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Education Department Newsletter

19th October 2026

Joan McCarthy
Director of Education

A Family in Christ: Giving Thanks and Looking Forward

A heartfelt thank you to all our Headteachers and School Business Managers who joined us for our cluster meetings this week. It was wonderful to see everyone, to catch up and to share such warmth and good spirits as we approach the end of another busy half term.

These opportunities to come together are so important. They give us precious time to pray, listen, share experiences and strengthen the relationships that make us a Family in Christ. Thank you for your openness, support and continued commitment to the children, young people and communities we serve.

I would also like to apologise to our Chairs of Governors for the postponement of our briefing meeting. Thank you for your understanding. We look forward to rearranging this after half term.

As I shared at our cluster meetings, we have so much to be thankful for and so much to look forward to with hope and confidence. It already seems a long time since our wonderful Education Day with the Papal Nuncio, but the joy, inspiration and sense of shared mission we experienced that day should stay with us.

The Gospel reading from Matthew 22:15–21 reminds us to *"Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar — and to God what belongs to God."* In the busyness of school life, with its many responsibilities, pressures and challenges, these words encourage us to remember what matters most.

Our purpose is rooted in something far deeper than policies, plans and priorities. It is rooted in our faith, our relationships and our shared calling to serve Christ through the children and communities entrusted to our care.

That is what being a Family in Christ means. We support one another, celebrate the good, face challenges together and keep Christ at the centre of all we do. There is so much wonderful work happening across our schools every day, and I am deeply grateful to everyone who makes that possible.

There will be no newsletter for the next two weeks as we take our half-term break. I hope you all find time to rest, recharge and enjoy precious moments with family and friends.

Thank you for everything you do and for the faith, care and commitment you bring to our shared mission. May we continue to move forward together, united in hope and strengthened by our faith.

Wishing you and your families a peaceful and well-deserved half-term break.

Ben McMullen
Deputy Director of Education

Chaplaincy Cluster Meetings

Our Autumn series of cluster meetings for school chaplains takes place this week. Please see the dates and venues below and follow the booking links.

Tuesday 20 th October	Chaplains – East Cluster meeting	1.30pm – 3pm	St Mary's, Leyland	Chaplaincy	Book here
Wednesday 21 st October	Chaplains – West Cluster meeting	1.30pm – 3pm	St Francis Xavier's, Woolton	Chaplaincy	Book here
Thursday 22 nd October	Chaplains – Central Cluster meeting	1.30pm – 3pm	St Edmund Arrowsmith, Prescott	Chaplaincy	Book here

Calendar for 2026-2027 Autumn Term

Please find attached our Calendar for the Autumn Term.

[Calendar 2026-27](#)

Gill Donohoe & Michael Boland

Published Admission Number

In order for admission authorities to consider a reduction in Published Admission Number (PAN) for admissions for 2028 2029, a period of consultation will need to be arranged. This would be for a six week period and undertaken between 1 October 2026 to 29 January 2027. Prior to this consultation, we would expect admission authorities (Governing Bodies, Local Academy Council/ Trust Boards) to have met to consider proposals and to have this minuted. We would then expect admission authorities to seek approval from the Archbishop (as per Diocesan Protocols) through the Director of Education as his representative.

The normal process of consultation would require admission authorities to consult with a range of interested parties, which would include a narrative to explain the reasons for a reduction. We would, of course be available to support admission authorities in this process.

Please contact either Gill Donohoe or Michael Boland for further advice.

Gill Donohoe g.donohoe@rcaol.org.uk

Michael Boland m.boland@rcaol.org.uk

Admission Policy 2027 2028

The majority of schools across the archdiocese have now consulted and determined the policy for admissions as recommended by the Catholic Education Service and adopted by the Archdiocese of Liverpool. A number of schools, however, have not completed the process and so will be using policies from previous years for admissions in 2027 2028. The opportunity to align with the rest of the archdiocese will be available to these schools for admission in 2028 2029.

Admission Policy 2028 2029

The consultation period for this process will begin 1 October 2026 to 29 January 2027 and we would expect all schools who have not yet completed the consultation successfully to engage. We will be available to support admission authorities in this process and provide specific guidance to ensure that all schools in the Archdiocese of Liverpool have admission policies which reflect current guidance.

Please contact either Gill Donohoe or Michael Boland for further advice.

Gill Donohoe g.donohoe@rcaol.org.uk

Michael Boland m.boland@rcaol.org.uk

Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time if you need any clarification on any aspect of the admissions process.

Ged Preston, Steve Coyle and Vikki Borlase

Secondary School Improvement Team



Upcoming Events (Secondary Schools/Colleges only)

Half Term Break 26 Oct – 30 Oct 2026

Tue 3 Nov 2026

14:00 - 16:00 **HoD Psychology Meeting (Teams)**

[Please book here](#)

15:30 – 17:00 **Physics Partners Programme session 2 (Electricity) Teams**

[Please book here](#)

Thu 5 Nov 2026

09:00 - 11:00 **RSE Post 16 Event**

Venue: Liverpool Archdiocesan Conferences & Events (LACE), Croxteth Dr, Liverpool L17 1AA

[Please book here](#)

Mon 9 Nov 2026

09:00 – 11:30 **Literacy Leads meeting**

Venue: St Peter's Catholic High School, Howards Lane, Orrell, Wigan WN5 8NU

[Please book here](#)

13:30 - 16:00 **HoD Geography Meeting (Teams)**

[Please book here](#)

Tue 10 Nov 2026

09:00 - 11:30 **Careers Leads Meeting**

Venue: The Wrightington Hotel, Moss Ln, Wrightington, Wigan WN6 9PB

[Please book here](#)

13:30 - 16:00 **HoD Art and Design Meeting**

Venue: The Wrightington Hotel, Moss Ln, Wrightington, Wigan WN6 9PB

[Please book here](#)

Wed 11 Nov 2026

09:30 – 14:30 **COP30 Student Event with Liverpool World Centre (Fully booked)**

Venue: Liverpool Archdiocese Conference & Event , Croxteth Drive, Liverpool L17 1AA

13:30 - 16:00 **HoD Languages Meeting (Teams)**

[Please book here](#)

Thu 12 Nov 2026

14:00 - 17:00 **Headteacher Residential Day 1**

Venue: The Wrightington Hotel, Moss Ln, Wrightington, Wigan WN6 9PB

[Please book here](#)

Fri 13 Nov 2026

9:00 - 12:30 **Headteacher Residential Day 2**

Venue: The Wrightington Hotel, Moss Ln, Wrightington, Wigan WN6 9PB

[Please book here](#)



Event Reminders: Secondary Schools and Colleges only

**RSE Post 16 Event 5th November
9.00am until 11.30am at Liverpool Archdiocesan
Conferences & Events (LACE)**

We have a professional development opportunity for PSHE/RSE Leads, delivered by Julie McCann, focusing specifically on RSE in the post-16 context.

[Please use this link to confirm attendance or to send apologies](#)



The PTI: Subject Expertise Certificate

The PTI are offering archdiocesan schools a **50% discount**, on top of the early bird offer for their Subject Expertise Certificate. This means the entire course will cost **£122.50** (+VAT), or is free for PTI Unlimited schools.

[You can access the flyer for more information here](#)

There sessions are running on the dates below at Great Sankey High School:

Day 1 - Saturday 21st November 2026

Day 2 - Saturday 30th January 2027

Day 3 - Saturday 15th May 2027

Subject sessions running are:

English

Biology

Chemistry

French

Geography

History

Maths

Physics

Spanish

You can book your places via their website, using the link below:

www.ptieducation.org/events/?event=Subject%20Expertise%20Certificate

Use the code **Return50** when booking to unlock the discount.

The topics are different from previous years, so anyone who attended last year's course is welcome to attend again and refresh their subject knowledge on these new topics.

If you have a query, please contact Preeya Harte, Programmes Coordinator at preeya.harte@ptieducation.org

If you would like information about The PTI, please contact John Wilkinson at John.Wilkinson@st-edwards.co.uk



Funded Training Opportunities for Staff in Liverpool Schools

[You can access resources and all free training here](#)

Secondary School Improvement Flyer

**Ged Preston, Dave Smith,
Sandra Martin and Andrea Gerrard**
Primary School Improvement Team

Best Practice Network

10th November - St Helens

9:15 - 11:30

St Anne's Catholic Primary School, St Helens, WA9 3SP[Booking link](#)**Schools Presenting and Focus Areas:**

School 1 - St Theresa's Catholic Primary School, Sutton Manor, St Helens - Sara Johnson
Focus of presentation: Attendance and Behaviour

School 2 - St Aidan's Catholic Primary School, Huyton, Knowsley - Kathryn Fitzsimmons
Focus of presentation: Personal Development

School 3 - St Albert's Catholic Primary School, Knowsley - Lorraine McEvoy
Focus of presentation: Inclusion

The Best Practice Network is a collaborative professional learning event designed to bring primary school leaders together to share effective practice, reflect on improvement journeys, and learn from one another in a supportive, non-judgemental environment.

The network prioritises high-quality practice and impact, rather than inspection or compliance, and is underpinned by professional trust, openness and meaningful local collaboration.

Each session showcases schools that are willing to share their improvement journeys honestly, including successes, challenges and key learning.

All presenting schools have recently been inspected under the new Ofsted framework and will be sharing their school improvement journey.

Autumn term training

Please see below our autumn term training offer. If you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

- 12th November - [Developing High Quality SEND Practice in the Early Years](#)
- 16th November - [Attendance: for Primary School Leaders and Attendance Leads](#)
- 17th November - [EY2P Training Events - Autumn Term EYFS Leadership Network Meeting](#)
- 27th November - [Safeguarding: Quality assurance of the Single Central Record](#)
- 30th November - [Disadvantaged Students - Ensuring inclusion, securing outcomes](#)
- 1st December - [EY2P Training Events - Autumn Term HT & DHT Briefing](#)
- 9th December - [Safeguarding: Getting the Basics Right](#)
- 11th December - [Analyse Your New IDSR and ASP with Expert Help](#)

Free Literacy Teaching Calendar 2026/27

The National Literacy Trust has updated its free literacy teaching calendar, bringing together key dates throughout the school year alongside ideas and resources to support reading, writing and oracy.

[Explore the calendar](#)

Nexus Education – Expression of Interest

Nexus Education provide expert support and guidance across key areas of school development, working closely with schools to meet their individual priorities and needs.

The new date for this meeting is 10th November at 10:00am. If there is sufficient interest (a minimum of 12 schools), Nexus Education will design and deliver the session based on the specific interests and needs of those who sign up.

If you are interested in attending, please register your interest using the link below:

[Sign up link](#)

Deacon Paul Mannings
Secondary School RE Adviser

p.mannings@rcaol.org.uk

When booking diocesan CPD events please see the calendar and brochure for details and links. Unless otherwise stated most

courses take place here at Liverpool Archdiocesan Conferences and Events (LACE) or in the adjacent St Margaret Clitherow Centre.

RE Leads Cluster/Area Meetings

These take place this week and all details and agendas have been posted to RE leads.

GCSE Working Groups

There have been changes with some schools undertaking new specifications. After half term we shall update the existing lists.

Education Department Calendar

For all other events please keep the calendar to hand. If you have not got a copy, please make contact.

CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES CCRS

A reminder to all candidates that we have come to a half term break that covers the 19 October to 6 November inclusive, with no taught sessions during that period. Be careful to keep your schedule to hand. Whilst attendance is very good, we do as a norm insist that absences are made good. However, the assessments can still be submitted on time. Please note that reading session notes or asking a colleague for updates does not compensate for attendance. Year 2 candidates can expect to receive their Summer 2026 assignments imminently. Again, thanks for all the hard work. The spirit and motivation of both groups is a joy!

Contacts

All academic, attendance and progress assistance or issues: Deacon Paul Mannings

p.mannings@rcaol.org.uk

Finance, registration and all contact details renewals: Paul Crilly

p.crilly@rcaol.org.uk

News from around the Archdiocese



**SENIOR LEADER FORMATION
RESIDENTIAL
2027**

The North West Catholic Dioceses Training Partnership offers support and development throughout your Catholic leadership journey. This residential will help you develop a deeper understanding of the distinctive nature of Catholic leadership.

Residential – Thursday 25th February 2027 (all day) and the morning of Friday 26th February 2027.

There will be thought-provoking speakers on the Thursday, followed by an evening meal and a chance to relax and socialise with colleagues. Mass will be celebrated on the Friday morning.

Location – The Wroughtington Hotel & Spa, Wigan

To register, please see website:
<https://www.nwcdtp.org.uk>

"I valued time out of school to reflect on leadership in a Catholic context. It really helped me see Catholic mission in action as a servant leader." (previous NWCDTP participant)

Cost for 2027 – £260



NWCDTP Leadership Formation and Networking Opportunities

Senior Leadership Residential – February 2027

We are delighted to promote the Senior Leadership Residential Conference for Headteachers and Senior Leaders, taking place at the Wrightington Hotel, Wigan, from 25-26 February 2027.

This popular residential offers an excellent opportunity for school leaders to step away from the day-to-day demands of school life, reflect on their leadership journey, engage with key educational developments, and network with colleagues from across the region. The programme combines professional development, leadership formation and opportunities for collaboration in a supportive environment.

The cost of the residential is £260. Places are expected to fill quickly, so early registration is encouraged.

Aspiring to Senior Leadership Programme

For colleagues considering the next step in their leadership career, the Aspiring to Senior Leadership Programme continues to provide valuable preparation and support.

An Interview Process Session will take place on Wednesday 25 November 2026, 9.30am-4.00pm at the St Margaret Clitherow Centre, Liverpool. Attendance at the earlier online session is not required, and colleagues may attend this session ahead of the Cohort 2 programme beginning in January.

Whether you are preparing for future senior leadership opportunities or supporting aspiring leaders within your school, this session offers practical guidance and valuable insight into leadership recruitment and selection processes.

Further information and registration details are available via the Northwest Catholic Diocesan Training Partnership website.



Christmas card competition!

The archdiocesan Christmas card competition is back for 2026!

[Please find information pack here](#)

As usual, there are two categories – one for primary schools and one for secondary

Please send designs to communications@rcaol.org.uk by **5pm on Friday 6th November** along with the name of student, age, year group, school, and confirmation of parent permission.

There are no limits to how many students can enter from your school, so please encourage as many as possible to take part.

Submissions will be whittled down to a shortlist by our panel of judges.

The shortlist of entries will then be shared on the archdiocesan social media channels and the one from each category with the most comments will be declared the winner.

If you have any questions, please contact our communications team on communications@rcaol.org.uk

Good luck!

To view current school vacancies, please click on the link below:-

Vacancies

If you would like to add a vacancy or a news article to the newsletter, please email j.ball@rcaol.org.uk

If your school would like a hard copy of the Catholic Pic Newsletter please contact communications@rcaol.org.uk

Catholic Pic Newsletter

Missed the last newsletter? Click on the link below to view it!

Education Department Newsletter W.C. 12/10/2026

Thank you for taking the time to read the newsletter. Wishing you every blessing for the week ahead.



St Margaret Clitherow Centre

Liverpool Archdiocesan Office | Croxteth Drive | Liverpool | L17 1AA



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