



# St Robert of Newminster

Catholic School and  
Sixth Form College Prospectus  
2020-2021







# Head Teacher's Welcome

**Welcome to St Robert of Newminster Catholic School and Sixth Form College. We are an 11-18 mixed Catholic comprehensive school with 1,600 students on roll. The school serves the Catholic parishes of St. John XXIII (Washington/Penshaw), St. Mary's (Easington Lane) and St. Michael's (Houghton-le-Spring). It is situated in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. We are part of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust, along with our five feeder primary schools (St Joseph's Washington, St Bede's, St John Boste, Our Lady Queen of Peace and St Michael's).**

St Robert's enjoys an excellent local and regional reputation. Our positive Catholic ethos, integral to all that we do, provides the basis for the highest standards of care, relationships and academic achievement. We are proud of the school's place within the local community and we provide a caring, inclusive, challenging and supportive environment for young people of all abilities so that they may flourish and achieve excellence. A varied curriculum provides academic success and a wide range of activities, including music, art, drama and sport.

We are committed in our drive to achieve the very best for our students in terms of their learning, achievement, enrichment and their spiritual formation. We are rightly proud of our excellent academic results both at GCSE and A Level. However, we equally take immense pride in how we help our students develop personally, socially and spiritually during their time with us.

Our focus on high quality teaching throughout the school provides a stimulating and challenging classroom experience, backed up by a strong pastoral system. The school has high expectations of behaviour and our calm, purposeful atmosphere of learning allows students to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge required to be successful independent learners. Our achievements have been recognised in both Ofsted and Diocesan inspections.

The school provides a well-considered and highly effective Transition Project to assist students in their move from primary school to secondary. Parents are very much part of this process. Indeed, our relationship with parents is vital

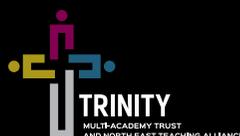
throughout a student's time at the school, as we seek to work in partnership with home.

A few years ago, we completed a £13 million build and refurbishment programme, and it has ensured the whole school is fully integrated and is able to offer well-resourced specialist areas throughout.

Our goal is to help students develop into well-rounded and well-educated young people with a strong set of values and morals. We provide this opportunity for our young people alongside the highest quality of academic education. These high ideals have meant that the school is consistently over-subscribed for admission both at age 11 and 16.

If you wish to apply for a place for your son or daughter at St Robert's, please follow the Local Authority admissions guidelines. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to welcoming both you and your children to our community.

**Mr D Juric, Head Teacher**



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# Welcome

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## **Our Purpose**

St Robert's is a Catholic and Christian community, in which we aim to follow the example of Christ in our daily work and relationships. We recognise that all members of our community are learners and are unique.

Staff and students alike should strive to treat each other with tolerance and respect and to be aware of one another's needs, hopes and aspirations.

The school aims, through a broad and balanced curriculum and an effective programme of personal development to help all students to develop their full potential spiritually, socially and intellectually, within a secure, happy and Christian environment.

We are proud of our traditions, and our purpose is to provide high-quality education for all, suited to each individual student's needs. We strive, through our partnerships with parents/carers and our community, to bring about continuous improvement.

By putting students first in a safe, hard-working and well-ordered environment, we are able to focus on individual achievement.

## **Our Vision**

All individuals are children of God, created equally in his image to share an eternal future. We promise to play our full part in their education and formation.

## **Our Mission**

We strive to meet the academic, moral, physical, social and spiritual needs of all students so that they may take their place as caring, committed, self-aware and self-confident members of society.

## **Aims of the school**

In striving to create the school climate, which will nurture this mission, the school aims to:

Offer to all students a broad, balanced, appropriate, relevant and flexible curriculum;  
Develop as an integral part of

the local community, particularly the local Catholic community; to develop and maintain the partnership between school and parents, parishes, primary schools and the wider community;

Develop as a worshipping community, in which prayer and liturgy are encouraged as part of faith development;

Encourage all members of our school community, students, staff and governors, to follow the example of Christ in their daily work and relationships; to treat one another with justice, tolerance and respect and to be aware of and respond to each other's needs, hopes and aspirations;

Provide and maintain an attractive, secure, safe and healthy school environment.

## **Religious Education**

The religious observance and instruction in the school is that of the Roman Catholic Church.

The governors are required to remind parents of their right of withdrawal of students from worship and Religious Education. However, parents are also reminded that the school exists to give a Catholic education to its students and that, therefore, they are expected to be in sympathy with its aims and objectives which pervade all areas of school life including the area of religious worship and Religious Education lessons.

## **Our partnerships**

The school has the benefit of a School Chapel with an established Chaplaincy Team who offer excellent retreat opportunities for all year groups (Year 7 - 13) as well as other liturgical activities and opportunities for reflection.

We also have strong and effective partnership links with our local parishes, the Youth Ministry Team and the Diocese.

## **Trinity North East Teaching School Alliance**

St Robert of Newminster is a strategic partner in the Trinity North East Teaching School Alliance. Cardinal Hume Catholic School is the lead school in the Alliance.

## **School Direct/ITT**

St Robert's offers a range of routes into teaching. Our most popular pathway is the School Direct ITT programme which is available for Secondary and Primary. The application process is through the UCAS Teacher Training system. St Robert's also has strong partnerships with a number of local Universities and SCITT's which follow the PCET and PGCE route into teaching.

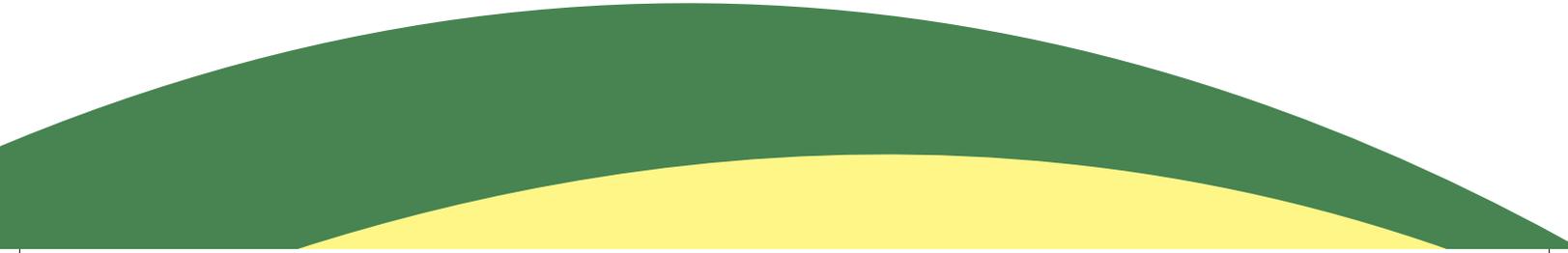
## **Primary Links**

We have strong links with our partner-primary schools and every year in July every year in July we have transition days for Year 6 students. This time enables all year Year 6 students who will be joining us in September to engage fully with a range of learning opportunities and they are given a chance to learn about St Robert's and also meet a wide range of students before they start with us in September.

Students attend from our partner-primary schools of:

- Our Lady Queen of Peace RC Primary School, Penshaw
- St Bede's RC Primary School, Washington
- St John Boste RC Primary School
- St Joseph's RC Primary School, Washington
- St Michael's RC Primary School, Houghton

We also accept pupils who match the criteria as detailed in our admissions policy.



# Care and Guidance

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The pastoral care of students is a real strength and we have extremely high expectations of all students in terms of their behaviour, their learning and their achievement.

The Form Tutor is the first point of contact through communication via the planner and they play an extremely important role in the life of their tutor group as they monitor the overall progress of students and offer support and guidance on a day-to-day basis as well as at crucial stages in their school careers. Students are placed in a House and see their Tutors on a daily basis; in this way, close links can be built up between student and tutor, and tutor and parents/carers.

The work of the Form Tutor is co-ordinated by the Head of House who has overall responsibility for students in Y7 - 11 in their house and remains with the house for five years until students enter sixth form. Sixth Form tutors remain with their tutor groups for two years, throughout Year 12 and 13.

We hope Parents/Carers will contact the Form Tutor or the Head of House if they are at all concerned about any aspect of their child's life at school. The parents/carers of students in each year group are invited to an annual consultation session and receive a report on their child's progress.

## Healthy School

We are a health promoting school through our PSHE provision and curriculum links in other departments, through our healthy eating and physical activity programmes, and through the support for emotional health and well being of students and staff. We are accredited with the National Healthy School status. A wide range of food is available through our café-style outlets. All of the food provided meets with our Healthy Schools status. Students eligible for free school meals are able to access the full range of eating options.

## Relationships and Sex Education

The school is committed to the provision of appropriate sex and relationship education to all students. The governors have approved a whole-school sex and relationship education policy, which outlines the teaching of sex

education within the moral teachings of the Catholic Church and as a central part of Education for Personal Relationships. Such teaching will take place in certain subject areas (e.g. Religious Education and Biology) and also in tutorial lessons. Special time will also be set aside when specialist staff and external agencies will be involved through the School Health Education programme.

## Statement of Policy on Substance Use and Misuse

The school does not accept the misuse of drugs or alcohol by members of the school, nor the illegal supply of substances. The school is committed to the health and safety of its members and will take action to safe-guard their well-being. The school acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people, and through the general ethos of the school will seek to persuade students in need of support to come forward.

In response to our shared concerns at a local and national level, we wish to state that as part of its care for the welfare of its students, the school believes it has a duty to inform and educate young people on the consequences of drug use and misuse. The school takes a pro-active stance on this matter, believing that health education is a vital part of the Personal and Social education of every student.

## Learning Support

Learning Support focuses on a range of specific learning needs, and is delivered by a very experienced team of Teachers and Teaching Assistants, who work in the classroom. An area for small group and individual work is also available.

Our pastoral support team works closely with parents/carers and other professionals, including the Connexions Service and our Extended Services and Home-School Liaison Team.

Students who experience problems with basic learning skills and who require more individualized programmes of work are catered for by withdrawal or classroom support. Progress is continually reviewed. Should further and more specialised assistance be required, reference can be made to the Local Authority's Education Psychology Service.

Counselling support is also available through the work of Mrs Hughes, our School-based Social Worker.

## Student Responsibilities

We believe that our students have responsibilities both to themselves and to all other people who work in the school. We want them to get on well with others and to recognise that they must work co-operatively. We emphasise respect and consideration for others: for fellow students, for all members of staff and for parents/carers.

We aim to treat students as responsible young adults in the expectation that they will respond in the same way. We expect them to be ready to learn and reliable, for example in completing homework and bringing equipment as well as turning up as promised for music rehearsals or team practices. We also expect them to be honest in their dealings with other people.

## Student Participation

All students have the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities and the wider life of the school.

Students can raise issues at the year councils and the School Council. Some students will be involved in the reading support; others are trained to contribute to staff recruitment by interviewing candidates or are involved in giving their views about general school life (e.g. giving their views about food menus). Sixth-formers are expected to participate fully in the life of the school e.g. assisting in classrooms or in lunchtime activities.

## Behaviour Policy

The school has a clear policy that is designed to promote and encourage respect and good behaviour. All staff and students are made aware of the standards of behaviour required to enable us to have an orderly and happy working environment.

## Rewards

Staff use a range of strategies to encourage and support positive work and behaviour, including verbal or written comments, achievement points, year or department commendations, attendance certificates, an annual award ceremony or praise in assemblies.

# Our Curriculum

We have extremely high expectations of our students and we have a strong commitment to a curriculum that is broad, balanced yet also personalised to the needs of our students.

## Years 7 - 9

Our curriculum is designed to stretch and challenge our students, while also enabling them to develop skills and knowledge in a wide range of subject areas. In Years 7 - 9 students follow courses in PSHE, Religious Education, English, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History, Design and Technology, ICT, Art, Music and Physical Education. All of our students follow a Foreign Language course throughout Key Stage 3. Students in Year 8 and 9 also study Drama.

## Years 10 and 11

The KS4 curriculum allows our students to follow a number of different pathways with differentiated courses within both core and optional subjects.

All students follow a core programme that includes RE, English, Mathematics, Science and PE. Those with a particular ability in Science will have the opportunity to study three separate sciences. The vast majority of students also study a Foreign Language and a Humanities subject.

A range of option courses are also available.

## Sixth Form

The Sixth Form curriculum is more specialised and more intense, allowing students the opportunity to develop their preferred interests and skills. The majority of students study three subjects at A level.

In addition to their academic studies, great emphasis is also placed on independent learning skills, which play a major part in preparing students for higher education and employment.



### ICT and e-learning

ICT facilities are available in every department in the school and used to support teaching and learning in all subjects.

Almost all classrooms have digital projectors and most also have electronic, interactive whiteboards. Many departments are served with computer suites within their own areas. Our school library has ICT facilities and there are numerous learning resources available through our computer network and intranet, as well as from the internet. Students can access many of these resources from home through our virtual learning environment or by directly logging into the school network.

Students can attend extra-curricular clubs both at lunchtime and after school to learn new Computing skills or catch up with class work.

### Homework

At St Robert of Newminster Catholic School and Sixth Form College we believe the purpose of homework is:

- To encourage pupils to develop the skills, confidence and motivation

needed to study effectively on their own

- To prepare pupils for the demands which await them in their studies, such as assessments, revision, external examinations, production of coursework, controlled assessments, research projects and extended writing
- To consolidate and reinforce the knowledge, skills and understanding developed at school
- To extend learning beyond the classroom
- To involve parents/carers in their child's learning and keep them informed about the work their child is doing

### Planning and Preparation:

We recognise that the quality and effectiveness of homework depends on how well it has been planned. As a result, we aim to make sure that homework is relevant and planned to complement classroom learning. Whenever a task is set, teachers and students will designate the task as one of the following three types in the pupil planners. Pupils will record in their planners either **P, C or E**.

- **Prepare** – tasks required to prepare, successfully, for the next lesson or beyond
- **Consolidate**- tasks which helps to reinforce the challenging nature of the work done in class
- **Extend**-tasks designed to challenge pupils to find out more and gather new information to deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills

### Student Planner

All students are issued with a student diary/planner. This consists of several sections including: school prayers, timetable and homework; information specific to particular terms, for example educational choices, study support; details of extra-curricular activities; and a day-by-day diary. One of its main uses is the recording of homework, and if used properly, the diary/planner can be an invaluable way of helping students develop the planning and organisational skills necessary for realising their full potential. Parents/carers are asked to support us by checking and signing the planner/diary on a weekly basis. There is also a space for parents/carers to comment.

## Careers Education & Guidance

We have a team of staff with specific responsibilities for work-related learning and Information, Advice and Guidance. In addition, the form tutors, the PSHE team and Heads of House play an important part in the continuing process of careers education, information, advice and guidance. We also have careers staff, Mrs T. Green is available for consultation.

Throughout Years 7 - 11 our Careers Advisor is available for consultation using our request system accessible via the main school library. Our external partnerships also allow us to offer a range of vocational and work-related courses in Years 10 to 13. We have a clear commitment to enable all students to access vocational study options, alongside those traditionally offered.

### The Careers Programme from 11 to 19

We guide Year 7 - Year 9 students through self-assessment and action planning, towards a realistic choice of courses for Years 10 and 11. Parents/carers and students are involved in full consultations with staff. In Years 10 and 11, careers education aims to help students to know themselves, to understand the place of work in the community, and appreciate the range of educational and training pathways open to them at the end of Year 11.

In the sixth form, we run a programme of careers education that covers further and higher education, apprenticeships and opportunities in a wide range of professions. Students visit universities and other institutions, attend a higher education conference and other events. Those students who do not wish to apply for universities

can attend lunchtime workshops which support them in making their applications for employment.

### Work Experience

The Key Stage 4 and 5 (Years 10 and 12) work experience scheme gives all students the opportunity to work for a week with a variety of employers and organisations. Some students are selected to undertake programmes of extended work experience or personalised learning programmes. They continue to work towards achieving in the core subjects and retain those options that relate to their future career choices. Integrated into the school week are blocks of work experience and time within small groups, with extensive support to ensure continuing progress in their school subjects.

# Home-school communication

We are keen to work as closely as possible with you during your child's time at St Robert's.

There are four main ways in which we seek to maintain these links:

- Text messaging.
- The school planner issued at the start of each year.
- Through personal contact with members of the teaching staff, Form Tutors and Heads of House.
- By written communication - especially reports and newsletters.
- By our school website:  
[www.strobertofnewminster.co.uk](http://www.strobertofnewminster.co.uk)

## Availability of Documents

A variety of documents is produced by the school and sent to parents/carers at appropriate times. There is also a procedure for formal complaints, details of which are available from the Headteacher. It is hoped that such procedures will rarely be necessary, and that parents/carers will always feel able to contact the school whenever they have cause for concern.



My Ed parent app is also now available, free to download to keep in touch with school.

## ParentPay

In an attempt to make payment for school meals, trips, clubs, etc. more convenient, we have introduced an online system, using a secure service called ParentPay. Therefore we are asking all parents to use our e-payment method to pay for school lunches. For those parents wishing to continue to pay by cash, the current system via cash loaders will still be in operation in school. However we do encourage the new system wherever possible. This can be done online using the ParentPay website or in cash at local stores where you see the PayPoint logo. A link to the ParentPay website is on the St Robert's school website. ParentPay provides you with a secure online account, activated using a unique activation username and password.  
[www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com)

# Sports

St Robert's is justly proud of its strong reputation for sport in the region. Staff provide a variety of lunchtime, evening and weekend activities which cater for a wide range of competitive and recreational activities including:

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Athletics     | Climbing      |
| Cross-country | Cycling       |
| Football      | Golf          |
| Gymnastics    | Hockey        |
| Netball       | Orienteering  |
| Rugby         | Rowing Skiing |
| Swimming      | Tennis        |
| Rowing        | Dance         |
| Table Tennis  | Handball      |
| Volleyball    | Trampolining  |

Our teams enjoy success in local leagues and in county competitions. The high standard of our students' achievements is reflected in the considerable number of county players we provide and there is an increasing number of students who perform at national level in sports such as football, karate, swimming and trampolining.

# Clubs and Societies

Many staff and students give freely of their time and expertise to run lunchtime and after-school clubs, catering for many interests e.g.

- |                               |                         |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Art club                    | • Chaplaincy            |
| • Athletics                   | • Keep-fit              |
| • Badminton                   | • Library               |
| • Basketball                  | • Liturgy group         |
| • Book club                   | • Music/ drama club     |
| • CAFOD group                 | • Netball               |
| • Choir                       | • Orchestra             |
| • Computing                   | • Outdoor activities    |
| • Creative writing workshops  | • Photography           |
| • Dance                       | • Public speaking       |
| • Duke of Edinburgh           | • Prayer groups         |
| • Award training (Sixth Form) | • Rosary group          |
| • Film club                   | • Rowing                |
| • First aid                   | • Table Tennis          |
| • Football                    | • Trampoline club       |
| • Gymnastics                  | • SVP group             |
| • Hockey                      | • Young engineers club  |
| • Reading activist group      | • Young enterprise club |

# Performing Arts

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We offer various performance opportunities during the academic year, both on and off the curriculum. We have taken part in the Shakespeare for Schools Festival over a number of years.

Our Performance Hall is a wonderful space in which to hold professional musicals, talent shows and music evenings.

There is an extensive programme of musical activities to get involved in; anyone and everyone who has a passion for music is welcome. School band, string groups, Orchestra and Choir each rehearse every week and give regular concerts.

In addition to this, we also offer space for choir and band practice, and students are encouraged to create groups according to their own interest. We have a tradition at this school of producing superb musicians from every genre, from classical to pop, with students regularly pursuing further and higher education at music colleges across the UK.

# Visual Art, Film & Media

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There is a strong tradition of the visual arts, represented by a team of specialist teachers. Students studying art, photography, media and film are actively encouraged to extend their studies in and outside school hours and to take advantage of our facilities.

Students' work is reflected by the facilities, and students often express themselves in a range of media that not only includes painting and drawing, but also clay, film, photography and print-making.

Regular field and exhibition visits are arranged, and a significant number of students go on to study art and media at local colleges and universities.

GCSE and A level art and photography students annually present an exhibition of their work which is open to parents/carers and the general public to recognise and showcase the work from a wide range of genres to students and their friends and families.



# Additional Information

## School Uniform and Equipment

Textbooks, exercise books, student planner and folders are supplied and should be looked after with care

What you will need:

- A bag (large enough to hold your books and equipment)
- Pens (Black or blue)
- Green pen for improvement tasks (provided)
- Pencils
- Pencil Sharpener
- Ruler
- Rubber
- Scientific calculator
- Compass
- Protractor and other mathematical equipment
- PE kit
- 2 Reading books

## UNIFORM

Uniform will be strictly enforced which contributes to the corporate image of the school.

Boys

- Green blazer with badge (colour of year)
- White school shirt
- School tie
- Black school trousers – traditional NOT fashion (e.g. no canvas or jean material, skin tight trousers)
- Plain black leather belt (if required)
- Years 7-9 green jumper or tank top with school name embroidered
- Years 10-11 black jumper or tank top with school name embroidered
- Black formal flat leather school shoes – no trainers, trainer designs, sports brands, canvas shoes, plimsoles, no suede or pump-style footwear. No suede desert boots or shoes or Dr. Martin style boots.
- Plain black formal leather boots worn under trousers (winter only)
- Plain dark coloured socks.

Girls

- Green blazer with badge (colour of year)
- White school blouse with short sleeve or threequarter sleeve (No tie)
- Black school trousers – traditional NOT fashion (e.g. no leggings, canvas or jean material, skin tight trousers or hipster-style trousers)
- Plain black leather belt (if required)
- Tartan knee length school skirt
- Years 7-9 green jumper or tank top or cardigan with school name embroidered

- Years 10-11 black jumper or tank top or cardigan with school name embroidered (uniform shop)
- Plain black or natural tights or white or black ankle socks
- Plain formal black flat leather school shoes – no trainers, trainer designs, sports brands, canvas
- shoes, plimsoles, no suede or pump-style footwear or Dr. Martin style boots
- Plain black flat leather boots worn under trousers (winter only)

## PE KIT

Compulsory:

- St Robert's Unisex T-Shirt
- Unisex Black Shorts
- Short white socks or Long black sports socks
- St Robert's PE Black Hoodie

Optional:

- Girls Black Shorts or Skort
- St Robert's Multi Sports Top
- St Robert's Training Top
- Black Tracksuit Bottoms
- In winter months loose fitting black tracksuit bottoms and black hoodies are permitted. No large logos.
- PE kit can be purchased online at:- [www.pbparentsonline.co.uk/strobertofnewminster.co.uk](http://www.pbparentsonline.co.uk/strobertofnewminster.co.uk)

## Safeguarding

Parents should be aware that the school will take any reasonable action to ensure the safety of its students. In cases where the school has reason to be concerned that a child may be subject to ill-treatment, neglect or other forms of abuse, staff have no alternative but to follow City Of Sunderland safeguarding procedures and inform Children's Services Safeguarding Board of their concern.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Mrs J Bowen

The safeguarding team are:

- Mr A McHale (DSL)
- Mrs M Salmon (DSL)
- Mrs H Macklon (DDSL)
- Mr D Bayne (DDSL)
- Mrs R Hurst (DDSL)
- Mrs C McHale (DDSL)
- Mrs K Gittins (DDSL)
- Mr D Bramley (School Governor Safeguarding)

## Charges for School Activities

At the present time the school will abide by the Local Authority policy on charging for school activities. In general terms no student will be charged for any visit or item which is considered an integral part of the school curriculum although voluntary contributions may be requested in certain cases. Copies of the Local Authority Statement of policy on charging are available from the school on request.

Families in receipt of certain benefits, including income support or family credits, may be offered financial support towards board and lodging charges for essential visits. Please contact the school for more information. In addition, the school will assist families in cases of hardship: we do not wish any child to miss out because of a shortage of funds. Please contact your child's Head of House in confidence.

## Contacting the school

We are always very willing to see parents/carers at the school, or to answer queries on the telephone. However, whilst it may be possible to make personal contact with a particular member of staff by visiting the school during normal hours, we prefer you to make an appointment in advance by means of a letter or a telephone call. This helps to avoid the risk of an unduly hurried conversation in the course of a very busy, daily routine.

Please contact the school office if you have any queries and one of our receptionists will be pleased to assist you.

## Complaints Procedure

Complaints under Section 27 of the Education Reform Act 1988 in respect of the curriculum should be referred to the Headteacher. Complaints which cannot be resolved on this informal basis should be made in writing to the Chairman of Governors and signed by the complainant.

Requests for the inspection and (where applicable) the obtaining of copies of any documents required to be made available by or under Education Regulations 1989 (school curriculum and relation information) should be made in writing to the Headteacher.

# School prayer *(written by a year 7 student)*

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Father,

Help us to see your glory in everything we do.

Guide us through this chapter of our lives and help us to write our stories, filled with faith and hope.

Let us live life to the full and take every opportunity that comes our way.

God our Father, thank you for everything that we have:

Our family, our friends and our school community.

Amen

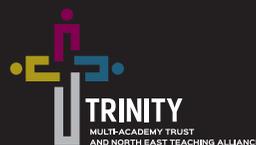


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