



Dear Parents,

We are approaching the end of a very long and busy Autumn Term which has once again been filled with excellent events and activities to enrich our pupils' education. Every time I write a newsletter I am so proud of all we achieve and how we all work together to ensure we have a community of happy, healthy, inspiring young people. With the Christmas break in sight, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the part that you, as parents and carers, play in our fantastic community.

Christmas Celebrations

The spirit of giving at Christmas is alive and well at Upton...

Thank you to all the students and their families who supported our local charities this Advent. We supported 'Ferries Families' with a toy appeal and they were all collected on Thursday 14.12.23 in time for Christmas.

We received many donations which will help those in need this Christmas.



Feast Day celebrations

On Friday 8 December, we celebrated the Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception. Our focus this year was on Catholic Social Teaching and this was built into many tasks and events held throughout the day. Proceeds from the day will go to the worthwhile cause of the FCJ community in the Philippines where the money is used for the Learning and Development Centre, empowering local women through an

education programme rather than relying on the local rubbish dump at Pattaya for an income.

We celebrated Mass with every year group in our Chapel with Fr Louis or at Saint Joseph's Church with Fr Lucas as it is an obligation for Catholics (and those who choose to study and work in a Catholic school) to attend Mass.

Many of our students had the opportunity to write Christmas cards and/or letters of companionship to fellow FCJ companions in secondary schools in Australia, Ireland and London as well as a primary school in Jersey. Letters of companionship were also written to local parishioners as well as residents in Woodheath Care home in Upton. The range of letters which our students participated in writing showed dignity and respect as well as a spirit of community participation which is extremely important, especially at this time of year when some people can experience isolation and loneliness.

Our students also had the opportunity of considering our global community as they were tasked with writing to Amnesty International in solidarity with victims of discrimination (Write for Rights Campaign). The letters showed much thought, dignity and empathy.

Our Form Tutors also led form auctions and this was a fun and engaging way for the students to get into the spirit of giving as we considered those in need in our world.

Our Sixth Formers, ably assisted by their form tutors, led a Christmas 'Winter Wonderland' activity where our students had the opportunity to purchase Christmas novelties and confectionary or have their nails and hair done (to name but a few) as well as having the opportunity for selfies at Christmas displays with their Upton companions or even with 'Ant and Dec' (donkeys from a local Donkey Sanctuary) or 'Lani and Tonic' (birds of prey from the local sanctuary). The purpose of this activity was to raise funds for those in need in a fun and engaging way during Advent.



We are so thankful to you our parents and carers who support Feast Day. Through this religious Feast Day, we have been able to raise funds which will impact on our FCJ companions in the Philippines in an immeasurable way. Thank you.

Last day of term

Thank you for helping our school help our local community.

On Wednesday 20 December, we will have a non-uniform day for all our students. They are encouraged to donate at least £1.00 and all proceeds will be split between Clare House (in memory of Dani Brandao and all those who have been cared for there) and the Upton Residents' Association. Staff will be taking part too.

Rewards Week at Upton Hall

During our last week of term, Year Heads have been leading reward events for groups of students in recognition of their hard work. There is a criterion (as always) and this includes achievement and behaviour points using our school information management system (SIMS).

Each Year Head has organised something different and these range from reward breakfasts to 'box rounders' to movie events with cookies.

Thank you for all your support in ensuring that your child aspires to the high standards and our FCJ values that underpin school life at Upton Hall.

School Production

A massive thank you and well done to all the students and staff (from a range of departments) who participated in and supported this year's School Production of 'West Side Story'. Since September students across years 7-13 have auditioned, and regularly attended rehearsals in preparation for the show.

The Drama, Music and Art Department are extremely proud of the cast and crew who participated in this year's school production. They demonstrated creativity, commitment and resilience throughout the rehearsal process, which culminated in an absolutely fantastic show!

The Drama department encourages all students to participate in our extracurricular activities and events. We have a wide range of lunchtime clubs and after-school activities available, to suit students across all year groups. Please see our extracurricular timetable on the school website. All are welcome to attend.

Poet Laureate 2023-2024

For the second year the English department have appointed pupils to take on the role of Upton Hall's Poet Laureate.

A poet laureate is a poet officially appointed by a government and they are typically expected to compose poems for special events and occasions. The British Poet Laureate is an honorary position appointed by the monarch of the United Kingdom, currently on the advice of the prime minister. The role does not entail any specific duties, but there is an expectation that the holder will write verse for significant national occasions. The current Poet Laureate is Simon Armitage. Our Upton Hall Poet Laureates will write poetry throughout the year to reflect local and national events and the changing seasons.

Pupils across all key stages were invited to submit a piece of poetry in application of the post. We had so many that we decided to appoint a Poet Laureate and a Junior Poet Laureate. Our successful entries were Juliette in Year 9 as our Poet Laureate and Nia in Year 7 as our Junior Poet Laureate. We look forward to reading more of their work during the rest of this school year. Here are their winning submissions:

A Mother's Refuge – Juliette 9J

I curl up in the rubble of a forgotten city,
My bloodied hands clasped around a crumpled photograph.
My heart aches as I shout out the name of my son.
My baby, my boy,
They took away his innocence.

Da mihi sanctuarium, refugium, oro.
Quatre mihi muros da salutius.*



My hands cup my face as tears engulf my vision,
Salt stings my cut skin and water congregates at my feet.
Waves trash violently as I feel myself thrown side to side,
A young girl grips my hand for balance,
I see her all alone, without a family, orphaned.

*Da mihi sanctuarium, refugium, oro.
Quatre mihi muros da salutius.*

My bones creak on land,
Congealed blood laces my clothes.
Rubble and dust encase my cheeks.
I see somewhere in the distance, a refuge.
As I near my being is flooded with a million
indescribable questions.

*Da mihi sanctuarium, refugium, oro.
Quatre mihi muros da salutius.*

I lie awake at night,
My mind and tears in tragic synchronicity.
I take out my crumpled photograph, my memory, and
hold it close.
I stare at the picture of innocence and cry,
Distraught at its destruction.

*Da mihi sanctuarium, refugium, oro.
Quatre mihi muros da salutius.*

I place my hand over my heart,
Shutting my eyes as I listen to the flailing rhythm of
tentative hope.
A shiver runs down my spine as I hope, wish and pray
That my baby's heart still beats like mine.

*Da mihi sanctuarium, refugium, oro
Quatre mihi muros da salutius.*

*Oro confgium ad puerum meum.***

Latin translations:

*Give me sanctuary, refuge, I pray. Give me four
walls of salvation.

****I pray for refuge for my child**

My Grandma – Nia, 7U

In a cosy corner of my heart, there resides,
A treasured soul who fills my days with pride.
Her warm embrace, like sunshine's gentle kiss,
My Grandma, a gem in life's eternal bliss.

With hands that weave tales of bygone lore,
She conjures magic, leaving me wanting more.
Her voice, a melody that stirs my soul,
Guiding me through life's journey, making me whole.

Her eyes, twinkling with wisdom and grace,
Hold stories and secrets of time's embrace.
A lifetime of experiences etched on her face,
She's a living testament of love's embrace.

In her kitchen, a haven of culinary delight,
She conjures flavours that make my heart take flight.
Her recipes, passed down through generations,
Nourish my spirit, igniting sensations.

Her embrace, a fortress of undying love,
A shelter from the storm's life challenges a shove.
Her laughter, a symphony of joy and cheer,
Dispelling worries, making obstacles disappear.

Grandma, you are my guiding light,
A beacon of love, shining ever so bright.
Through life's ups and downs, you're always there,
A pillar of strength, showing me you care.

So here's to my Grandma, my rock and my friend,
A bond that time and distance cannot bend.
Forever cherished, your love I'll always keep,
In my heart, where precious memories leap.

Women's Prize Book Club

This term, we launched our brilliant sixth-form book club, which is devoted to reading books which have been nominated for, or won, the Women's Prize for Fiction. The Women's Prize for Fiction was established in 1992 to address the imbalance between men and women winning prestigious literary prizes (by 1992 only 10% of Booker Prize winners had been women). Over thirty years later, it



is still going strong and continuing to promote and celebrate the works of incredible, talented female authors, whilst also running competitions to discover new writers, and donating books to those struggling to access literature. This term, we are reading two-time Women's Prize Winner Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 'Half of a Yellow Sun', a novel about the Biafran war told from a range of diverse narrative perspectives. We also watched the author's TED Talk, 'The Danger of a Single Story', which shed light on her determination to write her own novel from more than one perspective. We're really enjoying this novel so far—debating which characters are likeable, considering whose motives are questionable, and exploring stories which have often been excluded from mainstream history. We're looking forward to continuing our reading in the new year, and hope you'll be inspired to have a look at some of the past winners of the Women's Prize for Fiction to find your next great read!

Health and Social Care Update

Our health and social care students have been lucky to experience talks from a variety of health and social care professionals this term. This has offered valuable insight into a diverse array of roles and experiences. We had a talk from Joanne about her roles and responsibilities within a day care centre for individuals with learning disabilities. The network director of CQC spoke to the girls about the importance of regulatory bodies to ensure high standards of health and social care. Additionally, ex-pupil (Hope Brearley) gave a first-hand account about her experiences as a student midwife and provided a glimpse into the roles and responsibilities in midwifery. These talks have broadened the students' understanding of these professionals, which is particularly beneficial for Year 13's upcoming unit 2 exam in January.

Written by Louise McK, Year 13

Publication of photograph in The Dee Estuary Bird Blog

"Birdwatching and wildlife photography has been a passion of mine for the past 7 years. I love to capture the nostalgia and familiarity in nature, particularly in

birds. I believe being out in nature is incredibly important for your mental health and in my experience, finally spotting a specific bird brings such a sense of accomplishment! Very recently my Dad and I went out to Parkgate to try and spot this year's Owls and Raptors. Although we didn't see any owls, we saw a Ringtail (a female Hen Harrier) and a Marsh Harrier – as can be seen in the photograph.



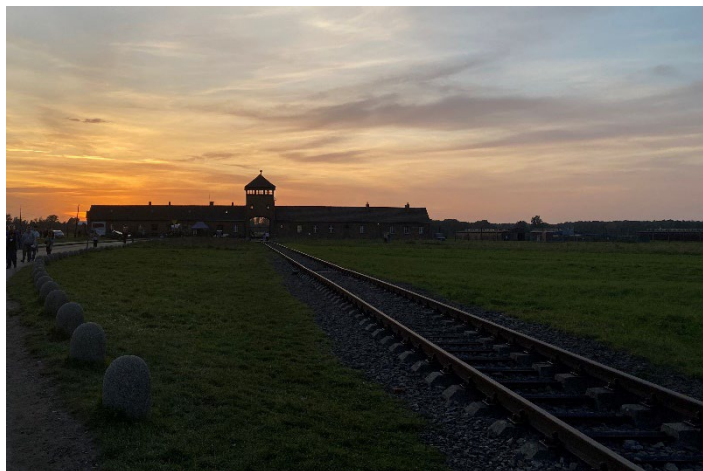
I then sent this photograph to the writer of the weekly Dee Estuary Bird Blog, and it was published amongst photographs of Great-Northern Divers spotted that week and Waxwings who had migrated from Scandinavia! As I am only a young photographer, I was very excited by this news, as this is my passion!"

By Eleanor S, Year 12



Holocaust Educational Trust – ‘Lessons from Auschwitz’ Scheme

During October 2023, we participated in the Holocaust Educational Trust’s ‘Lessons from Auschwitz’ scheme. We attended online seminars, spoke with Holocaust survivor Manfred Goldberg, and evaluated how we could bring our learning into our school environment. The highlight of this course was embarking upon a one-day visit to the camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland.



We were able to observe first-hand the conditions that Jewish, Roma and Sinti prisoners endured here during the Holocaust, and to bear witness to the atrocities that took place there. We were joined on that day by Rebbetzin Ilana Epstein, whose Grandparents survived the horrors of this camp. At the end of the day, she led us in a prayer service to remember the victims of the Nazis, and to pray for peace in our troubled world. This unique opportunity has enabled us to commence our training to become Holocaust Ambassadors, so that we can share our experience and knowledge with the wider school community.

by Amy F, Lily-Mai S, Olivia-Louise T, Lucy McD Year 12

Medics – Not Just Medicine Visit

A group of ten students visited Leeds University to participate in the Medics - Not Just Medicine programme. The aim of the day was to highlight the different STEM courses and careers within the medical field that don't require a medical degree. We visited the Faculty of Biological Sciences where the

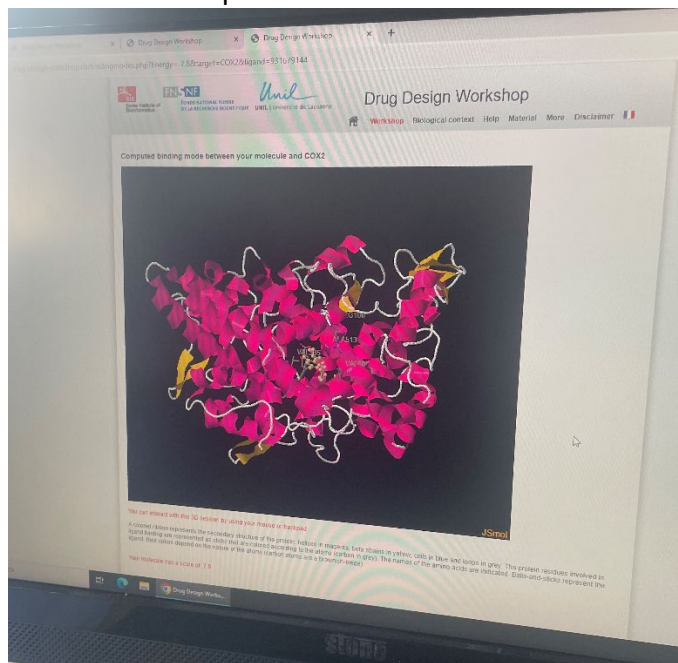
university ambassadors guided the students through three sessions.

Firstly, in the Engineering activity they had to select materials from a wide range of everyday objects e.g. pipe cleaners, sellotape and clothes pegs to design a



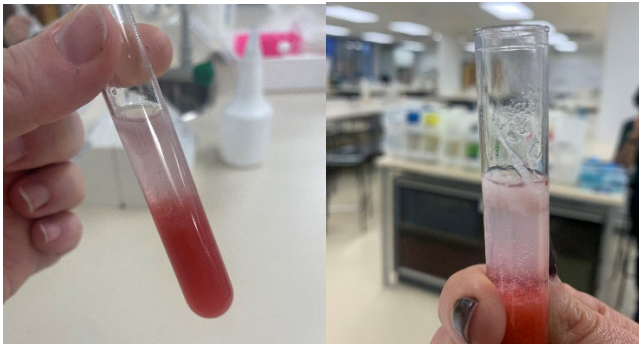
'surgical instrument' that could be used in surgery to pick up a number of different sized items.

The students then moved onto a Chemistry workshop where they studied polymers and targeted drug delivery. They then used a computer programme to try and design a pain relief drug that was more effective than aspirin.





Finally, the Biosciences activity involved studying the structure of DNA, our genetic code. The students then went on to work in the laboratory and extract DNA from strawberries.



The day was full of 'hands on' activities and our students (and staff!) were suitably inspired.

Geography News



On Wednesday 6 December, six Year 8 pupils were selected to take part in the Geographical Association 2023 WorldWise Quiz at Chester University.

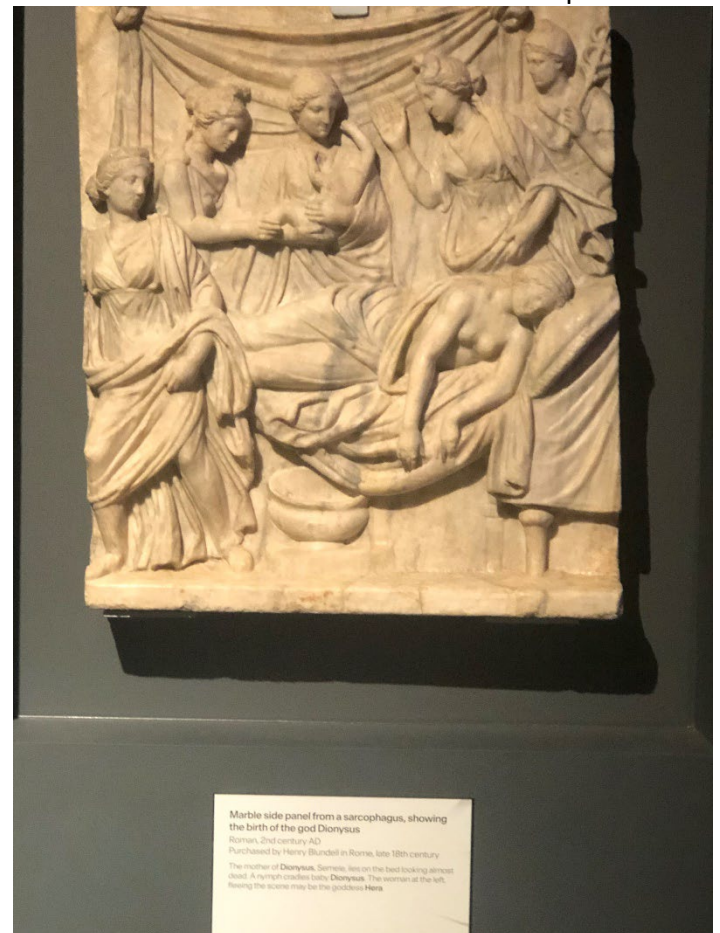
Daisy writes about her experience:

In two teams of three we competed against 17 other schools from the North West region. Over the course of this term we have been putting our knowledge to the test and practicing new skills in order to prepare ourselves for the competition. At the event we participated in a range of rounds, including: geography from the air, sustainability, coasts, geography in the news, fieldwork, and built environments. There were some challenging questions and despite not winning we really enjoyed working as a team and building our geographical knowledge.

The Geography Department would like to pass on our congratulations to Daisy, Maisie, Libby, Marta, Elizabeth and Natasha. We hope to organise an in-school WorldWise Quiz next term for all pupils who attend the club to participate in.

Ada Lovelace Adventures

Students in Year 9 have been participating in the Olympus Project as part of the Ada Lovelace Scheme. In addition to learning Latin and studying the ancient myths, they visited the Deva museum in Chester, and the 'Return of the Gods' exhibition in Liverpool.



"On our trip to Deva in Chester, we got to experience the daily life of a Roman, including seeing the markets, Roman baths, and the how to succeed at being a Gladiator. We were able to visit the amphitheatre, and marched the streets of Chester to learn how to drill and fight like a Roman soldier. We had a very interactive guide who was really well informed. Overall, we found the day to be very fun and highly educational."

by Flo Harrison, Isabel Renshaw and Ella Kent



"When we visited Liverpool Museum, we explored the 'Return of the Gods' exhibit. This included statues of each Greek God with detailed explanations of who they were and why they were perceived to be important to the ancient Greeks. In addition, there was a cinema experience explaining the ancient Greek myths and how these were used to understand the world. This visit really helped us to gain a deeper understanding of our studies of the Greek Gods, which we will be using in our Olympus project work. We hope to have many more enlightening trips like this in the future!"

by Greta G, Emily H, Evie S

Cyber adventures with Year 8

On 13 December 2023, a group of Year 8 students attended the 'Cyberfirst' experience at Aintree Racecourse. Here two of our students relate their experiences.

"We really enjoyed Cyberfirst, as we fully engaged and learned all about Cyber security. They gave us an entertaining and wide range of activities to try. Firstly, we had to find 'Patient Zero' using data and the internet. This skill is really important, because if you are trying to look for an online hacker, or someone important, learning to use data like this could really help someone. We were then given different clues in a box to solve an escape room experience and rescue a trapped woman. Finally, we designed and built a new facility for Cyberfirst Liverpool using Minecraft.



We really enjoyed the visit, as we got to try new activities and experience something that could become our future jobs. We particularly enjoyed learning about programming and working safely online. The event also really opened our eyes to the dangers of fake websites and online hacking. We hope that we get further opportunities to work with Cyberfirst again.

by Fawziyah and Miley 8S

Remembrance Service at Upton

The month of November is traditionally a time when the Catholic community remembers those who have died. The remembrance book, compiled of names submitted by students, staff, parents and those connected to the school always has a significant role in our school mass where it is taken up as part of our offertory.

This term, led by Head girl Abi Barker and her sixth form leadership team, we had a beautiful service where further prayers were said for those who have gone to be with the Lord. As part of the service, Poppy Watson and Jonathan Wang read poignant pieces of scripture whilst Alessia Saccucci sang "Amazing Grace" beautifully. Once the short service had concluded, students were invited to light candles and to say their own prayers.

The money collected for lighting candles will be donated to Cancer Research UK as this is the charity being especially supported by the Sixth Form leadership team this year.



The school remembrance book, surrounded by candles lit by students, in our school chapel.

Scientific Journal Success

Rosie, one of our Year 13 Students has helped to contribute to a paper due to be published in a Scientific Journal next year.

As a Research Ambassador for Alder Hey Children's Hospital I contributed towards a research project that is aiming to improve awareness amongst young people about the Yellow Card Scheme and the importance of its use. The Yellow Card scheme allows the harmful side effects of prescription drugs to be reported, with an aim to make these medicines safer in the future. However, most of these side effects experienced by young people go unreported, meaning that this age group is poorly represented in data. The project involved developing a guide to provide information about how to use the Yellow Card Scheme, with a hope to implement this into the national PSHE curriculum.

I was directly involved in data collection and analysis, as well as manuscript writing for the paper due to be published in the British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology.

Library News

Fire House win the Reading Engagement House Cup



Congratulations to Year 7 students in Fire House for their incredible efforts in reading this term. They have won the House Cup for reading engagement. Well done to Miss Patterson's form who collected 663 reading engagement points.

1st place: Fire (663 points), 2nd place: Water (588 points), 3rd place: Air (299 points), 4th place: Earth (279 points), 5th place: Aether (225 points).

Individual prizes were also awarded to students in each house who have gone above and beyond in their reading efforts this term. Congratulations to Matilda G., Isabella A, Alexia KS , Ella R, Tessa AM, Ava V, Olivia C.S., Rhiana S, Grace S, Chloe P, Thiya A, Vania K and Daisy V.





All reading engagement points have been reset and students can start to collect achievement points towards the trophy and individual prizes the Spring term.

Anna James Creative Writing Challenge Winners

Author Anna James visited Upton Hall School in September and set students in Year 7 a creative



writing challenge. Year 7 were asked to compose a short story that included the concept of 'Book Wandering', a theme in the author's works. Students were to write stories that borrowed elements from an existing works of literature. Entries were of a very high standard and went through three rounds of judging. Congratulations to the following students: 1st Place Minnie S, 2nd Place Sophie P, 3rd Place Darcey C.

Highly Commended: Shalikh R, Aoife B and Lizzie B. Winning entries will be edited and posted on the Library section of the school website.

Gaudete Trust

A few years ago, a number of Religious Orders began to think about how the schools that they had founded could continue to benefit from the special spirit that their Orders had brought to our schools over many years. They were aware that only a few of them were still able to play an active part in their schools and that there would soon come a time when none of them would be around to keep their special story alive. In September 2019, five Religious Orders got together to see how they might help each other. After three years of discussions, they were ready to present a proposal for a new family of schools. The name of this new family of schools is the Gaudete Trust. The name Gaudete means 'rejoice'. The word 'Trust' tells us that the five religious orders have each entrusted the Gaudete Family with the

responsibility of keeping the special features of their schools alive. Each school will still honour its own founder and be guided by the vision and values of its religious order. But each school will now also belong to an extended family of seventeen schools which will share a common vision of education. This will bring a number of exciting opportunities – new sports teams to compete with, more groups to link with, bigger audiences for debating competitions etc. We are a very new family and its most important members are our young people. Over the coming months we will post information about the Gaudete Trust on our website.

Uniform

It has been noticeable this term, the number of pupils who are not coming into school and following uniform rules. More disappointingly, there are a number of parents who support this. I need to remind those parents that while it is our responsibility to ensure that your daughters receive an outstanding education when they arrive at Upton, it is your responsibility to ensure that she arrives in the correct uniform/following our clear rules of appearance. Following the Christmas break, please do not send your daughters back to school, wearing false eyelashes, trainers, false nails, false tan and coats that are not black. This causes unnecessary conflict and wastes valuable time that should be spent focussed on learning.

In addition, the number of smart watches being worn by pupils is increasing. I should like to remind parents that reminder that Apple watches (and other smart watches) are not allowed.

Attendance reporting reminder

If you are reporting that your child is absent, please could you either call the absence line 0151 641 8133 or email the attendance email address:

attendance@uptonhall.org, or for Sixth Form absences email sixthform@uptonhall.org. Always include your daughter's first and last name and her form or year group.

If you receive a truancy notification or unexplained absence notification, please respond even if you think you have already reported the absence.



These messages are generated by the marks on the register so there will be an outstanding query if you receive one.

If you are unsure about any notifications you receive, concerning previous absences, please give a call to our school attendance officer, Ms McMaster after 10.30am.

Email communication

We are having difficulties communicating with parents via email as the parents' 'inbox' is full and emails are 'bouncing' back or the email address is out of date. This means that some parents will not be receiving important information. I should be grateful if all parents could undertake some housekeeping to ensure that there is sufficient space available in their inbox

Pupil medication process

Please note that parents are required to email school using year group email address (e.g.: yearseven@uptonhall.org) giving us permission for their daughter to take specific medication. Pupils should bring medication to Mrs Stocker/Mrs Whitehurst's office first thing in the morning and not keep hold of their medication.

Parking

Parking is always an emotive subject and we are frequently contacted by local residents with concerns about parents parking their cars when dropping off and picking up their children. Please could I give a polite reminder to parents that they park in a considerate manner which enables our local residents to access both to the road, in which they live, as well as their driveways. The current situation outside the gates before and after school is frequently hazardous, with an accident waiting to happen.

Parking on the lines outside of school is prohibited. If parents ignore this, we have no jurisdiction to do anything about it, however, I would hope that the prospect of causing harm to a child is deterrent enough to act safely in your cars around school.

Website & Social Media

Our website is constantly being updated, so please use it to keep up to date with current activities. www.uptonhallschool.co.uk. Significant dates for next term are shown in the website calendar. Similarly look out for latest news on our Twitter page (@UptonHallFCJ), as well as our Facebook (@uptonhallschoolfcj) and Instagram (uptonhallschoolfcj) pages.

Upton Community

This Christmas will be difficult for many families associated with the school because they are coping with the illness of a family member or a recent bereavement. As is often the case, we have had a number of pupils who have lost a close family member this year or indeed have suffered through illness themselves. I would ask you to remember these families in your prayers.

School Christmas Card Competition

Pupils in Year 10 were asked to create a suitable design for this year's School Christmas Card. Below is the winning entry and congratulations go to Lola Q in



Year 10. The cards were sent to various lucky recipients both locally, nationally and internationally.

A Christmas Prayer

*Loving Father,
Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.*

School Newsletter

December 2023



*Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.*

*Deliver us from evil by the blessing
which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.*

*May the Christmas morning
make us happy to be thy children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds
with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven,
for Jesus' sake.*

*Amen.
(by Robert Louis Stevenson)*

Finally, I want to thank you for your support this term
and wish you all a very happy and joyful Christmas and
a peaceful and healthy New Year.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Andrea Gaunt
HEADMISTRESS