

Fortnightly Newsletter

GATEACRE SCHOOL

6th March 2026



Why “BEST” Is Our Default for Learning

At our school, strong attention is not something we switch on occasionally — **it is our default**. We explicitly teach students that whenever a teacher or speaker addresses the class, they move automatically into **BEST**. This is not optional and not dependent on reminders. It is the standard position for learning.

Learning depends on attention. If a student misses an explanation, instruction, or key example, the gap appears immediately — and gaps quickly widen. By establishing a clear, consistent default, we remove ambiguity. Students do not need to guess what to do when teaching begins. They know.

BEST is our shared habit for attention:

B = Back straight

Students sit upright to show they are attentive, focused and respectful. This physical posture supports mental alertness.

E = Empty hands and arms folded

Students give 100% undivided attention. Hands are free from equipment or distractions, so listening is active and purposeful.

S = Silent

Students are patient and considerate. They do not interrupt and understand that silence allows everyone to think clearly.

T = Track the teacher/speaker

Students look at the person speaking or where directed. This ensures they are following explanations carefully and not missing key information.

By making **BEST** the default position:

- Instructions are heard the first time.
- Learning time is protected.
- Classrooms remain calm and focused.
- Students develop self-discipline and respect for others.

When this default is not in place, small distractions quickly escalate. Teachers must repeat instructions. Students miss critical explanations. Low-level disruption grows. Over time, this leads to lost learning, frustration, and preventable gaps in knowledge.

Consistency is key. When every student moves into **BEST** automatically, we create classrooms where attention is normal, focus is expected, and every child has the best possible conditions to succeed.

Thank you for supporting us in reinforcing these habits at home and helping your child understand that attention is not occasional — it is the starting point for success.

PRINCIPAL - MR N. JAMIL

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Attendance Matters: Reaching New Heights Together!

At Gateacre, we believe that every day counts. We are delighted to report that overall school attendance continues to climb! A huge thank you to all our parents and carers for your unwavering support in getting your children into school every single day.

Year 8: The "Most Improved" Leaders

A massive shout-out to **Year 8!** Over the last two weeks, they have shown the most significant improvement in the entire school. They are officially "leading the way" right now - well done to the students, tutors, and families involved in this brilliant turnaround.

Housekeeping: Quick Reminders

To help us keep our community safe and our records accurate, please remember:

- **Medical Evidence:** For pre-planned appointments, please email attendance@gateacre.org in advance.
- **The Edulink App:** This is the most efficient way to report an absence. It allows our team to provide the right support to families quickly.

Thank you for helping us make every school day a success!

Personal Bests & Rewards

Attendance isn't just about being perfect; it's about improvement. We are currently tracking dozens of students who have significantly boosted their attendance over the past few weeks. While we can't name you all here, your hard work is being noticed! Look out for rewards coming your way as part of our **Attendance Challenge** and during our end-of-term assemblies.

100% Attendance Heroes

Maintaining a perfect record since September is a fantastic feat of resilience and dedication. We would like to recognise every pupil who still holds 100% attendance - you are setting the gold standard!

Form Group Champions

Consistency is key! Congratulations to our current league leaders for the highest attendance so far this year:

- **Year 7:** 0702
- **Year 8:** 0808
- **Year 9:** 0904
- **Year 10:** 1003
- **Year 11:** 1106

Welcoming Our New Year 7 Families

Following **National Offer Day** on Monday, 2nd March, we are delighted to officially begin the countdown to September.

Gateacre School continues to be a popular choice for families across the region, and this year was no exception. We received over 400 applications for our **240 available places** in Year 7. We are incredibly proud that so many of you have chosen us to be the next step in your child's educational journey.

Joining the Gateacre Community

To our new Year 7 students and their families: a **huge congratulations!** We are thrilled to welcome you into the Gateacre family.

We understand that the move from primary to secondary school is a significant milestone. Our transition team is already working hard to ensure that every student feels supported, confident, and excited to start their high school career with us.

What happens next? Over the coming weeks, we look forward to:

- **Meeting our new families** during our upcoming induction and welcome events.
- **Connecting with our partner primary schools** to ensure a smooth handover for every student.
- **Sharing our school values** and helping our new starters feel at home before their first day.

Please keep an eye on your post and email for your official welcome packs and details regarding transition dates.

We can't wait to meet you all!

Spotlight on the Arts: Year 11 Explore LIPA Sixth Form College

On 11 February 2026, our Year 11 students stepped into the world of professional performing arts with an immersive visit to **LIPA Sixth Form College**, one of the region's premier creative providers.

The afternoon offered a comprehensive look at the high expectations and vibrant ethos of the college. Students met with the Principal to discuss the diverse creative pathways available, asking insightful questions about course structures, industry-standard enrichment, and future career trajectories.

Audition Ready: Demystifying the Process

A vital segment of the visit focused on the transition from applicant to student. LIPA staff provided a "behind-the-scenes" look at the interview and audition process, offering expert coaching on how to prepare effectively. For those students currently awaiting outcomes or preparing for their own showcases, this transparency provided a significant boost in confidence.

Creative Excellence in Action

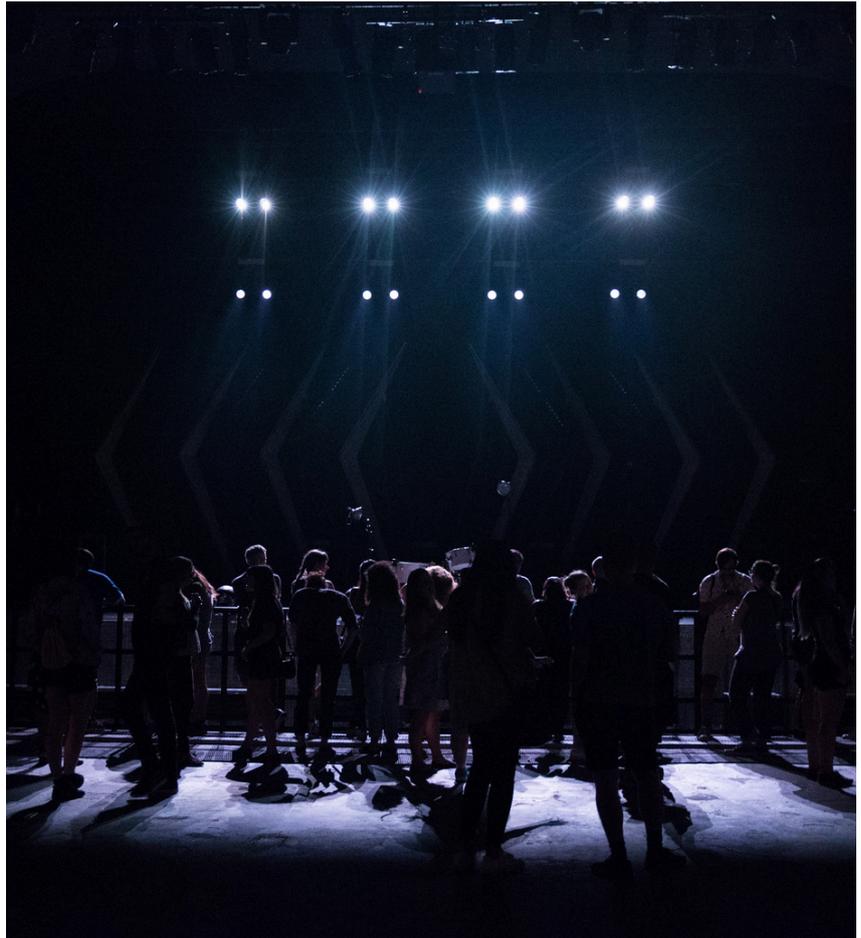
The highlights of the tour were the live snapshots of college life:

- **Industry-Standard Facilities:**

From high-spec rehearsal rooms to professional performance spaces.

- **Live Rehearsals:** Observing the dedication and technical skill of current students.

- **Performance Showcase:** A particular standout was a glimpse into a second-year Musical Theatre production, which set a high bar for what our students can achieve at Post-16.



Student Perspective: Building Confidence

For many, the visit was transformative. Luca (Year 11) cited the live performance as his personal highlight, noting that it helped settle his nerves ahead of his own interview that week.

"Watching the second-year students made me feel much more comfortable and confident about my own audition," Luca shared. "I'm now really looking forward to hearing back about a place to study Musical Theatre or Acting this September."

We are incredibly proud of the maturity and professional curiosity our Year 11s displayed during the visit. We look forward to supporting them as they take these exciting next steps into the creative industries.

A Heartfelt Thank You

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the staff at LIPA Sixth Form for their warm welcome. In particular, we are grateful to the Principal for hosting our visit and taking the time to speak so passionately with our students.

The opportunity to hear directly from leadership about the college's vision was invaluable in helping our Year 11s envision their own creative futures.

Year 11: The Road to GCSE Success

As the final GCSE examinations approach, our Year 11 students are entering a transformative period of their education. We believe that with the right habits, structure, and support, significant progress can be made in the weeks that remain. Parents and carers play a vital role in helping students navigate this high-stakes season effectively.

Evidence-Based Revision: What Works?

Research shows that not all study habits are created equal. To maximise marks, we encourage students to move away from passive reading and toward these high-impact strategies:

- **Retrieval Practice (Active Recall):** Students should regularly test themselves rather than simply re-reading notes. Using flashcards, answering practice questions without help, or "brain-dumping" everything they know onto a blank sheet of paper strengthens long-term memory. *Note: If it feels difficult, it's working!*
- **Interleaving:** Instead of studying one subject all day, students should mix subjects within a session (e.g., 45 minutes of Maths, a break, then 45 minutes of English). This "scrambling" of topics significantly improves long-term retention.

- **Exam Practice:** Nothing builds confidence like the "real thing." Completing past papers under timed conditions sharpens technique and improves time management. The most crucial step is reviewing the mark scheme afterward to learn from mistakes.

Environment and Wellbeing

Consistent routines and high expectations are the foundation of success. We recommend:

- **The Digital Detox:** Creating a quiet study space strictly without mobile phones to prevent cognitive distraction.
- **Physical Foundations:** Maintaining a consistent sleep schedule and healthy eating habits to fuel the brain.
- **Balance:** GCSE results open doors to the future, but wellbeing is paramount. Encourage regular breaks and provide steady emotional support to build resilience.

A Partnership for Achievement

Year 11 is a time for growing independence, but parental interest remains a primary motivator. By asking about revision plans, encouraging consistency, and praising effort, you help create the environment where your child can thrive.

Year 11 Core Revision Challenge: Lunchtime Showdown!

Last Friday, the Year 11 common room was buzzing with competitive spirit as we hosted our very first **Core Revision Quiz!** It was fantastic to see the vast majority of the year group turning out to test their knowledge during their lunch break.

The competition was fierce, featuring a high-stakes **English** round followed by a challenging **Maths** round. The level of preparation across the year group was clearly evident, with an impressive **four teams** achieving a perfect score of 100%!

The Grand Finalists

With the scores tied at the top, we moved into a nail-biting tie-breaker to determine our ultimate champions. After a tense final round, we are delighted to announce our winners:

Congratulations to Ethan, Ciaran, and Deniz!

A huge well done to everyone who took part—it was a brilliant display of teamwork and academic focus.

What's Next?

The battle for the top spot continues! This week, we introduce the **Science** round. Will our reigning champions hold onto their title, or will a new team rise to the challenge?

Get your teams ready and we'll see you there!

Year 11 Easter Revision: Maximising Success

Following the outstanding success and positive impact of our recent intervention sessions, we are pleased to confirm a comprehensive Easter Revision Programme for Year 11.

To ensure students have the best possible chance of exam success, sessions will run during the first four and last four days of the holiday. This schedule preserves a four-day weekend in the middle for students to rest, recuperate, and celebrate the Easter break.

Why Attend?

- **Bespoke Support:** Students will receive personalised invitations to the sessions most relevant to their progress.
- **Prom Points:** Earn rewards for every session attended.
- **Grand Rewards Trip:** Students who attend all invited sessions in the first week will be eligible for a special rewards trip at the end of the holiday.
- **Refreshments:** Based on student feedback, we are currently tailoring a menu of food and drinks for all attendees.

We have high expectations for attendance and look forward to seeing our wonderful Year 11 cohort demonstrate the same excellent engagement they have shown all term.

Keep an eye out for the full Easter schedule in our next edition!

Shaping the Future: Year 9 Options Process Underway

Last week marked a significant milestone for our Year 9 students as they officially launched the **Key Stage 4 Options process**. This transition represents an important step in their academic journey, as they begin to tailor their education toward their individual strengths and future career aspirations.

A Comprehensive Launch: The Futures Evening

The process began with a specialised **Options Assembly**, followed by our well-attended **Gateacre Futures Evening**. These events provided a vital roadmap for the road ahead.

During the evening, families received:

- The comprehensive **GCSE Options Booklet**.
- Personalised **Parental CAT Reports** to help inform decision-making.
- Expert guidance from **Mrs. Tracey** regarding the structure, academic rigour, and high expectations of Key Stage 4.

One of the evening's highlights was the **Subject Marketplace**, where the energy was high as students and parents explored courses in detail.

It was a fantastic opportunity for face-to-face dialogue with department heads about both KS4 specifications and the long-term Sixth Form Pathways they lead into.

The Key Stage 4 Journey

Key Stage 4 is a focused **19-month programme** designed to bridge the gap between discovery and qualification. This period demands a shift in mindset, bringing with it a greater degree of personal responsibility, increased independence in study habits, and rigorous preparation for both mock and final examinations.



Important Deadlines & Next Steps

As students move from exploration to decision-making, please keep the following timeline in mind:

- **Final Preference Submission:** All choices must be submitted via **Applicaa** by **Thursday 12th March**.
- **Confirmation:** Final course allocations will be confirmed in **July**.
- **Commencement:** Students will officially begin their bespoke KS4 timetables in **September 2026**.

A Note of Appreciation

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our Year 9 parents and carers. Your high level of attendance at the Futures Evening and your positive engagement with the guidance provided is greatly appreciated.

Finally, we are incredibly proud of our Year 9 students. The maturity and enthusiasm they have shown while planning the next stage of their education have been exemplary. We look forward to supporting them as they finalise their choices for September 2026.

Gateacre Sports Update: Spring Term Highlights

It has been a busy period for our student-athletes across a range of disciplines. From competitive tournaments to professional workshops, our students continue to represent Gateacre with pride and determination.

Football: End of an Era for Year 11

The Year 11 football team played their final match together this month in a tough Merseyside Cup fixture against Rainhill. It was a poignant afternoon as the boys held a determined draw for the majority of the match, largely thanks to an outstanding performance between the posts by goalkeeper **Liam F.**

Though Rainhill eventually found the net in the final 10 minutes, this team leaves a lasting legacy at Gateacre. They will always be remembered for their historic **Elite Schools Cup victory in Year 8** - an achievement that remains a benchmark for our younger squads. We wish the boys the very best as they move into their next chapters.



Basketball: Year 9 & 10 Show Resilience

Our Year 9 and 10 boys' basketball teams recently headed to Archbishop Beck for a high-energy tournament. The squad got off to a fantastic start, showing great chemistry to finish third in the group stages. While they were ultimately knocked out in a hard-fought quarter-final, their progress was evident.

A special mention goes to **Daniel A.**, who was named **Player of the Tournament** and finished as our top scorer for his clinical finishing and leadership on the court.



Netball: Inspiring the Next Generation at Anfield

A combined squad of girls from Years 7 through 10 enjoyed a truly unique opportunity at Anfield, participating in a netball event led by professional star **Eleanor Cardwell.**

Beyond the court, the day was about much more than just drills and matches.

The girls engaged in powerful sessions regarding **inclusivity in sport** and the vital importance of female participation. It was an empowering experience that left our students feeling inspired to continue breaking barriers in athletics.

Careers & Pathways: Shaping Future Success

At Gateacre, we are committed to ensuring our students are well-informed about the vast array of opportunities available to them after secondary school. This month, we hosted two flagship events designed to connect our students with experts and educators from across the region.

Gateacre Annual Careers Fair

Last week, students from **Year 9 through to Year 13** attended our Annual Careers Fair. The hall was buzzing with energy as students networked with representatives from top-tier universities, local businesses, and specialised training providers.

This event provided a vital platform for students to ask questions and explore pathways they may not have previously considered.

Gateacre Futures Evening

Our **Futures Evening** saw a fantastic turnout from students in Years 9, 10, and 11, accompanied by their parents and carers. This evening was specifically designed to help families navigate the transition to Post-16 education.

Highlights of the Evening:

- **Meet the Experts:** Our Curriculum Leaders showcased the wide variety of A-Level and Level 3 qualifications available right here at Gateacre.
- **External Pathways:** Representatives from local colleges were on hand to discuss T-Levels and Apprenticeships, ensuring a balanced view of all available options.
- **Professional Advice:** Independent careers guidance was provided throughout the night by Career Connect, offering personalised support for students at various stages of their decision-making.

Provider Type
Colleges & Training
Apprenticeships
Universities
Employers

Key Support & Insights Offered

Detailed insights into T-Levels and technical qualifications.
Expert guidance on "earn while you learn" pathways and application tips.
Essential information on UCAS, degree choices, and campus life.
Local and national businesses discussing future roles and industry demands.

We would like to thank all the providers and parents who attended. These events are a cornerstone of our commitment to student success, helping our young people move forward with clarity and ambition.



Super-Curricular Spotlight: Levelling Up Mathematics with the University of Liverpool

Our Sixth Form mathematicians are currently immersed in an elite enrichment programme designed to bridge the gap between A-Level success and undergraduate ambition. In partnership with the **University of Liverpool**, the "Levelling Up" initiative provides our students with a unique blend of academic rigour and higher education mentoring.

Every Wednesday during our dedicated super-curricular slot, students engage in high-impact sessions that strengthen their mathematical foundations while demystifying the path to university.

Strengthening the Core: Academic Tutoring

The programme's tutoring element is specifically designed to transform competence into confidence. By revisiting and deepening their understanding of school-taught topics, students are building the high-level fluency required for top-tier university applications. Recent focus areas include:

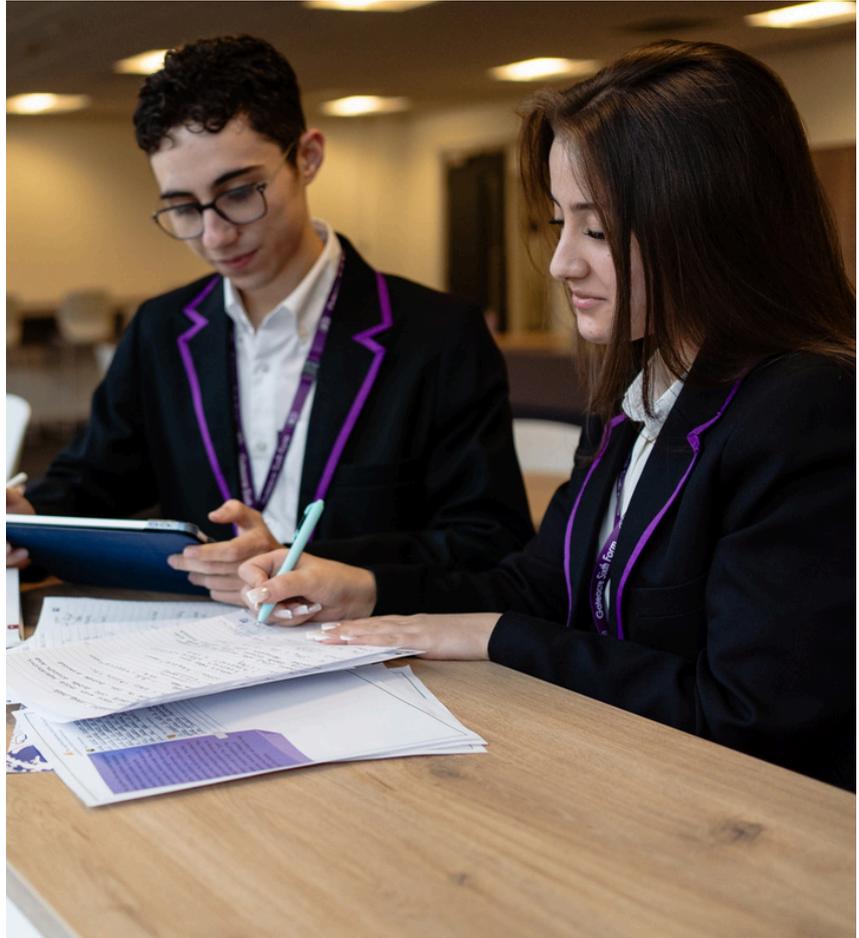
- **Advanced Problem-Solving:** Sharpening analytical thinking through introductory challenges.
- **Algebraic Mastery (I & II):** Deepening fluency in complex techniques.
- **Coordinate Geometry:** Bridging the gap between abstract algebra and graphical intuition.

Beyond the Classroom: Mentoring for Success

Alongside the math-heavy sessions, students benefit from a bespoke mentoring curriculum. These interactive, student-led discussions provide a relaxed space for our Sixth Formers to explore their futures. Key themes include:

- **Inside University Life:** A look at the University of Liverpool experience.
- **Mastering UCAS:** Expert guidance on navigating the application process.
- **The Standout Personal Statement:** How to articulate academic passion effectively.
- **Undergraduate Q&A:** Direct access to current tutors to discuss subject choices and career pathways.

This dual-track approach ensures our students aren't just achieving the grades - they are developing the mindset and the roadmap for success at the UK's leading institutions.



Governor's Update: Elevating Pupil Voice in Behaviour and Attendance

As part of my role as Link Governor for Behaviour and Attendance, I had the privilege of meeting with a group of Year 7 and 8 students ahead of our Governing Board meeting in February. My goal was simple: to hear directly from our young people about their daily school experience and their vision for the future of Gateacre School.

I was immensely impressed by their maturity and openness. They were incredibly articulate in sharing their aspirations - not just for their own success, but for the school as a whole.

Key themes emerged from our discussion:

- **Reward and Recognition:** Students spoke passionately about the importance of being celebrated for their hard work.
- **Learning Environment:** They offered insightful views on how the school day and lesson transitions are managed to maximise learning time.
- **The Pupil Experience:** While it was heartening to hear how happy these students are at Gateacre, they were clear that there is still more we can do to further enhance their time here.

Hearing this 'Pupil Voice' is vital. I am now looking forward to working closely with the school's leadership team over the coming months to ensure this feedback is not only heard but leads to meaningful change.

Thank you to the students who took the time to speak with me; your honesty and ambition are what make Gateacre a special place to learn.

A. Seeley Link Governor for Behaviour and Attendance
