

# Keynotes

January to February 2026



## Dear Parents and Carers

Last week, I enjoyed taking the Year 8 and Year 10 assemblies where the Gospel was from Matthew. Jesus sat down with his disciples and shared with them his top tips for wellbeing and the important things in life to focus on: The Beatitudes and what it means to be truly blessed. The

Greek word translated as 'blessed' or 'happy' is Makarios. It translates to more than just 'happy'. It implies a state of deep wellbeing, flourishing and being in the right place with God; a joy that external circumstances cannot touch.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" is the first of the Beatitudes and one we can learn a lot from. It relates to those who have no wealth or power to rely on, therefore, are most open to reliance on God. We try to encourage our students to be open to God, learning, honesty and to essentially open their eyes. Being trapped by the pressure of conformity, social media and a narrow view of the world can really stifle us, particularly at a young age.

At St Peter's, we judge the 'health' of our community not by our grades and top achievers but by how we treat the most vulnerable, the most in need, the lonely and those who are struggling. This half term, we have been judged as a community both outside the school and within, as we have dealt with one of the most significant challenges we have ever faced. Students, staff and families

have had to deal with a level of shock, uncertainty and confusion that we rarely experience. Great sadness has been the underlying emotion and our school community and Catholic family have drawn us in and helped us through. Our hearts go out to all the families most impacted by recent events and we continue to support our young people to continue their education whilst they come to terms with their feelings. I would like to

thank all of you for supporting your children and for the many messages of support we have received as a school.

As well as an endless supply of rain in January, we have enjoyed highlights at St Peter's this half term that have brought joy. Students continue to engage in all the activities that make for a rich school experience, supported by an energetic staff who enjoy spending time with your children. Trips to St Ives and Paris, Holocaust memorial events, theatre trips in Guildford and London, whole school careers day and many more have all contributed

to the opportunities students enjoy. Following the mock exams for both Year 11 and Year 13, we are into the final three months prior to exams starting. We wish all students the best as they embark on the final challenges.

God bless.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'T Miller'.

Mr T Miller, Headteacher





## A Visit From Sir Peter Bottomley

On Thursday 22nd January, our Economics, Politics and History students received a visit from the former MP of 49 years, Sir Peter Bottomley: the 'Father of the House' (the longest-serving continuous male MP) until 2024. Having witnessed years of political history, from the long premiership of Margaret Thatcher, to advocating for the UK to remain as part of the EU during Brexit in 2016, he shared many stories about the tumultuous happenings within Parliament and other political events.

Sir Peter began with a chilling recollection of an incident in a church in 1970's America wherein he witnessed, first-hand, the assassination of a priest. This served as a catalyst for him to discuss the importance of youth politics in a world where many such atrocities can occur, stating that in such a changing environment, the most important thing anyone can do is look out for each other and act with compassion.

Furthermore, Sir Peter outlined the continuous developments in careers for our generation because of alterations such as the movement on from typewriters to computers. Additionally, he shared his personal experiences and how they shaped him. We learnt about the changes in Thatcher's Britain, from when he first became an MP, to the modern day; his journey is truly inspiring.

Students were given the opportunity to ask questions which led to a lively discussion on current events such as US politics which Sir Peter described as "fluid", along with his personal experiences listening to speeches in the House of Commons, stressing that often the quietest people are the ones worth listening to. A question from an Economics student about the reason for Margaret Thatcher's decline by the end of her time in government led Bottomley to suggest that had she resigned at the end of her ten-year milestone, her legacy may have been viewed differently.

Overall, Sir Peter's visit was an insightful one and opened many students' minds about the world of politics and the changing opportunities open for them today.

**By Anna 12RO and Twishaa 12TE**



## Holocaust Memorial Talk

On 29th January 2026, St Peter's School welcomed a very special visitor, Bronia Snow, one of the children saved by Sir Nicholas Winton's Kindertransport. Born in Prague in 1927, Bronia shared her powerful story with class 9RO. She spoke about her happy early childhood, her parents' film business, and how life changed when the Germans marched into Czechoslovakia in 1939.

At just eleven years old, Bronia was placed - without her knowing - on a Kindertransport train to England. She remembered standing on the platform, frightened by the armed soldiers around her, unaware that she would never see her parents or her younger brother Leo again; they were deported to Theresienstadt and later to Auschwitz where they died.



The visit was organised by Ellie 9RO, who knows Bronia as a family friend and felt it was important for her class and their history teacher, Mr Power, to hear her story. Bronia's story reminded us of the importance of compassion, courage and remembering the past.  
**Written by Ellie 9RO**



## Year 7 Chaplaincy Ambassadors: Growing in Faith, Service and Leadership

We were excited to start the new year by launching our Year 7 Chaplaincy Ambassador programme which will support our Year 7s with the opportunity to live out their faith through serving and leading others in our school and the wider community.

As ambassadors, students have formed a chaplaincy team and will support with leading prayer, contributing to liturgical events and acting as positive role models living out our school rocks of love, service, justice, reflection and courage. The programme encourages students to deepen their



spiritual life, whilst developing their confidence, teamwork and a strong sense of belonging within our Catholic community.

Some of our ambassadors visited their old primary school, St Cuthbert Mayne, to help lead a whole school day of prayer. It was a fantastic responsibility, but also a brilliant opportunity to grow in faith and work together as a team. They also greatly enjoyed seeing their old classrooms which felt much smaller

than they remembered!

Throughout the day, there were many meaningful moments: our ambassadors loved reconnecting with familiar faces and helping the younger children explore their faith. One thing they noticed was that some children struggled with the writing activities which reminded them how important it is to adapt

tasks for different ages. It encouraged them to think creatively about how everyone can take part in prayer. They especially enjoyed watching pupils join in with the actions they taught and learning to pray using their hands. It was amazing to see how quickly they picked it up.

Our Year 7 Ambassadors are excited to keep developing their leadership skills and to continue serving our school community through chaplaincy.



## Art Masterpiece

This is my final piece for my A Level art project. It is mainly based on the works of Barbara Franc, Holly Cole and William Morris. I love this type of art because I think that it looks unique to incorporate textile and sculpture art. **By Isla 13TE**



**GAMES  
MATCHES  
PRIZES  
FUN!**



# **BASKETBALL CAMP**

## **FEBRUARY HALF-TERM**

*sign up at: [jessaustin.co.uk/basketball](http://jessaustin.co.uk/basketball)*

**CRANLEIGH 10AM-3PM**  
**16TH - 17TH YEARS 7-11**  
**18TH - 19TH YEARS 3-6**

**Get ready for an action-packed basketball camp.**

**Learn from experienced coaches, enjoy fun games, and play with your new teammates in afternoon matches. You may even win one of the cool prizes we're giving away daily!**

**It doesn't matter if you're a basketball expert or just keen to try something new - everyone is welcome!**





*"I'm very grateful for the warm welcome I've received from the St Peter's community. Both the staff and students have helped my transition to Sixth Form feel seamless and enjoyable. I've valued the enrichment programmes offered that provide a wide variety of opportunities to develop new skills while helping to meet new people across the year group."*  
**Maya 12TE**

## Year 12 Update

The Year 12 cohort of students have made an extremely impressive start to their Sixth Form journey; they have embraced every extra opportunity and tackled the challenge of adapting to A Level study with grace and determination.

Our whole school focus this year is Belonging and Year 12 have played a pivotal role in ensuring that every student feels welcomed at school. In Belonging Week in November, Year 12 students led sections of assemblies, contributed to tutor time activities and ran lunchtime sessions for students in the lower school. Additionally, an overwhelming majority of the year group have willingly given up their time throughout the autumn term for service opportunities. Some examples include Peer Coaching, Lifestyle First Mentors, helping Year 13 with RAG Week or by volunteering for school events. This year group are always willing and enthusiastic to help; their commitment to service is unparalleled. Year 12 have also engaged fully with the personal development provision offered in Sixth Form,

completing outstanding careers group presentations and enjoyed the multitude of options in our Enrichment Programme. They have also fully engaged in tutor time where they have considered their study habits, had the chance to get to know each other and explored ideas from a variety of self-improvement books including '4,000 weeks' by Oliver Burkeman and 'The First 90 Days' by Michael D. Watkins. In such a busy first term, it is important that students have the opportunity to socialise and blow off some steam. The Winter Ball at the beginning of December was a stand out



event and it was lovely to see the students having so much fun together. Additionally, at the beginning of this term, we took Year 12 bowling during one of their enrichment sessions, further cementing their community (and competitive!) spirit.

The students have been working so hard in their subjects this year and many of them have already established fantastic revision habits. With Year 12 Mocks after Easter and Work Experience the following week, this next term is an opportunity for the students to push themselves beyond their comfort zone and see what they are capable of. I am in no doubt that the exams will bring plenty of opportunities to praise and celebrate the year group.

I am extremely proud to be Head of Year to such a fantastic group of students and I am excited to see them continue to go from strength to strength as they continue their Sixth Form experience.



## Mental Health at St Peter's: Physical Health and Healthy Lifestyles

At St Peter's, we are continuing our commitment to supporting every child's wellbeing and this half term, our focus has been on the NHS Pillar of Physical Health. We have been exploring how small, everyday habits can make a substantial difference to both body and mind.

Across PE, tutor time and Children's Mental Health Week, we have highlighted the powerful link between movement and mental health. Students have developed their knowledge on how regular physical activity is proven to boost mood, improve sleep, reduce worries and support focus in the classroom. As a school, we are encouraging students to think about what types of movement help them

feel calm, grounded and energised, for example, walking, stretching, team sports or dance.

As families, modelling active habits can be a simple yet powerful way to support wellbeing. Evening walks, weekend activities or even five minutes of stretching before school can all create positive routines that support healthy minds.

A helpful reflection question to discuss at home could be: what activity helps you, and your child, feel more focused or calm?

### Useful Resources for Families

- **NHS Every Mind Matters** Physical Activity & Mental Health
- **Mind** Physical Activity & Mental Health

- **National College Guide: Health & Fitness Apps** <https://v2.nationalcollege.com/guides/health-and-fitness-apps>

### Key Mental Health and Wellbeing Dates

Here are some national dates we are signposting and celebrating in school:

- **World Teen Mental Wellness Day**  
2nd March: Raising awareness of the mental health challenges teenagers face.
- **World Sleep Day**  
13th March: Promoting healthy sleep habits: an essential part of both physical and mental health.
- **Neurodiversity Celebration Week**  
16th –22nd March: A week celebrating strengths, understanding differences and promoting belonging for all.



## St Peter's Keys

The St Peter's Keys this half term was awarded to Mia in 11RO for her work providing meals to families at Christmas. The Gaskin family and supporters have been preparing and distributing Christmas lunch for those in need for several years. This year they provided over 760

meals, crackers and treats all delivered by a team of willing volunteers. Mia had the idea eight years ago to provide an extra space at their dining table for someone who otherwise would not get a Christmas meal. Since then, it has expanded from their house to a village hall and now on to a delivery service, and all the food is donated by local suppliers. Well done and thank you, Mia.



## Hercules Theatre Trip

48 Year 7 students travelled to the West End on a dark January evening to see the fantastic show 'Hercules'.

The stage set, props and special effects were amazing and the student sat next to me kept asking how did they make it happen? Magical.

The Theatre Royal at Drury Lane is a

stunning building and it was a delight to hear some of our students passing comment on how "posh" the toilets were - easily impressed! Some others were also heard muttering about how expensive an ice cream is these days!

The students behaved impeccably and were a credit to the school. They immersed themselves in the show and

the only sound louder than their applause at the end was their singing on the bus as we returned home. So, whilst it was a late finish, it was a great night out and worth a few yawns the next day.

I hope we can get tickets to see 'Paddington' next time and I am sorry we could not take the entire year group.

## RSE Day Review

**Overview** This week, Year 11 students spent their last RSE Day studying important life skills, which will be beneficial especially in their next steps to Sixth Form and colleges.

**Drugs** In this section, we spent an hour studying different sorts of drugs that we may be faced with later in life. We also covered the criminal sentences and looked at the side effects which can include liver failure. This was a real eye opener to many students and encouraged us to all steer clear if we had not already been convinced by the law aspect.

**Equality** For this section, we spent time looking at gender roles in society; the boys focused more on toxic

masculinity and what that means. We were encouraged to avoid falling into this ideology which many people in the modern world often do. This also linked well to our section on mental health and how peer pressure can often make us turn to toxic masculinity.

**Mental Health** As a year group approaching a period of stress in the next few months, this was a key aspect of the day, and we were encouraged to talk about our feelings. The teacher was also prepared to share things about their own mental health, coping strategies and what it means to keep a positive wellbeing which will help not just in the coming exams but also in the future.

**Boundaries** This was another engaging session as many in the year group are/

have/will be in a relationship with someone either romantically and/or in a friendship. We talked about what we are comfortable with in a relationship and how to effectively set it. We also talked about our own flaws and how we can manage our anger in a relationship effectively and respectfully.

**Bereavement** In my opinion, this was the most important part of the day as many people will start to experience death in their lives. We discussed the different ways we can manage grief and how to help someone in grief. Teachers were also prepared to share their own experiences of death, helping students to understand death on a more personal level.

**Written by Huw 11JP**

# Our Year 12 Mental Health Champions

One of the defining characteristics of the 21st century is a drive to promote mental health. Books on mental health fill the bookstores, social media is rife with self-care routines and scientists are studying links between mental health and good grades. For all that new and positive energy, mental health is still a relatively new concept and there remains work to do to break down stigmas around it.

St Peter's' Mental Health Champions are here to help and do just this. We are a group of Sixth Form students who, along with Mr Sumner and Mrs Fraser, are helping to boost the mental health of our school community. We're dissolving stigmas by addressing mental health on a regular basis (such as in our assemblies and festivals) and working to provide every student at St Peter's with a toolbox of mental health strategies. Below, Mental Health Champions Renee and I share the exciting ways we have been doing this.

## What have we achieved this term:

### Training Sessions

Recently, we were trained up by Mr Sumner on how to support younger students on enhancing their wellbeing.

In the past few sessions, the Mental Health Champions have learnt how to deal with struggling situations (for example, sleep struggles, stress, difficulties in a relationship, etc.) through active listening without judgement and supporting as much as we can. The purpose of the training is to obtain the techniques and skills to communicate, so people can feel safe and connected in the community. We hope that we can improve the mental health and wellbeing in the community, and we are working towards our goals.

### Wellbeing and Thrive Club

The Wellbeing and Thrive Club is a new club that corresponds to a theme of wellbeing each term. It is held on every Friday (Week A) and the Mental Health Champions host different activities related to our theme. In this term, we are focusing on physical health and wellbeing. Some activities include walk and talk, movement for wellbeing



workshop and active games. If you are not interested in wellbeing, this can also be a space to socialise and relax. There were many students coming in just for fun and relaxing their mind. Previously, there were people bringing in board games to play with.

### Year 7 Safe Space

For students that may find the playground slightly overwhelming at times, the Year 7 Safe Space provides a calmer environment where students can chat, play board games and connect with others. If your child is interested, you or your child can speak to Mrs Hegg, Head of Year 7, for more information.

### Assemblies

In an assembly, Mental Health Champions like Renee and I are given a unique opportunity to address every student in a year group. We often promote our clubs, but I think the assemblies mean more. Younger students see older peers on stage talking about mental health. While this is no remarkable feat on its own, it gets the community thinking about mental health and shows classes that other students are acknowledging mental health and talking about it, not just the teachers. Mental health impacts each and every one of us and it is

prevalent in every aspect of society.

Renee and I particularly enjoy teaming up to deliver our message to assemblies. We aim for students to feel comfortable enough to come and talk to us. I believe that many students are just looking for an opportunity to open up and talk; we hope that they'll see the mental health team and our drop-in clubs as an opportunity to do just that.

### Our Mental Health Tips

**Roxane's tips:** Get outdoors! This is the focus of this half term's Wellbeing and Thrive Club and it's one I love. Go for a run or take a walk; I guarantee you will feel so much better for it. It's proven by science!

**Renee's tips:** Sleep: sleeping at least eight hours is essential for your health, sleeping allows the body and mind to regulate. People with enough sleep often have fewer negative emotions and reduced risk of anxiety and depression.

**Diet:** a healthy diet can help to improve the brain function and supports mental wellbeing. A regular, healthy diet helps to prevent extreme changes in blood sugar levels which can stabilise your mood.

**Written by Roxanne 12BA**