Castle Connect

Friday 6th November 2026

Next week: **Week B** · **Menu Week 2**

Welcome back! It has been a wonderfully busy and productive first week back after the half-term break.

We have been particularly impressed by our Year 11 students, who have demonstrated outstanding focus, maturity, and dedication during the first week of their mock examinations. Their positive approach to these assessments sets a fantastic tone for the term ahead, and we are incredibly proud of how well they are applying themselves. Thank you for your continued support as we help them navigate this important milestone.

We have also seen Year 10 showcase their cooking skills in the first round of the Young Chef Competition, Years 6 and 10 getting involved in baking, and our library ambassadors supporting the librarians with the relocation of books to our new North Site library.

Last half-term saw the implementation of our new behaviour ladder, which pupils have responded to really positively. Over 100,000 positive points have been handed out across our school, and one of our key priorities this half-term is further rewarding pupils who consistently engage positively with their learning and routinely demonstrate our CORE values.

I am sure many of you will be enjoying a fireworks display this weekend. Pupils have been reminded about the dangers of fireworks in this week's assemblies. Please take care and enjoy a safe weekend!

You'll notice that Castle Connect has a new look! We've made some updates based on recent feedback. If you have any additional thoughts, please share them using **this form**.

Warm regards
Matt Herridge
Vice Principal

Reception Open Mornings: Tue 10, Wed 11 & Thu 12 Nov, 9:30am

FOR FAMILIES

Key Messages

RECEPTION–YEAR 11

Remembrance Day: Wednesday 11 November

We will be commemorating Remembrance Day on **Wednesday 11th November** in school, with discussions in classes, CORE groups and assemblies, alongside collectively joining together on each site for the **two-minute silence at 11am on the playground**.

Poppies and uniforms. To mark the occasion, pupils are welcome to wear a poppy. Pupils who are members of uniformed youth and service organisations – including Beavers, Rainbows, Cubs, Brownies, Scouts, Guides, etc. – are invited to wear their official group/parade uniform to school for the day.

Cadets. Pupils who are Cadets are also invited to wear their uniform on the day. We ask that these pupils come to school in their own clothes and change into their Cadet uniform in school at the beginning and end of the day. This can be done in the **Sports Hall changing rooms**.

PE on the day. If these pupils have PE on Wednesday, they are expected to bring their PE kit with them to school to change into at the appropriate time.

Everyone else. If your child is not a member of a uniformed youth or service organisation, they should attend school in their school uniform/PE kit as they usually would on Wednesday.

RECEPTION–YEAR 11

Christmas concert sign-ups

Our annual Christmas concert is creeping up fast – a chance to showcase pupils' musical talents and celebrate the season as a community.

Reception – Year 6: register your child's interest using this Google form by **20 Nov**.
Secondary: pupils should tell Miss Green or Mr Serino what they would like to perform, also by **20 Nov**.

A confirmation letter will follow. Because of last year's volume of sign-ups, performances are limited to **one per pupil** this year.

RECEPTION–YEAR 11

Please don't drive onto site

The school premises and staff car parks are for staff only at drop-off and pick-up. Keeping them clear keeps walking pupils safe.

RECEPTION–YEAR 11

Refreshed rewards system

Our refreshed Rewards system consistently celebrates hard work, positive choices and commitment to our CORE values. All positive points are now tracked through MCAS.

Read the Parent & Pupil Guide and see the rewards poster on page 6. We introduce the system to pupils in class next week. Thank you for your continued support.

YEARS 7–11

Phone-free site

In line with Department for Education statutory guidance, Castle Newnham is a mobile phone-free environment. Pupils are excellent at using their phone pouches during school hours, but more pupils are using phones at the start and end of the day.

Please remind your child that their phone must go into their pouch as soon as they step onto school premises – even before 8:30. Many thanks for your support.

FOR FAMILIES

Key Messages continued

RECEPTION–YEAR 11

SEND Coffee Morning: Thu 19 Nov

You are warmly invited to our SEND Coffee Morning on **Thursday 19 November, 9:10am–11:00am**, in the **North Site Main Hall**. It's a relaxed chance to meet our SEND team, connect with other parents and share experiences over a hot drink.

We will also be joined by external support services – SENDIASS, ASAT, Young Carers, the Local Authority SEND team, CAMHS, Autism Bedfordshire and Fun4YP – on hand to offer guidance, information and support. Whether you have specific questions or just want to pop in for a chat, we would love to see you there.

YEAR 7

Pastoral consultation: Thu 19 Nov

Meet your child's CORE tutor to discuss how they have settled into Year 7. Appointments are 5-minute, in person, between 4pm and 6:30pm.

Book via MCAS. **Bookings go live at 4pm today (Fri 6 Nov) and close at 4pm on Wed 18 Nov.**

YEARS 7–11

Scholars' Club: new times from next week

We know a number of pupils have been unable to attend because of prior commitments. From next week, Scholars' Club will run on **Tuesday mornings, 8:00–8:30am**, with optional drop-in sessions on **Monday lunchtimes**.

YEARS 7–11

Uniform reminders

Unless in PE kit, pupils should wear a blazer and tie with a tucked-in shirt. Ring piercings are not permitted – pupils may wear up to two plain stud earrings and/or one plain nose stud.

Pupils not meeting expectations receive a poor behaviour event on Bromcom. Two events lead to a lunchtime detention. Many thanks for your support.

RECEPTION–YEAR 11

Academic Consultations 2026–27

To help families plan ahead and support your child's educational journey, we have put together a schedule of Academic Consultation Evenings for the school year.

Autumn Term

Year 8
Thu 3 Dec 2026 · 4:00–7:00pm

Year 11
Thu 10 Dec 2026 · 4:00–7:00pm

Spring Term

Year 9
Thu 11 Mar 2027 · 4:00–7:00pm

Reception–Year 6
Mon 22 & Wed 24 Mar 2027

Year 11
Thu 25 Mar 2027 · 4:00–7:00pm

Summer Term

Year 10
Thu 27 May 2027 · 4:00–7:00pm

Year 7
Thu 17 Jun 2027 · 4:00–7:00pm

CELEBRATIONS

Young Chef Competition

YEAR 10 · CELEBRATION

A fantastic showcase of culinary talent



All 40 Year 10 pupils studying GCSE Hospitality & Catering took part in round one of the Young Chef Competition, the national Rotary International competition we are proud to enter every year. Brian and Jan from the Rotary Club of Bedford ran the day and judged the dishes.

With 60 minutes and a budget of £8, each pupil planned, prepared, cooked and presented one main course or dessert. The range was superb: scallops with cauliflower purée, Cajun steak pasta, chicken tikka masala, meatballs, cherry pies and indulgent chocolate lava cakes.

15 of the 40 pupils go through to the next round – names will be announced in an upcoming assembly, so watch this space. Every participant receives a certificate, a great addition to their CV. We are so proud of every pupil, and thank Brian and Jan for supporting the competition.

Golden Learners of the Week

KS1

1AI Henrik H
1BB Elisa Z
1SA Rafe J
2AA Lily T
2ED Daphne W
2SS Jesse B

KS2

3RG Oscar J
3SB Henry P
3TK Bobbi S
4CE Evelyn R
4HQ Henry J-L
4MH Federica G
5BC Freddie W
5EK Theo M
5IA Ianis
6EB Nyah T
6JC Erin W-E
6RT Jack R

KS3

7ES Liana E
7GLH Georgia M
7IW Skye B
7LHO Rosie S
7RHA Esme F
8ADR Chloe R
8AJW Lily S
8NCS Daveed N
8PB Matias S
8SK Florence H
9MW Rui F-M
9PMC Norah S
9RJ Arjan B
9SB Cianna I-S
9WE Matilda H-J

KS4

10CS Sienna M
10EP Mcbright O-F
10OH Sadie M
10QL Mercie B
10YC Marley K-L
11CP Darcey K-B
11DM Mason H
11FD James B
11GS Komal B
11HL Ella W

MON 9 – FRI 13 NOVEMBER

Key Dates

WHOLE SCHOOL

Wed 11 Nov	Remembrance Day – two-minute silence at 11am

NEW RECEPTION FAMILIES

Tue 10 – Thu 12 Nov	Reception Open Mornings, 9:30am

YEAR 1

Mon 9 Nov	Mock phonics screeners begin

YEAR 2

Tue 10 Nov	2ED & 2SS multi-sports event
Fri 13 Nov	Year 2 Reading Morning

YEAR 4

Fri 13 Nov	Mock multiplication checks end

YEAR 7

Tue 10 Nov	Basketball vs Goldington
Fri 13 Nov	KS3 reports home

YEAR 8

Mon 9 Nov	Football @ Bedford Academy
Tue 10 Nov	U14 Netball v Goldington (home)
Fri 13 Nov	KS3 reports home

YEAR 9

Mon 9 Nov	Football @ Bedford Academy
Tue 10 Nov	U14 Netball v Goldington (home)
Thu 12 Nov	Year 9 boys badminton
Fri 13 Nov	KS3 reports home

YEAR 10

Mon 9 Nov	Basketball vs STM

YEAR 11

Mon 9 Nov	Basketball vs STM
Fri 13 Nov	In-class mocks end

SELECTED PUPILS

Mon 9 Nov	EFL Football Cup



Rewards system

Visit our rewards page

CASTLE HORIZONS · CAREERS & POST-16

Planning what's next

Can you help Horizons?

We are looking for parents and carers who could discuss their career or industry with pupils in small or large groups, host an industry day, or support a work-experience pupil. Completing the form does not commit you – it simply helps us understand your availability. **Parent/Carer Availability Form**

Events for families

Future Pathways – Sat 7 Nov

A post-16 opportunities event at the University of Bedfordshire (Bedford Campus).

Bedford Parent Power: university advice and support – Wed 11 Nov, 6–8pm

The first Bedford Parent Power meeting is at Bedford Academy, Mile Road, MK42 9TR. Doors open 5:45pm with hot drinks and food. The Brilliant Club has invited experts from King's College London to share advice on supporting your child's journey to university and the simple steps to take now. You will also hear how to secure a place on an upcoming free university trip.

Free food and drinks · free on-site parking · children are very welcome. **RSVP for the 11 Nov meeting**

Are you interested in construction? – Sat 14 Nov, 2–4pm

Bedford College and Universal Destinations and Experiences host a free day of workshops. Meet leading contractors working on the Universal United Kingdom Resort, including Galliford Try, Winvic, Wates and Careys, plus Universal's Talent team. Open to anyone aged 16 and over. **Register for the construction event**

Upcoming open days and evenings

Bedford Academy	Thu 12 Nov
Bedford College	Sat 14 Nov
Bedford Sixth Form	Tue 24 Nov
Central Bedfordshire College	Sat 21 Nov
Kimberley College	Tue 10 & Thu 12 Nov
Mark Rutherford	Thu 12 Nov

Milton Keynes College	Sat 14 Nov
Northampton College	Sat 7 Nov
Samuel Whitbread	Thu 12 Nov
Shuttleworth College	Sat 23 Jan
Tresham College Wellingborough	Tue 10 Nov

CASTLE HORIZONS

Essential skill spotlight

Problem solving & critical thinking

Problem solving is the ability to analyse a challenge, break it into manageable parts, evaluate solutions and put an action plan into motion. In a fast-changing job market, employers in every sector agree that adaptability and independent problem solving matter more than memorising static facts.

In school and at home. *Reception–Year 6:* persevering when a build or drawing goes wrong, trial and error in science, working through puzzles, resolving playground disagreements calmly. *Years 7–11:* multi-step maths proofs, analysing conflicting historical sources, adjusting ideas in group work. *In the workplace:* finding the root cause of a delayed supply chain, sourcing an alternative component, re-engineering a process to cut waste.

Post-16 pathways. *A-levels:* applying formulas to unfamiliar scenarios in STEM, and weighing complex arguments in History, Politics and Law. *T-Levels & BTECs:* open-ended business or technical briefs to design, test and present. *Apprenticeships:* assessment centres use group problem-solving tasks, looking for people who stay calm and focus on solutions.

Employer insight. The World Economic Forum (2025) ranks complex problem solving and critical thinking as the top two skills for the modern workforce, as automation and AI take on routine tasks. People who solve problems on their own initiative are promoted faster into team leader, management and specialist roles.

Try the "5 Whys". Ask "Why did this happen?" five times in a row. *I missed my deadline. Why? I finished late. Why? I started late. Why? I forgot. Why? I didn't write it down.* Root cause: a daily planner, not more study time.

Did you know? Making mistakes and working to solve them strengthens neural connections and boosts learning capacity more than getting it right first time.

Family conversation starter (Reception–Year 11): "What was one tricky problem, mistake or roadblock you met this week? How did you find a way through, or who did you ask for help?"

SUPPORT & STAYING IN TOUCH

Help when you need it

Safeguarding concern? If you're worried about a child's welfare or safety, contact the safeguarding team: CN-Safeguarding@bestacademies.org.uk

Safeguarding team

DSL Primary: Mr M Cleaver
DSL Secondary: Mrs B McWilliams
Deputies: Mrs H Harwood, Mrs H Grady, Mr M Herridge, Miss H Baxter, Miss S Cain, Mr D Chapman, Mrs H Clements

My Child at School app

Messages from school, plus payments for dinner money and trips. Download from the App Store or Google Play.

Follow us

Instagram
@CastleNewnham.Official
Facebook
/CastleNewnhamSchool

CLASSICS AT CASTLE

Measuring up the Parthenon

As part of their Greek temples topic, Year 10 have been learning about the Parthenon – arguably the most important and influential temple of the ancient world. At about 70 metres long and 30 metres wide, it is one of the largest. Pupils wanted to know how it would fit on our playing field, and found that the field's width is similar to the Parthenon's length – a vivid sense of the scale and engineering involved.





Debate topic: should Britain give back the Elgin Marbles to Greece?

Classics Club: the first three weeks of the second autumn term

Classics in popular culture and modern retellings of ancient stories.

Fri 13 Nov – Christopher Nolan's film of *The Odyssey*. How true is it to Homer's oral poem? How are the gods and immortals represented? If you made a modern film of a Classical myth, which would you choose, and who would you cast?

Fri 20 Nov – *Hadestown*, the Broadway musical combining the myths of Hades and Persephone with Orpheus and Eurydice. How are the characters and themes portrayed? Even when we know a story ends in tragedy, retelling a story of hope is itself an act of defiance and courage. What can modern audiences learn from it, and how can we apply it to our lives?

Intrigued? Come to E1 on Friday lunchtimes – bring your lunch and enthusiasm!

PE & SPORT AT CASTLE NEWNHAM

On the pitch

Pitch to Pitch

Top 5 classes this week (km added since last week)

1. 7Y2	+104 km
2. 8Y2	+83 km
3. 7X3	+69 km
4. 7X1	+68 km
5. 8X1	+28 km

Upcoming fixtures

Mon 9 Nov
Football @ Bedford Academy (Y8 & 9) – K. Dean
Basketball vs STM (Y10 & 11) – K. Dean

Tue 10 Nov
Basketball vs Goldington (Y7) – C. Phillips
U14 Netball v Goldington, home (Y8 & 9) – N. Crawford-Smith

Thu 12 Nov
Year 9 boys badminton (Y9) – C. Phillips



Les Misérables: School Edition

Mon 1 – Sat 6 Feb 2027. Sat 6th (2pm and 7pm) sold out; other nights limited availability. **Book tickets at the Box Office**

THE TERM AHEAD

Dates for your diary

Mon 9 Nov	Year 1 mock phonics screeners begin · EFL Football Cup (selected pupils)
Tue 10 Nov	Reception Open Morning · 2ED & 2SS multi-sports event
Wed 11 Nov	Reception Open Morning · Remembrance Day
Thu 12 Nov	Reception Open Morning
Fri 13 Nov	Year 2 Reading Morning · Y4 mock multiplication checks end · KS3 reports home · Year 11 in-class mocks end
Mon 16 Nov	Flu vaccinations · Odd Socks Day · KS3 Drama Club ACT!-26 performance at BMS
Wed 18 Nov	Year 6 Sports Leadership Course (selected pupils)
Thu 19 Nov	SEND Coffee Morning (9:10–11:00am, North Site Main Hall) · Year 7 Consultation Evening · Y3&4 girls futsal (selected pupils)
Fri 20 Nov	Children in Need · Year 2 Reading Morning · Christmas concert sign-ups close
Mon 23 Nov	Reception–Y5 assessment fortnight · Y5 boys football (selected) · Y6 writing moderation
Tue 24 Nov	Year 9 DTP/MenACWY vaccinations
Thu 26 Nov	Y5 boys football (selected) · GCSE Drama theatre trip
Fri 27 Nov	Year 2 Reading Morning · Y10 target grade reports home
Sat 28 Nov	PTA Christmas Fair
Mon 30 Nov	Y3&4 boys football (selected) · Year 11 3D Design mock exam
Tue 1 Dec	Y4 mixed sports hall athletics (selected pupils) · Year 11 3D Design mock exam
Wed 2 Dec	KS4 Quiz Night · Year 11 Graphics mock
Thu 3 Dec	Y3&4 mixed dodgeball (selected pupils) · Year 8 Academic Consultation Evening
Fri 4 Dec	Year 2 Reading Morning
Tue 8 Dec	RKC theatre trip to the Place Theatre · RKC Christmas performance · Year 4 Christmas performance
Wed 9 Dec	RP Christmas performance · Year 11 Art mock exam · GCSE certificate collection
Thu 10 Dec	RH Christmas performance · Year 3 Christmas performance · Y9 & 10 DTP/MenACWY vaccination catch-ups · Year 11 Art mock exam · Year 11 Academic Consultation Evening
Fri 11 Dec	Reception–Year 7 pantomime trip
Mon 14 Dec	Year 2 Christmas performance · Year 5 Christmas performance · Year 11 Music mock exam · DofE Awards Evening
Tue 15 Dec	Year 1 Christmas performance · Year 6 Christmas performance · KS1 Disco · LKS2 Disco · Year 11 GCSE Dance practical exam
Wed 16 Dec	Christmas Lunch · UKS2 Disco · KS3 Disco
Thu 17 Dec	Christmas Concert · Year 10 GCSE Dance mock practical exam
Fri 18 Dec	Last day of term · Years 1–6 iRock performances
Mon 21 Dec – Mon 4 Jan	Christmas holidays – school closed to pupils

PTA

PTA news



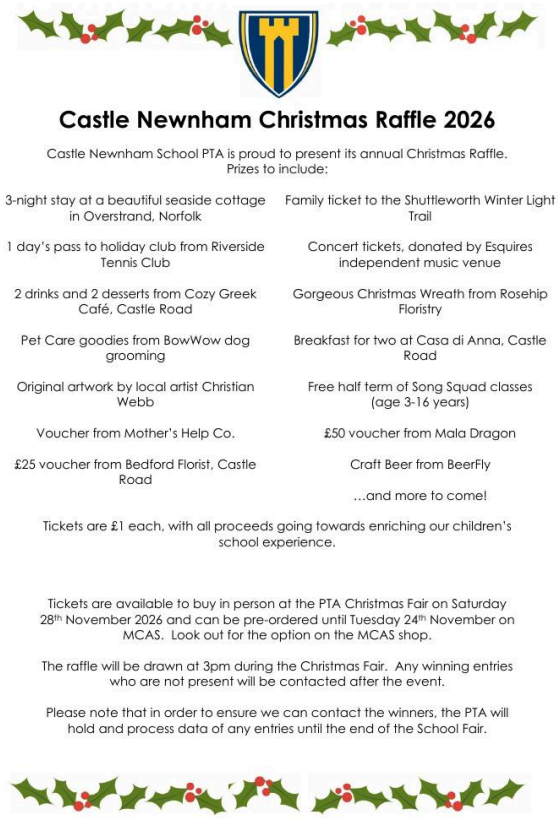
Christmas Fair: Sat 28 Nov

1pm–4pm, South Site. £2 entry per person (preschoolers free), payable on MCAS or at the door. Free and paid activities inside – bring cash!



Donation appeal

Drop donations at the front desk of either school on **Friday 13th** or **Friday 20th November**. Lucky jars must contain no sweets or edible items.



Castle Newnham Christmas Raffle 2026

Castle Newnham School PTA is proud to present its annual Christmas Raffle. Prizes to include:

- 3-night stay at a beautiful seaside cottage in Overstrand, Norfolk
- 1 day's pass to holiday club from Riverside Tennis Club
- 2 drinks and 2 desserts from Cozy Greek Café, Castle Road
- Pet Care goodies from BowWow dog grooming
- Original artwork by local artist Christian Webb
- Voucher from Mother's Help Co.
- £25 voucher from Bedford Florist, Castle Road
- Family ticket to the Shuttleworth Winter Light Trail
- Concert tickets, donated by Esquires independent music venue
- Gorgeous Christmas Wreath from Rosehip Floristry
- Breakfast for two at Casa di Anna, Castle Road
- Free half term of Song Squad classes (age 3-16 years)
- £50 voucher from Mala Dragon
- Craft Beer from BeerFly
- ...and more to come!

Tickets are £1 each, with all proceeds going towards enriching our children's school experience.

Tickets are available to buy in person at the PTA Christmas Fair on Saturday 28th November 2026 and can be pre-ordered until Tuesday 24th November on MCAS. Look out for the option on the MCAS shop.

The raffle will be drawn at 3pm during the Christmas Fair. Any winning entries who are not present will be contacted after the event.

Please note that in order to ensure we can contact the winners, the PTA will hold and process data of any entries until the end of the School Fair.

PTA Christmas Raffle 2026

Tickets **£1 each**. Pre-order on MCAS until **Tue 24 Nov**, or buy at the Christmas Fair on **Sat 28 Nov**. Draw at 3pm.