



In all things for October 2025

St Damian's RC Science College

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Dear Parents/Carers

A very warm St Damian's welcome to my latest newsletter that showcases our great community. I can't believe that it is the end of half term 1 already. Doesn't time fly when you are having fun! 😊
Enjoy reading!

St Damian's ... THREE recent accolades/rewards

At St Damian's our high standards and excellent provision also gets recognised externally. Below are THREE examples of this that have all occurred in the past month.

We have also commissioned a video to align with the '**Silver Winners Pearson Teaching Awards**'. We were recently visited by 'Step into Teaching' [The sponsors of the Pearson Awards] who came into school to capture everything that is **MAGIC** about our school and how we make a difference and transform our students lives. This celebration video showcases our story and captures the **HEART** of St Damian's as a strong, united Catholic community. The video is now available to watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYiUo7ssF9M>

1] Good luck to one of our great teachers!



I am delighted to report that Mrs McCardle has been short-listed at the 2025 Educate Awards for '**Teacher of the Year**'. This is in recognition of all her hard work and determination to inspire a love of learning in every student she teaches. Her unwavering commitment to nurturing potential and

fostering confidence has made a lasting impact across the school community. Mrs Heenan stated *"Mrs McCardle exemplifies everything a teacher should be - dedicated, innovative, and relentlessly student-focused. Her ability to ignite curiosity, build confidence, and consistently go above and beyond for her students makes her a natural choice for this recognition and I am delighted for her!"* All the staff and I wish her all the best. Watch this space!



2] Another special accolade for the St Damian's Community



St Damian's has been honoured with the Step into Teaching '**Special Recognition of Excellence**' Award. This award was accepted on behalf of our school by Sarah Sutton, our dedicated Professional Mentor for Initial Teacher Training, along with our 3 amazing Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and 4 PGCE

students, currently completing their placements with us from the University of Manchester. We are absolutely delighted to be recognised for the role we play in developing and supporting aspiring and new to role teachers. It is a testament to the nurturing, collaborative environment at St Damian's, where



St. Damian's RC Science College

professional growth and excellence in education are at the heart of everything we do. This is another accolade that we are very proud to receive. This award belongs to our entire school community!

3] St Damian's Students Crowned Clear Winners at Young Chemist Competition

On Tuesday 14th October, two of our outstanding Yr11 students, Maya Santana and Shaun Shibu, represented St Damian's at a prestigious Young Chemist event hosted by Hulme Grammar School. Competing against five other teams, including two from Hulme Grammar and one from Crompton House, our students showcased exceptional scientific skill, teamwork, and resilience. The competition featured two challenging rounds: a practical titration task involving potassium manganate and iron sulfate, followed by a demanding 20-question chemistry quiz. Maya and Shaun excelled in both, scoring an impressive 63 points, well ahead of second place (47 points). Their performance included full marks on 12 questions and near-perfect scores on five others. This is testament to their deep understanding of science.



Mr Millington, from Hulme Grammar School, who led and organised the event said *"Maya and Shaun were an absolute credit to St Damian's and in particular to their incredible science teachers. They were clear winners of the event and worked brilliantly as a team. Their intelligence shone through and they demonstrated that rare ability amongst teenagers to show genuine*

higher order thinking skills".

We are incredibly proud of Maya and Shaun for representing our school with such distinction. **WELL DONE!** We have got excellent students who always shine at external events! Their success reflects the high standards of science teaching at St Damian's and the dedication of our students to academic excellence. A special thanks to Mr Spencer for leading on this great opportunity!



Catholic Life of the School

This month has been another busy month for our RE department.



- **Inter Faith Week.** As part of our preparations for **Inter-faith week 9th - 16th November** we have warmly invited students, staff, and parents to contribute to a special project that honours the rich tapestry of beliefs within our community. We are looking for short, creative resources that express your religious or non-religious views, whether that's a personal reflection, a cultural insight, or a message of unity. Your contribution could be as simple as a single PowerPoint slide. These resources will be shared in RE lessons throughout the week, helping to spark meaningful conversations and promote respectful understanding among students. If you'd like to take part, please email admin@stdamians.co.uk FAO Miss Yates.

- **GIFT Team.** We have recently appointed our new 'Growing in Faith Together' [GIFT]. These students are dedicated to enriching the Catholic life of the school and sharing our faith with the wider community.

They will take the lead planning and delivering numerous events such as liturgies, rosary club and other liturgical activities throughout the year. Their passion for prayer, service and leadership will make a positive impact to our already great school, and we look forward to seeing what they achieve this year!



- **Yr9 Eco team.** The Year 9 GIFT Eco Team, led by Mrs Lowe, proudly received their badges this term, marking the beginning of their stewardship journey within the school and wider community. Their first initiative was a Fair Trade stall held during breaktime as part of Fair Trade Week. Students had the

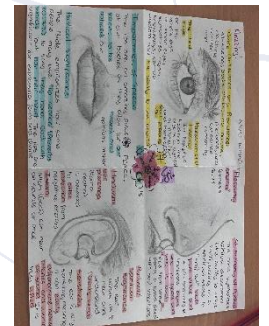


opportunity to purchase a variety of Fairtrade products while learning about the importance of ethical consumer choices. The event highlighted how Fairtrade supports farmers, promotes sustainability, and contributes to a fairer global economy. A fantastic start - well done to the team for inspiring positive action and awareness!

- **Yr9 RE Curriculum.** This term students have been delving into the profound concept of *inalienable dignity*. This is the idea that every human being possesses an intrinsic worth that cannot be taken away. Through thoughtful discussion, philosophical inquiry, and personal reflection, students have been challenged to consider the question, "What is so special about human beings?" As part of their independent learning, students were invited to respond creatively to this question, using any medium they felt best expressed their understanding. The results have been



nothing short of inspirational, showcasing a rich tapestry of ideas, emotions, and interpretations. I highlight two exceptional examples. One student created a striking visual piece that explored the uniqueness of human empathy and imagination, using symbolic imagery to represent the human capacity for compassion and creativity. Another student composed a powerful spoken-word poem, weaving together themes of resilience, diversity, and the shared human experience, reminding us that dignity is not earned - it is inherent. These projects reflect not only a deep engagement with the topic but also a celebration of the individuality and brilliance of our students.



- **Y10 Caritas.** Mrs Allmand and students are actively preparing and planning for the school's Remembrance Service, which will be held at 11am on Tuesday 11th November in our school chapel. As part of their contribution, they will be selling poppies during break and lunchtime throughout the first two weeks of November, helping raise awareness and support for this important occasion.
- **Oracy October in RE.** This month, RE lessons have focused on building students' confidence in speaking and thinking through our Oracy October initiative. Students took part in 'Oracy Compass' activities, using role-play and questioning to promote resilience and respectful dialogue. They've explored different viewpoints, developed debate skills, and learned to listen

and respond thoughtfully - deepening their understanding of ethical and philosophical issues. In RE, debate helps students reflect, challenge ideas, and grow. We're proud of how students have embraced these skills and look forward to seeing them flourish.



• *Year 10 XL Academy Theology Conference.* Congratulations to our Year 10 students who received awards for their outstanding participation in the XL Academy *Theology* Conference at Ashton Sixth Form College. The event offered a valuable opportunity to explore A-Level Religious Education and gain insight into future career paths linked to theology, ethics, and philosophy. Students found the experience both meaningful and enjoyable, engaging in thought-provoking discussions and activities throughout the day. Their enthusiasm and curiosity were praised by staff and organisers alike. We're incredibly proud of their achievement and look forward to seeing how this inspires their academic journey ahead!

Safeguarding Update

Mrs Gerschler, our acting Designated Safeguarding Lead [DSL] has been really busy over the past few weeks, ensuring that safeguarding remains our number one priority.

- ✓ *UNITE.* On Friday 17th October, our school successfully carried out a practice of the UNITE safety procedure, our lockdown protocol designed to ensure swift and calm action during emergencies. Students and staff responded promptly and responsibly to the simulated alert, demonstrating a clear understanding of the instructions shared earlier in assemblies. Senior Leadership Team members were stationed across the site to support and monitor the process. The drill was a valuable opportunity to reinforce our commitment to safety and preparedness, and we are proud of how our students and staff came together to support one another. Follow this link for more information <https://www.stdamians.co.uk/unite>
- ✓ *Community Police visit Y7 Assembly.* This month, PC Tony Lawton, our local High Schools Engagement Officer, spoke with Yr7 students during an assembly. He introduced his role both within the school and the wider community, explaining how he is here to help keep students safe. He spoke about the importance of building trust and being a friendly, familiar face that students can turn to. As part of his visit, he also shared important advice around **online safety**, including how to protect yourself from **cyberbullying** and stay safe when using social media and digital platforms. It was a valuable assembly, and we're grateful for PC Lawton's continued support in helping our students feel safe.

As the nights draw in and seasonal events approach, it's important to stay vigilant and stay safe. Here are some key messages:

- *Dark Nights.* As the evenings grow darker, please ensure that your child is wearing appropriate clothing and are visible when walking or cycling: reflective clothing or accessories can make a big difference.
- *Halloween Safety.* We understand some of our students may choose to take part in trick-or-treating activities with their families. For those who do, we want to ensure you stay safe and respectful. Please remember to go out with a trusted adult, stick to well-lit areas, and only visit homes that are clearly welcoming trick-or-treaters. We encourage kindness, courtesy, and care for others at all times. Your safety and wellbeing are always our priority.
- *Bonfire Night Safety.* For safety please use organised events as public firework displays are safer and better regulated than private ones and keep your distance. Always maintain a safe space from bonfires and fireworks.



Teaching & Learning Update



Mrs Heenan continues to ensure that quality teaching is at the heart of what we do. This term, we've been focusing on strengthening teaching and learning across the school through our robust appraisal system. This structured

process ensures that every teacher receives regular, supportive feedback and sets clear, measurable targets aligned with school priorities. As we look ahead to 2025 - 26, appraisal discussions are now directly linked to subject leader planning documentation, helping staff identify key development areas within their subjects and align them with whole school improvement goals. Recently, we held a work scrutiny event where staff reviewed students' books to celebrate progress and ensure consistency in standards. These activities are vital in driving high-quality teaching and learning, and we're excited to see the impact they're having across the curriculum.



For the record, this group of teachers are the **best** I have ever had the pleasure to work with. They are committed to ensuring your child achieves their potential.

Yr11 Update

Overall, there is a mixed picture from Yr11 students. Some are working extremely hard and scoring highly in their assessments and tests. Others are just doing the minimum that is expected. However, a significant minority are not putting in the required work. They are at risk of becoming overwhelmed and this will lead to underachievement in the summer. For clarity, there is no substitute for hard work and effort. Students will '*not get what they wish for, but rather what they work for*'. I ask parents to support their child in ensuring they are focused on their schoolwork. They won't regret it and they will be rewarded with great results in the summer.

- ✓ **Mock exams.** Your child should be revising for their Mock exams which take place at the beginning of December. These grades are indicative of what they will achieve in the summer and are used by the school to support applications to College. This means that they should also be working hard during this half term.



- ✓ Our Year 11 Hospitality and Catering students have recently completed their practical cooking assessment, where they independently planned, prepared, and presented two dishes of their choice. Each student selected recipes that are linked to a specific task, demonstrating a strong understanding of key hospitality skills such as time management, organisation, and presentation. that reflected their individual interests and abilities. I am incredibly proud

of their commitment, effort, and professionalism during this assessment. Well done to all our Year 11 Hospitality and Catering students!

- ✓ **Revision at half term.** There are several revision sessions this half term. Students will be aware if they need to attend. I ask that parents support this initiative.

Date	Time	Teacher	Subject
Tues 28 th Oct	9:00am – 2:00pm	JTS	Computer Science, room 40
Fri 31 st Oct	9:00am – 2:00pm	LGY	History, room 10B

Yr11 Geography Field Trip



As part of the GCSE Geography course, our Yr11 students took part in a compulsory fieldtrip to Salford Quays to investigate the impacts of urban regeneration. The visit provided an excellent opportunity for students to apply classroom learning to a real-world environment. During the trip, they conducted a people count to assess footfall in different areas and created a land use map to explore how the space has changed and been redeveloped over time. These activities helped students

understand how regeneration can influence economic activity, public spaces, and community life. Mrs Spencer, Head of Geography said *"The behaviour and engagement of all students were exemplary throughout the day. They worked with focus, enthusiasm, and maturity, representing the school with pride. The data collected will now be used to support their GCSE coursework and deepen their understanding of urban geography"*.

Learning Support Clubs for Students

- ✓ **Social & Games Club.** Learning Support staff provide a popular Social and Games Club each day at lunchtime in Room 6. Students have fun playing competitive family-favourites such as Connect Four, Uno and Guess Who? Students who prefer a quieter, relaxing time, can simply talk and draw, colour-in and sketch before returning to period 5 after lunch.



- ✓ **Study Clubs.** Homework is 'part and parcel' of learning and progress at St Damian's. The Study Clubs provided aim to help children develop good study habits and embed their learning. The Special Support Managers run Study Clubs after school on Tuesday and Wednesday from 3.10pm-4:00pm. The venues are:

- Room 19 for Year 7 - 9 with Miss Gardiner and Mr Wardle
- Ambrose for Year 10 with Mrs Shaw
- Room 11 for Year 11 with Mrs Burrows and Mrs Walthew



Each venue has computer access, and staff are on-hand to support students with completion of homework, or with revision. Students can drop into the club, complete what they need to do and then go home. They do not have to attend on both days and do not have to stay until 4:00pm. Attending Study Club is a great way to stay on top of homework and avoid it building up. There is no need to struggle at home, when there is help on-hand.

ASPIRE Day...enhancing students' Personal Development



Our first ASPIRE Day of the year was a powerful and thought-provoking experience for our school community, highlighting the importance of living out core British values such as respect, tolerance,



democracy, and the rule of law. Through a range of engaging workshops and discussions, students explored what it means to be a good citizen - someone who actively contributes to their community with compassion and integrity. We reflected on the difference between free speech and hate speech, learning how to express ourselves respectfully while standing up against discrimination. Sessions on drug and alcohol awareness helped us understand the risks and responsibilities



involved in making healthy life choices. We also learned about child criminal exploitation and how to recognise and resist manipulation, as well as the importance of kindness, whether through daily acts of service



or by advocating for animal rights and environmental care. Overall, the day encouraged us to be positive role models who lead by example and use our voices and actions to build a safer, more caring society for everyone. Our students showed great maturity and respect, with guests commenting on the outstanding behaviour displayed and purposeful atmosphere in school. With special thanks to all our guests who helped to support the day.

Pastoral Theme: Hope Mr Carty's form, Yr9ACY, as part of this half term's theme of HOPE explored what 'hope' meant to them. Linking to the 'monkey's paw' story that we had been reading as part of the literacy sessions, we focused on the idea of wishes and how they could be selfish or charitable in nature.

From our discussion, and as a symbol of hope, the message in a bottle idea formed. Each child in the form wrote messages and placed in a bottle to be read when they are in Year11.



These messages had a focus on friends, family, or other people in the world that may be struggling. Each note was private, sealed immediately and placed in the bottle. The students discussed that these messages might reach God, drawing parallels with personal prayers of hope. This is a great example of a form embracing the Friday pastoral theme sessions to really good effect.

To continue the theme of hope, the form are learning basic sign language (Elisa Santana's idea), and Anthony Skelly shared a speech with the group, to raise awareness for breast cancer. These ideas are entirely student led. As a school community, we believe that hope is a pre-requisite for St Damian's being a special place.

Walk & Talk Group



Our Wellbeing Walk & Talk group takes place every Wednesday lunchtime supported by Mrs Harrison and Mrs Hunter our two experienced school Student Support Officers. This initiative has been developed to encourage positive mental health and wellbeing along with building new friendships. On these

walks, students are not just covering ground; they are growing in confidence, resilience, and perspective whilst mixing with peers from other year groups. This also gives our students the opportunity to develop their communication skills by engaging in respectful and thoughtful discussions whilst walking in a safe place.



Sustainability at St Damian's... looking to the future

The importance of sustainability and looking to the future is important for this community. As such, I am delighted to introduce our new Sustainability and Stewardship Lead, Mr Stoneley, who will be championing our Climate Action Plan, along with a group of dedicated members of Sustainability Committee including our Eco Club lead Mrs Lowe, and Business Manager, Mrs Ogden.

The aim of our Sustainability Committee is to foster a culture of environmental responsibility across our school community through promoting sustainable practices, supporting student-led initiatives like the Eco Club, and aligning with the values of 'Laudato Si'. The committee will integrate climate awareness into everyday school life. There will be an opportunity for students to become 'SEED Young Changemaker' to take part in real-world projects that support our Climate Action Plan and Eco Club, turning ideas into impactful change which will support students with Post 16 options and future careers. Collectively, this empowers our students and staff to take meaningful action, reduce our ecological footprint, and contribute to building a more just and sustainable world; starting right here in our local community with our 'Preloved Uniform Pop-Up Shop'.



Update on Choir



Our school choir has had a wonderful start to the autumn term, with rehearsals full of energy and enthusiasm. With the addition of our new Yr7 members, the choir now boasts **over 100** talented singers from Yrs7 to 11. We're currently preparing for a series of exciting performances, including the Yr7 Welcome Mass, the Expressive Arts Extravaganza, a special visit to Willow Wood, and our much loved Christmas Carol Concerts in December. It's been fantastic to see the group grow, and we're looking forward to sharing our music with the wider community in the coming months. Mr McCardle said *"The choir's energy this term has been amazing! Our new Yr7s have added so much enthusiasm, and it's brilliant to see over 100 students making music together. I'm so excited for what's to come!"*. A big thanks to Mr McCardle whose vision for the choir has been realised.

NB. The date for the Arts Extravaganza is Thursday 13th November at 6:00pm. This is a night that showcases our students' talents and is an evening NOT to be missed!

Parental Evenings

We've had 2 further parental information evenings this month.

- ✓ *Yr8 parental evening.* On Thursday 9th October Ms Joyce & Mrs Harrison warmly welcomed parents/carers of children from Yr8. Key messages included the importance of their child's attendance and how even at this stage any absence impacts on their long-term progress, curriculum and assessment information was imparted, and student leadership opportunities were shared. Finally, Mrs Harrison discussed the additional challenges our children face as they go through puberty, things of concern to look for and where additional support can be obtained.
- ✓ *Yr10 parental evening.* Mrs Burtles said *"A big thank you for the continued support of parents who attended the recent Yr10 Information Evening"*. The evening highlighted the importance of KS4, with particular focus on excellent attendance, high expectations, the need for a consistent independent study routine and a positive attitude to learning. Mr Healey provided information on the end of year work experience, which is key to raising aspirations, with the key message, the quicker the student arranges the work experience for themselves, the better.

Just a reminder that the date for the Yr7 parental evening is Wednesday 5th November at 6pm.

Year 8 Trip to PGL Boreatton Park in Shropshire



We are excited to announce that 36 of our Year 8 students will be heading to PGL Boreatton Park in March for an action-packed residential trip! This much-anticipated adventure will give students the opportunity to develop confidence, teamwork, and independence as well as undertaking the unique THRIVE activity programme which focusses on building self-esteem. The students will take part in a wide range of outdoor and indoor activities such as climbing, raft building and mindfulness techniques like yoga to manage wellbeing. Boreatton Park offers a safe and supportive environment where students can challenge themselves, build friendships, and make unforgettable memories. The payment schedule has been set up on ParentPay, and we will be in touch with the date for a parental meeting shortly.

Certificate Evening: The record breaking class of 2025!



We were immensely proud to welcome back last year's Y11 students for Certificate Evening. They were an exceptional year group, and it was lovely to see them arrive back to collect their GCSE certificates. Some students received special

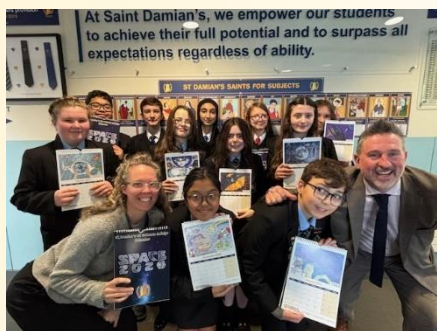
awards for their individual achievements and as usual it was difficult to determine who these awards should go to as so many of them were worthy winners. Staff and I really appreciated the sincere words of 'Thanks' that so many students and parents expressed. We wish them all health, happiness, and success in their future endeavours!

Art GCSE Update

The GCSE Art students have made a fantastic start to the year. Ms Wrigley, Subject Leader for Art, is extremely pleased to report that both Yr10 & Yr11 students are attending the weekly after-school intervention to improve the quality of their coursework. The Art room is a hive of activity with collaborative conversations between the year groups. It has been especially good to see our Yr11 Artists inspecting exemplar materials to broaden their understanding of the success criteria. The intervention runs **every week** and provides a place for GCSE Art students to access media, materials, and expertise from Ms Wrigley in a relaxed setting. Please encourage your child to attend every Thursday to give them the best chances of success. See the image from Sophie Stevenson who left last year and was a student who excelled.



School Calendar Art Competition!



I am excited to share the winners of our first school calendar art competition! The theme was SPACE, chosen to celebrate NASA's planned mission to the moon in 2026 which will be the first crewed mission to the Moon since 1972. As a Science College, it felt like the perfect link between science and creativity. Ms Wrigley said, "The students amazed me with their highly imaginative ideas,



'Void's Universal Concert,'
by Troy Servan

everything from other worldly landscapes to alien music concerts. Their artwork showed real imagination and effort, and I'm incredibly proud of everyone who participated." The winning pieces will be featured in our 2026 School Calendar, which will be available to buy soon on ParentPay. Thank you to everyone who took part, and I hope this becomes a yearly tradition! The winners are:

Y8: **Ciara Nugent** 'Cadet 13,' **Neave Ratcliffe** 'A Century Ahead,' **Caoimhe McLoughlin** 'The Whole World In My Hands,' **Elise Foronda** 'When Aliens Achieve Travel – 2525,'

Y9: **Isabella Brazier** 'You Are All Stardust,' **Elijah Nathaniel** 'The Astropup,'

Y10: **Carmen Cwynar** 'Spaceship Serenade,' **Oliwia Purgal** 'A New World – by The Aliens,'

Y11: **Hafsah Ahmed** 'Aurora on Mars,' **Alex Szpurka** 'Vibrant Void,' **Troy Servan** 'Void's Unviersal Concert,'

Y12: **Sophie Stevenson** 'Falling Through Space.'

World Mental Health Day – Thursday 10th October



We were proud to join thousands of others across the country in support of World Mental Health Day. This important initiative reminds our young people that they are never alone when it comes to their mental health.

To mark the occasion, our students and staff wore yellow accessories alongside their school uniform, showing solidarity and raising awareness in a vibrant and meaningful way.



Celebrating our Children



Ted Allen, Yr10 took part in the HSK Box Cup. This is a boxing competition that takes place over 2 days – and this year it took place in Denmark. Students from all around the world compete to win the coveted Gold Medal for their age group. We are extremely proud to announce that **Ted won the Gold Medal for the under 15's group**. He fought against someone from Hungary in the semi-final and then went onto win against someone from Switzerland in the final – WELL DONE Ted!

Open Evening Feedback

The open evening at the end of September was a resounding success in the sense that it showcased this great caring Catholic community. The staff, as always, were great. The comments from prospective parents were extremely positive. One comment said *"Every member of staff was enthusiastic and engaging. It was a real pleasure to speak to them"*. As ever, I am proud of the staff. They **always** rise to the occasion. However, the stars of the show were our great students. They were simply the best! They showcased the school by being themselves. Happy, confident, respectful children. I read dozens of comments from the evening. One said the students were *"absolutely wonderful"*. I concur with these simple words that reflect OUR students, YOUR children.

Finally...

On a lighter note ... a house on the local estate, very close to school is being sold and one of the selling points is that it is in the **'catchment for St Damian's'**. This just shows that it's not only the students who benefit from St Damian's being outstanding ... 😊 😊

I hope that the staff and students have a well- deserved October half-term break.

Shelley Logue

Mr Logue
Headteacher