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13<sup>th</sup> December 2024

## **Headteacher's Weekly Roundup Autumn B Week 6**

Dear Parents and Carers

The Year 11 students completed a full week of their written Mock GCSEs. The first day butterflies in the stomach have disappeared and they are entirely engrossed in the process, committing fully and maturely to the challenge and opportunity. See the picture below of the students all sitting their RE paper 1 Mock under formal exam conditions.

I had the pleasure of introducing the new Sixth Form leadership teams of the school to the staff today. The leadership team comprises this year of joint Head girl and Joint Deputy Head girl positions alongside senior prefects. Sarena and Gabriella have been appointed joint Head Girls, Berta and Ines have been appointed joint Deputy Head girls. You can listen to their introduction message to the Ursuline Community [here](#). This year's selection process was very competitive and four students (Anna, Ella, Katrina, and Natalia), who came very close in the contest, are being prepared for Senior Prefect responsibilities in the school. Well done again for everyone who had the courage to put themselves forward and this will lead to new opportunities for them.

### **Highlights of the week**

Christmas Dinners went down a storm this week. Students across the school signed up in huge numbers to enjoy the locally produced and sourced food skilfully prepared by our in-house catering staff. I had the privilege of helping out myself and took the opportunity to remind those students being a little too fussy about the importance of eating their vegetables, especially the maligned Brussel sprouts. I was very impressed with the Year 9s who were asking for extra sprouts and gravy.

On Tuesday, Student Leaders from across the school, led by the Chaplaincy team hosted a Christmas Party for retired members of our Sacred Heart parish. The food was produced by students in Food Technology, the entertainment and singing were led and managed by students. The carol singing and festivities were excellent, and the visitors all commented to me on the exceptional and unique students we have in the school noting their confidence, maturity and their ability to engage in conversation.

### **Focus areas for next week**

A reminder to all parents and carers on the importance of full school attendance including the last day of term. Information on attendance expectations can be found on the school website and if you need to discuss this with school please contact the attendance officer Mrs Young [bernadette.young@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk](mailto:bernadette.young@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk). Further information and support on attendance can be found on the government link below.

[Resources for families | Children's Commissioner for England](#)

Good luck to all the year 11 students as they sit the last week of Mock GCSEs, we know you will continue give it your best.

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**Voluntary Aided 11-18 Roman Catholic School for Girls**  
**Acting Headteacher: Mr Eoin Kelly**

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### Some upcoming Events & Dates

Year 11 GCSE Mocks continue until Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December 8pm: Carol Service at the Sacred Heart Church

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 7:45pm: Katy's Songbirds Carol Concert at Sacred Heart (Year 8s)

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 12:50pm: End of term

### Christmas Gift Appeal

Our annual Christmas gift appeal for the Catholic Children's Society is in its final push. The charity supports disadvantaged families from all backgrounds across London and the Home Counties and every year your kind donations spread joy to those who otherwise might not have a very happy Christmas. Any final donations can be dropped off underneath the foyer Christmas tree on Monday. Please label your gift whether it is suitable for a boy/girl and general age group. Thank you for your generosity.

Christmas  
Gift  
Appeal



### Parents News and announcements

The Governors of the school remain on track for the school to convert on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2025 into the Catholic Academy Trust **Sancta Familia**. For more information on this exciting new opportunity for the future direction of the school and securing the future of Catholic education in this area of the diocese please look up.

[Sancta Familia Catholic Academy Trust](#)

### Parent/Carer communications:

**Swiped: The School that Banned Smartphones Aired this week. Available on catch up. (Channel 4 /All4)**

Matt and Emma Willis ask the question in [Swiped: The School That Banned Smartphones](#). This University of York study monitors behavioural changes including sleep, attention, mood and social connections. Although this is an important documentary for teens to watch, please note that it does contain some upsetting content. You may prefer to watch this alone first, before watching with your children and having the important conversations.

### Smart Devices and Social Media guidance in the run up to Christmas

Internet Matters' CEO shares [valuable advice](#) and launches ['My Family's Digital Toolkit](#) for busy parents/carers to put online safety measures in place now ahead of the hectic festive season.

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Remember, Social Media has a minimum age of 13, which means Year 7 and the majority of Year 8 students should NOT currently be using it. Should parents and carers agree to give access once their child has reached 13, we strongly advise you follow expert advice and research the app to understand the dangers and risks, ensure accounts are set up with the right date of birth, use parent controls and family pairing. Please remember, in accordance with our Digital Learning & Safety Policy (and the current minimum age of 13), Social Media will not be tolerated at school, and there will be consequences for failing to comply with this policy.

**Additional Resources**

- [Parents' Guide to Snapchat](#), Common Sense Media  
What Parents Need to Know about Snapchat, National College (attached)
- [Parents' Guide to TikTok](#), Common Sense Media  
What parents need to know about TikTok, National College (attached)
- [UHS Smart Device and Social Media Guidance 2024](#)



I enjoyed serving the Christmas lunches alongside the canteen staff this week.





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We held our Christmas Tea Party for the Elderly Community on Tuesday. Thank you to our Year 8 and sixth form helpers.



**Save the Children**

Students enjoyed Christmas Jumper Day on Thursday, raising money for Save The Children charity. We will announce the total raised next week.





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We ended the week with some great news!  
**Congratulations to our new Student Leadership Team!**  
**Head Girls: Sarena S & Gabriella K Deputy Head Girls: Ines P- H & Berta K.**  
See their introduction video [here](#).

**Quick Links**

- [Arbor](#) - student records and reports
- [School Calendar](#)
- [Parent School Calendar 2024-25](#)
- [Term Dates 2024-25.](#)
- [Catholic Life & Mission](#)
- [Curriculum Information](#)
- [ParentPay](#) - lunch card top ups and other purchases
- [Parent Engagement & Communications](#)
- [Parent Portals](#) – Arbor, ParentPay & FAQs
- [Safeguarding, health & wellbeing](#)
- [Sancta Familia - Sancta Familia Website](#)
- [Ursuline Directory](#)

Wishing you and your families a relaxing weekend and thank you for your continued support and co-operation.

Yours faithfully

**Eoin Kelly**  
Headteacher

