

# Newsletter 6 December 2024

Dear Parents/ Carers

Lunchtime today was a little different with student fundraising events led and organised by our wonderful sixth formers. Events included students vs staff volleyball matches, beat the goalie and food/ drink stalls. A big thank you to our sixth formers for their efforts in taking the lead on organising this, and for the staff who gave up their time over lunch to support.



## **Ivolution**

Our annual dance show took place this week. Ivolution is always a highlight on the St Ivo Academy calendar, and this year was certainly no exception. Over 160 students participated, with performances from our BTec groups, dance clubs and student's own choreographies. Congratulations to everyone involved – the dedication of rehearsals certainly paid off with some fantastic talent on display. Thank you to all the staff who supported Ivolution to make the show possible, but particularly Miss McAdam who goes above and beyond to make this wonderful opportunity happen for our students.

## **Lunchtimes**

In all honesty and in reflection, the single lunch isn't operating as well as we had hoped. The previous good and self-regulating behaviour of students at lunch has not translated as well to the single lunch format. Also, whilst we have been able to get everyone through the canteen in time between Monday and Thursday, having to extend Friday lunch has impacted on period 4 and I not convinced this can be overcome.

I really wanted this to work for staff, as I understand how much better it is for staff morale for them to be together. However, sometimes you have to reflect, hold your hands up, and

admit it isn't working. Therefore, from Monday 9 December we will revert back to a split lunch.

Mr Wilson has also consulted with the student leadership council who report that they felt safer when the lunchtime was split. Whilst some may miss being with friends from other years, they recognised that there would still be 20 minutes in the middle where they could see each other. This would be the same for our staff too.

This will be the lunch pattern from Monday 9 December 2024:

- 12.00pm – 12.45pm: Years 9, 11 and sixth form (on rotation, but sixth form retain their queue-jump privilege)
- 12.25pm – 1.10pm: Years 7, 8 and 10 (on rotation)

Years 11 and the sixth form have mocks throughout the year which require them to be on the first lunch so that the afternoon session is long enough for exams to be completed before the end of the day. Therefore, this approach means we don't have to keep changing the lunch pattern throughout the year. Year 10 also have mocks in the summer term, but by that time Year 11 and Year 13 will have left, making it easier to switch the lunch for Year 10 around for the mock weeks.

### **Year 9 into 10 process**

You may remember that we launched a consultation on our draft timetable blocks for Year 9 into 10 in the newsletter on 15 November. We received 11 responses, plus feedback from Heads of Department in school.

As a result our final blocks can be found at <https://www.astreastivo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Year-10-2025-26-blocks-changes-after-consultation.pdf>. You will see that GCSE Music has moved to block A (away from Triple Science) and we have added a GCSE German course (this will be a high pace, challenging course that may interest some of our linguists who want to study a second or new foreign language). Please also note that the Art and Design courses are now grouped together – students can choose a maximum of one specialism as these are, in effect, exactly the same qualification, just with a different focus.

To address individual feedback points from the parent/ carer consultation:

- “Only one block allows French to not be taken, and that block doesn't include triple science”  
*As in previous years, our expectations is that the vast majority of students take French, hence why this is available in 3 of the 4 blocks. Staffing constraints mean that we only run two triple science classes, which run alongside each other to allow students to be in the same group for all their science lessons.*
- “Children should be able to drop French and do both history and geography”  
*We firmly believe that the study of a language is a crucial part of a broad, balanced curriculum that will enable further and higher education and employment. There is nothing to stop students taking both humanity subjects in addition to French.*

- “Does this mean that students who do science must drop geography?”  
*No. Students will be asked for their preferred subject from each block (column).*
- “Do you have to give up an option to take triple science? How many GCSEs are available to take in total? Please can you provide some clarity and rationale for this? Are you effectively capping it by only allowing an extra 4?”  
*We need to allow sufficient time for students to cover the content of each course. The combined science qualification is included in the core curriculum, but as there is more content in the triple qualification and this needs the time from one of the preference blocks. In total, the vast majority of students will sit nine GCSEs (as they have in previous years) – between eight and ten is standard nationwide. Students will also study non-examined RE, personal development and PE, as part of the national curriculum. Full details will be in the Year 9 into 10 booklet when this is published in January 2025.*
- “What are the timings for the process?”  
*The timeline was published in the newsletter on 13 September and can also be found at [Year 9 into 10 – Astrea St Ivo](#)*
- “Can my child choose a certain set of subjects?”  
*Students will need to pick one subject per option block. As the parent/ carer consultation did not show any particular set of common clashes, the blocks are as per the draft but with changes for music and German following staff feedback.*
- “Does my child have to take a language?”  
*We firmly believe that the study of a language is a crucial part of a broad, balanced curriculum that will enable further and higher education and employment. We will say more on this at the curriculum evening on Thursday 13 March 2025.*
- “Are there one or two English GCSEs? Please consider allowing triple science without it being one of the four options.”  
*There are two English GCSEs for all students – GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature. As outlined above, triple science needs additional teaching time due to the extra content.*
- “The choice is very limited – where are business studies and economics?”  
*The academy is committed to offering a broad and balanced curriculum. We are pleased to have been able to add GCSE German back in as a possible subject, and are committed to running GCSE food this year. However, staff constraints do ultimately mean that we cannot offer every possible subject. Both business studies and economics A Levels do not require these subjects to have been studied at GCSE.*
- “Please provide more detail of each subject. Music and drama is not a possible combination.”  
*Details for each subject will be in the preferences booklet that we will publish in January 2025. In addition, families will have a parents’/ carers’ evening on*

*Thursday 13 February 2025 and the curriculum evening on Thursday 13 March 2025 as opportunities for discussion with staff. Music and drama are in separate timetable blocks, so students can opt for both these subjects if they wish.*

Yours faithfully

Tony Meneagh

Principal

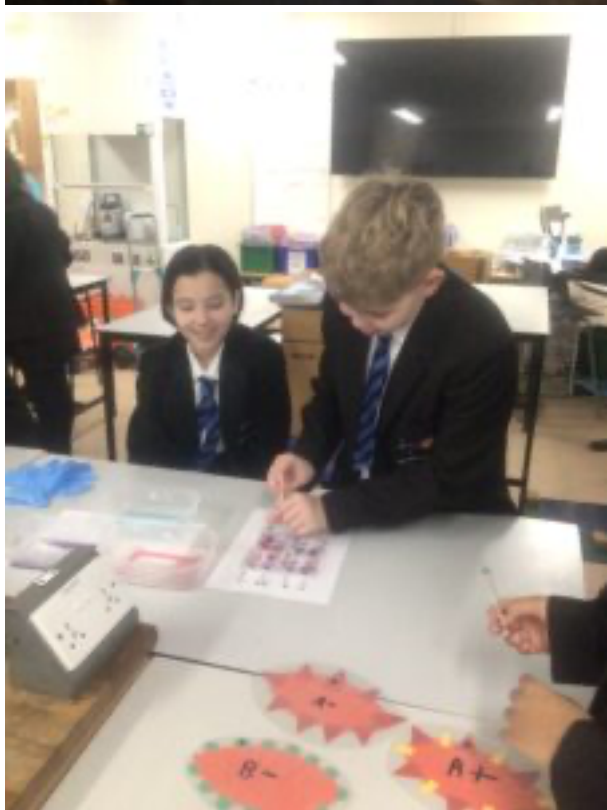
## Christmas Jumper Day

Christmas Jumper Day is Thursday 12 December 2024. Staff and students are encouraged to wear a festive jumper (replacing the blazer for students, otherwise normal uniform).

Donations can be made via our JustGiving page [St Ivo Academy – Christmas Jumper Day is raising money for Save The Children!](#)

## Year 7 Science

On Thursday 5 December we were fortunate enough to be visited by the CHaOS Science Roadshow. Year 7 got to observe and carry out experiments on a range of concepts including blood types, cantilever bridges and the star of the show, 'mini-explosions'.







## Duke of Edinburgh

Following on from the Duke of Edinburgh assemblies for Years 9 and 10, and the introductory meeting last week, families may wish to access the following documents:

[Introductory information](#)

[Annual programme](#)

[Payment details](#)

## Supporting your child

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### What to do if your child tells you they're struggling

If your child tells you they're struggling, it's important to make sure they feel seen and heard. When responding, it helps to:



1. Validate their feelings. You could say 'it's really understandable that you're feeling...' to let them know that their feelings are okay.



2. Thank them for sharing what's going on and be encouraging about the way they've opened up.



3. Let them know that you love them, you're there for them, they can talk to you whenever they need to, and you can help them get support if they need it.



4. Ask them if there's anything you could do that they would find particularly helpful.



5. Spend time together thinking about what's making them feel this way. It could be something at home or school, a relationship with a friend or family member or something else.



6. Let your child know about helplines, textlines and online chat services that are available - which you can find at the end of this guide. Young people can find it difficult to talk and worry about upsetting their parents, so reassure them that it's okay to open up to other people.



7. Remind your child that this is temporary. Reassure them that things can change and they can feel better.



8. Avoid conversations at the height of distress. It's important to be there for them, but it can be more helpful to talk about the causes when things are feeling calmer.

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