



# The Ursuline Post

## St Ursula's Convent School

13<sup>th</sup> September 2024



## Headteacher's Weekly Message

Dear Parent/ Carer

As promised, we are pleased to share with you the first Ursuline Post of the new academic year. Importantly we have been really impressed with the attitude of all our students since the start of the year – polite, well-behaved and hard-working. For myself, the new staff, and the staff returning it has been great to build new relationships. Our new staff have been settling in well and Mr Amadi has written to you all in this edition.

I had the pleasure of meeting the Senior Prefect Team last Friday and will meet with them again today. Suffice to say, it was a grilling but there were lots of positive ideas from that meeting. Firstly, our Year 11 Prefect Team will now be finalised over the next week – the deadline for applications was today. We will also be announcing over the coming weeks more about the trips and clubs that will be on offer. It is tempting to start giving teasers now so all I will say at this stage is that some of the more commonly asked-for trips and clubs have been Debating Club, Art Club, a Student Magazine, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Drama Trips, and a Ghost Hunt at the school.

I will take the opportunity to point out that our Year 11 Information Evening will be held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September - a week later than previously advertised a letter will be sent out to Year 11 parents today.

We also open our doors to prospective Year 7s tomorrow and I want to say thank you to all students and staff for coming in to help out with tours and showing off our school. Wishing all in our community a happy and safe weekend.

Mr O'Shaughnessy

# CHAPLAIN'S PAGE

## **Gospel:**

Jesus told his disciples this parable: “A man going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one—to each according to his ability. Then he went away. Immediately the one who received five talents went and traded with them and made another five. Likewise, the one who received two made another two. But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master’s money. After a long time, the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. The one who had received five talents came forward bringing the additional five. He said, ‘Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.’ Then the one who had received two talents also came forward and said, ‘Master, you gave me two talents. See, I have made two more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.’ Then the one who had received the one talent came forward and said, ‘Master, I knew you were a demanding person, harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter; so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground. Here it is back.’ His master said to him in reply, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter? Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return? Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten. For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.’”

## **Reflection:**

We used this Gospel in our Liturgy with staff when we returned on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September. At the start of a new academic year, it is a useful guide on a number of levels. As staff, a reminder that it is our purpose and mission to help young people discover and develop their own talents, whatever they may be. But this parable is also about the power of hard work. Ultimately we are here on earth to work and hard work is rewarded. God rewards those who work hard for themselves and in service to their community.

# CHAPLAIN'S PAGE

## Closing Prayer:

Lord, draw our hearts away from selfishness,  
- **turn our lives to loving service.**

Lord, may we bring the bread of hope to the poor,  
- **teach us to serve you in those who suffer.**

Lord, may we come to know the abundance of your  
love,

- **give us compassionate hearts. Amen**



# Introduction from the new Head of Mathematics

Dear Parents & Guardians,

I hope you and your family have had an enjoyable summer break. As we begin a new academic year, I would like to take the opportunity to introduce myself to you. I am both honoured and excited to have begun my tenure as Head of Mathematics, having taken over from Mr O'Brien who retired after a successful tenure. I have been working closely alongside Ms Grant since my appointment to ensure smooth transition and handover of all academic matters in the Department of Mathematics. I would like to take this opportunity to say a public 'thank you' to her for the wisdom and openness that shaped the handover process.

I am very much looking forward to getting to know the school community and my team of other maths teachers over the coming weeks. It was clear to me that St Ursula's School successfully balances a genuine desire for kindness and community with an unerring commitment to individual academic excellence, a commitment which was demonstrated by my impressive GCSE results compared to the national average the students achieved this summer.

I feel incredibly excited to join St Ursula's as Head of Mathematics and I am steadfast in my desire to ensure that our pupils are given the resources and support to make informed and unconstrained choices about their interests, subjects and careers. It is therefore important that we work collaboratively to improve the chances of them developing into successful, happy and confident citizens in every aspect of their lives.

I look forward to meeting you at one of the upcoming information events. In the meantime, I wish you and your daughters a happy start to the school year 2024/2025.

With Best wishes,

Mr G Amadi  
Subject Leader and Head,  
Department of Mathematics.

# Physical Education

Physical Education clubs are due to commence next week. Lunchtime clubs students will require their trainers but can take part in their school uniform. Clubs will run from 1.30pm until 2pm.

For after-school clubs, if students have not had a PE lesson on the day and are therefore in their PE kit, they must change into their PE kit after school. Students just need to come down to the sports hall and register.

## AUTUMN TERM 2024

## PE CLUBS

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lunch 1.30 - 2.00	Badminton Club Year 7/8/9  KCL	Basketball Club Year 9/10/11  EWM	Badminton Club Year 9/10/11  EWM	Basketball Club Year 7/8/9  EWM	Bench ball Club Year 7/8/9  KCL
After-school 3.20-4.30	Football All years  KCL	Netball All years  KCL	Staff Training	GCSE PE club Year 10/11  KCL	Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Date to be arranged KCL



# Literacy Newsletter

## St Ursula's Literacy Newsletter

Week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024



### Word of the Week:

**Aspirational** [adjective] Having a strong desire and drive for achievement.

At St Ursula's we have high expectations from our students and we expect them to have high expectations of themselves and to be **aspirational**. If they don't fully succeed in that lesson, always remind them that tomorrow is another day.

Please use this word during your lessons when the opportunity arises. Encourage students to use this word and reward them with praise and house points when they do.

Display this word of the week on your laminated poster.

### Whole School Literacy Focus:

The three pillars of literacy are reading, writing, and speaking and listening. Therefore, each term will have a specific focus on one of these.

- Autumn Term – Speaking and Listening
- Spring Term – Reading
- Summer Term – Writing

We all teach and incorporate each of these every day in our lessons, but we need to make **speaking and listening** a specific priority this term.

### Autumn Term – Speaking and Listening:

Last week's newsletter featured three strategies to develop **speaking and listening** in our classrooms. This newsletter features two more:

- ✓ **'Question Bouncing'** - to encourage more students to verbalise their ideas, ask a question, take an answer from a student and then 'bounce' it to another student. "Thank you Kimora, Precious - could you add anything to that answer or do you perhaps have a different answer?"
- ✓ **Active Listening** - when students read their work aloud, ask the rest of the class to actively listen and to note down (possibly on their mini whiteboards) any important points they hear the student making.

### Form time:

Remind your form that a reading book is an essential part of their daily equipment. Use your allocated Literacy day for DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) until I have provided you with the book that you will read together as a form. I am in the process of locating these books. **If you find a set of reading books in your classroom then please send two responsible students to bring them to M5.**

### Newsletter Competition:

To encourage us all to read this newsletter, every week a small, subtle literary reference will be hidden within it. If you spot it – please email me at [howen@stursulas.com](mailto:howen@stursulas.com). The first person to email with the correct answer will be rewarded with chocolate in their pigeonhole and the glory of being mentioned in the next newsletter.

Congratulations to **Albert Edwards** who spotted the subtle reference to *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen in last week's newsletter.

### Wider Reading:

[How we can teach speaking and listening in the classroom](#)

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like any specific assistance in developing literacy in your classroom.

Thank you for your support.

Holly Owen (Literacy Coordinator)

# School News

## An exciting opportunity!

Here at St. Ursula's, we are looking to appoint our own Poet Laureate, who will be asked to write a poem for each special occasion across the year. These occasions might include Black History Month, Advent, St Angela's/Ursula's Day and more.

If your child would like to be St Ursula's Poet Laureate, they will need to write an entry poem celebrating a **fresh start**.

Poems can be handed to any English teacher.

**DEADLINE: 20th September**

**Ms Dias Head of English**



## Great News – National Coding Week returns 16th September for its 11th year!

National Coding week is dedicated to inspiring individuals of all ages to learn and embrace coding skills. This year's event will commence on the 16<sup>th</sup> September with the primary theme being Artificial Intelligence(AI). National Coding Week is dedicated to inspiring individuals of all ages to learn and embrace coding skills.

The week-long event promotes the idea that coding is not just for tech professionals but is a valuable skill that can benefit everyone in their personal and professional lives. This week in Computer Science lessons pupils will completing different activities to gain a broader understanding and proficiency in this cutting-edge technology.

# School News



## **Science student of the week:**

Sinead Y. – Year 7

Chidiogo Agu – Year 8

Benedicta Okeke – Year 9

Marie Andony – Year 10

Lexie Shepherd – Year 11

## **Educake leader of the week:**

Educake will start again next week.

## **Science fact of the week:**

Unlike most planets, on Venus the sun rises in the west and sets in the east





# Safeguarding Support and Information

© National Online Safety, available to all parenting parents, users and trusted adults with their permission to all our licensed consultation about the safety with their children, if you'd like to help is needed. This guide is one of many a part of our biggest trusted safety through a series of online user manuals designed to help you for further guides, for to help for a safe.

## What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

Snapchat is an instant messaging app which allows users to send images, videos and texts to people in their friends list. One of Snapchat's unique features is that pictures and messages 'disappear' 24 hours after they've been viewed; however, this content isn't as temporary as many believe - with some users saving screenshots or using another device to take a photo of their screen. This year, Snapchat added 'My AI': a customisable chatbot with which people can chat and share secrets, as well as asking for advice and suggestions of places to visit.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

Even if your child only connects with people they know, they may still get friend requests from strangers. The Quick Add option lets users befriend people the app recommends - but these 'friends' are merely a username, which could have anyone behind it. Accepting such requests reveals children's personal information through the Story, SnapMap and Spotlight features, potentially putting them at risk from predators.

#### EXCESSIVE USE

Snapchat works hard on user engagement, with features like streaks (messaging the same person every day to build up a high score), Spotlight Challenges (prompt users into spending time producing content in search of cash prizes and online fame), while it's easy for children to pass hours watching Spotlight's endless scroll of videos.

#### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some videos and posts on Snapchat aren't suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so even an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's 'disappearing messages' feature also makes it easy for young people (teens in particular) to share explicit images on impulse - so sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.

#### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

My AI is Snapchat's new chatbot, which replies to questions in a human-like manner. However, the software is still in its infancy and has significant drawbacks, such as biased, incorrect or misleading responses. There have already been numerous reports of young users turning to AI for medical help and diagnoses, which could be inaccurate and therefore potentially dangerous.

#### ONLINE PRESSURES

Although many of Snapchat's filters are designed to entertain or amuse, the 'beauty' filters on photos can set unrealistic body-image expectations - creating feelings of inadequacy if a young person compares themselves unfavourably with other users. Snapchat now also has 'priority' notifications (which still get displayed even if a device is in 'do not disturb' mode), increasing the pressure on users to log back in and interact.

#### VISIBLE LOCATION

Snap Map highlights a device's exact position on a virtual map which is visible to other users. There are options to restrict who can see this information: all friends, only you (Ghost Mode) or selected friends. Snapchat also has real-time location sharing, which is intended as a buddy system to ensure friends have reached home safely - but which could also be used to track a young person for more sinister reasons.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

#### TURN OFF QUICK ADD

The Quick Add feature helps people find each other on the app. This function works based on mutual friends or whether someone's number is in your child's contacts list. Explain to your child that this could potentially make their profile visible to strangers. We recommend that your child turns off Quick Add, which can be done in the settings (accessed via the cog icon).



#### CHOOSE GOOD CONNECTIONS

In 2021, Snapchat rolled out a new safety feature: users can now receive notifications reminding them of the importance of maintaining connections with people they actually know well, as opposed to strangers. This 'Friend Check Up' encourages users to delete connections with users that they rarely communicate with, to maintain their online safety and privacy.



#### DISCUSS AI

Although My AI's responses can often give the impression that it's a real person, it's essential that young people remember this certainly isn't the case. Encourage your child to think critically about My AI's replies to their questions: are they accurate and reliable? Remind them that My AI shouldn't replace chatting with their real friends, and that it's always better to talk to an actual person in relation to medical matters.



#### CHAT ABOUT CONTENT

It may feel like an awkward conversation (and one that young people can be reluctant to have) but it's important to talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting. Remind your child that once something's online, the creator loses control over where it ends up - and who else sees it. Likewise, it's vital that children understand that some challenges which become popular on the platform may have potentially harmful consequences.



#### KEEP ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Profiles are private by default, but children may make them public to gain more followers. Snap Stories are visible to everyone your child adds, unless they change the settings. On SnapMaps, their location is visible unless Ghost Mode is enabled (again via settings). It's safest not to add people your child doesn't know in real life - especially since the option of My Place, which allows other Snapchat users to see where your child regularly visits and checks in.



#### BE READY TO BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger does connect with your child on Snapchat and begins to make them feel uncomfortable through bullying, pressure to send explicit images or by sending sexual images to them, your child can select the three dots on that person's profile and report or block them. There are options to state why they're reporting that user (annoying or malicious messages, spam, or masquerading as someone else, for example).



Meet Our Expert

National