



Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been a dark, wet half term but packed full of activity. The Catholic School Inspection has not yet resulted in a formal judgement and report, but as soon as we receive them we will pass them on to you. Meanwhile, I would like to record my appreciation of the many positive comments that you sent to the inspection team about BUCHS. The Lead Inspector said that ours was an unusually high number of responses and, even more pleasingly, the considerable amount of trouble taken by parents to respond at length was also exceptional. Thank you to all concerned.

Year 11 have now finished their Mocks and will be in a good position to make the next step up in their preparations for the summer exams; Year 13 are only a couple of weeks behind them. The behaviour and attitude of our students during the Mocks has been exemplary, which bodes very well for May and June.

Our Sixth Form block is on schedule and starting to take shape; we will start to see the walls rising up over the coming weeks. A record number of students attended our 'Offer Holders Event' to give applicants a taste of what to expect in Year 12 at the Ursuline, so we are looking forward to more students than ever benefiting from our new facilities in September.

I wish you a restful (and hopefully dry) half term break!

Dr Richard Wilkin MA, EdD, Headteacher



Uniform Donations

The school would welcome donations of pre-loved uniform in good condition. Please send any items to reception.

Unfortunately, we are not able to accept the old style striped blouses or PE kit with a name/initials embroidered onto them.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Instagram Account for BUCHS

We highly recommend following us on Instagram to stay in touch with news at BUCHS.

We now use our school Instagram account as the primary method of updating you on the latest news here at school. So don't miss out!

How to gain access to our account:

The safety of students remains our priority, so please follow the process outlined below.

STEP 1:

Complete the Evolve 'request for permission' form which was resent to parents and carers on the morning of 17/12/25. Please check your junk folder too. NB it is important to include your Instagram username on this form.

STEP 2:

Once you have completed and returned the Evolve consent form, please login to your Instagram a/c and request to follow us:

[@brentwood_ursuline](#)

Kindly note that we cannot request *you*. We will not approve requests until we have verified the accounts submitted on the forms.

Please do not use your child's Instagram username as the request will not be accepted.

We look forward to connecting with you on Instagram.

Please follow us on Instagram

[@brentwood_ursuline](#)

Vacancies

For details of current staff vacancies, including the HR Officer combined with Headteacher's PA role please click the following link:

[BUCHS Staff Vacancies](#)

Dates to note:

Staff and students return to school on:

Monday 23rd February

School will be closed to students on:

Friday 13th March



We would like to invite you to attend our Quiz Night on Friday 20th March 2026, from 6.30-8.30pm. This event will take place in the Main Hall. Tickets cost £5.00 per person and teams of up to ten people can take part. This is an event for those aged 16 years and above. Parking will be available on the school site.

There will be a licenced bar on the evening for you to purchase refreshments (cash and card will be accepted). We kindly request that you do not bring any snacks containing nuts.

Any funds raised from the event will contribute towards our new Sixth Form block. You can view the plans of this on our school website and Instagram page.

To purchase tickets, please follow this link, and be sure to enter your **team name** under the section 'Order/delivery instructions', so we can arrange the appropriate number of tables.

https://evolve.edufocus.co.uk/shop/shop_item_public.asp?site=brentwoodursulineconventvisits&estab=0&id=5986

We look forward to seeing you at the event!

STEM Challenge Final



Going to the STEM Challenge at Greenwich University honestly felt like a mix of nerves and excitement. When we first walked onto the campus, everything seemed massive and a bit overwhelming, but in a good way! Once we got into the challenge, it became really fun. My team spent a lot of time trying out ideas, messing things up, fixing them, and then messing them up again, but that actually made the whole thing feel real. It was cool seeing how other groups approached the same task completely differently. By the end of the day, I felt proud of what we made and surprised at how much I enjoyed it. It definitely made STEM feel less like a school subject and more like something I could actually see myself doing.

Liya A, 10B



Liya and Catie, Year 10

The STEM Challenge has helped me to develop the following skills: critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, collaboration and communication. I had so much fun and learnt so many new things too. I was lucky enough to get to the final and had the opportunity of a lifetime. So on behalf of myself, Catie, good luck to those who get chosen next year, as this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Caty A, 10J

Dance



Congratulations and thank you to Mrs Hilder and team for putting together a wonderful celebration of Dance across two evenings in December. Staff, friends and family all enjoyed watching our students perform a range of dance styles to music with a space theme including tap, ballet and contemporary. Amongst other numbers, the Tap Company performed their Children In Need charity routine and we watched some beautiful solos and duets; including those with siblings!

A huge well done to all students who took part, the standard was incredibly high. You really did create an enjoyable evening, and you showed us how much you all love to dance!



English

Sixth Form Academic Writing Workshop—13th January

Reflecting on the writing workshop run by the Fellows of the Royal Literary Fund, the experience proved to be insightful and beneficial. Over four sessions, we were taught to take a more critical approach to structuring our writing, and consider how the language we use can aid us in communicating to our target audiences more effectively, which myself and many of my fellow students found very helpful.

Neve J-L, 13.4

Visit to the RSC, Stratford-Upon-Avon

We visited the RSC at Stratford-upon-Avon, where we worked with a theatre director specialising in Shakespeare. We focused on Othello and took part in practical activities exploring how actors prepare for performance, including warm-ups and performing key scenes. We learned the importance of emphasising line endings in Shakespeare, as the final words often reveal deeper meaning and subtext. What I enjoyed most was experiencing the play from an actor's perspective; thinking and feeling like a performer helped me understand Othello more deeply and engage with it on a more meaningful level.

Lindsay I, 12.2



English Continued

Our trip to the Theatre Royal Haymarket was a joyful experience, that was incredibly useful for furthering our studies of the play, Othello. David Harewood as Othello had an incredible stage presence and gave an emotional performance of the tragic character. The other actors also gave interesting, yet effective takes on their characters, keeping the play entertaining and funny at times. One of the most interesting parts for me was seeing the way David Harewood played Othello's deterioration and the emotional impact of Desdemona's death. Overall, the play was very fun to watch and a clear visualisation of what we have studied.

Mia W, 12.2



Maths

Solution to the Caesar Cipher included in the Winter issue of the newsletter:

"Go gscr iye k Wobbi Mrbscdwkc kxn k Rkzzi Xog lokb"

Becomes:

"We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year"

The cipher shifted each letter of the alphabet forward by 10; an 'a' became 'k,' 'b' became 'l' and so on.

Government & Politics

To enrich and inform my studies in Government & Politics A Level, I attended Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) on Wednesday 14th January. It felt surreal to see the significant political figures speak in front of me after studying them, and witness the processes of debate, scrutiny and holding the government to account. Both main parties criticised each other heavily; particularly regarding policy changes and 'u turns' and Prime Minister Sir Kier Starmer blamed the Conservative Party for previously "crashing the economy."

I also appreciated immersing myself in the architecture of the Westminster building. It was inspiring and intriguing with its rich history, paintings and sculptures. I am hugely grateful for the opportunity to be so close to the centre of my subject and am even more motivated now as a result.

Hannah O, 12.1



Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School

Music Scholarship applications open soon!

Music Scholarships and places will be offered to up to 17 of the 175 places for admission into Year 7 in September 2027, on the basis of musical aptitude. Please visit our website www.brentwoodursuline.co.uk for more details.



Scriptural Reasoning

Scriptural Reasoning returned in 2026 with a discussion about lying. All Sixth Form students are welcome to attend; particularly A Level RS, Law and Psychology students, and those considering early application to top level universities, as Scriptural Reasoning is based on a Cambridge University programme.

a Cambridge University based programme

Scriptural Reasoning

for Year 12 and 13 students

Discuss religious texts, contemporary ethical dilemmas, philosophical arguments and more.

All are welcome, particularly those considering Oxbridge applications.

Thursday Week B, 1:00pm, T34

a battle between deontological Kantian Ethics and teleological Utilitarianism; two normative ethical theories we cover in A-level RS.

A deontological ethical view is where morality of an action is judged by adherence to rules or duties, not consequences of those actions. A teleological ethical view focuses on the consequences of actions rather than the action itself. So clearly the reasoning we used in this week's discussion was overall teleological, and maybe to some people this is exactly the way we should judge the morality of actions. However, let's just briefly think about this discussion from a Kantian absolute viewpoint. Kant proposed universal moral laws should guide actions, such as "don't lie", focussing on intent and treating others as an end in themselves. This means these universal laws can't ever be broken and must always be upheld. If you allowed for one person in a specific situation to break an absolute law, such as lying about something, you are allowing everyone to lie about everything, including lying about crimes committed. So now if we return to Tom and Brian, using Kant's universality, we shouldn't lie about Tom being a Bluecastle United fan, as that breaks Kant's universal moral laws. So according to Kant, if we lie about Tom being a Bluecastle United fan, that means we agree lying should be universalisable, therefore we think it's okay to lie for our friend who committed murder and needs us as an alibi. Kant's deontology is something that's very hard to apply to real life, since we are sometimes inclined to focus on consequences of an action, rather than dismissing them completely and only focusing on the actions.

But this ethical discussion doesn't necessarily have a right or wrong answer. It's up for debate. So after reading the scenario, what do you think? Would you lie to save Tom?

April D, 13.1

In this week's scriptural reasoning:

This week's session was focused on a classic moral dilemma of whether we should lie to save a friend from danger. In the scenario given was Tom, your best friend, who is a Bluecastle United fan, and Brian. Brian hates Bluecastle United, however doesn't know Tom is a diehard fan. Brian tells you that he dislikes Bluecastle fans so much that he beats up anyone he sees who supports the team. He then tells you he has suspicions that Tom might be 'one of those,' and asks you: 'Is Tom a Bluecastle United fan?'

The discussion started out with the majority agreeing that they would lie to save Tom, mainly because of the irrational premeditation of Brian's aggression. This view was further supported when measuring the proportionality of good outcomes of lying to the bad outcomes. However, then Mrs Brand asked us, "What if instead your friend committed murder and asked you to lie for them on the stand, to make you their alibi?" Then the discussion shifted. We collectively agreed that we would not lie to protect our friend in the second scenario. Their actions were wrong and they deserved to be punished. Now this might seem like an easy discussion, but beneath the surface is



Computer Science & History

Trip to Bletchley Park



Year 12 history students and Year 10 and 12 Computer Science students started the new year with a visit to Bletchley Park on Friday 16th January. Known as the Intelligence Factory during the Second World War, and the birthplace of modern computing, Bletchley Park is of great significance to both subjects. At Bletchley Park, Alan Turing and the codebreakers cracked the Enigma machine codes to decipher Nazi communications, giving the Allies information which would be crucial to the Normandy landings, and subsequently victory in Europe.

Our cohorts, split into Year 10s and Year 12s, both went on tours of the park. We saw the mansion where codebreakers originally worked, the huts that they moved into when the operation got larger, and various exhibits concerning the war efforts and, more recently, AI. We learned also that the key to cracking the Enigma code, the fact that letters could not be enciphered to themselves, was discovered by female codebreaker Mavis Lever, and that at least 6,000 of the 8,000 codebreakers at Bletchley Park were women! This fact was empowering to our Computer Science students, as women have been and remain underrepresented in this field. As only the men were at war, women played various crucial roles in the Bletchley Park operation (originally known as Operation X), such as the *dispatch riders*, who took messages from one place to another on motorcycles in blackout conditions.

Codebreaking and encryption (scrambling messages to protect their contents) can be considered two sides of the same coin. As such, the Bletchley Park team offered us a workshop about the development and use of modern encryption methods: the types used by messaging apps like WhatsApp to protect user privacy. We also learned of the risks to information safety posed by the rise of quantum computing, which would essentially be able to 'guess' the keys needed to 'unlock' these private messages.

Unfortunately, we could not see the first modern computer "Colossus", as it had been moved to the National Computing Museum. Regardless, the day was fantastic, and it was enlightening for our students to see the impact their studies could one day have on the world!

Felicity M, 12.3

Music

Welcome

Welcome back to our Spring 1 Music Department update here at BUCHS. Thank you very much for your continued support of our events and concerts. In Music this half term, we have had great success in our Epiphany Mass, our St Angela's Feast Day Mass, our most recent chamber concert and our continued assembly performances. I would like to wish you all a very calming and relaxing February half term and I look forward to sharing more updates from Music.

Epiphany Mass

On Tuesday 6th January, we celebrated the wonderful feast of the Epiphany at Brentwood Cathedral. As always, the Insieme Choir sang with vibrancy and reverence. The students represented themselves to the highest standard in this regard and performed 'Ding Dong Merrily on High' at communion beautifully. Thank you to all the members of the Insieme Choir and special thanks as always to Stephen King for accompanying us.

St Angela's Feast Day Mass

On Tuesday 27th January, we celebrated the feast day of St Angela Merici, a significant and important person to the Brentwood Ursuline and its ethos. Once again, the Insieme Choir sang the hymns and responses beautifully. The students made the school and myself extremely proud due to their excellent behaviour and attitude throughout. Thank you to all of our hardworking members of the Insieme Choir and thank you to Stephen King again for accompanying us.

Chamber Concert



In February, we hosted another very successful chamber concert where thirteen pupils performed with professionalism and gusto. The students entertained us with intensity and great magnitudes of expression. The students pushed themselves to showcase their exciting repertoire and they should be extremely proud of their performances.

The students who performed were: Cecilia G, Beatrix M, Ysabella R, Quinn W, Amelia F, Davina J, Ofelia B, Emily O, Ella A, Amalia Z, Isabella C, Mireya H and Abigail D. Finally, special thanks as always go to the families, friends and staff who attended to support our pupils, and to Stephen King who accompanied our students so elegantly.

Assembly Performances

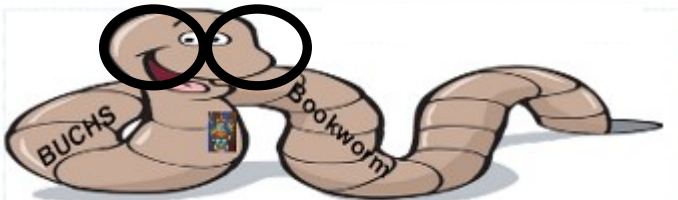
Throughout this half term, we have heard exceptional and reflective performances from our students at the beginning, during, or at the end of assemblies. Students have been a huge credit to themselves and the school as they perform with confidence and maturity to their fellow students. I would especially like to highlight the talented pupils who performed recently at our assemblies: Nile M, Mary H, Isabella C, Abigail D and Anna-Maria N. Thanks also to all of our students who have performed this half term, and I hope they continue to make assemblies even more successful in Spring 2.

Mr Maynard, Director of Music

Library News

BUCHS Bookworm Success

Very well done to Lia B in 7J for achieving her Gold BUCHS Bookworm badge. This was presented to her by Dr Wilkin on 14th January. Lia has now completed all three levels in her short time at BUCHS; a very impressive achievement!

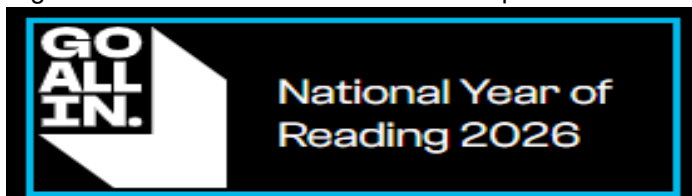


Dr Wilkin presenting Lia with her Gold BUCHS Bookworm Badge



Advent Reading Challenge

Well done to those students who took part in the library's Advent Reading Challenge. Students who handed their signed forms in all received achievement points.



You may have heard about the National Year of Reading on the TV, in the press or on social media.

The National Literacy Trust describes it as 'the biggest campaign in a generation designed to help more people (re)discover the joy of reading and make it part of their everyday lives.'

As a school, we fully support this initiative and encourage all students, staff and families to read more for pleasure. We have some activities planned to celebrate this special year. Watch this space!

**The Great BUCHS Book
Swap**

Thursday 5th March

Library

Bring your tickets!




See Mrs Osborn in
the Library for more information

To celebrate World Book Day, the library is hosting a Great BUCHS Book Swap event during lunchtime on Thursday 5th March. All students are welcome. Here's what you have to do to take part:

- Bring in unwanted books from home. (These must be in good condition and suitable for secondary school age students.)
- Hand the book(s) to Mrs Osborn in the library any time up to 4th March. You will be given a ticket for each one donated.
- Bring your ticket(s) to the event and you can choose books that are new to you to take away and keep.

This is a fantastic way to stock up on 'new' reading books whilst also helping the environment by reducing



WORLD BOOK DAY®

Every student in the school has been given a £1 World Book Day token to use in part payment for a book bought at participating book shops. Alternatively, they can choose a free book from this year's selection of wonderful titles:

<https://www.worldbookday.com/books/>

Year 10 Speak Out Challenge



On Monday 26th January, a representative from the Jack Petchey Foundation visited BUCHS and spent the day with a group of our Year 10 students to support them in improving and strengthening their confidence in public speaking.

The day began with a fun ice-breaker; the 'hokey-cokey,' and culminated in each student delivering a timed self-written speech which was delivered without notes.

Courageous & Resilient

All of our students showed that they were courageous and resilient in working towards their final presentation. They grew in confidence and technique as the day progressed.

Members of staff and the Jack Petchey representative, selected the top four speeches. The students who delivered these will now move forward to the next round.

Good luck to those students and congratulations to all the Year 10s who took part.



Jack Petchey's
"SPEAK OUT"
Challenge!

Year 7 Biscuit Making Competition

This competition was offered by the Food Tech and RE Departments. The theme was Ash Wednesday and the biscuit had to include a portion of fruit.

There were many lovely entries and the winner was Summer P in 7U.

2nd prize went to Scarlett R in 7B.

3rd prize to Ireoluwayinka B in 7C.

Well done to all three and to the many pupils who entered. Certificates and prizes have already been distributed!

Mrs Sullivan, Teacher of Food Tech



PE News

Throughout this academic year, the Year 7 Netball Squad (pictured below) has been truly unstoppable, winning every match so far. Their impressive results include a 22–1 victory against The Forest Academy, an 11–9 win over The Sandon School, and their latest outstanding performance, a 30–2 triumph against Sanders Draper School in the Quarter Final of the Essex Plate Netball Competition.

The team has now progressed to the semi-finals, where they will face Woodlands School. Over the course of the season, the girls have come together, grown in confidence and developed into a strong, solid team who are united in harmony.

In addition to this, we have a fixture against Brentwood School where BUCHS will be represented by three Year 7 squads. It is brilliant to see so many of our students playing netball and wanting to be a part of our extra-curricular clubs and teams.

Huge congratulations too to our U14 A & B Netball squad, who represented BUCHS with dignity and pride in both the Essex Cup & MESSA leagues. The players showed impressive skill, teamwork and determination throughout the competition, with strong passing, confident shooting and disciplined defence on display.

A special well done to the A team (pictured below), who battled all the way to the quarter finals - an outstanding achievement in such a competitive tournament. Both teams should be incredibly proud of their performances and the commitment they showed on and off the court.



The U13 football MESSA (Mid Essex Secondary School Sports Association) squad, pictured above, has gone from strength to strength this year, with the team remaining unbeaten in the league, with two fixtures still to play. The girls have been fantastic throughout the season, showing great determination, teamwork, and consistency in every match.

In addition to their league success, the Year 8 team also finished an impressive 3rd place in the Futsal tournament at Brentwood County High School, where they played with great skill, energy, and enthusiasm against strong opposition.

WiseUp to Switching Off

WiseUp to Switching Off was created to give families something **positive, simple, and pressure-free** they can use together, without adding to school workload.

WiseUp to Switching Off is a printable Digital Detox that helps families reflect on screen use and create healthier habits through conversation and small changes, rather than restriction.

It supports:

- Positive parent–child conversations
- Balanced screen habits
- Wellbeing, focus, and sleep
- Consistency between home and school values

It's completely **free to download, print, and share**.

WiseUp to Switching Off – Free Digital Detox for Families

WiseUp to Switching Off encourages positive conversations around screen use and wellbeing, helping children and parents find balance together.

Download here: <https://team.wiseup-teambuilding.co.uk/landing-page-page>

The WiseUp Team

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AT TWICKENHAM!



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21 - 22 MARCH 2026



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Essex Fire Museum

Open Day

2026



17th and 22nd Of February

10:30AM To 4:00PM

Fire Station, Hogg Lane, Grays
RM17 5QS



Book Now 
Free Entry



Museum@essex-fire.gov.uk



Promoting Education And Conversations In The Home

ExpertEdLive: Family allows parents and children to learn together connecting directly from home. Events including our popular Midweek Maths series give parents insights as to how their children access learning so they can then support them in other areas of learning and life.

See this link for more details of when family courses are running <https://expertedlive.org/family/>

BUCHS Safeguarding Team – 2025/2026



Dr R J Wilkin
Headteacher

DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead
DDSL – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mr D Giles
DSL



Miss T Orritt
SLT Line Manager
Y7
DDSL



Mrs A Baird
SLT Line Manager
Y8
DDSL



Mr D Giles
SLT Line Manager
Y9
DSL



Ms K Wenborne
SLT Line Manager
Y10+11
DDSL



Mrs K Mackenzie
SLT Line Manager
Y11
DDSL



Miss F Scott
SLT Line Manager
Y12+13
DDSL