

Newsletter 29 November 2024

Dear Parents/ Carers

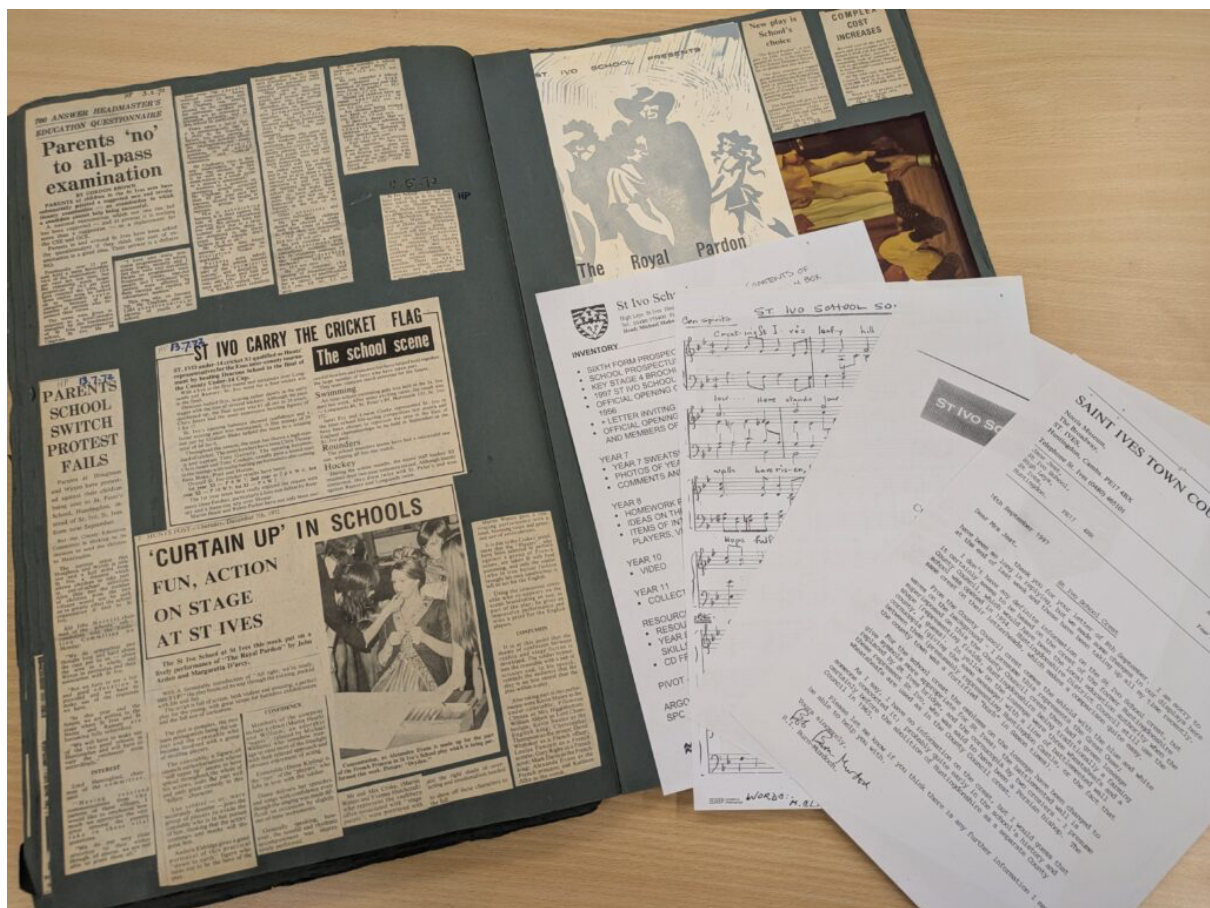
So, a little bit of alliteration feels right for this week's newsletter – I should probably title it "news", nostalgia and norovirus, but I'll address these topics in reverse order.

Reminder to wash hands!

In last week's newsletter I talked about the new "Permission to leave" form. One outcome from its implementation is the raising of awareness for all about the reasons for students going home due to illness. Looking at these forms, it looks like our community is currently experiencing a bout of norovirus. The NHS site gives information to parents/ carers about this: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/norovirus/> and one aspect that I hadn't personally realised, and that may also come as a surprise to some (especially after everyone's Covid experience) is the advice on washing: "Washing your hands frequently with soap and water is the best way to stop it spreading. Alcohol hand gels do not kill norovirus."

Historical photos and newspaper articles

It's amazing when you move offices or cupboards around in a school – you always unearth some fascinating items from the past. This was particularly so the other month when we found a book containing newspaper articles, photos, and even the old school song lyrics and music from the first 18 years of the school being open. We've scanned in all the material in case anyone in the community is interested in having a look back to the school's origins.



- [St Ivo Crest and School Song](#)
- [Pages 1-10](#)
- [Pages 11-20](#)
- [Pages 21-30](#)
- [Pages 31-40](#)
- [Pages 41-50](#)
- [Pages 51-60](#)
- [Pages 61-70](#)
- [Pages 71-83](#)

Unclaimed exam certificates

We've also updated and moved the secure exam storage room recently, and that's highlighted another potential area for nostalgia. You may not be aware, but the school keeps hold of unclaimed exam certificates for students for as long as required. We still have certificates from exams that were held in 2007! So, if you're an ex-student from the last twenty years and you think you may have forgotten to get your certificates, chances are we still have them. Feel free to contact Mrs Abraham (toni.abraham@astreastivo.org) and her team will gladly check for you.

Fact-checking the local "news"

In a previous newsletter I talked about not believing everything you read on social media about the school, and clarified some misinformation. It appears that I now need to do the

same with some written “news” as well. You may have not seen the recent Riverporter article about us, but here it is for

reference: <http://www.theriverporter.uk/Riverporter172.pdf>

As the school wasn’t asked to comment before publishing, which would be the normal journalistic approach, I feel we have to set the record straight via our newsletter. I’ve quoted parts that need responses, and provided more context or corrections to give parents and carers more information.

“Up to 2018, entry to the 6th form averaged 177 pupils”

This is an over-simplification of the facts. Student numbers (and related funding) is derived from our October census submission each year. If you average the number of students in Year 12 between 2018 and 2014 on the October census you do indeed get an average of 177. However, the trend that lies behind the average is far more interesting:

- Oct 2018 = 146
- Oct 2017 = 170
- Oct 2016 = 189
- Oct 2015 = 194
- Oct 2014 = 187
- Oct 2013 = 232

The size of the sixth form was reducing significantly since the school’s academisation in February 2012 and before its transfer to being part of a multi-academy trust. It’s a long period of time between 2013 and now, and there have been many changes nationally to the breadth and type of post-16 qualifications available, the number of institutions available nearby, and funding pressures on schools generally. All of which, as well as others factors, have led to a shift over time in numbers from some school-based sixth forms to larger providers.

“Last year it was 77 and this year it was 36”

Actually, in the spirit of full disclosure, the October census of 2023 stated there were 112 Year 12’s on roll. This year we did start at 36, but it now stands at 38 due to returners. This is far from what we would wish, as I have admitted several times in newsletters and publicly, and therefore has to be a priority for the school.

“This could affect the school[’s] income as the pupil premium of £7k per pupil would go with them, meaning a loss of £1m.”

No school in the country receives pupil premium funding for sixth form students – it’s limited (for us) to Year 7 – 11 students.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2024-to-2025/pupil-premium-2024-to-2025-conditions-of-grant-for-local-authorities> states quite clearly that it is “...based on the number of pupils in year groups reception to year 11...” However, obviously, basic funding does reduce if there are fewer students, but pupil premium is not affected. As for the “loss of £1m”, that’s gross over

estimation. The funding formula for sixth forms can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-information-for-2024-to-2025> If you work on a rough £5k per sixth form student (there's more that goes into the funding formula, but it's a good estimate) then you can see that the drop in numbers last year doesn't get you anywhere near £1m.

"With no languages offered at A level and subjects such as maths and computer science unavailable..."

Mathematics is currently running in Years 12 and 13 (so the quote is incorrect). Computer science wasn't offered due to staffing as previously reported in our newsletter. Language courses were offered but the interest was extremely low, so the courses did not run.

However, in order to build the sixth form, we have committed to running courses in the future on very low numbers where the students indicate that we are their first or second choice. This should support subjects like languages in the future, and we are also offering IT qualifications again for Year 12 starting September 2025.

"This has also had a big effect on the Busway, which is now overloaded with pupils travelling to Swavesey..."

We're not sure why students would be travelling to Swavesey for sixth form – Swavesey Village College doesn't have a sixth form, it's an 11-16 school: <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/Establishments/Establishment/Details/136580>

"...continued issues with bullying..."

This was alarming to read. Our student voice work regularly tells us that when others are unkind, students believe that staff will take it seriously and the victim will be supported effectively. We are a comprehensive school, so I'm not going to suggest that unkind behaviour never happens, but I do believe we deal with it successfully when it does. Obviously, if this is not the case, then I would urge parents/ carers to use our normal communication options: contact the tutor/ student support assistant/ head of year or use the itstopsnow@astreastivo.org and safeguarding@astreastivo.org email addresses. Then, if you not satisfied please feel free to contact contact the senior leader linked to the year group immediately. These are the senior leaders linked to each year group for reference:

- Year 7 = Mrs Robertson
- Year 8 = Mr Izycky
- Year 9 = Mr Wilson
- Year 10 = Mr Varey
- Year 11 = Miss Dones
- Sixth form = Miss Sherwood

"...immediate detention for simply having their shirt untucked..."

This, again, is an over-simplification/ untrue. Only students who have their shirt completely untucked, ie all the way around, receive a detention. A little bit being untucked receives a simple reminder to tuck it in with no sanction or negative points.

Even then, we take into account whether a student has just come out of the toilet or off the playground after running around and respond appropriately to the context.

"...St Ivo Parents['] Forum was considered to be an 'extreme group' that makes trouble..."

I think it would be unfair to categorise all members of the Parent Forum in this way. I would say the school has very productive engagements with some leadership members. It would be nice to develop effective and supportive working relationships with the entire Parent Forum.

"...denied the opportunity to talk to Ofsted inspectors."

All parents and carers had equal opportunity to complete the Parent View questionnaire prior to the visit to give their views. Ofsted inspections do not typically involve face-to-face meetings with parent groups due to the pressure to undertake a thorough inspection in just two days. Parent views are therefore sought via the online survey. The Ofsted inspectors at St Ivo did allow the Parent Forum to submit a dossier of information which was taken into consideration along with the other evidence the inspectors collected.

"It was also suggested that the recent good rating from Ofsted was aided by teachers from Longsands being bussed in during the Ivo Ofsted inspection..."

I think I've already answered this before, but here it is again for clarity: there are a significant number of meetings that happen with senior leaders over the course of a two-day inspection. In order to free up staff for these meetings, other colleagues supported the school. We disclosed exactly who was on site, who wouldn't normally be, to the lead inspector during the inspection. No Longsands staff went into any of the meetings.

"...all the Parents Forum wanted was an honest conversation with the school..."

I last invited Parent Forum members in to meet me on 4 November 2024; I've not heard back from them. In addition, Parent Forum members, just like other parents, have been repeatedly invited into the school during the school day to see what it is really like. Only one Parent Forum member has been in during the school day, and then only for approximately 15 minutes to see Morning Welcome in action. I'm not sure why they would decline such an offer.

"Ben also raised concerns regarding why the only secondary school in St Ives is under-subscribed."

It's quite a simple cause-and-effect: fewer primary aged students will result in equally fewer secondary aged students unless a significant number of families with secondary-aged students move into the area in the meantime. I shared the demographics in the newsletter on 20 September 2024: <https://www.astreastivo.org/newsletter-20-september-2024/>

I have invited Councillors Hussain and Kerr to come into the school to observe our normal working practices and to chat to students and staff.

"The Riverporter first reported these concerns in September (RP167). Let's hope this situation can be resolved and the school return[s] to its former status."

Between 2016 and 2021 the school's Ofsted judgements descended from 'Good' to 'Requires improvement' (<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/23/137305>). In 2019 students' progress 8 (a measure of how much progress students make compared to

others nationally) was -0.21 (which is really poor), and in 2016 it was -0.14 (still below average) compared to the latest reported +0.23 for 2023 (which is above average). Now, admittedly, attendance was far better in 2019 than 2023; but then that's a national trend since the Covid years. Does the writer really believe parents and carers want to go back to a school that was underperforming?

Apologies to those of you who may not have been aware that the school was once again, front page news in the Riverporter local newsletter. However, it is concerning that this kind of reporting causes worries among our St Ives community and within the families that make up our school community. Our concern is that students and parents/ carers who may have been considering St Ivo Sixth Form as an option may be put off by this kind of negative reporting which as I've attempted to show, is inaccurate. All Year 11 students are experiencing sixth form life this week, talking to the young people who make up our sixth form who are wonderful ambassadors for our school. Student voice from Years 12 and 13 is overwhelmingly positive. They feel supported by the committed sixth form leadership team and their form tutors, they appreciate the expert teaching of the subject experts we are lucky to have at St Ivo and they enjoy a wide range of extra curricular activities. We have exciting plans afoot for the sixth form going forward and it would be a shame to have those derailed by a minority of people who seem intent on disparaging our school publicly at every opportunity. We would urge anyone with concerns to book in for a school visit; it will give you a much more accurate picture of our school than reading the Riverporter!

I would also like to thank the many parents and carers who time after time, show their appreciation and support for all we do. We have a wonderful body of hard working staff at St Ivo.

We are actively looking for community involvement in many aspects of school life including our new style 'Shaping Futures' work experience and other community events. If you feel that this is something you would like to get involved in, please do get in touch.

Yours faithfully

Tony Meneagh

Principal

Year 11 Parents'/ Carers' Evening

Parents' evening will be held online on Thursday 12 December from 4.00pm-7.30pm.

Appointments can be booked via [SchoolCloud – St Ivo Academy](#). Booking open on Monday 2 December at 6am. If you have any difficulties using the online platform, please call the school office on 01480 375400. If you have any other queries about parents' evening, please contact your child's Head of Year.

On the evening itself, please once again log on to [School Cloud](#) then click the “join video appointments” button. The system will then load your appointments, please see <https://support.parentseveningsystem.co.uk/article/801-video-parents-how-to-attend-appointments-over-video-call> for further information. You can use most phones, tablets, laptops etc to access this service. Please note that in order for the evening to run to time, calls will automatically cut off at the given end time (there will be a countdown on your screen).

Year 11 Maths

Next Wednesday 4 December, we are running a revision morning for 48 Year 11 students. This will be during periods 1 to 3 and will on this occasion involve students who are in sets 3 and 4 and were more than 1 grade away from their target in the summer.

Single lunch update

We have been monitoring the lunch queuing times this week since we started the trial of a single lunch, and we can report that the lunch queue was cleared with between 13 and 15 minutes to spare Monday to Thursday. Friday “chip day” is always the busiest day, and so we had to give some Year 9s an extra 10 minutes leeway in order to ensure that they had sufficient time to eat. We will continue to monitor this over the next week to ensure that this single lunch trial is sustainable.

Student fundraiser

All students are invited to come and watch a showdown at the upcoming student v teacher volleyball game on Friday 6 December! Our St Ivo Student Event Organisation Committee has organized a school fundraiser in the form of a student v teacher volleyball game, where students are invited to watch a face-off between our sixth form and teachers. The game will be Christmas themed, with the players of the game dressing in Christmas outfit and the decoration of the sports hall.

Students will be having an extended lunch (from 12:00 – 1:10) to facilitate this event, and there will be a food and hot drink stall outside the game to create the atmosphere of a school ‘Game Day’. Outside of the game there will be external fundraising activities for those not watching the game, including beat the goalie and our favourite teachers being put on the stocks!

Students are encouraged to bring in cash to school in order to take part in these games and buy food and drinks, all at a low price to encourage involvement. All of the money raised will go straight to St Ivo, and the use of these funds will be decided by students themselves through a voting scheme of where the money is used. The more money raised the better the facilities we are able to have! By buying a ticket to the game, you will enter a raffle with two possibilities of winning a Christmas hamper valued around £30. If

you do not want to watch the game but still enter the raffle, this will be available on the day as a £1 entry.

The entirety of this event is wholly student run and organized, including the advertisement, announcements, volunteers, and the future distribution of the funds. Any further information will be told to students within school assemblies, and a video has already been sent to forms alerting them about this event.

Tickets will go on sale Friday 29 November online, and will close on Thursday 5 December. Game one will run from 12:20 – 12:40, and Game two will run from 12:45 – 1:05 in the sports hall. Team lists will be posted around school. There are limited amounts of tickets, 150 per game, due to maximum capacity of the sports hall, the sooner bought the better the chance at watching. The tickets are available on My Child at School.

Sixth form information evening

On Wednesday evening we welcomed Hilary Beck from Anglia Ruskin University who delivered a presentation to our sixth form students and parents about university finance and accommodation. If you were unable to attend, the presentation is available at [Student Finance Accommodation – ARU – St Ivo2024](#). If you have any questions about the UCAS application process at all, please do get in touch. The personal statement completion deadline is Friday 13 December.

Post-16 applications

We are now asking students to complete their MyChoice16 profiles and start to apply for their chosen college or sixth form places (including at St Ivo Sixth Form) with the aim to having applications submitted by Christmas.

To give students the best possible chance of securing a place of their choice then it is important to apply as early as possible as after 14 January there is no guarantee that students will secure a place.

We have been busy working with Year 11s during morning tutor time and will also be offering lunchtime drop-in sessions in the computer rooms to support them with the application process.

Please encourage your child to complete applications as soon as possible and if they need any support then just pop into the Careers office and talk to Mrs Parks, Careers Lead/Adviser.

Job vacancy

We are currently advertising for a Cover Supervisor, please visit the link below if you are interested.

<https://mynewterm.com/jobs/137305/EDV-2024-SIA-43471>

Holiday voucher scheme

Please see information from the local authority:

[Parent Letter \(CCC\)](#)

[FAQ Parents – Voucher Scheme CCC](#)

ESFA Enterprises

We have been made aware that the English Schools FA has launched two residential coaching camps for elite level players, due to take place at Marlborough College in Wiltshire in July/August 2025. The camps will be available for U14 Boys and U15 Girls and both camps will take place over a 5 day period where players will be provided with a one-of-a-kind coaching experience, using Marlborough College's first class facilities in a safe and nurturing environment, where empowered, young players will leave with a bespoke development plan to allow them to continue with confidence in their footballing journey.

Please see full details available at www.esfaenterprises.com

Huntingdonshire youth survey

YOUTH SURVEY

FOR YOUNG
PEOPLE
AGED 11 - 19
YEARS OLD



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HUNTINGDONSHIRE
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