

Fortnightly Newsletter

GATEACRE SCHOOL

 08th May 2026 ◆


Celebrating Success & Supporting the Road Ahead

As we move further into the summer term, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the many positives flourishing across our school community. This remains a busy and purposeful time of year, and I am incredibly proud of the continued commitment shown by our students, staff, and families. This edition of the newsletter highlights the many achievements and developments from the past fortnight.

Dates for Your Diary

There are a number of important events approaching this half-term. To ensure you remain up to date with key arrangements, please regularly check EduLink and the school website. For your convenience, we have included a summary of upcoming key dates in this edition.

Army Cadets: Building Character

Our Cadets programme continues to go from strength to strength. The impact on our students' confidence, discipline, and teamwork is remarkable, and they continue to represent Gateacre with immense pride. I am very much looking forward to visiting our pupils during their training in **Altcar** to see them in action and celebrate their achievements firsthand.

PSHE Spotlight

We continue to deliver a robust PSHE curriculum across all year groups.

By focusing on the knowledge and

personal skills needed to navigate modern life safely, we ensure our students are well-prepared for life beyond the classroom. This remains a vital pillar of our wider educational offer.

Sixth Form Success

Our Sixth Form students continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to both their academic studies and their roles as leaders within the school. We look forward to sharing further updates soon as they finalise preparations for their next steps and future careers.

Year 11: The Road to GCSE Success

As the GCSE examinations begin, we have further strengthened our support for Year 11 through a bespoke **mentoring programme led by the Senior Leadership Team**. This additional layer of pastoral guidance ensures that every student feels supported, focused, and emotionally ready to succeed during this high-stakes period.

Year 10 Parents' Evening

It was excellent to see such a high turnout at our recent Year 10 Parents' Evening. These collaborative conversations between staff and families are invaluable as students navigate this foundational GCSE year. Thank you to all parents and carers for your continued engagement and support.

PRINCIPAL - MR N. JAMIL

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Army Cadets

YEAR 11: THE ROAD TO GCSE SUCCESS

This week marks a significant milestone in our school calendar as Year 11 begin their formal examinations. We are delighted to report that the cohort has approached this period with remarkable focus and ambition.

Building on Early Success

The foundation for this exam season was laid over the past few weeks with outstanding performances in the **Art, Graphics, and Photography** practical assessments, alongside the Spanish speaking tests.

Our students' dedication during these sessions has set a brilliant tone, providing them with the confidence and momentum needed to navigate this crucial stage of their educational journey.

Expert Support and Targeted Preparation

In the classroom, our focus has shifted to high-impact revision and refining exam technique.

Our subject experts are working closely with every student, providing bespoke feedback to ensure they secure every available mark. To further support our learners, we have implemented a comprehensive "wrap-around" support programme:

- **After-School Masterclasses:** Targeted revision sessions held the afternoon before each scheduled exam.
- **Pre-Exam "Warm-Ups":** Morning and midday sessions designed to review key knowledge and boost confidence moments before papers begin.
- **Nutritional Support:** Our doors open at 7:45 am for every morning exam, offering a free breakfast to ensure all students are well-fuelled and ready to perform.

Commitment to Student Wellbeing

We recognise that this is a demanding period, with some students sitting multiple papers in a single day.



To manage this, our staff are focusing on ensuring students are physically, mentally, and emotionally prepared.

Success in the exam hall is inextricably linked to health and wellbeing. We encourage all Year 11 families to support their children in maintaining a balanced lifestyle by:

- 1. Prioritising Rest:** Ensuring a consistent, good night's sleep.
- 2. Strategic Breaks:** Factoring in regular downtime and fresh air during revision.
- 3. Digital Detox:** Reducing screen time to improve focus and lower stress levels.
- 4. Hydration & Nutrition:** Maintaining a healthy diet and drinking plenty of water.

We are immensely proud of the maturity Year 11 have shown thus far. With the right balance of rigorous preparation and self-care, we are confident they will achieve the results their hard work deserves.

Musical Milestone: Success for Lily (Year 10)

We are thrilled to celebrate a remarkable achievement by **Lily in Year 10**, who recently completed her **Grade 5 Singing Exam**.

Lily achieved an outstanding score of **93/100**, earning her a **Distinction**. In the world of music performance, Grade 5 is considered a major landmark qualification, representing a high level of technical skill and musicality.

This success is a testament to Lily's hard work, talent, and dedication to her craft. We look forward to seeing her continue to excel as she works toward future milestones.

Congratulations, Lily!

PSHE: RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION – THIS HALF TERM (YEARS 7–11)

This half term, students across all year groups are engaging with the **Jigsaw “Relationships”** unit during PSHE form time. This programme is designed to equip young people with the essential knowledge and skills to build safe, respectful, and positive relationships in an age-appropriate and supportive environment.

Curriculum Focus by Year Group

- **Year 7: Building Foundations** Exploring friendship dynamics, respect, and consent in everyday life. Students are learning to navigate friendship changes, manage social media vs. reality, and establish personal boundaries.
- **Year 8: Influence & Identity** Examining how social media, AI, and the wider media shape our expectations. Key topics include assertiveness, online safety (including risks of exploitation), and promoting equality and neurodiversity awareness.
- **Year 9: Complex Connections** A deeper look at equality and consent within healthy relationships. Students are introduced to sexual health topics, including contraception and STIs, while learning to think critically about online influences.
- **Year 10: Maturity & Safety** Focusing on long-term relationships, self-respect, and future readiness. Students learn how to recognise and respond to unsafe situations and identify where to seek professional support.
- **Year 11: Transition & Wellbeing** Preparing for adulthood and life beyond Gateacre. The focus is on building independence, managing significant change, and developing robust stress-management strategies during the exam season.

Support for Parents and Students

We encourage parents and carers to continue these important conversations at home. Discussing topics like online safety, respect, and boundaries helps reinforce the learning taking place in the classroom.

Trusted Resources for Families:

- **Safety & Guidance:** [NSPCC](#), [Childline](#), and [CEOP](#) (Online Safety).
- **Wellbeing & Exam Support:** [Young Minds](#) and [NHS Every Mind Matters](#).

A Reminder to Students: If you have any concerns or need further support regarding the topics covered, please speak to a trusted member of staff. We are here to help.

YEAR 10: PARENTS’ EVENING UPDATE

Last Thursday, we were delighted to welcome the parents and carers of our Year 10 cohort for their Parents’ Evening. This event represents a pivotal moment in our academic calendar, providing a dedicated space for families to engage directly with subject specialists regarding progress during this foundational GCSE year.

The Power of Parental Engagement

The evening saw an exceptional turnout, with most of our families in attendance. This high level of engagement is a significant indicator of future student success; research consistently demonstrates that positive parental involvement can equate to an **additional four months of academic progress** over a single year.

The “powerful conversations” held between teachers and families have helped map out the precise next steps required to ensure every student is on a trajectory toward their personal best.

Looking Ahead: End-of-Year Examinations

The timing of this evening is particularly strategic as Year 10 students begin preparing for their end-of-year examinations, which run from **24th June to 3rd July**. Students will sit formal papers in:

- **Core Subjects:** English (Language and Literature), Mathematics, and Science.
- **Foundation Subjects:** All four selected GCSE option subjects.

These examinations are vital for consolidating long-term memory and identifying specific areas for intervention. Furthermore, the results will assist the school in determining the most appropriate sets for students as they transition into the final, critical year of their GCSE journey.

A Community Commitment

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who attended. Your support at home is the cornerstone of your child’s achievements, and this collaborative approach ensures they enter their final 12 months of study with clarity and confidence.

Save the Date: We now look forward to welcoming our **Year 12 parents and carers** for their own Parents’ Evening on **Thursday 25th June**.

SAFETY AWARENESS: KNIFE CRIME EDUCATION & PREVENTION

As part of our ongoing commitment to student safety and wellbeing, we are currently delivering a series of vital assemblies to all year groups focusing on the dangers and consequences of knife crime.

Working in Partnership with Merseyside Police

These sessions are supported by **Merseyside Police**, who are providing professional insight and guidance to help our students understand the risks and realities associated with carrying a weapon. The assemblies are designed to:

- **Educate on Legal Realities:** Outlining the serious legal implications for individuals caught carrying a knife.
- **Highlight Community Impact:** Discussing the devastating effect knife crime has on victims, families, and the wider community.
- **Empower Choices:** Encouraging open discussion to help young people make safe, informed decisions when faced with difficult situations.

National Knife Crime Awareness Week

This initiative coincides with **Knife Crime Awareness Week** this May, a national campaign dedicated to prevention and education.

By working closely with the police, we aim to reinforce these essential messages and ensure our students have the tools they need to stay safe. We encourage parents and carers to use this opportunity to discuss these topics at home, further supporting the work being done in school.

PERFORMANCE SPOTLIGHT: DANIEL TAKES TO THE STAGE

Year 10 Student Shines in Samuel Beckett Masterpiece

We are incredibly proud to celebrate the success of Year 10 student **Daniel**, who recently graced the stage at the iconic **Everyman Theatre and Playhouse** in a professional production of *Waiting for Godot*.

A Role of Mystery and Meaning Daniel took on the pivotal role of "The Boy" - a character tasked with delivering key messages to the protagonists, deepening the play's famous themes of mystery and anticipation. Written by the legendary Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* is widely considered one of the most significant and challenging plays of the 20th century. Taking on such a role requires immense focus and maturity, both of which Daniel displayed in abundance.

Beyond the Classroom Currently studying **GCSE Drama**, Daniel has used this experience to see the "industry in action." Working alongside professional actors and directors at the Everyman has provided him with invaluable insights into the technical and emotional demands of professional theatre - skills that will no doubt benefit him as he continues his GCSE coursework.

Future Aspirations Daniel described the experience as both "exciting and inspiring," and it has firmly fuelled his ambition to pursue a career in **Musical Theatre**. This professional debut marks a significant milestone in his journey toward the stage.

The Gateacre community is incredibly proud of Daniel's achievement. We look forward to following his progress and seeing where his talent and passion lead him next.

Bravo, Daniel!

GATEACRE SHINES AT THE BUSINESS OF SCIENCE INNOVATION AWARDS

We are delighted to share some fantastic news: all schools across **Northern Schools Trust** have achieved national recognition in the prestigious **Business of Science Innovation Awards**.

Out of more than 350 projects submitted nationwide, only 35 were selected as "Highly Commended" or shortlisted for the grand finale. We are incredibly proud to announce that Gateacre's entry was one of **only four secondary projects shortlisted nationally** - and one of three representing the NST.

Highlights of our success:

- **National Recognition:** Gateacre is officially in the top tier of scientific innovation for secondary schools across the country.
- **Prize Funding:** This achievement has already secured £250 for the Gateacre Science department.
- **The Grand Final:** We have the opportunity to win a further £1,000 at the final in Nottingham on 14 May.

This exceptional result is a testament to the creativity, ambition, and scientific thinking of our students, as well as the expertise of the staff who support them.

Congratulations to everyone involved - we are incredibly proud of this achievement and wish the team the best of luck in Nottingham!



Waiting for Godot - Daniel, Year 10

SIXTH FORM: EXCELLENCE IN THE BRILLIANT CLUB

Gateacre Sixth Form students have officially graduated from **The Brilliant Club Scholars Programme**, a nationally recognised initiative that provides a taste of university-style learning.

What is The Brilliant Club?

The Brilliant Club is a UK-wide charity that partners with schools and universities to support students in progressing to highly selective higher education institutions. Through **The Scholars Programme**, PhD tutors deliver degree-level tutorials, challenging students to develop the critical thinking, research, and academic writing skills necessary for success at the university level.

Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare

Working closely with PhD Scholar **Zainab Mahmood** from Liverpool John Moores University, our students completed a demanding six-week course focused on the transformative role of **Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare**. From diagnosis to treatment, students explored the cutting edge of medical technology. To complete the programme, they were required to produce a final extended essay that mirrored the rigour and expectations of undergraduate study.

Our Lead Tutor, Ms. Mahmood, commented:

"The students were absolutely brilliant, so engaged and genuinely curious. I was blown away by the quality of the work; I am even nominating one of the Gateacre students to have their essay published in The Brilliant Club journal because it was just that good."

Student Spotlights

- **Jakub:** Earned a special mention for his sophisticated analysis of machine learning and convolutional neural networks in his essay, *"Can AI improve healthcare in real clinical settings?"*

Read Jakub's essay [here](#).



- **Beyonce:** *"My essay focused on AI in diagnosing breast cancer from mammograms. It taught me how useful technology is when used alongside medical professionals."*
- **Chloe:** *"I wrote about the pros and cons of AI screening for lung cancer. The final essay was a great insight into what university study will be like."*

Graduation and Results

Student success was celebrated first with a breakfast hosted by the Principal and Head of Sixth Form, followed by a formal **Graduation Ceremony at the University of Manchester**. The academic results were outstanding:

- **7 Students** achieved a First-class grade.
- **5 Students** were awarded a 2:1.
- **2 Students** achieved a 2:2.

A special congratulations to **Callum and Oscar**, who were selected to deliver a keynote speech to the entire graduating cohort, sharing their research journey and experiences with students from across the region.

We are incredibly proud of our Scholars for their hard work and academic ambition!

Gateacre Sports Update: Summer Term Highlights



Cricket: Bowling Into the New Season

Cricket clubs are officially in full swing, and student enthusiasm is at an all-time high. A highlight for the players has been our **new bowling machine**, which is proving to be a "big hit" for building batting confidence and refining technique.

Join the Club:

- **Morning Sessions:** Monday–Wednesday (8:00–8:30 am)
- **After-School Sessions:** 3:15–4:15 pm
 - o **Mondays:** Year 7 & 8
 - o **Tuesdays:** Year 9 & 10

With fixtures and competitions on the horizon, we encourage students of all abilities to come along and sharpen their skills.



Year 9 Football: Proud Merseyside Cup Run

The Year 9 football team's impressive cup run reached a spirited conclusion in the **semi-finals of the Merseyside Cup**. While they narrowly missed out on a place in the final, the team can hold their heads high.

Match Highlights:

- **Anthony K** delivered a standout moment with a superb header to put Gateacre on the scoresheet.
- **Sam C** showed incredible composure under pressure, pulling off an outstanding penalty save to keep the team in contention.

Congratulations to the entire squad on a fantastic tournament run!

Basketball: Thrilling Comeback for the Phoenix Suns

Our **Year 7 Gateacre (Phoenix Suns)** team displayed incredible grit in their recent fixture against **Cardinal Heenan**. Trailing 6–2 heading into the final quarter, the team showed immense determination to turn the game around and secure a hard-fought **8–6 victory**. A huge well done to the Year 7s for their "never-say-die" attitude!



Flag NFL: Success on the Field

It was a landmark day at the **FLAG NFL competition**, with Gateacre representing the school with pride and elite-level skill.

- **Year 7/8 A Team & Year 9/10 Mixed Team:** Both teams performed brilliantly to finish as Runners-Up. Notably, both sides were the **joint-highest touchdown scorers** in the entire tournament - a testament to their explosive attacking play.
- **Year 9/10 Girls' Team:** Our standout performers of the day! The girls dominated their group to finish in top spot. Their tactical awareness and teamwork have earned them a well-deserved place in the **Northwest Regionals**. We wish them the best of luck in the next round!

ARMY CADETS: AIMING HIGH FOR SUMMER CAMP

A group of our Year 8 Army Cadets has achieved a major milestone by successfully completing their **L98 A2 rifle training**. This qualification is a significant step in their cadet journey and officially secures their places at the upcoming summer camp. Throughout the course, the cadets impressed both instructors and senior members with their discipline, teamwork, and commitment to safe handling.

Rigorous Training and Safety

The training involved several supervised sessions, beginning with classroom-based instruction on safety responsibilities and the fundamentals of marksmanship. Progressing to structured practical activities, the cadets focused on:

- **Safe Handling:** Mastering the essential protocols for managing equipment safely.
- **Range Discipline:** Learning to follow precise commands and maintain focus.
- **Expert Supervision:** All practical work was conducted under strict adult supervision and followed established cadet procedures.

Instructor Feedback

Instructors praised the maturity and progress shown by the group. One instructor noted: *"They have shown respect for safety protocols from day one. Qualifying on the L98 is a significant milestone that prepares them well for the advanced activities planned at summer camp"*.

Cadet Experiences

Our cadets thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of the training weekend:

- **Cadet Leadbetter:** *"I learnt how to operate a rifle"*.
- **Cadet Todd:** *"I learned how to load, re-load, and reassemble the weapon. I really enjoyed it"*.
- **Cadet McGrady:** *"I learnt how to assemble and reassemble an L98 A2 rifle. I enjoyed it"*.

Looking Ahead to Summer

With their qualifications secured, these cadets are now ready to participate in a variety of leadership, training, and team-building activities at camp.



We join their families and unit leaders in expressing our pride in their achievements and look forward to hearing about the new skills they will gain over the summer.

Special thanks to Captain Chris Bate, Sergeant McCarthy, and Sergeant Byrne for their guidance and support.

Community Support: School Uniform Donations

As we approach the final term of the academic year, we are launching a school uniform donation drive to support our families and promote sustainability within our community.

If your child has outgrown their uniform or if you have items that are no longer needed, we would be incredibly grateful for any donations.

These items will be made available to other students, ensuring that everyone has access to the high-quality school wear they need to feel confident and ready to learn.

What we are looking for:

We kindly ask for donations of the following items in **decent, wearable condition:**

- School Blazers
- Jumpers
- Trousers, Skirts, and Pinafores
- Ties
- PE Kits

How to donate:

Please ensure that all items are **laundered** before being dropped off. You can leave your donations at the **Main Reception** during school hours.

Thank you for your continued generosity and for helping us support our school community. Your contributions make a real difference!
