

St Philip Howard Catholic Voluntary Academy

Newsletter

16.10.2026



"Head, Heart, Hands, Together on the Success Journey"

From the Headteacher

Dear Readers,

As another busy week draws to a close at #TEAMSPH, I am once again reminded of how quickly time passes in a school community. With half term now firmly on the horizon, it feels as though we have only just welcomed our pupils back for the start of a new academic year, yet so much has already been achieved and celebrated.

This week, we held our first SPH Experience Day of the academic year. These days are always packed with valuable learning opportunities and are carefully designed to help our pupils broaden their horizons, develop new skills and prepare for the future.

There were many highlights throughout the day. All our Year 7 pupils received CPR and first aid training, equipping them with potentially life-saving skills. Our Year 9 pupils visited the National Holocaust Centre, where they also had the opportunity to hear from a Holocaust survivor, providing them with a powerful and thought-provoking experience. Meanwhile, our Year 11 students spent the day preparing for life beyond St Philip Howard. They attended a college and careers fair, began working on their CVs, and finished the day exploring effective revision techniques and creating personalised revision timetables in preparation for their upcoming mock examinations.

This week also saw us welcome the Anne Frank Trust to school. Twenty of our Year 10 pupils took part in two days of specialist training, learning about the life of Anne Frank and her family. Following the training, our Year 10 students led a pop-up exhibition for all Year 8 pupils and a group of Year 6 pupils from one of our feeder primary schools.

The Year 10 pupils were outstanding. They spoke with confidence and maturity, communicated complex and sensitive topics with great care, and remained calm and composed when responding to questions from their audiences. Their professionalism and leadership were a credit to both them and the school.

Well done to everyone involved. It was a fantastic experience, and you should all be incredibly proud of the way you represented #TEAMSPH.

Have a wonderful weekend.

Kind Regards
Mr M Kays
Headteacher



Important dates

- Monday 19th October – Feast of St Philip Howard.
- Thursday 22nd October – year 11 Parents Evening.
- Thursday 5th November – Year 7 Form Tutor Review Evening.

#TEAMSPH – Head, Heart, Hands,
together on the success journey

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A Message from Our Attendance Lead

At St Philip Howard Catholic Voluntary Academy, we want every young person to flourish, achieve their potential and feel a valued part of our school community. Regular attendance at school is fundamental to making this possible.

Every day in school matters. When students attend regularly, they benefit from consistent teaching, develop positive routines, maintain friendships and are more likely to make strong academic progress. Even relatively small amounts of absence can quickly add up to significant learning being missed.

Our school attendance target is 96%, and we ask all parents and carers to work with us to help their child achieve the best possible attendance.

As a guide:

- 96% and above – Good attendance and a strong foundation for learning.
- 95% attendance – Approximately 9–10 school days missed over a year.
- 90% attendance – Approximately 19 school days missed, equivalent to nearly four weeks of education.
- Below 90% – A student is considered a persistent absentee, and the amount of learning missed can have a significant impact on progress and achievement.

An important part of preparing young people for adult life is helping them to develop resilience – the ability to manage challenges, overcome difficulties and continue when things do not always feel easy.

We would therefore ask for your support in encouraging your child to come to school and remain in school wherever they are well enough to do so. It is normal for young people occasionally to feel tired, experience minor aches or pains, feel worried about something happening during the school day, or simply have a day when they do not particularly feel like attending.

Where a student is well enough to be in school, we believe that remaining in school, accessing lessons and seeking support from trusted adults is often the best approach. Going home should not automatically be the first response to a minor difficulty or discomfort.

Our pastoral team is available throughout the school day to support students who may be struggling. We will always contact parents or carers if we believe a student is genuinely too unwell to remain in school.

By working together and giving young people consistent messages about attendance, perseverance and resilience, we can help them develop the confidence to manage challenges rather than avoid them.

We fully recognise that there are occasions when absence is unavoidable, particularly when a child is genuinely too unwell to attend. However, wherever possible, medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside the school day, and holidays should not be taken during term time.

Punctuality is also important. Students should arrive at school on time and ready to learn. Regular lateness can disrupt learning and means students miss important information at the beginning of the school day.

If your child is experiencing difficulties that are affecting their attendance, please contact us. Our pastoral and attendance teams are here to work alongside families, identify barriers and provide appropriate support. Early communication is extremely helpful.

Thank you for your continued support in making attendance a priority. By working together, we can ensure that every student has the best possible opportunity to succeed academically, socially and personally.

From the PE Department

Please find attached our PE Parent Handbook for the 2026–27 academic year.

The handbook brings together the key information families need regarding PE at St Philip Howard, including expectations, routines and other important guidance. I would encourage you to take some time to read through it with your child so that everyone is clear about our expectations for PE.

I appreciate that we are now several weeks into the new academic year before this handbook is reaching you. I wanted to ensure that several details were fully finalised and agreed with Senior leaders, before sharing the document with families. Thank you for your patience while we completed this process.

We hope that having all this information together in one place will provide greater clarity for both students and parents throughout the year.

If you have any questions after reading the handbook, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Sporting Fixtures

This week saw our Year 7 and Year 8 football teams travel to Hope Valley College for their first fixtures of the academic year. Both teams performed excellently, producing two high-quality performances and securing victories in their opening matches.

On the same evening, our Year 10 and Year 11 netball teams also travelled to Hope Valley College to compete in the High Peak Tournament. Our Year 11 girls finished an impressive 4th overall out of seven teams. The Year 10 girls delivered an outstanding performance, winning five of their six matches and narrowly missing out on becoming tournament champions. It was an absolute pleasure to watch the girls perform at such a high standard.

All pupils representing the school conducted themselves with the highest levels of sportsmanship and were a real credit to the school. Their attitude, commitment and behaviour throughout the evening were exemplary. It was fantastic to be part of the fixtures and to see our students competing with such determination, enthusiasm and pride across a variety of sports.

A huge well done to all involved and thank you to the staff who supported the teams. #TEAMSPH 🏆 ⚽ 🏐

From the Student Leadership

One of our first responsibilities as Head Students was to speak at this year's Open Evening for prospective students and their families. We were all incredibly proud and honoured to have the opportunity to represent our school and share our experiences of being part of #TEAMSPH.

It was a privilege to talk about our journey through the school and reflect on the many opportunities we have been given, both inside and outside the classroom. We spoke about the support we have received from staff throughout our time here, the friendships we have made, and the experiences that have helped us grow in confidence and achieve our goals.

We thoroughly enjoyed meeting prospective students and their families and sharing what makes our school such a special place to learn. We hope our speeches helped provide a genuine insight into life at #TEAMSPH and gave visitors a sense of the welcoming, supportive and inclusive community that we are proud to be part of