Dear Families,

Next week, the final week of the term is a short week with term ending at 1230 hrs on Wednesday 20th December. Owing to this short week, this newsletter will be the last of the term.

Reflecting upon this term it has been excellent. All members of our school have worked incredibly hard. Buoyed by exam results that significantly exceeded the national average and placed us in the top 5% of schools nationally, the momentum of school improvement continues to ensure positive change to the benefit of all of our students. The progress being made has been acknowledged through external audits and I am delighted that these audits "view that the school has improved over the last 12 months". Supporting this view there are many positives to draw upon and I will look to celebrate these as you read through this edition of our newsletter.

Now the Christmas holidays are almost upon us, I would like to take the opportunity to wish all of our families a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy 2024. Thank you for all of the support you have extended to all of us at St John's School. We look forward to welcoming our students back to school on Thursday 4th January 2024 at 8.00hrs

Upcoming School Events

<u>Next Week</u>	
Monday 18th December	Key Stage 3 Reward Trip
	Key Stage 4 Reward Trip
Tuesday 19th December	Key Stage 3 Reward Trip
Wednesday 20th December	Key Stage 5 Reward Trip
	End of Term : School closes at 1230hrs
Week Commencing 1st January	
Thursday 4th January	Term 2 starts—All students return to school
	Mock Examination Catch up
Friday 5th January	Mock Examination Catch up
Week Commencing 8th January	
Monday 8th January	Mock Examination Catch up
Tuesday 9th January	Year 7 Parent Afternoon : 1430—1700 hrs
Thursday 11th January	SJS Coffee Morning 0800—1000 hrs
	Bookings required via <u>SJS.enquiries@modschools.org</u>









This week at St John's School in pictures



I enjoyed the opportunity to form part of the judging panel for the Design Ventura competition. Students presented their design ideas allowing us to choose a winning group (left) who now progress to the national round. Well done to all of the students who presented some outstanding ideas. The winning design was 'Lose Conetrol' an innovative idea that catches melting ice-cream from a wafer cone.—loved it!

Our Key Stage 3 girls competed in an interschool netball competition earlier this week.





Our Sixth Form Christmas Dinner took place on Thursday.



Students involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award had to work together to mummify one another!



Student Emails

You will have hopefully seen the letter attached to last weeks newsletter. The letter from the Department of Children's Services outlined the need to ensure full GDPR compliance. As mentioned this will result in changes in the use of applications and software packages in schools. Further information will follow in the New Year, however a key change happening over the Christmas Holiday is the renaming of student individual emails to ensure they are anonymised. Students will be provided with their new emails in January. We expect the transition to be smooth with students subsequently being able to access their historic emails and classwork. As this transition is undertaken there maybe a temporary loss of access to Google Classroom and/or Epraise, however it is expected that should this happen we will be able to resolve any issues early in the new term.

Year 7 Parents' Afternoon

Tuesday 9th January 1430–1700 hrs

Have you made your appointments? Appointments must be made in advance of the Parent Afternoon. Appointments can only be made through our Parent Portal, EPraise.



Trouble Registering?

Should you encounter difficulties it is possible that the email address we have for you is out of date. To update your email address or to notify us of difficulties please email Mr Barber who will gladly assist you in logging on. Mr Barber's email is <u>Dave.Barber@modschools.org</u>



www.facebook.com/stjohnsschoolcyprus

Let's be friends!

Be sure to add us as a friend of Facebook to keep up to date with what is happening at St John's School



End of Term Reflections

Guiding everything we do at St John's School is our commitment to our moral purpose of *eliminating educational disadvantage caused by mobility*. Co-constructed with school stakeholders in the Summer of 2022, we are guided by eight whole school improvement priorities and further supported by our three new school values of *Integrity, Commitment and Respect*.



Safeguarding provision is '**exemplary'** and supports other MOD Schools in improving their provision.



ST JOHN'S SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL OFFER

The educational offer is consistently **'Good'** ensuring St John's School ranks in the **Top 5%** of schools nationally for student progress.

Eliminating educational disadvantage caused by mobility

ATTENDANCE

Student attendance is **above 96%**, exceeding the national average.

STAFF WELLBEING

Staff at St John's School feel valued and motivated by a shared moral purpose. There is a collective sense of achievement. Employee turnover is less than 5%

INCLUSION

The learning needs of our varied and diverse student community are effectively met through well planned lessons that provide **support and challenge**, underpinned by a caring pastoral ethos.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Students are **highly satisfied** at St John's School, possessing an attitude towards their learning that exceeds that of all other students nationally.

STUDENT MOBILITY

St John's School is a centre of best practice; eliminating educational disadvantage caused by mobility. Student progress exceeds 0.38

COMMUNITY PRIDE

The community is **proud** of St John's School, celebrating the strengths and successes of a school which exceeds their child's previous school experience.

As we have now arrived at the end of the first full term, I felt it appropriate to offer you my reflections upon the progress we have made and how we will continue our delivery of each priority as we move into Term 2 and the new calendar year. Supporting me in reflection are the views and opinions of a wide variety of stakeholders, including students, staff, parents and the observations recorded through an external review undertaken in October of this year.



Safeguarding Provision

Safeguarding provision is **'exemplary'** and supports other MOD Schools in improving their provision.

The key priority for St John's School has and will always be to ensure our safeguarding provision continues to be exemplary. In November we welcomed a review into our safeguarding provision. I am pleased that the significant improvements were recognised and it was acknowledged that the "school is more vigilant, and it maintains a positive safeguarding approach of 'it could happen here'. Particular praise was afforded to our Designated Safeguarding Lead and her team who have ensured "the school is now open, professional and transparent. This includes sharing information with others and actively seeking, when required, expert advice".

The report cites that, as a school, we are "fully aware, responsive and proactive" to issues of a safeguarding nature. You will recall that I have previously communicated the work we have done as a school to address the inappropriate language used by some students and I am grateful for your ongoing support. This work will continue into the new term and will remain a priority along with additional priorities for ongoing improvement that will respond to new safeguarding guidance to be published by the Department for Children's Services when it is published in January 2024.





Educational Offer

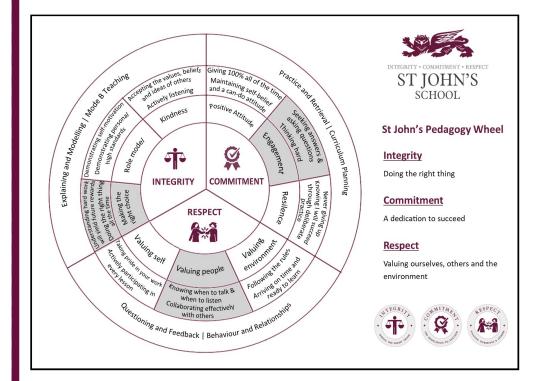
The educational offer is consistently 'Good' ensuring St John's School ranks in the Top 5% of schools

nationally for student progress.

Ranking in the Top 5% of schools nationally for student progress; we have improved the educational offer provided by St John's School. However, the task is far from done and we are clear in what we need to do to bring about further improvements as we move into the new calendar year. These improvements largely sit around iensuring consistency across our school to ensure students receive the same high quality learning experiences across the curriculum.

This is being prioritised through our pedagogy wheel and a focus upon:

- Engagement : by providing lesson opportunities to allow students to think hard, seek answers and ask questions.
- Valuing People : by providing lesson opportunities that facilitate students to collaborate effectively
- Making the right choice : by creating a school culture that values hard work and doing the right thing



- In lessons students will see
- Learning objectives and success criteria
- AFL Strategies that ensure class understanding
- Effective feedback
- Collaboration
- Challenge to think hard
- A literacy focus
- All underpinned by effective planning

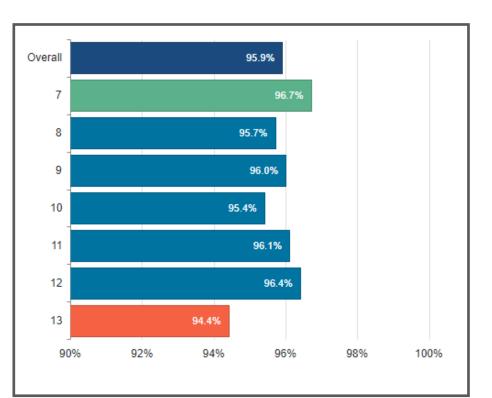


Attendance

Student attendance is **above 96%**, exceeding the national average.

Overall percentage attendance stands at 95.9%, matching our target and exceeding the national average by 4%. The current attendance builds upon successful attendance outcomes for the academic year 2022-2023. I am extremely grateful to the support and partnership that exists between home and school in helping to ensure excellent student attendance.

	School (%)	National avg. (%)	Cyprus Sec. sch. avg. (%)	Cyprus all sch. avg. (%)
Attendance	95.9%	92%	94.8%	95.8%
Absence	4%	8%	5.2%	4.2%
Persistent absence	9.3%	NA	15.3%	11.5%
Authorised absence	3.1%	5%	3.7%	3.5%
Unauthorised absence	0.8%	3%	1.5%	0.7%





December 8th



Inclusion

The learning needs of our varied and diverse student community are effectively met through well planned lessons that provide **support and challenge**, underpinned by a caring pastoral ethos.

<u>Support</u>

Introduced as an explicit school improvement priority at the beginning of this academic year, we continue to place a growing emphasis upon the support and challenge provided in lessons. Our SENDCO, Andrew Holden joins, each week, members of our Senior Leadership Team for paired lesson visits. The sole focus of these learning walks is to evaluate and promote how well strategies aimed at supporting students with specific educational needs are being used. Aided by this focus we have seen a growing awareness amongst staff for the different strategies and their subsequently effective use in lessons. It was noted in the external visit that "the information provided by the SENDCO regarding pupils' additional needs is comprehensive", however the use of this information is inconsistent. We have now ensured that teaching staff have access to all of the information and have insisted that class seating plans are redesigned to make better use of this information and other student data, such as reading ages, prior attainment data and current assessment grades. To support the work being undertaken by Andrew, we have asked that in the New Year the DCS School Improvement Team visit our school to undertake a specific in depth visit looking at SEND provision.

Challenge

In addition to ensuring we get the support right, we also want to further improve the challenge in lessons, particularly for our more able students. Synonymous with our Educational Priority, we have agreed with staff that effective challenge is achieved when teachers:

- Ensure that well selected/structured activities in lessons encourage all students to think hard about their learning
- Increase the opportunities for discussion between pupils as a valuable tool for deepening thinking and discussing learning

These actions, along with the other pedagogical priorities identified to support our wider educational offer have already begun to feature as part of the work of our Lead Teachers. This work will be further strengthened through faculty meetings, where teachers have the opportunity to collaboratively plan lessons with these pedagogical priorities in mind.

Student Mobility

St John's School is a centre of best practice; eliminating educational disadvantage caused by mobility.

Student progress exceeds 0.38

Stage 4 and 5

Students have this week completed their Mock Examinations and in the New Year some of our BTEC students will sit their final exams in subjects like Sport and Health and Social Care. Early indications from the Mock Exams, show improvements from earlier assessments.

Reports for Year 11 and 13 will be issued after Christmas when all mock examination papers have been marked and grades collected. Parents / carers of students in Year 11 and 13 will be invited to a short afternoon meeting on <u>Tuesday</u>

<u>16th January at 13.30pm</u> in the School Hall when we will issue all mock exam grades to students.

A wide variety of interventions have been employed over the past half term. These have included changes in tutor group provision, small group and 1-1 tuition, a targeted mentoring programme and the use of walking talking mocks to name a few. The impact of each strategy will be evaluated using the mock exam result data and further focused to support the final exam run in that begins in earnest in January.

SCHOOL St John's School Year 8 Autumn Term Report									
Student Name: Tutor Group:									
					Reason for concern				
Subject	Teacher name	Target band	Current Band	Effort	1	2	3		
English	Miss H Harper	Intermediate	Foundation	3	Homework		10.00		
Maths	Ms K Stevenson	Intermediate	Intermediate	2					
Science	Mrs J Byers	Intermediate	Foundation	2					
Art	Mr P Bougeard	Intermediate	Intermediate	2					
Computing	Mr G Kingston-Bray	Intermediate	Intermediate	2					
Design & Technology	Ms L Dunmore	Intermediate	Intermediate	2					
Drama	Miss H Stonier	Intermediate	Foundation	3	Engagement				
French	Mr J Gleed	Intermediate	Foundation	2					
Geography	Ms C Sofianos	Intermediate	Foundation	2					
History	Mr J Strang	Intermediate	Intermediate	1					
Music	Mrs J Edwards	Intermediate	Foundation	2					
Physical Education	Mrs K Gardiner	Intermediate	Higher	1					
Religious Education	Ms S Papaioannou	Intermediate	Intermediate	2					

All students in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 have received their end of term report today. Their report will tell you for each subject how they are progressing against their target bands in Key Stage 3 and target grades in Year 10 and 12. It will also give you information about how much effort they are showing. These improved reports are far more robust than those of Informed previous years. by accurate, standardised and moderated assessments we are able to report with accuracy as to how each child is progressing against the new bespoke subject target bands and grades







Staff Wellbeing

Staff at St John's School are valued; motivated by a shared moral purpose there is a collective sense of purpose and achievement. **Employee turnover is less than 5%**

I am extremely appreciative of our staff, who irrespective of role, have leant me their full support in effecting an extensive programme of change at St John's School. The diligence, professionalism and collaborative spirit of our staff was recognised and praised in the external reviews that have taken place since September. The comments made by staff to the respective review teams are extremely encouraging and I am proud to share their sentiments below:

- They feel energised by the new leadership in school, they welcome stability and clear direction
- Staff are unanimous in their view that school has improved over the last 12 months
- Morale is improving, this is intrinsically linked to the feeling of stability after a period of change
- They feel listened to and valued

Moving into another calendar year I hope that I am able to maintain this feeling as we continue to bring about whole school improvement.

Student Satisfaction

Students are highly satisfied at St John's School, possessing an attitude towards their learning that

exceeds that of all other students nationally

Throughout the past term there have been frequent opportunities to canvas student opinion about their school and their attitude towards their learning. Students possess an attitude towards their learning that exceeds that of all others nationally as measured through the Pupil Attitude to Self and School Survey. However, we have been able to extract further detail and opinion through our student focus groups who report:



"They are proud of their school and complimentary of the relationships they have with their teachers, they feel safe and enjoy school" "Behaviour across year 9 has improved"

"They welcome the support they are given by teachers to settle into school. Transition into KS5 is well managed and much appreciated by pupils"

"At times they hear or are victims of inappropriate insults from other pupils"

"They do not feel that teachers are consistent when dealing with poor behaviour"



Community Pride

The community is **proud** of St John's School, celebrating the strengths and successes of a school which exceeds their child's previous school experience.

I continue to be encouraged by the support you afford our staff and I and the faith you entrust in our agenda for whole school improvement. It has been great to meet with so many of your over the past term and showcase our school as part of a tour, through the Headteacher's Surgery, Parent Forum, a Parent Afternoon and/or one of the different school events we have held. Community attendance to these events and the feedback from you that we receive continues to be extremely positive. I am confident that our community reputation is improving and hope that it continues to do so as we move into 2024.

Below are some of the images collected over the past term that truly celebrate the strengths and successes of our school.















St John's School Writers

This week, we have some festive treats in the form of some short Christmas stories written by Year 7, as well as a powerful piece of writing from a Year 10 student, set in the WW1 trenches.

Merry Christmas from the English and Drama Faculty!

The Gift of Love

Once upon a time, in a small town nestled deep within a snow-covered forest, there lived a young girl named Emily. Emily's heart was filled with warmth and cheer, but there was one wish she longed to fulfil.

On Christmas Eve, as Emily nestled under her warm blanket, her wish came true. A magical snow globe appeared in her room, filled with swirling flakes and a cosy cottage. Emily picked it up and shook it, and to her surprise, a figure appeared inside. It was a kind-looking old man, wearing a red coat and hat.

"Welcome to Christmas Village," he said, his voice filled with joy. "I am Santa Claus, and I am here to grant your wish."

Emily's eyes widened with excitement. She couldn't believe her wish had come true. Santa led her through Christmas Village, where the streets were filled with decorations and lights. They passed shops selling handmade toys and bakeries filled with delicious treats.

As they reached the centre of town, Santa introduced Emily to the residents. Each person she met brought a smile to her face, reminding her of the importance of kindness and love. Finally, Santa led Emily to a beautiful cottage. "This is your house," he said. Emily ran inside and found herself surrounded by a cosy fireplace, a Christmas tree adorned with ornaments, and stockings hanging above the fireplace.

"Thank you, Santa," Emily said, her voice filled with gratitude. "You have given me the greatest gift of all – love."

And so, Emily spent the rest of her Christmas in Christmas Village, spreading love and joy to everyone she met. She learned that the true spirit of Christmas was not in the presents but in the simple acts of kindness and love that fill our hearts.

Luke H-S (Y7)



St John's School Writers

Christmas Story

Gerard was only little when he first saw Santa. He grew up in pitiful settings, from hospitals to broken homes; yet he always sustained his love for the festive season. Santa was his favourite concept.Specifically, concept rather than person. He had stopped believing that things like that existed far too early in his short life.

All was routine at home, until Gerard got diagnosed with lung cancer, when it became a steady fall from health to decay. Nobody realises how much they truly love something until they lose it. His parents supposedly felt this effect too greatly to subside during this process of decreasing health, but all that they had done felt too terrible to forgive. His life was as good as gone, and his lungs were filling with fluid too fast to be drained again.

Gerard had been told of 'Make-A-Wish' before and knew the idea of it semi-well. He wanted to wish to see Santa, so he asked a nurse: "Would I be able to meet Santa?"

She replied, "Possibly. We'll see what we can do for you." She arranged his medicine on the rolling table, accompanied by a paper cup of water.

"Gerard, wake up". She nudged him slightly, after Gerard had fallen asleep into the night. It was raining. The nurse was surrounded by four people, dressed casually. One spoke to him.

"Hello, Gerard dear. We are from 'Make-A-Wish' and heard that you were eligible for our services and wanted to see Santa. We've managed to get you out for the day! What do you think?"

Gerard had never had someone speak to him softly like that before and replied, "Thank you, miss. I'd really like that."

Gerard arrived at the Christmas Fair with his big medical appliances keeping his body working and a team of 'Make-A-Wish' workers. He had never seen so many shiny lights and they hypnotised him. He asked, "Where's Santa miss?" and the worker asked him to follow her.

They passed on elves' maze draped in dazzling colours of red and green. He approached Santa's little meet and greet stall and joined the line.

"Don't be silly young boy, haha!" The worker skipped right past the whole line towards Santa. His beard was so perfectly white that it was just as beautiful as falling snow. Gerard sat on his red lap and Santa spoke to him.



St John's School Writers

Christmas Story continued...

"I suppose you're Gerard. I've heard of you. What do you want for Christmas?" There was a tremble in his voice as he wasn't comfortable with seeing someone as unhealthy as Gerard. Reality hurts sometimes, he guessed. "I can assure you that you will get everything you could ever want for Christmas if you live through this month and stay strong for me."

"I want to be normal for Christmas, Santa." Gerard said.

Santa bit back.

"Gerard, son, you're already as perfect as you could possibly be. Cancer simply makes you stronger than others, but that's good."

Gerard stayed silent then. He would remember this day as it gave him hope and encouraged him to keep on fighting for himself and all the helpless people, such as his father, who had felt hopeless ever since Gerard was diagnosed. Then he promised that he would fight and told the workers it was time to go home. And so they did.

Gerard fought his disease and asked his parents if they could try to fight for their marriage and love as well. He asked his father to get better for him and help his mum get through things. Despite his fighting, Gerard passed away by the end of the winter season. But Gerard had thought that was okay – he was luckier than some, whose lives are far too short-lived. He was happy and many don't get that opportunity.

Sophiella E (Y7)





St John's School Writers

The Elf's Story

Once upon a time in the North Pole, there was an elf named Candy Cane and she was a mischievous elf. She was sat at her desk making and packing presents for the children. She used to be in charge of presents but she put a stink bomb in a present...luckily Santa caught her and she got removed from 'Head of Presents'. While she was sat down doing nothing (as usual), she got a call from Santa, who asked her to go to his office.

Santa's office was full of lists from all the children around the world. He had piles of candy canes and chocolate next to him. It was a high-roofed building full of drawers for every child in the world. Candy Cane walked into his office and Santa exclaimed:

"Ah, Candy Cane! My special but mischievous elf! I'm very sorry to tell you this but...you're on the naughty list and if you don't get on the good list, you will be banished from the North Pole!"

"WHAT?!" shouted Candy Cane.

"I'm sorry, Candy Cane", said Santa.

"Okay Santa. I'll be better, I promise. Actually, I pinky promise!" proclaimed Candy Cane.

"Oh, Candy Cane, you know pinky promises can't be broken. It's the rule!" exclaimed Santa.

"I know", replied Candy Cane.

Candy Cane was off on her mission to become better. She started doing kind acts: she would help old elves cross the candy road; she helped pick up sweet wrappers off the chocolate path; and she helped Mrs Claus bake cookies and treats for Santa. After her hard work, she went to Santa to see if she was on the nice list.

"Okay, C-C-C-Candy Cane. Ummm, nope. Not yet Candy Cane. One more big good deed should do the trick though", declared Santa.

"What? But – but I've done so much!" huffed Candy Cane.

Candy Cane walked away and whispered to herself. "How am I not on the nice list yet? It's so unfair!" Candy walked around the elf village (where all the elves lived) thinking about what she could do.

"AHHHHHHH!" screamed a big crowd of elves.

"What's going on?" shouted Candy Cane.

"THE YETI GOT OUT!"



St John's School Writers

The Elf's Story

Candy Cane ran as fast as she could to the Yeti's cage but he was gone. She ran and ran until she saw the Yeti. He was massive and coloured white and blue with a mix of green. Not many elves knew this, but Candy Cane used to be the Yeti's trainer (just in case of attack) and she knew how to save the North Pole! She ran to the market to find mint candies. She found a store that sold them and put elf bucks on the table to pay. Candy Cane walked to the Yeti calmly, holding the mints out, and she walked slowly to the Yeti's cage, still holding the mint, with the Yeti following behind her. She put the Yeti back in his cage and a crowd of elves surrounded her, exploding in applause.

"CANDY CANE! In my office, now!" shouted Santa on the speakers. Candy Cane let out a big gulp and walked to his office.

"Well done! You're on the nice list! Proclaimed Santa.

"Really? Thank goodness!" beamed Candy Cane.

Candy Cane walked back to her house, as bright as the sun. "Another happy Christmas", cheered Candy Cane as soon as she got home.

Beth T (Y7)





St John's School Writers

GCSE Imaginative Writing – The Trenches

The sun rose, shining a vicious light on no man's land. The vast valleys of destruction lit up like a fire. The death was visible. Like a lighter, one switch and you could see around you. What was once a field full of beautiful scenery and luscious wildlife that roamed had been turned into a miserable hell on earth, with huge craters which ripped the ground up. A fiery barbaric wasteland was now visible for the soldiers.

The soldiers peeped out to see the sun shining on death and destruction, their eyes fixed onto the enemy trench. War changes people, yet there were no birds chirping, no green grass in sight, no clean fresh air. It changes everything.

"Soon to be the end soldiers, do not dwell", instructed the Corporal. The soldiers slumped around the trenches which were nearly as bad as the outside land. Full of infections and disease, the worst infection being war itself. Everyone was tired and wanted the war to end so that they could live their lives on luscious fields with their families. That was the only thing keeping them moving.

"Nightfall is upon us soldiers. Everyone knows what job they have to do. In case of attack, be ready", the General bellowed as all the soldiers scurried around the hell hole. Some soldiers were on look out, some asleep, some even cooking food. Silence. Not a peep. Outside the trenches, there was only the sound of the enemies. They were louder than usual. Most nights were silent. Suddenly, everything went quiet. At first, it was confusion, but seconds later, not so much.

Bombs whistled in the air and the soldiers screamed, all hurrying into bomb shelters. The bombs dropped; screams and cries followed every blast; the General ordered his men to attack but they couldn't hear over the bombs burying the trench. The bombs stopped for a second or two. Then the gas came, followed by the enemy troops. The soldiers all hurried for anything to save them from the death air.

Sun rise. Silence once more. The sun gave beams of light that lasered onto the earth. The grass had grown back greener than ever; the birds chirped and the rabbits hopped and the wildlife bloomed. War can change everything, but the only thing that can change a war is for it to end. Over 100 years ago the land was death itself and now, a beautiful landscape.

Tyler L (Y10)