £2277.74 to NI Cancer Fund for Children.

Eseta was asked by NI Cancer Fund for Children why she loved taking part in ReadOn:

“I think that it is a good idea to take part in ReadOn because it helps you to develop your vocabulary through reading, and you get to help a really great charity too. I enjoy reading because it helps me to get involved in a story which can become real!”

Safeguarding Team

Designated Teacher for Child Protection



Mrs B Cripps



Mr G Patterson

Deputy Designated Teachers



Mrs N Christie



Mrs L Hanvey

Principal



Mrs E Bush

Designated Child Protection Governor

Safer Internet App

The Department of Education (NI), along with INEQE Safeguarding Group have launched the Safer Schools App to support all school staff, parents and carers to keep children in their care safer online. As a parent /carer you will have access to information on the popular social media platforms used by your daughter and her friends. You will also be provided with an insight on critical issues such as bullying, sexting and gaming and are given easy to follow advice on how you can make your home and the devices you give your children safer.



Parents can build their level of confidence by completing Parental Digital Proficiency tests in the App. The App is free to download – scan the QR code to download the app and enter the code when you are asked.

Code - Parent/Carer Post-Primary - 0689



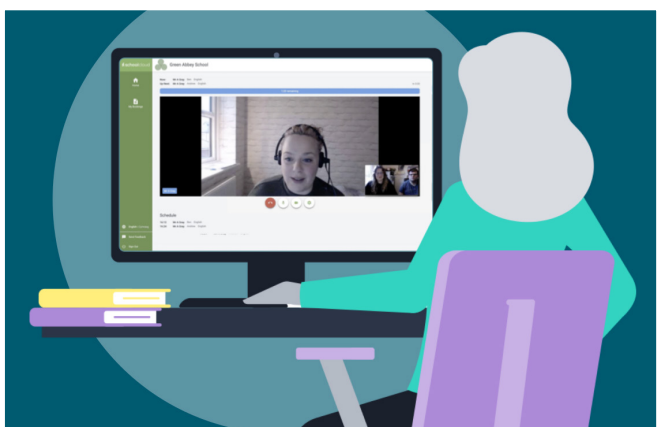
SchoolCloud

We are fortunate to have supportive parents in Ashfield Girls', so it was important for us to find a way to engage in a traditional parent / teacher consultation, within the confines of COVID restrictions. We successfully launched an online solution in the form of SchoolCloud, in November 2021.

To date we have organised parent consultations for each year group, as well as our Annual Reviews. SchoolCloud is convenient for parents as the journey time to school is now removed and parent consultations can take place in the comfort of your own home, or place of work.



Online parent consultations allow teachers to see more parents than is possible face-to-face. Some of the positive comments we received were, 'I appreciated not waiting around for teachers between appointments', 'online consultations were more convenient' and 'the video call was an excellent use of time'. All the feedback we have received will help to decide how the software will be used as we move forward in what will hopefully be a post COVID future.



End of year comments from the Chairperson of the Board of Governors



It has been a joy to watch Ashfield Girls' High School grow and flourish over the past academic year. Each term saw the impact of Covid 19 diminish; school now feels almost normal again. The vibrancy and life is tenable while walking through the corridors and in classrooms. I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents and carers for their continued support.

I would like to thank pupils for their excellent behaviour and attitude towards learning and the professional and highly skilled staff who lead learning within each classroom. Finally, I would also like to thank the Board of Governors for the time and commitment they extend, in a voluntary capacity, to govern all aspects of school life.

Key Dates for your Diary Term 1 (2022/23)

Thursday 18 August 2022	GCE Results Day
Thursday 25 August 2022	GCSE Results Day
Friday 26 August 2022	Year 8 Induction
Monday 29 August 2022	Bank Holiday - for all teaching staff and pupils
Tuesday 30 August 2022	Year 8 Induction
Wednesday 31 August 2022	Year 8, Year 11 and Year 13 Induction
Thursday 1 September 2022	Start of Term 1 - for all pupils
Tuesday 20 September 2022	Meet the Form Tutor (Year 8) and Principal - 7.00pm - 8.00pm
Wednesday 28 September 2022	Literacy HOME - 7.00pm - 8.30pm
Thursday 14 October 2021	Year 12 Parent Consultation 1.30pm - 3.30pm Pupils finish at 1.10pm
Friday 22 October 2021	Senior Prize Day 1.45pm - 3.30pm Pupils finish at 1.10pm
Thursday 27 October 2022 - Friday 28 October 2022	School Development Day - school closed to all pupils
Monday 31 October 2022 - Friday 4 November 2022	Mid-Term Holidays - for all teaching staff and pupils
Friday 8 November 2022	Year 14 Parent Consultation 1.30pm - 3.30pm Pupils finish at 1.10pm
Wednesday 30 November 2022	Year 11 Parent Consultation 1.30pm - 3.30pm Pupils finish at 1.10pm
Monday 5 December 2022 - Friday 9 December 2022	KS3, KS4, KS5 Winter Examination Week KS3 Pupils finish at 1.10pm
Thursday 15 December 2022	Carol Service St Mark's - 7.00pm - 8.00pm
Tuesday 20 December 2022	Last Day of Term 1 - pupils finish at 12.30pm
Wednesday 21 December 2022	School Development Day - school closed to all pupils
Thursday 22 December 2022 - Tuesday 3 January 2023	Christmas Holidays