ST THOMAS AQUINAS
CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

OCTOBER 2026

De Lisle College

Parent / Carer Newsletter

Dear Parent/ Carer,

Welcome to our first newsletter of this academic year. We have had a wonderful first half term with a lot taking place, as I'm sure you can see from the newsletter. We have had a visit to China in July, Year 11 Battlefield visit, Philosophy success, local MP visit and Catholic young writers award to name but a few things.

We celebrated excellent GCSE and A Level results in the summer of 2026, and our sixth form has continued to grow. Our year 12 now has 155 students; they have settled in well and they have really come together as a year group. We have our Post 16 information evening on Thursday 29 October 2026 at 6pm to 8pm for our current Year 11 students and their families.

Year 7 have settled into school well; we enjoyed a wonderful Year 7 Welcome Mass which was a joyful beginning to their time at De Lisle. A big thank you to all the parents and carers who were able to attend this lovely occasion.

We have been so impressed with our students work in their books during lessons and with their homework. They have been working hard on their PRIDE. Students have been receiving PRIDE cards for exceptional, improving or trying hard work. Thank you for your support with this.



God bless,

Mr C Maher
Headteacher

NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2026

Newsletter Highlights

Headteacher Message
Mr Chris Maher

China Trip 2026

Battlefields Trip 2026

University & Career Workshop

Student Achievements & Competitions

Menphys Carol Concert 2026

Year 9 Briars Retreat

School Council

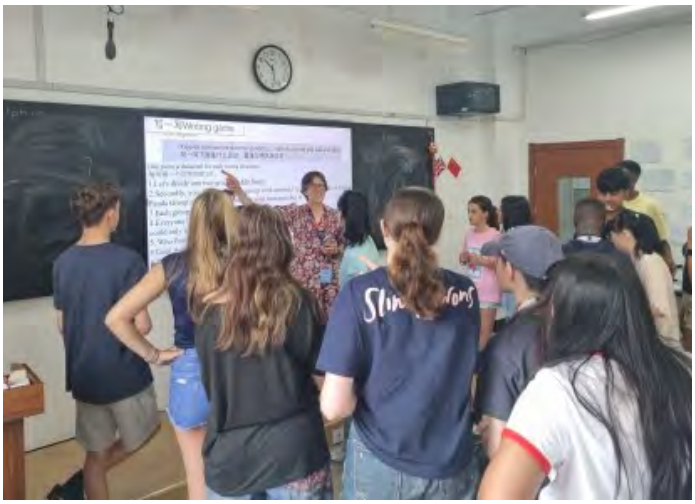
Year 7 Retreat Day and Mass

De Lisle to Host Catenian Public Speaking Contest 2027

CHINA TRIP – July 2026

In July, 23 members of the year 9 Mandarin class at De Lisle took part in the school's third Mandarin Excellence Programme trip to China, accompanied by Mr Connor, Mrs Gerrard and Mrs Aird. This year, we were hosted by Zhejiang Normal University, which is situated in Hangzhou, about an hour away from the coastal city of Shanghai by China's high-speed rail. Hangzhou is home to nearly 10.7 million people and is the global headquarters for the enormous tech giant, Alibaba.

As in previous years, students spent a large part of each day in Mandarin lessons, where they worked alongside Chinese peers who had been specially recruited to help them practise their spoken Mandarin. During our stay, we also visited these students at their own school, where our students took part in an international basketball match between the two groups of students in an intensely hot sports hall, urged on by enthusiastic supporters on both sides.









In the afternoons, students were introduced to a range of traditional Chinese crafts, including lantern-making and what must be one of the noisiest hand-crafts in history, which involved using hammers to imprint the shapes of flora and fauna onto cloth bags.





Outside the classroom, our students enjoyed several cultural trips, including a tour of a nearby tea plantation which produces the famous Longjing tea. At the plantation, students were able to try making ancient matcha drinks with traditional tea-frothing equipment and many sampled the not-so-traditional matcha-flavoured ice-cream, which is fast becoming a local specialty. We also wandered along the shores of the Western Lake, which is renowned as one of China's great beauty spots and apparently attracts more than 37 million visitors a year. As always, students particularly enjoyed opportunities to go shopping and enjoyed the delights of exploring both traditional tourist streets and sparkling high-end brand shopping malls, which are now commonplace in China.







The highlight of the trip was watching the relationships built and deepened between the individuals involved: the games of Uno between staff and students from the UK and China during the breaks between lessons, the football match in strength-sapping heat between the two UK schools being hosted by Zhejiang Normal University and the impromptu square-dancing where our students were able to join locals in their regular evening exercise routines.

Our thanks go to Mr Connor and Mrs Gerrard for accompanying the trip, to the staff and volunteers from Zhejiang Normal University who made us so welcome, to the MEP for all their work behind the scenes organising the trip and, finally, to the parents without whose support the trip could not have happened. In the words of the Chinese song that students were taught and then performed in a rousing chorus at the closing ceremony:



《听我说谢谢你，因为有你世界更美丽。》(tīng wǒ shuō xièxiè nǐ, yīnwèi yǒu nǐ shìjiè gèng měilì) ‘Hear me say thank you; because of you, the world is more beautiful.’

OCTOBER 2026

Year 11 Battlefields Trip 2026

Year 11 GCSE History students recently travelled to Belgium and France for a three-day residential trip, bringing their studies of Medicine on the Western Front and the First World War to life.

The trip included visits to significant First World War sites, including Essex Farm Cemetery, Langemark German Military Cemetery, Tyne Cot Cemetery, Vimy Ridge, the Somme, Menin Gate and Hill 62. Students explored preserved trenches and tunnels, visited memorials and cemeteries, and saw artefacts and equipment used during the conflict.





At Vimy Ridge, students experienced preserved Canadian and German trenches and explored underground tunnels used by soldiers before the battle. In the Somme region, they visited Lochnagar Crater, Thiepval Memorial and Beaumont-Hamel, gaining a deeper understanding of the scale and human cost of the conflict.

One of the most poignant moments was attending the Last Post ceremony at Menin Gate in Ypres, where students joined visitors from around the world in remembering those who lost their lives during the First World War. Students also took part in a De Lisle remembrance service at Thiepval Memorial, placing a school wreath and observing a two-minute silence and prayer.







The final day included visits to the In Flanders Fields Museum and the preserved trenches at Sanctuary Wood, where students were able to connect what they had studied in the classroom with the physical landscape and experiences of those who served.

The residential was an invaluable opportunity for students to deepen their historical knowledge while reflecting on the human stories behind the events they study at GCSE.

A Level Politics Students Meet Local MP

On Friday 18 September, A level Politics students heard from Dr. Jeevun Sandher MP, Member of Parliament for Loughborough, Shepshed and the Villages. This was an excellent opportunity for those studying Politics to hear directly from their local MP and to ask questions related to their A level course and wider interest in politics. Many thanks to Dr. Sandher MP for his time spent speaking about his career, role as a Member of Parliament, and for answering a range of student questions.





University of Oxford Visits De Lisle to Support Students' University Aspirations

University of Oxford staff and students spent the afternoon at De Lisle when they spoke to groups of students from year 10, 11, 12 and 13. These talks are an annual event which start by explaining university as an option in Year 10, then making A level choices in Year 11. In sixth form, students start to plan future applications and develop their critical thinking skills in Year 12, then prepare for interviews in Year 13. We are grateful to St. Edmund Hall, University of Oxford for their continued support and look forward to future talks and visits.





University of Nottingham Theology Study Day

Students in Year 11-13 were given the opportunity to visit the University of Nottingham on 17th September. The event was hosted by the Philosophy department, and students took part in a range of sample lectures from such themes as Pluralism, Utilitarianism and Animal rights. This was a great opportunity to experience first-hand what university lectures are like, alongside learning some useful information, applicable to their studies. Students were particularly enthused by the animal rights discussion, with many interesting avenues of debate explored on the return coach journey. Thanks again to our local partners for making this possible.



The Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award

DE LISLE COLLEGE

The first batch of Bronze Duke of Edinburgh participants from the 25-26 season received their Certificates and Badges from Mr Connor recently. They successfully completed their volunteering, physical, skill and expedition within a year of signing up for the award and are now ready to undertake the Silver level. Sign up for 26-27 is underway for all 3 levels of the Award Scheme and we are really impressed by the numbers of students wanting to take part.



Philosophy success



We were delighted to be able to present a large amount of students their certificates for completing their Philosophy research project at the end of last year. Students gave up their time after school to broaden their knowledge of key philosophical ideas, before embarking on the creation of an academic research project on a question of their choice.

Once it was all written up, they were then able to present their work to the supportive staff at the University of Nottingham's Philosophy department and receive feedback on their work. A fantastic opportunity for our students, made possible by our work with local partners.



Catholic Young Writer Award 2026

De Lisle College is delighted to celebrate the success of its students in the Catholic Young Writer Award 2026. Two students achieved second prize, while a further nine students received Highly Commended recognition among over 100 entries submitted by Catholic secondary schools and individuals nationwide.

The students entered this year's competition by responding to the theme "The Church's Sacrament of Forgiveness: Why We Go to Confession", exploring the significance of the Sacrament of Reconciliation within the Catholic faith through their writing.

Congratulations to all our students on this excellent achievement!

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OCTOBER 2026

Student Takes on 500-Mile Fundraising Challenge

Alfie has been taking on an incredible personal challenge to raise money for The Army Cadets Charitable Trust and the Royal Marines Association, which supports Royal Marines veterans.



Since setting himself the target in July, Alfie has aimed to run 500 miles in five months, with the goal of raising £500 by Remembrance Sunday. He has already completed an impressive 400 miles and is on track to achieve his target!

Alongside this challenge, Alfie is also taking part in the Leicester 10K this Sunday in support of Cancer Research UK, demonstrating his continued commitment to making a difference through fundraising.

We are incredibly proud of Alfie's determination, generosity and commitment to supporting these important causes. Well done, Alfie, on this fantastic achievement!



Menphys Carol Concert 2026

De Lisle College is delighted to be taking part in the annual Menphys Carol Concert at De Montfort Hall on Friday 4 December 2026.

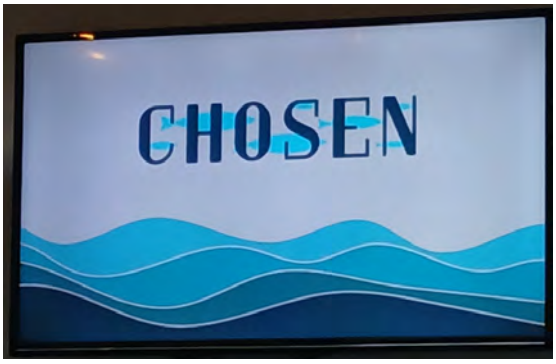
This festive concert is a much-loved annual event, bringing schools together to celebrate the Christmas season while supporting Menphys and its work with children and young people with disabilities and their families.

Tickets are now on sale! Families wishing to attend can purchase tickets directly through the De Montfort Hall website.

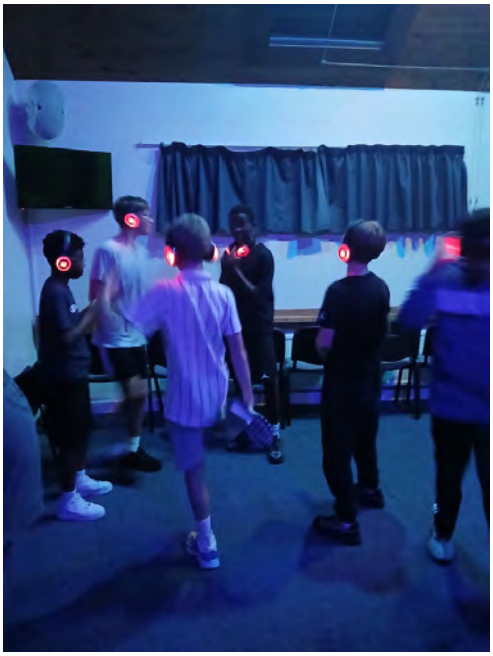
We look forward to being part of this special occasion once again!

Year 9 Briars Retreat

From 5-7 October, a group of Year 9 students went to the Briars Retreat Centre, near Crich in Derbyshire. The retreat was centred on the theme “Chosen” to reflect the belief that we are all called by God, who knows and loves each one of us. The team led the group through a series of small and whole group activities and prayers to reflect this theme.



Each day was packed with a range of activities and punctuated by delicious meals. Alongside the times of prayer and reflection there were some highlights, enjoyed by staff and students alike. One of these was the game of Traitors where Ollie, who was leading the programme arrived dressed as Claudia Winkleman, setting challenges and working with the group to find the traitors. Of immediate suspicion were the teachers, who were eliminated very quickly to a loud cry when the students heard that they were “faithfuls”! Students also loved the silent disco where there were many great dance routines and lots of fun with friends, as well as time in the games room playing pool, chess and table football. It was a wonderful time of faith and friendship.







School Council

Congratulations to new school council members!

Head students: Sam, Amara, Matthew, Remi, Katelyn and Shyla.

Council members: Pavandeep, Maisie, Amelia, Naia, Ebiolade, Anay, Megan, Lily, Ifenna, Julia, Klarisa and Andrew.

We received lots of letters of application and so the head students and heads of year had the difficult task of narrowing down the applications to select two students per year group. Over the year we will share the work of this group, which is determined to find ways to live out our mission #DeLisleLoves through the School Council values established by the head students:

Love: the leadership given by the student council is rooted and grounded in love and is based on understanding what the school stands for and why our school values exist.

Example: the student councillors are role models to the rest of the school community, acting with integrity, being trustworthy, approachable and recognising the importance of promoting student voice.

Awareness: student councillors need to be self-aware, reflective and thoughtful as well as aware of the needs of the wider school community.

Dedication: student councillors need to be committed to their role on the student council, using their role as an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the school community.



Year 7 Retreat Day and Mass

On Wednesday 30 September, we held our first retreat day of the year, to welcome our new Year 7 students. We had a busy day thinking about what it means to belong to the community here at De Lisle. Following Deacon Keith's opening liturgy, where we considered the value of extending worship, students heard from Shyla and Matthew, two of our head students. They talked about what it meant to belong at De Lisle. It was wonderful to hear how much they have gained from their time at De Lisle in terms of their education, enrichment and faith journey. Hymn practice was wonderful – Year 7 have great singing voices!

Following this, Year 7 worked in their tutor groups to make shields to reflect the individuals who had come together to form the tutor group – these were later shared in Mass. Following an extended lunch, students received very special postcards, written to them by last year's Year 11 students on their retreat day. Year 7 students wrote their own pledges about how they will live out the De Lisle mission to be "rooted and grounded in love".









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We are so grateful to Fr Colin for celebrating Mass for us during the final part of the day. Students took on a variety of roles from altar serving, to reading and leading us in prayer. Mikael from Year 9 played the organ to accompany our hymn singing. It was a wonderful celebration with many parents and carers joining us. Welcome to De Lisle, Year 7!

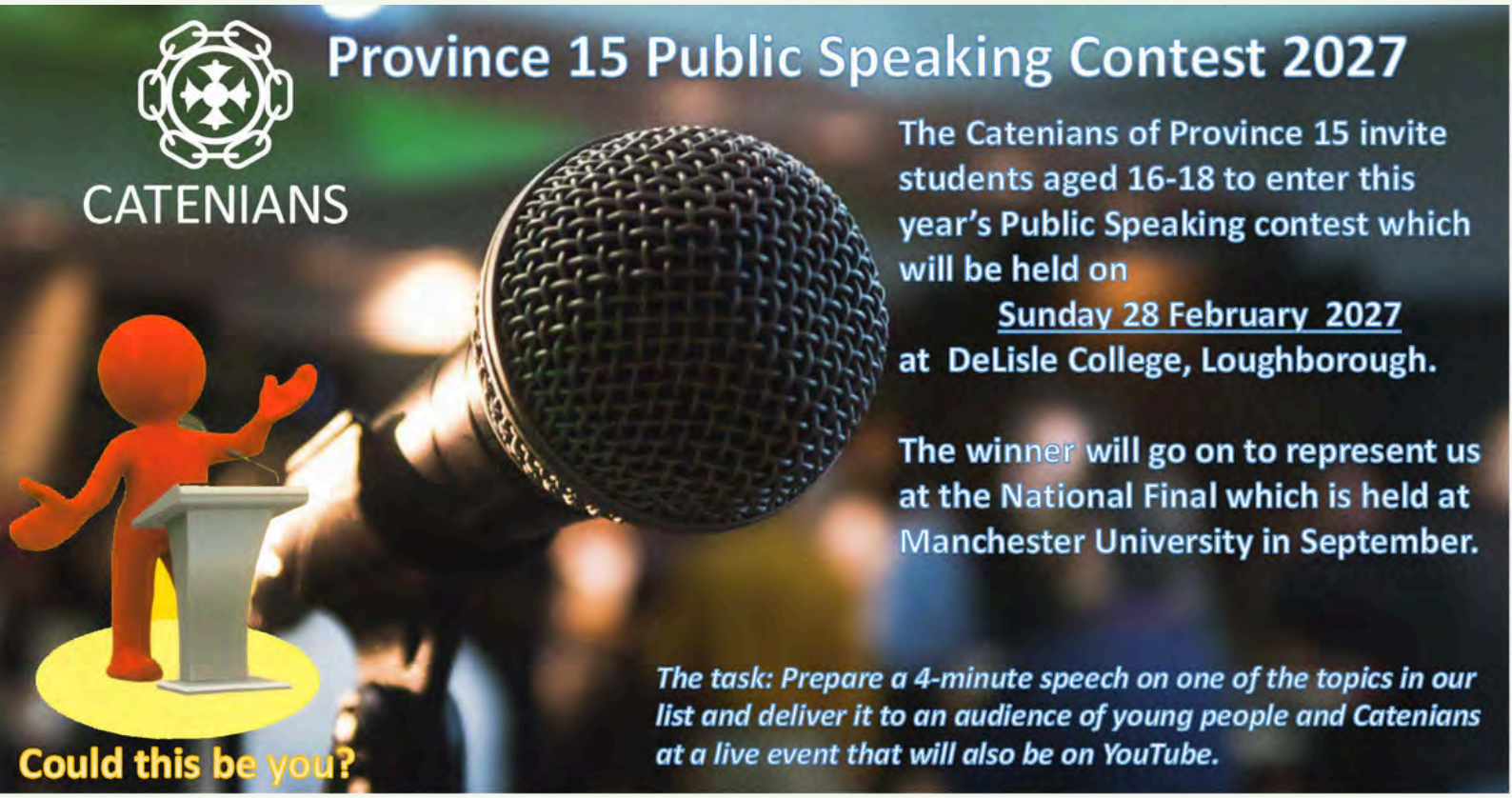


De Lisle to Host Catenian Public Speaking Contest 2027

De Lisle College is pleased to announce that it will host the Catenian Public Speaking Contest 2027 in the College Hall on Sunday 28 February 2027 at 1:30pm.

We look forward to welcoming participants and celebrating the public speaking, communication and presentation skills of young people.

Further details will be shared in due course.



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Follow US

OCTOBER HALF TERM 2026

Half Term is here and we wanted to send our usual information sheet out to you with some ideas to keep costs down during the holidays!

Discounted meals

Children aged 12 and under can enjoy a free kids' bento box at participating YO Sushi restaurants, all day Monday to Friday during local school holidays. One child eats free for every £10 the accompanying adult spends on food. Each bento box lets children choose a protein, maki and side, served with steamed rice and a drink. The offer is dine-in only and excludes airport restaurants and York Outlet. Check the full offer and terms before you go by clicking on the sushi.

CLICK HERE



Things to do

Enjoy a family history day out at the King Richard III Visitor Centre in Leicester: During September and October, children aged 15 and under go free with a paying adult (up to three children per adult). Adult tickets are £12.50, and full-price tickets also give unlimited return visits for 12 months. The Centre recommends booking ahead to guarantee entry. Click the crown to find out more and book tickets.

CLICK HERE

More things to do

Hunt for Leicester's giant monsters this half term! From 22–31 October, eight illuminated monsters will appear around the city centre. Follow the free, family-friendly trail, pick up a printed map and see if you can find them all. Plan your monster hunt by clicking on the monster!

CLICK HERE

Rutland

Animal lovers, don't miss Rutland Pet Festival! Enjoy a day of pet competitions, animal-themed fun and stalls at Oakham Castle Grounds on Sunday 18 October, 11am–3pm. Entry is free, so bring the family along to enjoy the festival. Find out more by clicking on the dog!

CLICK HERE

Fun at home

Looking for an easy, low-cost activity to enjoy together over half term? The Woodland Trust has gathered 11 autumn craft ideas for children, using colourful fallen leaves and simple materials such as paper, crayons, paint and card. Make leaf rubbings, print patterns, create leafy animal pictures or decorate a wreath to brighten your home. Take a short walk to collect leaves, then bring them home for a creative afternoon. Click on the acorn to learn more.

CLICK HERE