A MASS OF CELEBRATION AND THANKSGIVING
FOR THE LIFE OF SISTER MARY STEPHEN
By Mrs C. Allen, Deputy Head Teacher

On Saturday 7th October, the school was privileged to host a thanksgiving mass in celebration of Sister Mary Stephen following her death in January this year. Many of you will know that Sister Mary Stephen was a member of the Bernardine community at Westcliff and from 1976 to 1982 was Head Teacher at the school.

The timing for the celebration was chosen because traditionally the month of October has been the time when the St Bernard’s Old girl Association (SBOGA) has met. Sister Mary Stephen was a passionate advocate of SBOGA and took delight in organising the meetings.

Sister Elizabeth Mary, an old girl of St Bernard’s herself and a member of the Bernardine community at Brownshill, brought 8 members of the Bernardine Communities from Brownshill (Stroud) and Hyning (Cumbria). They joined around 350 Old Girls in a wonderful celebration presided over by Emeritus Bishop of Brentwood Thomas MacMahon and concelebrated by Father Joseph Whisstock. Bishop Thomas and Fr. Joseph both have long-standing connections to The Bernardine Community and Westcliff. It truly felt like a ‘family’ celebration.
Among the Old Girls attending were representatives from several decades in the school’s history and following a very moving and spiritually uplifting Mass there was time to share stories and memories. Following a wonderful lunch there was a chance to wander the school and reminisce with old friends. The sisters were generous with their time and as always shared many happy memories.

To carry on the SBOGA several old girls kindly volunteered to act as an organising group to enable reunions and events to continue. A fund to support students at St Bernard’s Westcliff who may find themselves in need was launched and due to the generosity of those present raised almost £600 on the day. Sister Mary Stephen would have approved! Since then more donations have come into school and the fund is now over £700. In these difficult economic times the kindness of the St Bernard’s Old Girls and wider community will lighten the load of present students. The organising group will be in touch with the Old Girls and one of their aims is to continue to raise money for those students in the school community who find themselves in immediate need.

The strength of community and the love of God was present in abundance on that October day and we have received many wonderful thank you letters from those attending. The Bernardine Community will always have a place in their heart for St Bernard’s Westcliff even if they are no longer present in the building. We look forward to the SBOGA continuing for many years and the links with the Bernardine community remaining as strong as ever.

DIVALI
By Sasha Shukla, Year 8

Last month the Hindu festival of Divali (Festival of Lights) took place. This festival represents good triumphing over evil or light over darkness. Candles or lights are placed around the house and rangolis (colourful patterns) are made with multi-coloured powders by hand or stencil. Divali is one of the most important festivals in the Hindu calendar as families comes together to celebrate the start of a New Year and good over evil.
A STUDENT’S PRAYER
By St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas Aquinas (Jan 1225-Mar 1274) was an Italian Dominican friar, Catholic priest and Doctor of the Church. This immensely influential philosopher, theologian and scholar was born in January 1225.

ADVENT AT ST BERNARD’S

The 1st of December marks the beginning of our Advent preparation here in school. Every Friday during December we will gather outside the Library at 1.15 to share readings, pray and join in song as we reflect in readiness for the celebration of Christmas.

These short services are one of the highlights of our liturgical year. New students to the school in Year 7 and Year 12 are particularly welcome and I extend a personal invitation to them.

Each week during the Advent Liturgy we light a candle on our Advent wreath and our final candle is lit during the whole school Advent service on the last day of term. At this whole school event we demonstrate our Christian action by presenting representatives of the Southend Women’s Refuge with Christmas Gifts donated by St Bernard’s students and staff.
Last month St Bernard’s held its annual Year 11 Leadership Conference, organised by the Senior Prefects and Ms Connelly, Head of Upper School. This year’s theme was equality and the focus was on women in power, reflected by the quiz on powerful women like Ellen DeGeneres, Malala Yousafzai and Kate Middleton.

Our Keynote Speakers were all women who ran successful businesses or organisations. The first speaker owned her own performing arts company, using her theatrical and musical background to venture forward in the world, persevering when things looked down. Her strength and resilience was apparent to me and I admired her determination. She shared with us her favourite quote: “But darling, what if you fly?”

The next speaker grew up in a remote Polish village, with the expectation of following tradition and staying in the village. This is not the path she wanted to go down, and now she is heading up Innovation and Integration Ltd, a company specialising in projects to develop ‘innovation, openness to change and improve digital skills’. Her speech particularly resonated with me since it was about breaking free from a mould and creating an international company from virtually nothing.

Then it was my turn to speak and I chose to focus on my younger brother. Although this may seem obscure and unrelated to the central theme it did highlight an opportunity for self-growth and personal resilience. Following this there was a moving speech, which focused on immigration and the struggles immigrants often face. Many people in the room who had not appreciated the shocking reality of hatred and prejudice faced by many immigrants.

The story of the next speaker, a highly skilled dancer who runs her own Dance Company, was equally inspirational. Her story was one of struggle, applying to prestigious dance schools and then experiencing rejection. Yet, she trained, improved and reached her goal. It was this story of not giving up that inspires me still, to strive for what I want to achieve and even if I do not get there the first time round, never give up!

Following on was an American Data Scientist, who explained the importance of having women in scientific research fields. On her team at work she is the only woman, and she described to us how when she attends seminars and work events she is often in a male dominated environment and is constantly undermined by her male colleagues. She encouraged us to pursue a career in science, and expressed her pride in the rising numbers of female scientists and data analysts.
Following the Keynote Speeches, we split off into groups for a series of workshops. One of these emphasised trust between women and involved supporting one another around an obstacle course whilst blindfolded. Another focused on communication skills and gave the opportunity to speak to a member of the group and bond. Other workshops included Break Dance, Henna tattoos, becoming Drag Kings, decorating biscuits and bag painting.

The final activity of the day was to watch the movie Hidden Figures, an inspiring film following the true story about three African American female mathematicians at NASA who faced daily racism and struggled to have a voice.

On the behalf of Year 11 I would thank all of the Senior Prefects, the teachers and staff who supported and encouraged us, anyone who helped ensure the day ran smoothly and particularly Ms Connelly who makes this day a possibility every year.

**REMEMBRANCE DAY**

*By Mr P. Walls, Assistant Head Teacher*

The words above are commonly referred to as The Exhortation and come from the 4th verse of the poem, For The Fallen, by Robert Laurence Binyon. Binyon penned it in mid-September 1914, only a few weeks after both the British Expeditionary Force and the Imperial German Army had suffered huge casualties at the Battles of Mons & Cateau and at the First Battle of Marne.

On Remembrance Sunday, I had the privilege of attending the commemoration at the Southend Cenotaph, along with the Head Student Team who represented the school magnificently. Following the chiming of Big Ben the haunting echoes of The Last Post rang out, before the reciting of The Exhortation. Two minutes silence ensued, before The Reveille and then the recitation of the Kohima Epitaph.
When you go home, tell them of us and say,
For your tomorrow, we gave our today.

The Kohima Epitaph is the epitaph carved on the Memorial of the 2nd British Division in the cemetery of Kohima (North-East India). The verse is usually attributed to John Maxwell Edmonds (1875-1958), and is thought to have been inspired by Simonides to honour the Greeks who fell at the Battle of Thermopylae in 480BC.

The service continued with the hymn I Vow to Thee My Country, during which wreaths were laid at the Cenotaph itself by The Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor Fay Evans, Members of Parliament James Duddridge & David Amess and others, including the three emergency services and representatives from the local faith communities.

The Mayor’s Chaplain then read key words from the Gospel of John:

**Jesus said, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live even if he dies, and the one who lives and believes in me will never die.’** (John 11: 25-26)

**Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.** (John 15:13)

The hymn Abide With Me then led into prayers by The Venerable Mike Lodge, the Archdeacon of Southend, the Reading by Rabbi Bar and the address by Father Clive Hillman. The Head Student Team then laid their wreath along with representatives from the other local schools whilst those in remembrance sang O God, our help in ages past.

**We will not break faith with you who died**

**Honour the Dead – Serve the Living**

The service was a moving tribute to those who have fallen in so many wars and a reminder that lasting peace and toleration is something we constantly need to strive for if we are to pay meaningful tribute and truly honour the dead by serving the living.
FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE
By Mrs A. Every, Art Department

On Friday 10th November, students visited the Rose Garden near Southend Cenotaph as part of a Local Authority Festival of Remembrance. Students designed and produced poppies, as shown in the BBC News video below:

The accompanying pictures show the beautiful poppies produced by our students.

REMEMBERING WITH POPPIES
By Millie Batt, Year 9

On Friday 10th November 15 members of 3D art club visited the Southend Cenotaph and the nearby Rose Garden to see a clay poppy exhibit, which included poppies that we had been making in 3D art club.

Upon arriving to the Cenotaph, we were greeted by a display of various schools’ poppies cascading out of a fountain with our St Bernard’s poppies right in the centre. We were told that the organiser of the event was speaking on the radio just meters away and as we waited we strolled around the exhibit. It was interesting to see how although everyone made poppies they were all completely different and unique. Dotted with the famous red poppies were other coloured poppies and we learnt that there are in fact three different colours. Blue poppies are for war animals, white poppies are for anyone who died because of war and red poppies are for the service men and women who died.

Later on, we met a local artist called John Adams, who had created a piece of artwork for the exhibit. He had made three boxes with clocks inside and the hands were positioned at different times to represent when WWI started and ended as well as 11 o’clock, to represent the time that WWII ended and why we still have the minute silence to remember those in the war.

Afterwards we walked down and along to look back on the display. Earlier the project organiser told us that the idea was for the poppies to look like water running from the fountain and they clearly did. Poppies were scattered on a mixture of blue fabrics sewn together in a patchwork style. The overall effect was breath-taking. The trip was informative, breath-taking and fun.
DRAMA STUDENTS AND ROAD SAFETY COMMUNITY WORK

By Katriona Stidston & Chloe Davenport, Year 13

On the week commencing 16th October, Year 13 drama students visited several primary schools to perform their road safety play, 'Dear Diary', to Year 4 pupils. The play was a great success, praised by the children and teachers who thoroughly enjoyed the piece, especially the interactive elements. It was performed at Milton Hall, St Helen's, and Our Lady of Lourdes, which provided a great opportunity for the A level group to showcase their abilities whilst, at the same time, performing for a good cause; to educate children about road safety.

We delivered a message that is key to the younger generations, especially as they become more independent, by entertaining them with comedy, over-exaggerated characters and physical theatre. It was a great experience to be a part of, as it not only taught the children the rules of the road, but also extended our knowledge of acting styles and practitioners.

HARVEST FAST DAY

By Mia Cann, Year 13 Liturgy Leader

Harvest Fast Day commenced on Friday 6 October this year throughout England and Wales. The day involves schools and parishes coming together in collaboration with CAFOD by fundraising and praying to help those in El Salvador.

As a school, we organised a ‘Soup and a Roll Day’. This encouraged the school to take a day of fasting, in addition to giving the proceeds to the less privileged. This took place during lunchtime of 6th October where the canteen only sold a selection of soups. Students and teachers would pay a small sum of £1.50 in which all proceeds went straight towards CAFOD and Harvest Fast Day.

The Liturgy Leads in year 13 worked together in helping to raise as much money as possible for this event. They achieved this by going round the school, collecting any spare change the students may have in order to donate, as well as gathering up approximately 300 pupils and tutors before and during the event to encourage them to donate to the less fortunate. This inspired us not to take how lucky we are for granted.

LET THE CHILDREN LIVE

By Irineu Fartan & Katriona Stidson, Sixth Form

On Friday, 3rd November 2017, Fr. Peter Walkers, founder of ‘Let the Children Live, or ‘Vivan los ninos’, gave sixth form students a talk explaining his charity’s work and why he created the organisation in 1992, followed by a mass in the chapel. The organisation tackles Colombia’s problems regarding children living in poverty, attempting to provide opportunities for young children, and an escape from the dangers of slum and street life.
Drugs, exploitation, and starvation are only a few examples of how challenging life is for children that live in Medellin, Colombia. Fr. Peter Walkers delivered personal and poignant stories of the strong bonds that he had made with the children, which was truly touching for students. They recognised the importance of his work, and many have been inspired to support and contribute to his non-profit organisation. As one student commented:

“It was a moment of revelation and truth, teaching me the impact of poverty upon vulnerable children in Columbian society. Father’s dedication to his charity made me rethink my whole life in terms of what I receive from the society I live in, and what I am giving back. I am now more aware of other people’s difficulties, and how I can contribute to improving their lives.”

Social & Cultural
ART TRIP TO KEW GARDENS
By Amy Fox, Year 10

Before we had made our way to the gallery at Kew, there were already so many plants and trees around in all different autumnal colours, the perfect season for a range of greens, yellows, oranges and reds. My favourite part of the actual gallery was Life in Death by Rebecca Louise Law, which was so meticulous in its detail. Made from pinecones, dried flowers and seedpods, it hung from the ceiling and filled an entire room.

Despite the humid conditions in the palm house it was very interesting, like stepping into a jungle. My favourite part of the entire trip had to be the Princess of Wales house because everything had such intricate patterns.
The seven members of Pooh Bear & Friends came into school with our bright yellow jumpers and our muddy hiking boots, feeling a mixture of excitement, fear, hope and regret when getting on the bus and taking our seats for the start of the Silver Expedition. The journey was long and loud due to the teenage tendency to sing various songs on the bus, some of these including:

- The Electromagnetic Spectrum song
- Korean pop hits of the mid noughties (this consist of humming as we didn’t know the Korean lyrics)
- High school musical ballads
- Justin Bieber’s 2009 discography

We arrived at the campsite and immediately started working for the teachers. We ensured that we took Mr Elmes’ Potato and Leek soup out of the van and transported Mr Clancy’s bike into the warm and luxurious lodge in which the teachers were staying.

Meanwhile, we were preparing to sleep outside protected by nothing but a thin piece of fabric and our desire to go home on Sunday. We spent the rest of the night eating disappointingly tepid expedition meals. We then got into our tents and prepared for the day ahead, until the teachers called us to the lodge to take part in a series of trust exercises and imaginary fires (thanks Mr Elmes). Over the next three days, we experienced various aspects of nature including an insanely high amount of stinging nettles, England’s most amazing average sized hills and many dogs, which gave us our expedition purpose. On D of E, as a team we grew as friends, learnt more about map work and developed greater responsibility.

A common request, throughout year 12 and 13 for the past few years, has been the introduction of a sixth form uniform; the argument for this stemming from the desire for a more regulated image and sense of togetherness. Currently students are required to dress in ‘formal office wear’.

In the last academic year, I conducted a survey in which 76.7% of year 12s said they would like either a partial or a full uniform. The Head Student Team have worked with Mrs Berridge, Head of Sixth Form Studies, to produce a suggestion that suited the feedback. It seemed a common wish that students keep some level of individuality and expression, so our suggestion was a choice of uniform: black skirts and trousers, with any collared formal shirt or blouse (any colour), formal shoes and optional plain black jumper or blazer.

This term, I ran a second survey including both year 12 and 13, where 77% (67/87) of respondents said they would be comfortable with the new uniform choice. We proceeded to bring in some skirt and trouser samples, and a number of students of varied heights tried these on and were pleased with them. We are looking to introduce the uniform for the next Year 12, next academic year.
REQUEST FOR FABRICS FOR THE TEXTILES DEPARTMENT
By Mrs J. Seabrook, Head of Textiles

The Textiles Department are busy making patchwork quilts & bunting and are keen to use recycled fabrics, in line with our ecological policy. We have made use of some very generous donations of unwanted fabrics in the past and would very much welcome further fabrics, buttons, trimmings and dress-making patterns. If anybody is clearing out cupboards and attics, please think of us before you send your unwanted items to landfill! Reception Staff will be able to take your fabrics, or we can arrange to pick them up.

LONDON YOUTH WINTER TRACK LEAGUE
STRATFORD OLYMPIC VELODROME
By Katie-Ann Elliston, Year 11, at the London Velodrome

On 19th October, I took part in the first winter track league, leaving school at 3.45pm to head straight to Stratford for 6.15pm sign on to compete in four separate races: Scratch, Dash, Elimination & Points.

In the first race, I had a 30 lap scratch and it took time getting used to racing in a bunch again. However, the pace quickly ramped up; a girl sitting in front of me had a speedo under her saddle reading 28mph! I dug deep to keep up with the pace when out of nowhere, someone in a national champion jersey made an attack. I managed to get into a breakaway group of three, but was unable to keep up the pace and re-joined the peloton to help recover and save some energy. I ended up in a midfield placing.

The next race, a 4 lap dash, went a lot better. Having been on the front of the bunch, I peeled off and tried to tuck in a little further back to reserve energy for the final sprint. Unfortunately, I ended up being boxed in and finishing 8th.

Next, I had the elimination race and was determined to get a higher position. Each lap went by with someone being eliminated every other lap and I found myself getting closer to the back of the bunch. There was a lot of jostling, with handlebars jangling and I had to lean on people and use my elbows in the tight bunch. Each lap was becoming a sprint and I did well to achieve 5th place. My dad gave me a smile and the thumbs up, a sure sign I had done well!

It was now 9pm, with one event left. This last race was a 30 lap Points with a sprint for points on every 5 laps. Whilst I was not looking forward to this event, I was still determined to give everything and I did, battling it out to come 5th overall in the race. I rolled back into track centre with a beaming smile, being proud of my performance and resilience. Again, I got the smile and thumbs up from Dad.

A good start to the winter track league.
DEANERY NETBALL TOURNAMENT
By Emma Harris, Year 10

Earlier this month six GCSE PE students took a trip to Our Lady of Lourdes to umpire at the Year 6 Deanery Netball Tournament. Elissa Black, Bowe Cann, Olivia Sleap, Shania Lapunaire, Carla Miranda & I all felt very privileged to be asked to help and we thoroughly enjoyed the experience, despite the inclement weather. There was a great atmosphere throughout the afternoon with the Catholic primary schools coming together in competition. For some of us Year 10s it was a blast from the past and we would be happy to help at such an event again, in the future.

STUDENT VOICE
By Mr P. Walls, Assistant Head Teacher

Earlier this term, St. Bernard’s students joined others across the UK by taking part in the Make Your Mark political consultation. One in six young people, aged 11-18, voted in the ballot, resulting in the Youth Parliament debating the top 5 topics highlighted as being of particular relevance to them: (1) A curriculum to prepare us for life (2) Transport (3) Work Experience hubs for 11-18 year olds (4) Mental Health and (5) Votes at 16.

Members of the Youth Parliament (MYPs) are increasingly representative of the importance of Equal Opportunities, with 52% female, 33% identifying as a Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority group and 14% with a disability.

I would like to take this opportunity in thanking Helen Jones (Year 9) for her work on the Youth Council. All students are most welcome to attend Youth Council meetings, which take place on the first Wednesday of each month, at 5pm at the Civic Centre.
THINGS I KNOW TO BE TRUE
By Beatrice Sleigh-Johnson, Darcy Robinson & Laura Wicker, Year 12

In October, A-level drama students embarked on a journey to the Mercury Theatre in Colchester to watch Things I Know to be True, a production created by the Frantic Assembly. The production told a story about the many difficult predicaments faced by the Price family to a range of graceful physical techniques, which included effortless lifts and subtle gestures. These techniques successfully expressed the various emotions felt by the characters at different points in the play, and we strongly believe that we can utilise and adapt them during our devising process to create a moving physical and emotional piece. We found the play to be thought provoking and heart-rending, summoning a tear to the eyes of the audience members. We are very thankful to the drama Department for providing us with this phenomenal theatrical experience and we look forward to being able to use this extended knowledge in our own work.

LIBRARY NEWS
By Mrs Middlemast-Neal, Librarian

The Library has a wide range of hard copy support material for students of English Literature. The school also subscribes to Connell Guides, giving us free online access to even more material. This is especially useful for students in Years 10-13. If you are interested then go to the following website: https://www.connellguides.com/

The school’s user name: St Bernards High
Password: StBernardsHigh1

CAREERS UPDATE
By Mrs H. Davies, Careers Co-ordinator

Our prospective future medics in the Sixth Form recently attended a ‘Careers in Medicine’ morning at Southend hospital, the purpose of which was to give them the opportunity to discover more about applying to medical school and to hear about the varying experiences of current practitioners; from medical students through to GPs, Consultants and Surgeons. Students met with a Consultant Surgeon, a Foundation 1 Doctor, a Consultant in Medicine and a GP. They were able to get first hand tips on applying, and getting into the medical school right for them. Students had the chance to question the individual presenters and to learn about the work experience and work shadowing opportunities available. On return to St. Bernard’s the students met with Mrs Allen who lead a presentation on ‘Preparing for Medical Applications’ and the school support provided.

A number of Careers Talks have already taken place this month: Legal and Professional Services, Science and Healthcare, Engineering, Construction and Surveying. Students have met with current career professionals to explore the numerous opportunities and apprenticeships available in each sector.
Degree Apprenticeships are fast becoming the ‘go to’ training route for employers and opportunities can be found in Midwifery, Nursing, Finance, Law, Science, Healthcare, Engineering, Construction and Surveying. The venue for the Careers Talks is E12, between 12.40-1.25pm and everyone is welcome. Future Talks will be advertised by email and on the display screens around the school. For further information or if there is a particular career that you would like featured, please speak to Mrs Davies.

**PSHE DRAMA PRODUCTION**

*By Elizabeth Ambrose, Year 8*

On Tuesday 8th November, for Year 8s PSHE lesson, a drama company came in to perform a role-play around the theme of domestic violence. It centred on a girl called Zoe who, after being dumped by her boyfriend, becomes more and more antisocial and eventually ceases to leave the house at all. Her brother manages to persuade her to go to a party as his friend Ben will be there, who hopes to get into a relationship with Zoe. It soon becomes apparent that Ben acts as a gentleman when in the company of others as he buys Zoe expensive gifts, but is abusive and controlling when they are alone. He tells her what to wear, when she can see her friends and what she can say. Unfortunately for Zoe, when she eventually sums up enough courage to tell her brother about Ben he does not believe her and thinks she is overreacting.

When the role-play had finished the drama company repeated it, only this time we were able to pause the play and change what happened to make it right. The play had a real impact on Year 8 and it was shocking how quickly the situation developed and how powerless Zoe felt.

**IT NEWS**

*Apple and Android Devices*

School Applications are now working and Instructions for using School Applications are given on the VLE home page. These instructions cover Mac, iPhone, iPod, iPad, and Android devices.

Please contact us if you continue to have issues.
## Calendar

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 29 November</td>
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<td>Bake Sale Fundraiser for Cancer Research UK</td>
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<td>Wednesday 29 November</td>
<td>7.00pm</td>
<td>Sports &amp; DofE Awards Evening</td>
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<td>Thursday 30 November</td>
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<td>Yr 12 &amp; 13 Visit to “Maths in Action” Conference</td>
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<td>Friday 1 December</td>
<td>All Day</td>
<td>Yr 11 Mock GCSE Art Exam</td>
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<td>Wednesday 6 December</td>
<td>7.00pm</td>
<td>Carol Concert</td>
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<td>Friday 8 December</td>
<td>All Day</td>
<td>Inset Day</td>
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<td>Friday 8 December</td>
<td>9.00am– 3.00pm</td>
<td>Yr 10 Jack Petchey ‘Speak Out’ Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 11 December</td>
<td>All Week</td>
<td>GCSE Certificate Available in Reception for Ex– Yr 11 Students</td>
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<td>Tuesday 12 December</td>
<td>All Day</td>
<td>Sixth Form Taster Day for Yr 11 Students</td>
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<td>Thursday 14 December</td>
<td>8.30am– 5.00pm</td>
<td>Yr 11 GCSE Drama Scripted Assessment</td>
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<td>Thursday 14 December</td>
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<td>Cake Sale for The National Autistic Society</td>
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<td>Monday 18 December</td>
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<td>Yr 12 &amp; 13 Drama Trip to Gielgud Theatre</td>
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<td>Tuesday 19 December</td>
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<td>Christmas Dinner and Non–Uniform Day (Wear Something Pink for Breast Cancer Care)</td>
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<td>Wednesday 20 December</td>
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<td>School Closes at 12.30pm for Christmas Break</td>
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<td>Thursday 4 January</td>
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<td>Students Return to School</td>
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**St Bernard’s High School**  
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