

The Convent Chronicle



Friday 22nd September 2023

Inspiring Ambition,
Achieving Excellence

Dear Parents/Carers,



Today, the school felt very different as students came in their jeans. This is to raise money and awareness, through the work of the Science team, about genetic illnesses – Jeans for Genes Day. Life-altering genetic disorders affect around half a million children in the UK. Jeans for Genes Day is fundraising day for children with genetic conditions in the UK. Between 1 in 25 children are affected by some form of genetic disorder. Some of our girls are, of course, affected; several by sickle cell anaemia and other disorders.

Some of the outcomes of fundraising include holidays for families affected by genetic disorders, provision of communication equipment, sensory equipment, support groups, support websites, mobility aids, education and training – as well as important fundraising for genetic research.

Charitable works, of course, are part of our ethos in a Catholic school, doing as Jesus did, and indeed part of our LSU charism 'unity, service, worship, work and prayer'. The girls offer a great deal of these core values to their community – not just in raising money but in their kindness and the way they work for each other.



We are grateful to you for supporting this worthy cause through your daughters. Much cake was also eaten and I must say thank you to the staff and students who came into school early to make and ice, then sold their blue cakes this week. Well done to Mrs Bialek and her helpers and Mrs Beadle.

It was lovely to see Year 7 parents this week at the Information evening and to hear that your daughters are settling in. Change, of course, unsettles some people, and things take time to 'bed in', but the gloves come off next week and Year 7 will be making their way around solo. It's ok to get lost! My daughter has spent her first week at Exeter University and she is very homesick too; I miss her greatly and as I said to my mum, there's lots of loo roll left at home!

Penny Johnson
Headteacher



Get the Studybugs App
the quick and easy way to report your daughter's
absence



Please get the **free Studybugs app** for
reporting your child's absence due to illness.

<https://studybugs.com>



Report sickness, receive guidance, help improve children's health
See what illnesses are going around
Secure system, all communications encrypted



Working in partnership with:



Studybugs

Mrs Burrow

The Den! An online engagement opportunity for 11-16 year olds with SEND

CALLING ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 11-16 WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The Den is an informal virtual hangout for young people aged 11-16 providing an opportunity for young people to share their experiences and work together to improve services for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, living or attending education in Thurrock.

Meeting via MS Teams from 5.30pm on the following dates:

Friday 29th September 2023
Tuesday 31st October 2023
Monday 13th November 2023
Wednesday 13th December 2023

You can join 'The Den' and participate in regular online meetings and share thoughts and feelings on our online pinboard. Parents and / or guardians must complete this online registration form: <https://forms.office.com/e/xECdu8uE5A>

Thurrock Children's Services

Water Bottles



Please check your daughter's water bottle is made of plastic – NOT GLASS. Unfortunately, we have had instances of broken glass bottles which have caused a hazard in the school.

Mr O'Hanlon

Uniform recycling...



Calling all parents!

Has your daughter outgrown her school uniform over the summer break? Does she have things that still have life in them but that she no longer has need for?

If so, please consider donating her old uniform and/or PE kit to the school so it can be given a new home. We are especially in need of blazers and skirts. Thank you.

Mrs Burrow

KS3 Summer Reading Challenge

DEADLINE EXTENDED DUE TO RENAISSANCE LEARNING SOFTWARE UPGRADE

The deadline for the KS3 Summer Reading Challenge has been extended to **Friday 29th September** as students could not access Renaissance Learning over the summer holidays. To take part, you simply need to log in to your Renaissance Learning account <https://ukhosted42.renlearn.co.uk/2237696/> and quiz on the books you have read.

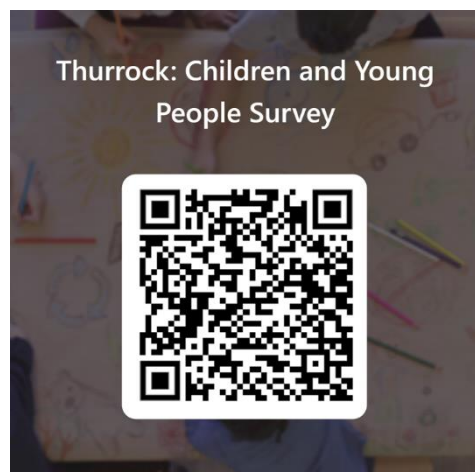
The students with the highest word counts in each year group on this date will be awarded a £10.00 Amazon voucher.

Mrs Nyland

Thurrock SEN – Delivering Better Value Surveys

Thurrock SEN would like parents and pupils to have their say about how to improve SEND services in Thurrock.

Could you please support Thurrock SEN in their 'delivering better value' work and complete either the child/young person or parent/carer surveys below by using the relevant QR code or clicking the relevant link:



Child/Young Person:
<https://shorturl.at/qwCXY>



Parent & Carer:
<https://shorturl.at/bFHRU>

Thurrock SEN

Ex-Convent Girl off to Cambridge...!

We were thrilled to hear from Lily Knights this week, who left us in 2021. She wanted to write to thank Mrs M Smith for all her help and support while she was at Grays Convent, and wanted to let us know that she did well in her A Levels and is now off to Cambridge to study history! She went on to say in her email to Mrs Smith that she never expected to be studying History, as she was adamant on taking geography for GCSEs. She said that thankfully Mrs Smith encouraged her to choose history and went on to love history lessons with Mrs Smith. She said that she couldn't thank Mrs Smith enough for all the help she gave her.

She is off to Murray Edwards College, which is an all-girls college, so is hoping that will mean her accommodation will be a bit cleaner! She starts on 2nd October, and will be studying Early Modern Britain, The Global Eighteenth Century and for sources she is doing Letter in Antiquity. She said she wants at some point to do some modules on the Cold War as she found it really interesting, and it was the one topic that got cut out due to Covid.

How lovely to hear such fabulous news from our ex-students, we are so very proud of all our girls and really enjoy hearing of their adventures post-Convent! Well done Lily, and we wish you all the very best with your studies at Cambridge!

Mrs Albrow

Vacancy

We have vacancies for Exam Invigilators to work during the exam periods. If you are interested in joining on a casual basis please see the full advert and job description on the school website or contact Jackie Reynolds at finance@graysconvent.thurrock.sch.uk for further information.

Finance Office

Lunch Money

If your daughter has loaned lunch money from the Finance Office could you please ensure it is paid back the following day.

We have a large amount of outstanding money owing and emails have been sent home. If you have received an email could you please ensure the money is returned as soon as possible.

This service is only available for emergencies and if the money is not returned on time it could lead to us being unable to loan money to another student.

Finance Office

ParentPay Accounts



It is important that our Parents have a ParentPay Account, and that this account is activated. This enables parents to purchase equipment and not to miss out on school trips.

If you require another copy of your ParentPay Activation Letter then please email Mrs Wood on:

woodj@graysconvent.thurrock.sch.uk

Finance Office

Eco Club News

During Eco club this year, we have been growing our vegetables in the school garden. We have been growing potatoes, tomatoes, aubergines radishes, carrots and courgettes. These vegetables were then ready after summer for the eco committee girls to pick and take home to cook up a lovely meal with. These are just some of the meals that our eco have cooked up!



Chole Blankson (Year 11) and Nicole Blankson (Year 10) cooked a stir fry with the tomatoes and carrots from the garden.



Goda Budenaite (Year 10) cooked garlic Hasselback potatoes with homemade tomato sauce.



Charlotte Plumridge (Year 10) cooked ratatouille with the aubergines, courgettes and tomatoes.



And Mrs Grint made Cheese & tomato pastries with what she picked from the garden.

The Eco committee is welcoming any new Year 7s or any other year groups to attend our eco-club and have fun recycling, gardening and helping our environment. Just join the Google Classroom: [we2aquk](#)

...and this is the Eco club harvesting all that lovely produce...



Mrs Grint

Spelling Bee

Prepare for "*Excellent spelling!*" at **Spelling Tests**, **ASSESSMENTS** and *Spelling Bee!*

SPELLING BEE COMPETITIONS THIS YEAR:

For Year 7- **Autumn Term**

For Year 8 - **Spring Term**

For Year 9 – **Summer Term**

Get ready! – Week 2

FOR YEAR 7	FOR YEAR 8	FOR YEAR 9
official	Quarry	battlement
special	Shed	jutty
artificial	complicate	frieze
partial	boar	buttress
confidential	huddle	trammel
essential	chaff	shoal
initial	gambol	adage
financial	whinny	chamberlain
commercial	windfall	mettle
provincial	assemble	weird



For Year 7:

–**cial** is common after a vowel letter and –**tial** after a consonant letter, but there are some exceptions. **Exceptions:** initial, financial, commercial, provincial (the spelling of the last three is clearly related to finance, commerce and province)

For Year 8 in detail

Learn the words – they are all from *Animal Farm*:

quarry - animal hunted or caught for food

shed - cause or allow to flow or run out or over

complicate - make less simple

boar - an uncastrated male hog

huddle - a disorganized and densely packed crowd

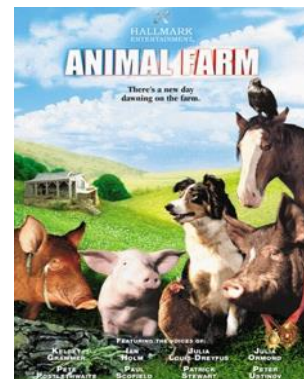
chaff - material consisting of seed coverings and pieces of stem

gambol - play or run boisterously

whinny - the characteristic sounds made by a horse

windfall - a sudden happening that brings good fortune

assemble - create by putting components or members together



For Year 9 – in detail. Learn these words-

they are all from *Macbeth* – Act 1

battlement - a wall with open spaces to shoot through, usually on top of a tower

jutty - a projecting part of a building

frieze - a decorative band, as along the top of a wall

buttress - a projecting structure built against a wall for support

trammel - to entrap or confine

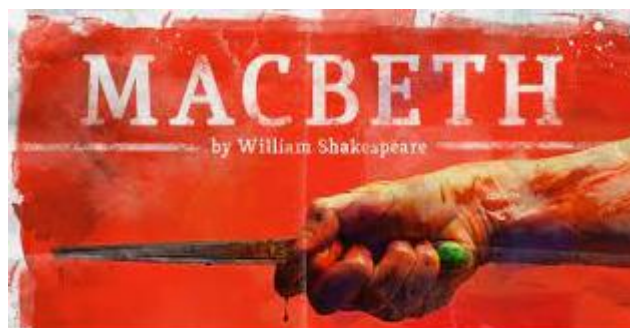
shoal - a shallow place in a body of water

adage - an old saying accepted as true

chamberlain - a person who manages the household of a ruler of nobleman

mettle - courage

weird - having to do with fate or destiny; the witches are "weird" because they foresee (and possibly influence) the future or destiny of humans.



Learn them to improve your spelling!!!

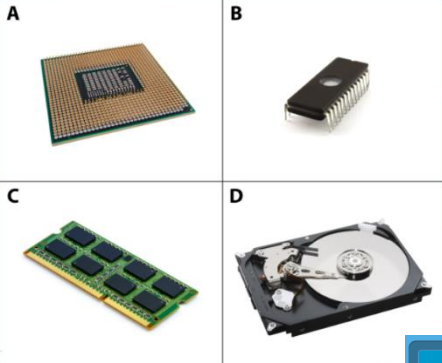
Miss Petrova



Computer Science

Central Processing Unit (CPU)

Which of the following is a CPU?



A

D

B

C

Answer: A

Mr Burr

Drama



This week the Year 9s have started to put into practice the Mask skills they have been learning this term; this includes Point of Focus, Counter Mask & Clocking the Audience. Mask is a tricky skill to master but the girls are doing well and trying their best – especially as their visibility is severely impaired and they're also extremely hot when wearing them!



Mrs Grint



English



Year 8
Set 2



Animal Farm
Title Pages



Mrs Grint

Hairspray News...



On Wednesday this week, the Hairspray cast list was revealed to the students and here are just a few of the magical moments captured when they read the news.



Congratulations to all of the girls who auditioned for this year's school production, it was honestly the largest amount of auditionees we've ever received! We certainly have lots of very talented young ladies here at Grays Convent and are looking forward to working with them in the upcoming months.

Mrs Grint/Mrs O'Donoghue

Cycle to school week

25th-29th September 23



Would you like to save money, get healthier and protect the environment at the same time as well as have lots of fun on your journey to school?

Bikeability and Sustrans are asking you and your family to sign up and make a pledge towards cycling to school between Monday 25th and Friday 29th September. For more details, visit [Cycle to School Week - Bikeability](#).

If you think that your cycle may need a service or you have outgrown your old cycle why not visit ForwardMotion Cycle Hub at 43 Calcutta Road, Tilbury. Our fully trained cycle technicians will be happy to help you and why not have a look at our reconditioned cycles, suitable for riders of all ages at great prices!

The Sacrament of Baptism

**Through the Sacraments,
the gifts of grace -
God's life and power
are poured into
our hearts.**



If you or your daughter have not yet received the Sacrament of Baptism and would like to be baptised please speak to your parish priest.

The Sacrament of First Holy Communion

If you or your daughter missed the opportunity to make the Sacrament of First Holy Communion, please speak to your parish priest. The School Chaplain is also here to support you in any way needed e.g. if your daughter needs support with preparation for a Sacrament.

Bible Study Group

Bible Study groups have started and are available for every Year Group during the second half of their lunch times on Friday. Please remind your daughter to sign-up if she would like to join.

Justice & Peace Group: Students in Year 10 are invited to sign-up if they would like to join and to please tick whether they prefer to meet at a lunch time or after school.

Miss Carson

The Feast of Saint Matthew the Evangelist

This week we celebrated the Feast of Saint Matthew the Evangelist.
We wish God's blessing to all those called Matthew, the name which means 'Gift of God'.

Feast of Saint Matthew the Apostle & Gospel Writer

The name Matthew means 'gift of God'.

Matthew 9:9-13

Jesus left that place, and as he walked along, he saw a tax collector, named Matthew, sitting in his office. He said to him, "Follow me."

(Tax-collectors were hated outcasts of society because they cheated & over-charged people.)

Matthew got up and followed him.



While Jesus was having a meal in Matthew's house, many tax collectors and other outcasts came and joined Jesus and his disciples at the table.



Jesus heard them and answered, "People who are well do not need a doctor, but only those who are sick. Go and find out what is meant by the scripture that says: 'It is kindness that I want, not animal sacrifices.' I have not come to call respectable people, but outcasts."

Reflection:

Jesus loved and welcomed everyone, especially those who were left out.

As a doctor visits and heals the sick, so Jesus came to call and heal sinners.

They were changed and healed just by being in his presence. In the light of his love, they became aware of their sinfulness and repented, they had a change of heart.

Jesus came to save us all who admit that we are sinners, in need of God's forgiveness and healing, and who are willing to have a change of heart.

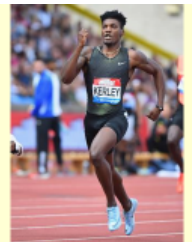


Some Pharisees (*religious leaders who looked down on people*) saw this and asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such people?"



A SAINT IS A CHAMPION OF GOD

All saints have a past and
all sinners have a future!



Matthew left his selfish way of life and decided to follow Jesus and became a great saint. All sinners are potential saints. All saints have a past and all sinners have a future! The saints are alive in Heaven with God. He is the God of the living. All the followers of Jesus in Heaven and on earth are united, we are on the same team and the saints are the champions who have proved their love for Jesus; so we ask the saints to cheer us on, to pray for us and help us to follow Jesus' example.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help us to welcome and see everyone through your eyes of love; let us not judge by appearance or ever leave anyone out. Give us the grace to see and repent of our own faults and to forgive and pray for those who hurt us. Help us to bring your healing love to others by giving generously to support Jeans for Genes Day. Saint Matthew pray for us, in Jesus' name. Amen.

God bless you,

Miss Carson

Hurray! Youth Gather returns!

For students in Years 9, 10 &11 - BCYS Youth Gather, 21st-22nd October, Essex Outdoors on Mersea Island















Youth Gather is back for 2023 and the BCYS are absolutely thrilled to be joined by the fantastic Adenike, semi-finalist on the voice. Taking place at Essex Outdoors on Mersea Island, there is cabin accommodation and a brilliant range of outward bound activities, opportunities for climbing high ropes, archery, zip wires and much more to keep you challenged and entertained, plus performances, input and workshops from Adenike and the SVP! All meals are included, plus two Mersea activities, 2 BCYS workshops, accommodation and travel to and from Mersea Island – all of this for just £70! Diocese. Apply now at: www.bcys.net/events/yg23/

Mrs Johnson is offering a 50% discount for the first 10 students who come forward and give their names to the Chaplain, Miss Carson by signing the Youth Gather list, so it will only cost them £35. If you need further help with the full cost please write to or email Mrs. Burrow burrowl@graysconvent.thurrock.sch.uk who will assist you confidentially.

The Brentwood Youth Service are very well known and have been coming into our school for over twenty years and have been running residential retreats for Catholic schools from all over the diocese for even longer. You can be assured that they will take very good care of your daughter, who will be well-supervised while enjoying time with other young people from other Catholic schools.

Miss Carson

Extra-Curricular Sports Timetable – 3:30-4:30pm

<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
<p><u>All Years Cricket: SF</u></p>  <p><u>All years Basketball club: GS</u></p> 	<p><u>Year 10 & Y11 Netball : SF</u></p>  <p><u>KS3 (Y7-Y9) Football: GS</u></p>  <p><u>All Years Badminton Sports prefects</u></p> 	<p><u>U16 (Y10& Y11) Football: MB</u></p>  <p><u>Y8 Netball: ZB</u></p>  <p><u>Y9 Netball: GS</u></p>  <p><u>All years Fitness: SF</u></p> 	<p><u>All years Rugby: SF&GS</u></p>    <p><u>Y7 Netball: KW</u></p>  <p><u>All years cross Country : ZB</u></p> 	

Safeguarding our Children at Grays Convent

At Grays Convent our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Mrs Collis, and our Safeguarding Officers are Mrs Wells and Mrs Bishop. Students can contact any of our Safeguarding Team during the school day.

Worried about a child?

You can phone or write to The MASH about your concerns. Phone immediately if you believe it is urgent.

- Thurrock MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding hub), Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL, Tel: **01375 652802**.
- Emergency Duty Team (for out of hours) **01375 372468**.
- Police Child Abuse Investigation Team **01277 266822** or call **999** if you are concerned a child needs immediate protection.
- Childline **0800 11 11** www.childline.org.uk
- NSPCC **0808 800 5000** www.nspcc.org.uk; www.facebook.com/nspcc

Mrs Collis

Internet Safety Tip - Think U Know - Advice for 11-18 Year Olds

The following link provides you with useful advice if you have any concerns regarding keeping yourself e-safe.

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_18/

The screenshot shows the CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the text 'Let's talk about' followed by a dropdown arrow, a search icon, and a 'Get help' button. The main header features the CEOP logo and the title 'The internet, relationships & you' in large, bold letters. Below the title, it says 'Advice from CEOP Education at the National Crime Agency'. A large search bar with the placeholder text 'Search info & advice' and a magnifying glass icon is prominent. Below the search bar, there are five teal buttons labeled 'Relationships', 'Socialising online', 'Online safety', 'Support', and 'Nudes', with left and right arrow icons on either side.

Mr Burr

Pope Francis - Tweet of the Week



Pope Francis @Pontifex · 1d

#Prayer is “water for the soul”. It is humble, unseen, yet gives life. Those who pray grow inwardly. They know how to raise their gaze on high, remembering they are made for Heaven.

488

1,289

6,892

306K



Walk Online Roadshow for Parents, Carers and Practitioners Wednesday 22nd November 2023 - 20:00 till 21:30

**THURROCK LOCAL
SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN
PARTNERSHIP**

Thurrock LSCP have offered the Walk
Online Roadshow for all Years 5s.

We are pleased to be able to offer a
session for parents, carers and
practitioners.

This session explores how parents, carers
and practitioners can support their
children to navigate the online world.

Visit the website to access the link.

Please note that this session is for over 18s
only.

www.thurrocklscp.org.uk

An Awareness Raising Session for Parents and Carers to Increase Knowledge of Gangs and Child Criminal Exploitation

~~Thursday 14th September 2023~~

Thursday 7th December 2023

18.00 till 19.00

Via MS Teams

This session will identify the harms associated with gangs and county lines and will
look on practical advice on how to support a young person who you may be
concerned about in relation to Exploitation

To book your place visit www.thurrocklscp.org.uk

Child and Family Counselling Services

Parents are now able to access direct support for their child by referring them into the safe hands of our Child and Family Counselling Services (CFCS). We have a team of highly experienced Counsellors, Specialist Child and Adolescent Counsellors and Play Therapists available within the counselling team who work in our specially adapted therapy rooms.



We offer support to children, young people and parents through talking, play and art therapy.

CFCS provides therapy to children, young people and families. We support many different issues such as:

- Self-harm
- Identity
- Anxiety
- Bullying
- Bereavement
- Parental separation and family issues or conflict.

The pathway is overseen by our Head of Child and Family Counselling Services, who is supported by a team that are both passionate about and dedicated to the wellbeing of children and young people. The team has achieved very positive and reparative outcomes for children and families.

What can you expect?

After an initial contact, we will arrange an assessment to explore the issues your child may be experiencing and will then identify which model best supports the difficulty your child may be facing.

Who do you contact?

If you are worried about your child and would like to talk to us further, please either email Catherine cmunns@bccs.org.uk or call on 07792 732206 and we will be pleased to help.

Take a moment to read about the experience a parent shared with us:

*I had contacted a number of professional services to assist me in helping my daughter. At the suggestion of my daughter's school a referral was made to **BCCS** and it was then that I met one of their counsellors. After months of unanswered questions and "hitting brick walls" I finally had answers, structure and a profound understanding of how a small little girl's mind works.*

*For me, there has been nothing so worrying as watching your child struggle and the **BCCS** counsellor's help has enabled me to help her for which I will be forever grateful.*



www.bccs.org.uk



headoffice@bccs.org.uk

BCCS, 133 High Street, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9AB

Brentwood Catholic Children's Society - Registered Charity Number: 1000661



BCCS

a children's charity for
Essex and East London

Key Dates and Events

Monday 25 th September	Years 7, 9 & 10 Portrait Photographs	Years 7, 9 & 10
Wednesday 27 th September	Year 6 Open Evening 5-8pm (Early close 11:45am – students leave at 11:45 – no lunches)	Whole School
Thursday 28 th September	Late start – students in school for 9:30am	Whole School
Monday 2 nd October	Black History Month begins	Whole school
Tuesday 3 rd October	Rise Above Day (pupils finish at 2:30pm)	Years 7-11
Friday 6 th October	CAFOD Fast Day	Whole School
Thursday 12 th October	Year 7 Welcome Mass	Year 7
Friday 13 th October	Debrabant Day	Whole School