



ACS NEWSLETTER



What's On

Wednesday 18 December - Sixth Form Christmas Trip

Wednesday 18 December - Winter Festival (7.00pm - 9.00pm)

Friday 20 December - Early finish for Christmas

Monday 6 January - INSET day

Tuesday 7 January - All students in school

Thursday 9 January - Year 9 Parents Evening

Wednesday 15 January - GCSE Success Evening parent Workshops

Thursday 23 January - Sixth Form Open Evening

Friday 24 January - GCSE PE Practical Moderation

Wednesday 29 January - 'Dear Evan Hansen' Theatre Trip

Thursday 30 January - 'Blood Brothers' Theatre Trip

Friday 31 January - Year 11 Sixth Form Discovery Day

Friday 14 February - Term ends at 3.15pm

Letters Home

Click [HERE](#) to find the most recent letters we have sent home to parents.

It has been an eventful term, and the students have coped incredibly well with different tasks and challenges, including getting used to the phone pouches, more significant challenges in lessons, and two long half-terms.

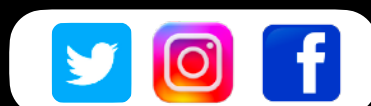
Through all the challenges, I know there are times when we don't get the communication or decisions quite right. Still, I know I have a team of enthusiastic, experienced and dedicated teachers who want your children to succeed and progress. We continue to need your support, and your children need your encouragement. The children who arrive at school ready to learn, attend their lessons on time, and focus on learning always do well at this school, and your support will raise their attainment. Please talk to your children about this over the Christmas break.

We have two teachers leaving at Christmas - Miss Siva and Ms Farcas - and I would like to thank them for their commitment to The Astley Cooper School and wish them all the best at their new schools. Ms Siva has been here since 2014 and has led our successful Mathematics department for a number of years.

The 3G football pitch - funded by the Lionesses Future Fund - will be completed in the new year, and I know the students and staff are excited about the opportunities this will bring. Look out for announcements regarding the opening of the facility and any special guests that may be attending. We have included a guide in this newsletter to explain the footwear requirements.

There will also be some building work commencing in the new year to repair the roof in the Sixth Form block. A recent survey identified the presence of a type of RAAC concrete - a type that isn't on the list of concrete from the DfE - in a small section at the back of the block. To avoid it becoming an issue in the future, we have taken steps to get this rectified now.

Finally, on behalf of the staff and governors at The Astley Cooper School, I wish you all a peaceful and prosperous Christmas break.



GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Necessary maintenance must only be carried out by a Lano Sports approved company having the appropriate machinery equipment and experience, or by a client direct if they have been properly trained and have the correct equipment. It may be necessary to take out an annual agreement with an approved maintenance contractor.

FOOTWEAR

Appropriate footwear should be used as inappropriate footwear will accelerate the wear of the artificial grass drastically. Never use metal spiked shoes on the surface. The use of flat sole shoes is not allowed as this will compact the infill and is considered to be more aggressive to the pile and causing early wear.

Always try to encourage the use of football boots with moulded studs or plastic/nylon screw-in studs. Blades are not recommended due to the potential to injure ligaments but are not banned/prohibited categorically by Lano as they do not damage the surface. We prohibit the use of metal screw-in studs and those screw-in studs with a metal tip and a plastic base. Astroboots (hockey boots with tiny dimples) are prohibited as they effectively act as flat sole shoes and therefore have a similar damaging effect. Please make sure, for safety reasons, that boots of all players are checked before every game or training, both for sharpness and cleanliness.



Studded football shoe



Bladed trainer



Multistudded trainer



Flat-soled trainer



Spikes



The Year 7 students have had a very busy and successful first term. They have settled well into secondary school life and have engaged with lots of extra-curricular activities.

I was able to celebrate their hard work with some of the students at Hollywood Bowling. Their form tutors identified five students from each form that had worked hard, that had supported their peers and they are an excellent member of the school community. They had a great time and enjoyed the competition and beating the staff scores that were bowling as well.

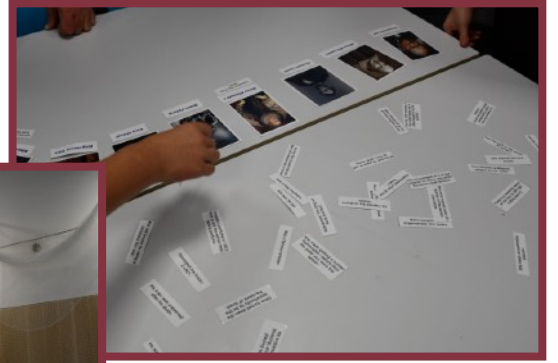
We are also celebrating with the Year 7 students that have achieved the top ten highest house points and five students have been picked to attend too that have been identified by myself for being a positive member of the year group. They will have hot chocolate and breakfast to celebrate.

I hope you all have a lovely Christmas and I look forward to seeing Year 7 in the New Year.

Julie Goodchild



Open Evening 2024



Thank you and well done to all of the students who assisted DT with the Open Evening on Thursday, October 10th, and made this fantastic bunting: TEXTILES— ONE STITCH AT A TIME. They used a variety of embroidery and decorative techniques to help inspire others during

Men Matter

This year, The Astley Cooper School has dedicated a whole week to Men's Mental Health, and we plan to repeat this every November. We wanted to raise more awareness in our school surrounding boys' mental health. We know that many male students find it incredibly difficult to express how they are feeling and talk openly about their worries.

The week focused on speaking out if we were unhappy and offered the boys safe spaces to meet and have open conversations. We actively encourage all students to ask for help when they are struggling.



We finished the week with a 'Wear Green' day to raise awareness for mental health. We also marked 'Movember', the global campaign promoting better health for men. The infamous statement moustache was launched twenty years ago when growing a moustache became a symbol for men's health. The moustache has continued to raise awareness in November, grabbing people's attention and starting up difficult conversations around mental health and suicide, prostate cancer and testicular cancer.

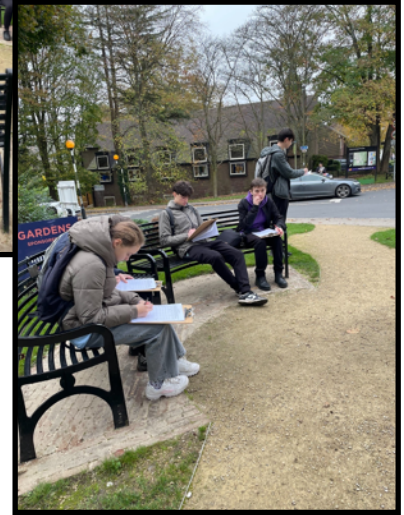


Great Missenden Trip

On Friday, 8th November, the Year 12 Geography students went to Great Missenden in the Chiltern Hills to collect information to help prepare for their A Level Geography exam. They also practised fieldwork data collection techniques to prepare them for writing their coursework later in the year. The investigation centred around the changes that have taken place in Great Missenden over the past decades to shape the town that Great Missenden has become. The trip was designed to fit with the Changing Places unit in the A Level specification.

It was a very rewarding day with a lovely group of students who worked hard and found the experience very beneficial in supporting their classroom lessons.

Mrs R Waters
Head of Humanities



Rotary
YOUNG CHEF
COMPETITION



Young Chef Competition 2024

In November, Lina T 8K and Michal U 7H represented Astley Cooper School in the Young Chef Competition our local Rotary club ran and held at Kings Langley School. This competition is open to all students aged 11 – 17, and the other students that Lina and Michal were competing with were all from Y10 and Y11. Lina and Michal did well, and it was an exciting evening. They both had the opportunity to cook in front of chefs from West Herts College. Well done to them both 😊

Miss G Hodges


We are thrilled to introduce our "Who's in Charge?" Parenting Course, specifically designed to support families navigating the challenges of defiance, aggression, and threatening behaviour in children. If you feel overwhelmed and unsure how to regain control and improve family dynamics, this course is for you. Throughout the program, you will learn practical strategies to address challenging behaviours, foster positive communication, and rebuild trust within your family. Led by experienced facilitators, our engaging sessions will provide practical tools to help you understand the root causes of these behaviours and develop tailored approaches to support your child's emotional and behavioural needs. This course is due to start in February 2025, but we encourage you to sign up before places run out due to its popularity. Please see the attached poster for details.

To register for interest, please complete the Google form here <https://forms.gle/AEFJSegfMDSPmCmU9>.

Additionally, if you would like further information, please contact d.collins@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk

Who's in Charge?

Does your child threaten, hurt, or intimidate you?
Do you feel you are losing control?
Want to better handle conflict?



Parent Insight

Regain control and improve your family dynamics!

The *Who's in Charge?* group is an 8-week program for parents or Carers of young people (8 to 18) who are beyond control, violent or defiant.

The group aims to

- Provide a supportive environment to share experiences and ideas
- Reduce the guilt and shame which most parents feel
- Offer ideas to help you develop individual strategies for managing your child's behaviour
- Explore ways of increasing safety and well-being
- Help parents feel more in control and less stressed

Starting: 4th February 2025 – 6:30-8:30pm (Evening Sessions)

At: Astley Cooper School, St Agnells Lane, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7HL
8 weeks – 4th of February, 11th of February, 25th of February, 4th of March, 11th of March, 18th of March, 25th of March, 1st of April

COST per session: **FREE**

Follow our social media pages for up-to-date news and information about ACS.



Further information is also available on our website.



Design a Christmas Card Competition 2024

Congratulations to Samreen K on creating the winning design. It was a tough competition as there were many fantastic designs by students. In the end. It was the completeness of Samreen's picture that stole the show!

Merry Christmas!



3rd Place Alana H



2nd Place Alex R



1st Place Samreen K

We have several students performing in pantomimes across Hertfordshire this Christmas.

We wish Lilia, Stella and Ella-Rose the best of luck!

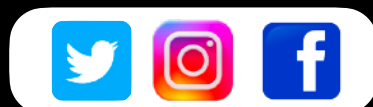


ACS House System

Parks	King	Curie	Nightingale	Hawking	Shakespeare
21,666	20,316	19,856	24,809	18,871	15,362



Follow our social media pages for up-to-date news and information about ACS.



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SPOTLIGHT

The Computer Science Department

The Astley Cooper Computer Science Department is 10 years old this year!

The department started in September 2014 in Room 39 (who remembers that!) part of the old Science Block. We used some very old RM Computers, even slower than the computers in the DT room!!! Dr Ryde at that time had inherited some older ICT courses but worked to expand our offering to include 'Computer Science' at both GCSE and A level. *There's a Mars Bar for anyone who can tell a member of the Computer Science department what the difference is between ICT and Computer Science.* 😊

We now are the proud custodians of rooms G1, G2 and G3 in the brand-new main building, with shiny new computers in a modern computer classroom.



Dr Ryde (on the left)



Ms Wijekoon

There are 3 full time members of staff, Ms Wijekoon, Miss Holmes and Dr Ryde. Each of us teach different groups within the school, Miss Holmes specialising with Year 7 and 8 students, Ms Wijekoon focusing on the middle school with some AS lessons and Dr Ryde looking after the department and mainly working with GCSE and A level students.



Miss Holmes

The department has achieved some fantastic results at both A Level and GCSE, and Computer Science is now taught throughout all of our Key Stage 3 groups



Maths Department

U K M T Senior Maths Challenge

Our A level Mathematicians completed the UKMT senior maths challenge. It is a 90 minute, 25 multiple choice question first round Challenge aimed at students year 13 or below. The problems on the Senior Maths Challenge are designed to make students think. Stimulating problems for both beginners and experienced problem-solvers.

Are you a keen problem solver? Have a look at some of the problems from this year's challenge by clicking the link below:

[Senior Mathematical Challenge](#)



MATHS IN ACTION

A day out into London with our **A-level Mathematicians: Maths in Action**

On Thursday, 5 December, our A-level mathematicians attended the *Maths in Action* event in London. It was an inspiring day filled with interactive sessions and expert talks.

The students heard from a stellar lineup of speakers, including Sophie Maclean, who explored the role of probability in finance; Colin Wright, who demonstrated mathematical connections in games; and Emily Grossman, who discussed how statistics are used in the media. Other highlights included Alison Kiddle's exploration of risk and reward and Ben Sparks' demonstration of the maths behind magic. The day showcased how maths can be applied in diverse fields, sparking students' curiosity and deepening their understanding of its real-world applications.



MOVIE NIGHT

On Tuesday, 22 October, forty Year 7 students attended the first Maths movie night of the academic year. The film featured *Queen of Katwe*, an inspiring story set in the slums of Katwe, Kampala, Uganda. It follows 10-year-old Phiona, who discovers the world of chess despite her family's struggles through Robert Katende, a missionary who teaches local children the game.

As Phiona's talent for chess grows, so does her hope for a better life. This powerful story of determination and perseverance has motivated our students, showing them how skills such as problem-solving and strategic thinking can lead to incredible opportunities, both in academics and beyond.

[Queen of Katwe \(2016\) - IMDb](#)

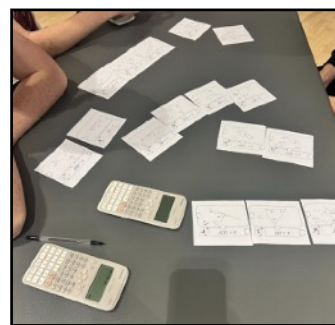
This movie is now available on Amazon Prime:

[Watch Queen of Katwe \(Theatrical Version\) | Prime Video](#)



SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

Since September, we've been running monthly Saturday workshops for a selected group of Year 11 students to support their preparation for the upcoming GCSE exams. The fourth session will occur on Saturday, 14 December, with students fully engaged in each workshop. Three of our A-level students have assisted the teacher each month, helping deliver content and providing valuable support to their peers. With three more sessions scheduled for the new year, we can't wait to see what these students will achieve as their exams approach.



GCSE MATHS REVISION

Several online resources can provide valuable support to students for GCSE maths revision.

MathsWatch offers video tutorials, practice questions, and step-by-step solutions across all topics. **MathsGenie** is a free website with worksheets, past papers, and topic-specific resources to help consolidate learning.

CorbettMaths provides clear explanations, video tutorials, and free exam papers for practice. **Kenneth Stafford Online** features interactive content and video lessons tailored to GCSE topics. These platforms are fantastic for revision and offer many free tools to help students excel.

Mathswatch

<https://vle.mathswatch.co.uk/vle/>

Maths Genie

<https://www.mathsgenie.co.uk/gcse.php>

CorbettMaths

<https://corbettmaths.com/contents/>

Kenneth Stafford

<https://www.kennethstafford.co.uk/resources-folder/past-paper-question-worksheets>

Year 10 and 11 students have their own personalised Mathswatch login.



999

Nine Nine Nine

Puzzle 1

Arrange the given digits to make three 3 digit numbers that add up to 999.

+		
<hr/>		
9	9	9

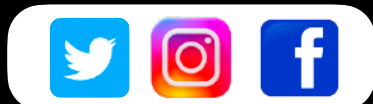
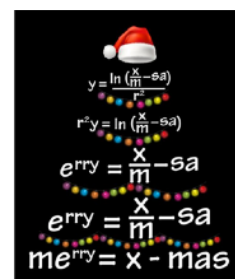


Clear

PUZZLE OF THE MONTH

The first three students with the correct answers will receive 10 points. Please see Miss Fernando with your solutions to claim your 10 House Points.

The Maths Department would like to extend our warmest wishes to all parents, carers, and students for a restful and enjoyable winter break. We hope this time provides a chance to recharge and spend quality moments with loved ones. We look forward to welcoming you all back in the new year, ready for more exciting learning and progress in maths. See you in 2025!



ACS Got Talent 2024

Our annual Talent Show was busier than ever this year, with almost 100 students queuing up to showcase their talents. We had everything from Origami to football, Dad jokes to dance! We are so pleased that this House Competition goes from strength to strength every year, with more and more students auditioning and every student in the school watching the finalists perform and voting for their winner!

Congratulations to our winners;

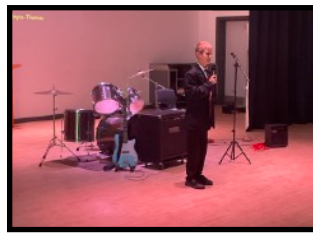
1st: Maddison B-T - singing

2nd: Max S- singing

3rd: Lenny R, Rishi C, Harry A, Jack A - Yr 9 band performance

4th: Emily N - singing

5th: Samreen K, Kaidee R and Kacey A - artistic poetry



Rehearsals for Matilda Jr. are in full swing, with students bringing this beloved story to life on stage. The show promises to be an unmissable event showcasing the incredible talents of our young performers. Mark your calendars for the performance on Tuesday, June 24th, 2025!

Ticket information will be released soon, so stay tuned to secure your seats. We look forward to welcoming you for an unforgettable evening of musical magic!

The Astley Cooper Performing Arts Department Presents

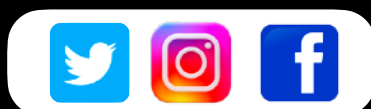


ROALD DAHL'S
Matilda
THE MUSICAL JR.

Tuesday 24th June 2025
Tickets Available Soon

Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical Jr. is presented through special arrangement with
and all authorized materials are supplied by
Music Theatre International, New York, NY
(212) 541-4684 mtishows.com

Follow our social media pages for up-to-date news and information about ACS.



Further information is also available on our website.





The White Ribbon campaign, now in its third consecutive year at The Astley Cooper School, was featured again this November. This important initiative has significantly contributed to raising awareness about gender-based violence and promoting respectful relationships within our school community. The White Ribbon is an international symbol to prevent violence against women and girls. Staff and students proudly wore a white ribbon to support the campaign.

This year's campaign included a partnership with the Narrative Alchemy Theatre Company, which showcased their thought-provoking play, "Unacceptable," to our students. This production serves not only as an artistic expression but also as a poignant catalyst for discussion. By engaging with this performance, our students were offered a raw and honest portrayal of the complexities surrounding the issue of sexism, misogyny and sexual violence, which resonated deeply with our students. The follow-up discussions provided students with a safe space to express their thoughts and feelings about the issues presented in the play, further solidifying their understanding and empathy towards those affected.

In addition to the theatre production, we incorporated various form-time activities throughout the campaign. These activities aimed to foster open dialogue, raise awareness, and encourage students to reflect on their attitudes and behaviours. From informative quizzes to open discussions, we engaged students in various ways to ensure that the message of the White Ribbon Campaign was both impactful and relatable.

Moreover, we have made significant strides in our assembly programmes, using guest speakers from the "Your Voice Your Choice" initiative to address our students directly. Their engaging and informative talks provided our students with valuable insights into making informed choices regarding what healthy relationships look like and how to support peers who may find themselves in abusive relationships. The feedback we received suggested that students found these sessions inspiring and empowering, encouraging them to challenge the status quo and speak out against any form of violence or discrimination. One student in Year 9 said, "Hearing real stories from people who have experienced sexual harassment was eye-opening." Another student reflected, "I feel empowered to stand up for what's right and to help my friends who might be struggling."



Meet Monty!



We are thrilled to have Monty visit us in Pathway each week. He is a valuable 'team member' who is loved by the whole department.

Monty is a pure-bred, 9 year old Golden Retriever who is a fully trained school therapy dog. His owner Susan saw the potential Monty had to become a school therapy dog, due to his gentle nature and calming presence

Dogs are emerging as the unsung heroes in schools, providing comfort and support by: reducing stress and anxiety; helping with social interaction and motivation; reducing feelings of fear or worry; increasing social support; and providing motivation, stimulation, and focus.

Quotes from ACS Students -

"I love Dogs and Monty is Fun, Fluffy and Cute" Pathway Student, aged 12

"He's like a big teddy bear that you can cuddle with" Pathway Student, aged 16.

He is a wonderful, calm addition to the team and all the staff and students love him. Monty absolutely loves all the attention and treats he gets during his visits.

It has been great pleasure welcoming the Year 8 cohort and getting to know them and their parents.

It has been a positive start to the school year, and students have settled in and are doing well. All the year group have been reminded of our core values at school and the importance of showing respect and being respectful to all.

We are delighted to have been able to offer reward trips and cinema afternoons to all those students who are always getting it right and doing the right thing. There will be more of these as the year progresses. Students can also receive weekly "Star of the week", "skip the lunch queue" awards and breakfast with their Head of Year, so remind your child of the importance of doing the right thing.

We have had several informative external assemblies and workshops for students, including bullying, Future Forward and our in-house ELFTASTIC assembly.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support and wish you all a lovely Christmas break.

Ms Tasher

Congratulations to Year 9 for a great start to the year! Your dedication and hard work have started paying off, and I have witnessed some brilliant learning this term. To recognise your hard work, we've enjoyed several reward breakfasts, where you've had the chance to relax and reflect on your success. Your enthusiasm and persistence are making a real difference in your academic journey. A special shout-out goes to those of you who have earned the privilege of enjoying the Christmas rewards movie, as you have earned this reward by achieving no behaviour points during this half term. This shows incredible resilience, responsibility, and respect for the school community. These rewards are a small token of appreciation for your continuous efforts. Keep up the great work, Year 9! We're proud of everything you've accomplished, and we look forward to seeing even more success in the next term. Enjoy the holidays, recharge, and return ready to take on new challenges!

Mrs Noquet



Sixth Form News

Welcome to the new academic year in the Sixth Form. Our new Year 12 students have made a fantastic start to life as sixth-form students, and we welcome back our Year 13 students for their final year, who are fully involved with their UCAS university applications.

I am pleased to announce our student team for this academic year is:
Head Students – Gabriel S and Ellis B
Deputy Head Student in charge of Charity and Events – Marissa L
Deputy Head Student in charge of Inclusion and Diversity – Rayan K
School Council Head Student – William R

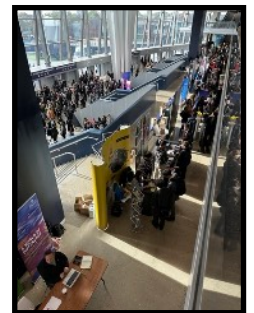


They have already made a fantastic start by getting people involved in our new Y12 v Y13 competition. Gabriel and Ellis spoke very well at our school Open Evening. William chaired his first school council meeting with the lower years, and Rayan has met with Miss Smith regarding diversity in the school and an initiative he would like to run this year. Marissa has recruited some helpers to share Christmas joy with people in our community who are less fortunate by supporting the Dunelm Christmas Joy Tag scheme with Age UK. We have included a thank you message from Dunelm at the end of this newsletter.

There are still roles to be allocated to Year 12 students, including House Captains, and we look forward to interviewing these students to hear their ideas.

University and Apprenticeship Show

In October, we took Year 13 and a selected number of Year 12 students to The Tottenham Hotspur Stadium for the University and Apprenticeship show. Here, there was a wide range of stalls hosted by universities and companies such as Amazon, Herts Police, and Cadent, who offer apprenticeship opportunities for students to go and speak to understand their future careers better. There was also an opportunity to attend seminars on critical topics such as student finance and personal statement writing.



Speak Your Mind Trip - St Albans



On Wednesday, 6 November, we took a group of students, including Politics and History students and the Y13 leadership team, to St Albans Cathedral for their annual Sixth Form debate. Political and social debate has never been so relevant to everyday life. Based on BBC TV Question Time, this event was a unique opportunity for students to debate with a platform of high-profile speakers across diverse subjects, including ethical, political, and global questions. This year's theme was Criminal Justice.

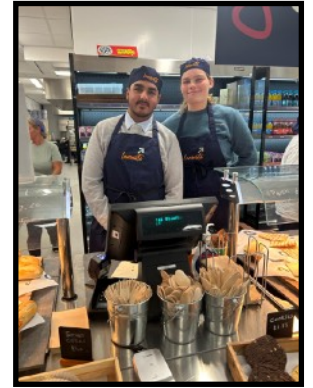
The afternoon was highly informative and fantastic for students to discuss and ask questions about an important topic.

Year 12 News

Students have made a great start to life in Sixth Form. As part of their Year 12 experience and to enhance their knowledge and understanding of their subjects, students have been asked to support in a KS4 subject lesson of their choice once a fortnight. It has been fantastic to see the students get fully involved in this scheme, which has benefited both themselves and the students they are supporting.

Catering Jobs

We were fortunate to offer six catering assistant jobs to our Sixth-Form students through our catering supplier, Innovate. We were overwhelmed by the number of applications we received, and with only six jobs on offer, it was difficult to choose between the students. Well done to those students who were successful; they have made a great start over the last few weeks.



Year 12 v 13 Competition

To help students collaborate and work together as year groups, we have devised a year-long competition consisting of fun activities for the students to get involved with, which will help with their personal development.

Our first event was a pumpkin carving competition where each year group had five student representatives to try and carve the best pumpkin. The pumpkins were voted by the teaching staff, and the winning team was Gabriel, Hussein, and Rayan, who were deemed Year 13's overall winners.

We will host a basketball and netball competition and Christmas-related activities this term in December.



Year 13 Exam Practice Week

To ensure our Year 13 students are prepared for their summer exams this year; we are now holding an exam practice week on the first week of every month. Resources have been put into folders in the silent study room. Students will use this week to attempt a practice paper, practice questions or complete other exam materials during their study periods.

Expectations

This term is slightly disrupted with our Sixth Form block out of action. A study room timetable has been issued to students. There will be two rooms on offer: a group work room and a silent study room.

Here are a few reminders of our expectations as we continue into a new half-term.

Uniform—The uniform looks fantastic. Students should wear smart business wear, no hoodies, trainers (including Air Max), or leggings. Students will be sent home to change if they are not in the correct dress code. Students should also wear their sixth-form lanyards at all times.

They also need to sign in and out on the electronic board in reception when they arrive and leave the school site.

Absence from school—If students are not going to be in school, we need to be informed of the reason why by 8:45 a.m. Truancy calls will be sent out for any students we can not account for in school.

Study Periods—Students are expected to work during their study periods in the silent study room, group work room, or the library if supervised.

Students will have work given to them by their teachers, but they should also use this time to revise using the strategies given in form time, consolidate notes, and use the reading list to find books to read or research their topic area.

Please do follow us on Instagram for all news and events linked to Sixth Form - @acs_sixthform

Mrs Ollerenshaw-East
Head of Sixth Form

Miss Hunt
Head of Year 12

Miss Smith
Head of Year 13

A huge thank you and congratulations to our Sixth Form leadership team members Marissa and Gabriel who organised collections of gifts from Sixth Form students and form groups from the lower school for the Dunelm Delivering Joy Christmas Tag Scheme for charities in the local area.

The team bought Christmas gift bags to pack the items in before loading their cars and dropping the donations off to Dunelm filling 4 large trolleys! They managed to collect over 1400 gifts and couldn't believe how generous everyone had been.

The staff at Dunelm were very grateful for the donations. Tobias at Dunelm Hemel Hempstead Community Support emailed to say. 'We worked with 14 locations local to our store- including primary schools, care homes, children's charities, Age UK day centres and even our local hospitals. We're so grateful to everyone at The Astley Cooper School that donated gifts this year, collectively ensuring 1400 people won't go without a gift this Christmas!'

Thank you to staff and students who helped donate gifts and to the many other Sixth Form students who helped behind the scenes in spreading the joy this Christmas'

