



# Birkdale High School

Aspire - Thrive - Succeed

A school where we all belong.



## WEDNESDAY LETTER

17th December 2025



### A WORD FROM MR BANKS...

As Christmas is now just around the corner, I wanted to take the opportunity to congratulate the pupils on a fantastic term full of academic and personal achievements and wonderful learning experiences.

Thank you to all the parents and carers who have supported the pupils throughout. Your input to your sons' education is vital to their success. I am really looking forward to celebrating the successes of the pupils with them in the final assemblies on Friday and giving them the recognition they deserve.

I wish our whole school community a peaceful and happy holiday and look forward to welcoming you back on Monday 5th January for another successful term.

Merry Christmas!

Don't Forget!

School finishes on Friday 19th December 2025 at 12:30pm!





## REMINDERS



### Christmas Canteen Treats

The Canteen is now serving Christmas Hot chocolates for £1.40 in the morning at breakfast.

You can choose between:

- Hot chocolate with cream and marshmallows'; or
- Minted hot chocolate with cream and a candy cane.

This year due to circumstances out of the canteens control, they are unable to produce the traditional Christmas lunch for the boys, however from the 17<sup>th</sup> of December, the canteen will be serving Hot turkey baguettes with/without cranberry sauce and gravy mayo.

There will also be sides of spicy sausages and stuffing balls available along with traditional mince pies and Christmas biscuits.

### Flu drop in Clinic

Please find below updated details of upcoming flu drop-in clinics across Merseyside, including Sefton, Kirkby, and Liverpool, for children who have not yet received their flu vaccination.

If you have any queries, please contact Sefton Immunisation Team on 0151 247 6130

Thank you so much for your continued cooperation.

### Uniform & Equipment

- **School ties** - Can be purchased for £5.50 cash from the school office, or via Parentpay.
- **Equipment** - Any students without the correct equipment will receive a detention. The school shop is open every day from 8.30-8.50am for pupils to purchase basic equipment. Price list is provided below.
- **Lost Property** - Please ensure that **all** uniform and equipment has your son's name, **clearly labelled**. Any **unnamed** lost property will be available for students to check through, after school on **Thursday**, this week, from 3:10pm - 4pm, in the school canteen, due to the early finish on Friday. Anything unclaimed after this date will be donated to the Uniform Hub



### #WAKEUPWEDNESDAY



AI-powered toys can feel lifelike, but how do they listen, learn, and influence play?

This weeks Wake Up Wednesday guide explores the privacy, security, and developmental considerations along with practical tips to help set boundaries, to ensure AI remains a support for real-world interaction and not a substitute for them.



## WHAT'S COMING UP



### Monday Mile

Monday Mile will restart back on the 5th January 2026.

It is a great way to start the week and New Year!

Staff and pupils are invited to complete 4 laps of the track... run, walk or jog, rain or shine, every Monday.

We meet on the track at 8am. All fitness levels welcome!

Boys who take part will receive a raffle ticket each Monday, with the chance to win a prize.

This term's winner was Jude R (9RP) - Congratulations!



### Southport Together Community Support Service

There are two initiatives starting in January 2026.



**Tea and Talk** which will take place the Second Monday of every month from 5:30pm - 7pm. This is open to any parent/carer wishing to access a safe, supportive space to discuss mental health and wellbeing concerns.

**Fresh Start Fridays** will happen every Second Friday of every month, from 12:30pm - 2pm. Each session will include different support agencies for parents to engage with surrounding any health or wellbeing related concerns, as well as providing an opportunity to receive guidance in a safe and supportive space, together with connecting with other parents.

If you require any further information, please see the posters below.

### Reverse Advent Calendar Christmas Hampers

Thank you to everyone who has sent in donations for the House Reverse Advent Calendar Christmas Hampers, especially to 7DBW for their contribution.

Compassionate Acts rely on generosity to keep up with the increasing demand on their services. Every donation makes a real difference to the people who rely on them.

Thank you!



### The Queenscourt Hospice Christmas Tree Collection & Recycling Campaign

Last year, thanks to the amazing support of our local community, The Queenscourt Hospice collected over 1700 Christmas trees and raised more than £28,000 to support patients and families cared for by Queenscourt Hospice.

This year, The Queenscourt Hospice are hoping to build on that success and raise even more vital funds — and your support could make a real difference.

If you would like to support, please see the poster below with details how you can support whilst recycling your Christmas Tree, responsibly.

Thank you for your ongoing support.





## WEEKLY ROUNDUP



### Bebras Computational Thinking and Problem Solving Challenge

90 boys in Year 9 and Year 10 GCSE Computer Science and Year 7 and Year 8 Robotics Club took part in the annual Bebras Computational Thinking challenge.

Over 526,000 students took part across the UK. They had 45 minutes to tackle a series of interactive tasks, designed to encourage logical thinking and problem-solving skills appropriate for their age group.



The challenge is conducted online, and the tasks are designed to allow every student the opportunity to showcase their potential, whether they excel in maths or computing, or not.

The UK Bebras Challenge is organised by the Raspberry Pi Foundation. We had some fantastic successes! All boys got a certificate for taking part, graded from Best in School, Distinction and Merit, which showed where they ranked in school.

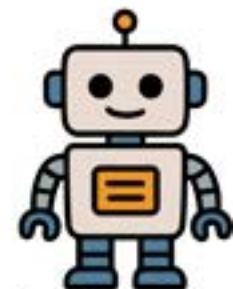


16 boys also gained a special Gold certificate, meaning they had achieved a score which put them in the top 10% of the country nationally, an amazing result given how many took part!

Almost all of these boys were in the Year 9 & Year 10 GCSE Computer Science classes so a special well done to the 2 Year 8 boys from Robotics who also gained this award, Vincent F and Charles K.

The other Gold certificates were awarded to George L, Will C, Jacob F, Vincent B, Lucas H, Fin B, Dzonatans, James M, William M, Sonny H, Charlie B, Adam S, Ernie, T and Ben S.

Well done boys!



### Animal Club – Charity event for “Young Lives v Cancer”

Members of Animal Club have recently been producing and selling Christmas decorations/coasters to raise funds for the “Young lives v Cancer” charity, raising a total sum of £502!

Thank you so much to all the pupils, families, and Birkdale High staff, who have all been so generous with their contributions to this worthy cause.

A big thank you also to Mr Milner, who provided the materials, and gave up his time to help the club create these decorations.

Mrs. House (Jasper’s mum), who’s role is Volunteering Engagement Lead, kindly came into school to accept the donation on behalf of “Young lives v Cancer.”





## ACHIEVEMENTS



### Birkdale Art Stars Auditions

Our Art Stars showcase final took place last night and what an event it was!

Supporting the event was our incredible Birkdale Big Band and the cast of our up-and-coming musical 'We Will Rock You'. We also couldn't have hosted the event without our tech crew who are the unseen ones that work tirelessly for us behind the scenes.

On the night we were dazzled with an array of talent from actors, magicians, musicians, bakers, engineers and artists, both traditional and digital. I am delighted announce the winners from the following categories:

**Most inventive engineer** - David B (11CMC) and Che M (11LHK).

**Best tasting cake** - Finn C (8NJW) and Thomas R (8CW).

**Most creatively designed cake** - Family duo, Zack (10AB) and Cody O (10AB).

**Most technical cake** - Dzonatans J (10VR) and Max R (10VR).

**Junior photographer of the year** - James M (9RVB).

**Senior photographer of the year** - Jakub O (11CMC).

**Junior artist of the year** - William H (7LC).

**Senior artist** - Ronnie P (9PC).

**Best animation** - Oliver H (8NJW).

**The short film award** - Rowen J (9TW), Fred H-C (9DCH), Jacob F (9TW) and Isaac H (9TW).

**Acting award** - Isaac H (9TW) alongside acting partner Sam C (9RP).

**Junior drama production award** - Jake C (7RAN).

**Instrumentalist of the year** - Vincent B (9SEM).

**Junior vocalist of the year** - Sebastian T (7JQ).

**Senior vocalist of the year** - James E (10AB).

**Pianist of the year** - Samuel L (9TW).

However, our overall winner of Art Stars 2025 was Isaac G (11IBO). Isaac has been a true ambassador to the Creative department for many years, both in his roles as senior sound engineer and as a performer.

Last night he wowed us by playing the piano and singing Running Up that Hill by Kate Bush. As always it was a flawless performance. Isaac has been close to being the overall winner on several occasions, and last night was finally his night. Huge congratulations to a very deserved and talented performer. This is Isaac's last year in school and will be a huge lost to our department as he leaves to move on to college. We can not thank you enough Isaac for the hour of dedication you have given to our department.

Please keep an eye out on Birkdale High's Facebook & X for photos of the night; and well done again to everyone who took part.





FROM EVERYONE AT  
BIRKDALE HIGH

*Merry  
Christmas!*

# School age flu drop-in clinics

**The flu vaccine is available to all children from nursery up to year 11.**



**You can drop-in to one of the clinics being provided by Mersey Care's School Aged Immunisation Team.**

**Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December, 10.00-4.00pm at**  
Sefton Road Clinic, L21 9HE

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December, 9:30am to 3.00pm at**  
Manor Farm PCRC, Huyton, L36 0UB

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 9:30 to 3:00pm at**  
St Chads PCRC, Kirkby, L32 8RE- First floor

- ✓ **Remember:** This is a drop-in service, so you may need to wait to be seen. Your patience is appreciated.

For further drop in venues please visit the living well bus timetable:  
<https://www.cwp.nhs.uk/livingwellservice>

**If you require an appointment time, please contact:**

Liverpool School Immunisation Team: 0151 295 3833  
Sefton School Immunisation Team: 0151 247 6130  
Knowsley, Halton & St Helens Schools: 0151 351 8805



**Birkdale  
High School**

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## **STATIONERY SHOP – PRICE LIST**

Ballpoint pens (black, red or green) 20p

Pencils 10p

Erasers 10p

12 inch rulers 20p

Glue sticks 30p

Compasses 40p

Highlighters (pack of 4) £1.00

Earphones £1.00

Whiteboards 50p

Whiteboard pens 40p

Whiteboard erasers 40p

Exam pencil cases £1.00

Scientific calculators £11.00

# Tea & Talk

## Family Peer Support

**A monthly peer support group for parents, carers or family members in Southport to feel a sense of community and improve their wellbeing.**

Facilitated by registered counsellor Penny Roscoe-Jones from FLOAT therapies. Penny will be available to chat to and guide you through any worries and anxieties you may have as a parent, carer or family member.

**Second Monday of the month**

**Start Date: Monday 12 January 2026**

**Time: 5:30pm - 7pm**

**Venue: Family Life Centre, Ash St, Southport, PR8 6JH**

**A part of the Southport Together Community Support Service, supporting the wider community affected by last year's tragic events in Southport.**

For more information, contact us:  
Southport Together Community Support Service

T: 07955 282 945

E: [communityoutreach@seftoncvss.org.uk](mailto:communityoutreach@seftoncvss.org.uk)



**Sefton CVS**  
Supporting Local Communities

**Sefton Council**



# Fresh Start Fridays

## Family Peer Support

**A monthly peer support group for parents, carers or family members in Southport to feel a sense of community and improve their wellbeing.**

A professional will be available to chat to and ask questions about any worries and anxieties you may have as a parent, carer or family member.

**Second Friday of the month**

**Start Date: Friday 9 January 2026**

**Time: 12.30–2pm**

**Venue: Linaker Family Hub, Linaker Street, PR8 5DQ**

**A part of the Southport Together Community Support Service, supporting the wider community affected by last year's tragic events in Southport.**

For more information, contact us;  
Southport Together Community Support Service

T: 07955 282 945

E: [communityoutreach@seftoncvss.org.uk](mailto:communityoutreach@seftoncvss.org.uk)



**Sefton CVS**  
Supporting Local Communities

**Sefton Council**



# CHRISTMAS TREE Collection & Recycling Service 2026

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**FLOORING UK**

OCEAN  
PLAZA  
SOUTHPORT



KINDLY  
SUPPORTED BY

**TREECO**  
SUSTAINABLE ARBORICULTURE

**We welcome a donation for  
the collection of your tree!**

**WE WILL COLLECT BETWEEN  
FRIDAY 9TH - SUNDAY 11TH JANUARY**

**WE COVER: PR8, PR9, PR4 6, L37, L39, L40, WN8**

**Registration will close at MIDNIGHT on  
Tuesday 6th January**

To arrange a collection please scan the QR code or book in at:  
**[queenscourt.org.uk/trees](https://queenscourt.org.uk/trees)**



# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI TOYS

This festive season, the newest toys on the shelves do not just blink or make noise; they listen. Many now come with artificial intelligence (AI), allowing them to talk, learn, and even respond to a child's emotions. These toys can be educational and engaging, but they also collect, store, and process information. This guide explains what that means for families and why it matters.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### TOYS THAT LISTEN AND LEARN

When a toy uses AI, it collects data such as voice recordings, interactions, and background sounds. This information is sent to remote servers, where it is analysed to improve responses. Your child's voice becomes training data, which may be stored indefinitely or shared with third parties.

### WEAK SECURITY PROTECTIONS

Some AI toys have poor password protection or open network connections. Others may have microphones or cameras that stay on, even when the toy appears to be off. This can lead to recordings being made without your knowledge, including conversations unrelated to play.

### ARTIFICIAL VOICES, REAL INFLUENCE

For very young children, an AI companion may become one of the first voices they interact with regularly. How that voice shows humour, empathy, or authority can shape how a child learns to communicate. If the model is artificial, then part of what is learned is artificial as well.

### PRESSURE TO KEEP ENGAGING

Some toys reward repeated use or track engagement, encouraging children to interact more. When children compare how their toys perform, it creates pressure to play more often. This increases the amount of data collected and can make learning feel like competition.

### MARKETING THROUGH PLAY

Toys that learn a child's preferences may feed that data into future advertising. A toy that knows a child's favourite colour or hobby could help a company design more targeted marketing to that child and their family.

### PLAYTIME AS DATA TRAINING

The information collected from children helps train AI systems. Their voice, emotional responses, and behaviour shape how machines 'understand' people. Play becomes part of a much larger system that influences how future technologies behave.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### START WITH A CONVERSATION

Talk to young people. Explain that some toys learn from what they say and do. Help them understand that even friendly technology should have boundaries, and to ask questions about it. Curiosity is healthy, blind trust is not.

### SET LIMITS ON USE

Turn off Wi-Fi or Bluetooth when the toy is not in use. Check for updates regularly, as they can change privacy or safety settings. Treat connected toys like any smart device; they should be monitored, updated, and switched off when not in use.

### MODEL DIGITAL AWARENESS

Children learn from adults. If they see you checking privacy settings, reading terms, and talking openly about online safety, they are more likely to do the same. Show them how to question technology in a healthy way.

### RESEARCH BEFORE YOU BUY

Look for toys that work offline or store data locally. Check for a free or demo version so you can test how it behaves. Read privacy policies to understand what data is collected, where it goes, and whether it's shared with others.

### REVIEW PRIVACY SETTINGS

Find out where the data is stored and who has access to it. Some companies sell or share data with advertisers. If the toy connects through an app, check what it requests access to and limit those permissions whenever possible.

### BALANCE AI WITH REAL PLAY

AI toys can be fun and creative, but they are not a replacement for real human interaction. Encourage time away from technology with activities that foster emotional and social development. Use AI toys to support learning, not define it.

## Meet Our Expert

Clara Hawking is Executive Director of Kompass Education. She advises governments, school trusts, and global organisations on AI governance and safeguarding, helping schools and families understand how technology shapes learning, wellbeing, and the digital future of children.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College