



# THE BLUE COAT SCHOOL WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

## A CELEBRATION OF MUSIC AND COMMUNITY: BLUE COAT SCHOOL CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT

On Tuesday 9th and Wednesday 10th December 2025, The Blue Coat School welcomed hundreds of families, friends, alumni, and members of our wider community to our annual Christmas Carol Concert; a much-loved tradition that filled both the Chapel and Shirley Hall with warmth, joy and festive cheer.

Across both evenings, pupils from every year group showcased their exceptional musical talent through a beautifully crafted programme of traditional choral favourites, congregational carols and exciting seasonal performances. The school choir delivered moments of deep reflection and breathtaking harmony, their voices resonating through the Chapel and capturing the true spirit of Christmas.

Alongside these classic carols, the atmosphere was lifted even further by the upbeat sounds of our Jazz Band, who added sparkle and fun with festive swing and popular Christmas numbers. Their stylish performances brought smiles to every face and more than a few toes tapping in the audience!

What truly made the event special was the incredible sense of community. Families gathered proudly to watch their children perform, students cheered one another on, and staff worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the concert ran seamlessly. Everywhere you turned, there were scenes of celebration, Christmas jumpers, warm greetings, shared laughter, and the unmistakable excitement of the holiday season.

Events like these remind us of the strong traditions, creativity, and community spirit that define The Blue Coat School. We extend our heartfelt thanks to every performer, volunteer, and member of staff who dedicated hours of rehearsal and preparation to make this concert such a magical highlight of the school year.

As we move towards the end of term, the music and joy of these two wonderful evenings will continue to echo throughout our school, a perfect start to our Christmas celebrations.



## A MAGICAL DAY AT THE BLUE COAT SCHOOL: WINTER MARKETS & CHOIR REHEARSAL

On Sunday 7th December, The Blue Coat School was filled with festive spirit as we welcomed families, friends, and members of the community to our annual Winter Markets. Taking place throughout the day, the event provided a fantastic celebration of creativity and collaboration - a true reflection of the vibrant life of our school.

The markets showcased a wide variety of stalls offering handmade crafts, Christmas treats, thoughtful gifts, and student-led fundraising initiatives. Students from Sewing Club, along with other pupils, put in an enormous amount of effort in the weeks leading up to the event, planning their projects, preparing resources, and proudly running their stalls. Their enthusiasm, teamwork, and entrepreneurial skills shone through, creating a lively and enjoyable atmosphere for all who attended.

Throughout the day, visitors also had the special opportunity to hear our choir rehearsing for the upcoming Christmas Concert in the chapel. The beautiful choral performances offered a glimpse of the musical excellence we are excited to share later this month. The hard work and commitment of our talented singers, supported by our dedicated music staff, brought a magical touch to the occasion.

We extend our sincere thanks to every member of staff who helped make the Winter Markets such a success, from coordinating logistics and supporting our pupils, to ensuring a warm and well-organised experience for guests. Their combined efforts, along with the creativity and energy of our students, made the day truly memorable and a wonderful way to begin our festive celebrations.



## “NOT FOR ONESELF BUT FOR ALL” LIVING OUR MOTTO AT CHRISTMAS

At The Blue Coat School, our motto “Not for oneself but for all” is more than a phrase on our crest it reflects who we are and what we aspire to be as a community. It reminds us that our actions, however small, can make a positive difference to others. At Christmas time, this message becomes especially meaningful.

Christmas is a season of kindness, generosity and togetherness. It encourages us to think beyond ourselves and to notice the needs of those around us. In school, this spirit can be seen in the way pupils support each other — whether it’s helping a friend who feels unsure, including someone new, or cheering on classmates during performances and activities.

We also see the motto come to life through volunteering and fundraising efforts that help our wider community. From charity collections and food donations to pupils giving their time to support local groups or visiting care settings, these acts shine a light on the real impact young people can have when they choose to put others first.

Even the simple joys of the season - sharing festive music, creating handmade gifts, or offering a warm smile to someone who needs it - reflect the heart of our motto. Christmas invites us to show gratitude, celebrate friendship, and remember that every member of our school family belongs.

As we approach the holidays, we are proud of how our pupils continue to live out “Not for oneself but for all.” It is through these everyday moments of compassion and service that we build a stronger, kinder community - one where everyone feels valued and supported.



## SUPPORT THE EXPERIENCES THAT HELP SHAPE STUDENTS

From clubs and competitions to creative projects and performances, our students gain so much from extracurricular opportunities, and your support keeps them going.

A contribution of just £10 per term (£30 per year) per student makes a real difference. Plus, every £10 donation earns a chance to win £50 in our monthly raffle!

See Parentmail for payment details and give today, together we can keep our enrichment programme rich, varied, and open to all.



## The Liverpool Blue Coat School Foundation

# DEDICATE A PLAQUE ON OUR CHAPEL PEWS



We invite alumni, families and friends of the school to leave a lasting mark on our community by sponsoring a personalised plaque on a chapel pew.

For £100, you can dedicate a plaque in your name or in memory of a former student, becoming a meaningful part of the school's history for generations to come. This is a unique opportunity to honour a loved one, celebrate your connection to the school, and support the ongoing care of our cherished chapel.



Email: [foundation@bluecoatschool.org.uk](mailto:foundation@bluecoatschool.org.uk) for more information

## SUPPORTING YEAR 7 THROUGH THEIR TRANSITION



Supporting our students' wellbeing as they move from primary to secondary school is a key priority for us as a school. This is an exciting milestone, but it can also bring uncertainty, new routines and increased expectations. By offering guidance at this early stage, we help students build confidence, emotional awareness and resilience, ensuring they feel secure and ready to embrace new opportunities throughout their first year.

Recently, a group of Year 7 students took part in a focused workshop delivered by the YPAS Transition Team. YPAS is a specialist organisation dedicated to supporting the emotional health of children and young people, and their work helps students develop a strong understanding of their own feelings and coping strategies. The session created a relaxed, small-group environment where every student was able to take part in meaningful discussion and receive tailored support.

During the workshop, students explored their hopes and goals for the year ahead and developed practical problem-solving tools linked directly to starting high school. The practitioners also introduced the "hand model of the brain," which helped students understand how the brain reacts when we feel stressed, and what we can do to calm down and regain control of our emotions.

By working closely with YPAS, we are strengthening our commitment to nurturing confident, well-supported young people. We look forward to continuing this partnership and offering further opportunities that empower our students to navigate challenges positively, seek help when needed, and thrive throughout their transition into secondary school.

## YEAR 9 BUSINESS STUDENTS SHOW THEIR ENTERPRISE SPIRIT

On Friday 12th December, our Year 9 Business Studies students took part in a festive enterprise activity as part of their course, the Blue Coat Christmas Markets! The day gave pupils first-hand experience of what it takes to build and run a successful business from the ground up.

Working in teams, students developed their own mini-business ventures, managing every stage of the process. They created product ideas, sourced materials, set prices, and worked together to design eye-catching branding and promotional strategies. From delicious Christmas confectionery and tasty seasonal drinks to handmade festive goodies, their creativity and hard work were on full display.

The markets provided pupils with a fantastic opportunity to put their business learning into action. They developed teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills while handling real-life customer interactions and adapting quickly to demand. The excitement and friendly competition between stalls made for a wonderful atmosphere throughout the day.

We are extremely proud of the maturity and professionalism shown by our Year 9 students. Their enthusiasm, dedication, and enterprise skills helped make the activity a huge success and an excellent foundation for their future studies in business.



## YEAR 7 EXPLORE THE MYTH OF MEDUSA



As part of their Latin course, Year 7 students have been delving into the fascinating myth of Medusa. They explored two contrasting versions of the story: one portraying Medusa as a fearsome Gorgon who turns anyone who looks at her to stone, punished by the gods for her pride and cruelty; and another presenting her as an innocent young woman wronged by Poseidon and unfairly transformed into a Gorgon by Athena.

Through comparing these narratives, students learned how to think critically about different interpretations of the same myth. They then applied their understanding in a creative project, producing artistic representations of the Medusa they found most compelling. Many chose to create mosaics, echoing a popular art form from Roman times.

We are delighted to announce the overall winners of the competition:

- 1st – Nora - 7 Curie
- 2nd – Arlo - 7 Turing
- 3rd – Anna - 7 Seacole

Well done to all students for their hard work and impressive creativity!

## YEAR 9 BEGIN THEIR DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S BRONZE AWARD JOURNEY

This week marked an exciting milestone for over 160 of our Year 9 students as they began their Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award journey. Across two days of online enrolment and training sessions, pupils gained an introduction to what lies ahead — from volunteering and developing new skills to taking part in challenging expeditions.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an important and valued part of life at The Blue Coat School. It encourages young people to push themselves beyond their comfort zones and discover strengths they may not yet realise they have. By committing to the Award, students learn resilience, independence, and responsibility, while developing teamwork and communication skills through shared adventures and achievement.

A key focus of this year's Bronze programme is the theme of belonging - belonging to a team, belonging to the school community, and contributing to the wider world. Through volunteering, students will play an active role in supporting others, helping local groups, and making a positive difference. This sense of purpose and connection is central to the ethos of DofE and to our aims as a school.

We are incredibly proud that so many Year 9 pupils have chosen to take part and embrace this opportunity. We look forward to seeing them grow in confidence, form strong bonds with their peers, and show the determination and spirit that make Blue Coat students truly stand out.



## YEAR 8 FUTURE LEADERS TAKE ON DELAMERE FOREST CHALLENGE



A group of enthusiastic Year 8 students recently took part in the Blue Coat Future Leaders course, held at Delamere Forest and delivered by the UK Military School. The day was designed to develop leadership, teamwork and resilience; all key qualities for our young people as they grow into the leaders of tomorrow.

Students faced a variety of exciting outdoor challenges, including orienteering and map-reading activities. Working together in small teams, they navigated woodland trails, solved practical problems and put their communication skills to the test. The experience encouraged them to think strategically, listen carefully to one another and take on leadership roles within their groups. It was wonderful to see their confidence grow as they learnt how effective teamwork can achieve fantastic results.

Beyond developing practical navigation skills, the course allowed students to push themselves outside their comfort zones in a safe and supportive environment. Many described the day as both fun and inspiring - a brilliant chance to build new friendships and discover individual strengths they didn't know they had. A huge thank you must go to Mrs Stewart-Williams, Ms Donohue for organising it and Dr Wilde for giving up his time to transport the students to and from the venue by minibus. Their support helped make this memorable learning experience possible.

We are incredibly proud of our Year 8 Future Leaders and look forward to seeing how they continue to grow and shine throughout the year.

## CHRISTMAS MUG DESIGN WINNERS

The Design and Technology Department would like to extend our warmest congratulations to the two winners, Seb G & Alexandra V-M, and two runners-up, Enrico L & Hadley K, of this year's Christmas Mug Design Competition.

All four students impressed the judging panel with their creativity, craftsmanship, and festive imagination. Our winners demonstrated outstanding originality and attention to detail, producing designs that truly captured the spirit of the season.

The runners-up also showcased exceptional talent, offering thoughtful and beautifully executed concepts. We are incredibly proud of all participants for their enthusiasm and hard work and wish all our school community the warmest of wishes for the festive season.



Back  
Liverpool Blue Coat School embodies pride and excellence, fostering ambition, respect, and a vibrant community spirit.





## HOUSE PING PONG COMPETITION SERVES UP FUN AND FUNDRAISING

Our Year 7 and Year 8 students took part in an exciting fundraising Ping Pong competition this week as part of the ongoing House Championships. The event brought plenty of friendly rivalry, impressive rallies, and a fantastic atmosphere as pupils competed to earn valuable points for their houses.

Students showed great enthusiasm and sportsmanship throughout, cheering on their teammates and demonstrating growing skill and confidence at the table. For many, it was a brilliant opportunity to try something new and get involved in the wider school community.

Alongside the competitive spirit, the event also supported fundraising efforts, allowing pupils to contribute to an important cause while having fun. Their energy and participation helped make the competition a real success, showcasing the commitment and school pride that sit at the heart of our House system.

A big well done to everyone who took part, and congratulations to the top-performing houses who now move one step closer to the overall House Championship title. We look forward to many more exciting competitions throughout the year!



## FANTASTIC TWO DAYS CELEBRATING FISH COOKERY!

On Friday, we were delighted to welcome Simon Gray from the Food Teachers Centre Fish Heroes programme, who delivered an inspiring and highly informative session for our Year 10 Food Preparation & Nutrition students. Simon demonstrated three brilliant fish dishes, showcasing a range of skills while weaving in important messages about sustainability, seasonality, and the nutritional benefits of including more fish in our diets. Our students were fully engaged throughout, asking thoughtful questions and gaining confidence in handling and preparing fish, often an area they find challenging.

As part of the Fish Heroes support, we also received a generous donation of 10kg of fresh mussels. Our Year 9 students rose to the challenge wonderfully, transforming them into fragrant Thai-style mussels that filled the department with incredible aromas. This hands-on experience was a fantastic opportunity for pupils to explore new flavours and techniques, and they were rightly proud of the dishes they produced.

The fish-focused learning didn't stop there. On Saturday, Food Teachers from across the North West joined us at The Liverpool Blue Coat School for a collaborative day of practical fish cookery training. The session provided teachers with the opportunity to upskill, share best practices, and build confidence in teaching fish preparation - an area often cited as challenging to deliver in schools. The atmosphere was supportive and energetic, with colleagues enjoying the chance to learn together and take new ideas back to their own classrooms.

It was a brilliant experience all round, bringing together students, staff, and visiting educators for a shared celebration of food education, sustainability, and practical skill-building.

A huge thank you to Simon Gray and the Food Teachers Centre for their partnership and expertise.



It has been an action-packed week for our sports teams, with fantastic performances across badminton and basketball. We are incredibly proud of all our students who have represented the school with skill, determination, and excellent sportsmanship.

🏸 **Badminton – Double City Champions!** 🏸

A huge congratulations to both our KS3 and KS4 boys' and girls' teams, who have been crowned City Champions!  
An incredible achievement, well done to all our players and coaches for their hard work and commitment.

🏀 **Basketball** 🏀

Our basketball teams have also been giving it their all in a busy set of fixtures:

**U16 Co-Ed Team**

Narrow loss to Great Sankey: 43–44  
Another close contest vs SMA: 47–54  
Brilliant resilience shown in two high-intensity games!

**U16 Premier Team**

Fantastic win against Sale: 79–56  
Another strong performance beating Helsby: 73–48  
Excellent teamwork and offensive execution throughout



We look forward to more exciting fixtures and celebrating further student success in the weeks ahead.

Well done, Blue Coat athletes - you continue to make us proud!



## BOOK REVIEWS

### Infernal Devices: Clockwork Angel

Infernal Devices: Clockwork Angel is a dark atmospheric fantasy set in Victorian London, following Tessa Gray as she uncovers the truth about her mysterious shapeshifting ability and becomes tangled in a dangerous plot involving clockwork creatures and hidden foes. The story mixes mystery, action, and surprisingly emotional character relationships that pull you in from the start. I'd recommend it because the worldbuilding is immersive, the plot twists are intriguing, and the characters are so compelling that you can't help wanting to finish the series.

Saanvi - 9 Tod



### Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief

Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief is the first book in the Percy Jackson series. This book revolves around Percy Jackson, a delusional 12-year-old who discovers he's the son of Poseidon, the all-powerful God of the Sea. With his friends Annabeth and Grover, he discovers the lightning bolt of Zeus has been lost and he's the main culprit for stealing it. Will he be able to prove himself innocent?

Lewan - 7Turing



HONGHAI (7TU)



JADEN (7FR)



HONGYANG (7TO)

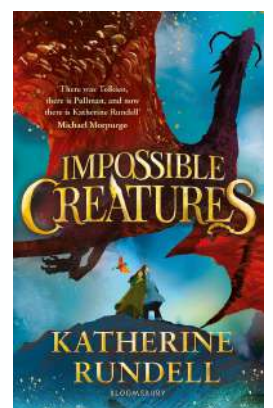


### Impossible Creatures

Impossible Creatures is a fantasy adventure full of amazing magical animals like dragons, griffins, and unicorns. It follows a boy named Christopher and a girl named Mal.

I liked it because it's exciting, creative, and packed with cool creatures. The book has incredible writing and description, and is one of the best new fantasy stories.

Ethan - 7 Seacole



## SEWING CLUB

This term, our creative Year 8 Sewing Club have been busy transforming old school uniforms into beautiful, upcycled creations. From stylish hair accessories to reusable Christmas card decorations, the students have shown impressive skill, teamwork, and a strong commitment to sustainability.

Not to be outdone, our inventive Year 7s put leftover fabric scraps to excellent use by crafting their own no-sew tinsel. This simple but effective project demonstrates how easy it can be to repurpose old materials while still embracing the festive spirit.

After a hugely successful showcase at the Winter Market, these eco-friendly items will be available once again at the upcoming School Market on Friday. It's a fantastic chance to support student creativity while also promoting greener choices.

Reuse, reduce, and celebrate a sustainable Christmas!



## BLUE COAT MATHS STUDENTS TAKE ON THE GCHQ CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE

This December, the Maths Department at The Blue Coat School is excited to announce that our students will be joining hundreds of schools across the UK in taking part in the GCHQ Christmas Challenge 2025 - the annual festive code-breaking competition run by the UK's cyber-intelligence agency.

Each year, GCHQ releases a specially designed Christmas card containing a series of puzzles inspired by real-world code-breaking and analytical skills. This year's card features seven brilliantly brain-teasing challenges, ranging from cryptic codes and mathematical conundrums to logic-based reasoning and creative lateral-thinking tasks.

Students will be working individually and in teams to crack each puzzle, and once all seven are solved, they'll unlock a secret festive message hidden within the card.

The challenge provides a fantastic opportunity for our students to stretch their problem-solving abilities, work collaboratively, and experience the kind of thinking used in cybersecurity and intelligence work. We're incredibly proud of their enthusiasm and determination as they take on this national challenge.

We look forward to celebrating their achievements and sharing their puzzle-solving successes later this term.



# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

(Certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Online videos are often associated with apps such as YouTube, but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a potentially addictive, never-ending stream of short clips tailored to users' interests based on their viewing habits. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while most content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where young people are "most likely to encounter a potential harm".

## AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

TikTok's Following Feed shows videos from known creators, while the default For You Feed serves endless clips based on viewing history. Most are harmless, but unsuitable content can still appear, and watching for long enough signals interest to the algorithm. Although TikTok bans illegal or inappropriate uploads, the volume of posts means some slip through, increasing the chance that children encounter age-inappropriate material before it is detected or removed.

## BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

Ofcom reports that most online harms for girls involve body image, while boys more often see dangerous stunts. Both types appear frequently on TikTok and spread quickly through its engagement-driven algorithm. Harmful challenges have included the "blackout" trend, where users held their breath until passing out. Families filed lawsuits after children died linked to the trend, showing how extreme or risky content can rapidly reach young people and negatively influence them.

## IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but children can still spend money. TikTok coins, costing £9.99 to £224.99, let users buy gifts for creators. TikTok Shop adds risk by allowing purchases from influencers or companies, sometimes leading to poor-quality items driven by persuasive marketing. A Canadian investigation found TikTok collected personal data from many children for targeting and advertising despite age limits, meaning young users may lose control over their personal information.

## CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Between 1.6 and 1.9 billion people use TikTok, meaning there's a high risk of unwanted attention from strangers. Accounts created by over-16s (or young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public view by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and allows anyone to download or comment on them.

## MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

TikTok's short videos may appear lighthearted, but they can expose young people to harmful ideas. Misinformation is common, and Ofcom reports that nearly one third of 12-15-year-olds use TikTok as a news source, increasing the chance of seeing racist, misogynistic, extremist or conspiracy material. Even brief clips can influence impressionable users and shape their worldview, making discussions about critical thinking, propaganda and online influence especially important for parents and educators.

## ADDICTIVE DESIGN

TikTok's fast-paced stream of eye-catching videos can be potentially addictive for young users. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the platform, double the time recorded in 2020. Excessive use can disrupt sleep, increase irritability, and distract from healthier activities. Constantly skipping between short clips may also affect attention span, making it harder to focus on longer tasks such as homework or reading.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's in order to manage settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children cannot alter these settings without parental approval.

### DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure they don't share any identifying personal information or respond to dangerous trends, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's important to talk about misinformation and propaganda.

### BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

Parents can restrict in-app purchases on iPhone and Android devices to prevent accidental or impulsive TikTok spending. Young people can easily spend large amounts on TikTok coins or low-quality products promoted through TikTok Shop. If a disappointing purchase occurs, turn it into a discussion about influencer marketing and how online promotions can be misleading.

### READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.

### Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



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