THE KING'S CHRONICLES

AUTUMN TWO - 2025



The Greatest Gift - Annual Carol Service 2025

We were delighted to host an incredibly festive evening for our annual Carol Service. A huge well done to our Year 7 singers, who truly shone, and heartfelt thanks to our talented in-house band. With music across three venues throughout the evening and a well-attended Christmas Market beforehand, it was a wonderful celebration. Thank you to everyone who helped make the night so special.

"Legally Blonde JR." – A Director's Reflection

I am incredibly proud of our students and the outstanding work they brought to "Legally Blonde The Musical JR." says Mr Jones. Their commitment, teamwork and enthusiasm shone through every scene, creating a vibrant, polished production that truly impressed. Violet Renwick led the cast with a superb performance as Elle Woods, supported brilliantly by a dedicated ensemble who never stepped out of character. Our choreography, staging and technical teams worked seamlessly to bring the story to life. This was our 21st annual production, and the first full one to receive such a glowing report from NODA. Thank you to everyone who made it possible.



Festive Fun

Christmas Shopping at the Metrocentre

Students across years 8 - 11 were invited along to the Metrocentre for a spot of Christmas shopping in recognition of their hardwork and outstanding attendance so far this year.







Year 7 Festive Film Night

Our Year 7 students were invited to a festive film night to watch a Christmas Classic! Despite Mr Johnson's best efforts to convince the staff and students that "Die Hard" is, in fact, a Christmas film, the group voted for "The Nativity" which sees Mr Maddens and Mr Poppy scramble together a showstopping nativity which is almost as good as our very own "Legally Blonde".

Hot Chocolate Friday

It was wonderful to be able to offer every student who came to school on Friday 5 December a hot chocolate with all the trimmings to start the day. If that's not something to get out of bed for on a morning, I don't know what is.



Sixth Form Visit to York

Our annual visit to the York Christmas Markets was a popular reward for our sixth form students who have worked hard across the term in both Year 12 and 13. The trip offered them the opportunity for some retail therapy, festive foodie treats and Christmas relaxation ahead of a big term of rehearsal exams and the run up to final exams for our Year 13s. We are delighted that so many of them have already received multiple university place offers from highly competitive institutions such as Durham, York, Newcastle and Leeds.



Christmas Lunch 2025





It's fair to say that our Christmas Lunch went down an absolute treat. Students and staff enjoyed a traditional turkey dinner with all the trimmings – from stuffing, roast potatoes and roasted parsnips to the all-important pigs in blankets. The festive feast was perfectly rounded off with a delicious chocolate fudge cake.



















Christmas Cracker 2025











Wednesday afternoon was dedicated to House Competition fun as tutor groups battled it out in our annual Christmas Cracker! The afternoon was filled with quizzes and challenges to earn points for their house. Here's a selection of photos from the event.

















Going Beyond the Classroom

A Christmas Carol



On 21st November, a group of Year 10 and Year 11 GCSE students visited Middlesbrough Theatre to watch a touring production of "A Christmas Carol". The trip provided a fantastic opportunity to experience live theatre and immerse themselves in the festive spirit. The performance was engaging and atmospheric, allowing students to appreciate the creativity and talent involved in bringing a classic story to the stage. As always, the group represented the school exceptionally well, demonstrating impeccable behaviour throughout the visit. It was an enjoyable and meaningful experience for everyone involved, and a memorable way to begin the Christmas season.

Sixth Form Art Trip



The Art and Textiles department enjoyed our annual Sixth Form trip to Newcastle last week. We took a small group of Year 12 and 13 students to visit The Biscuit Factory, The Laing and The Baltic Art galleries. We had the opportunity to see a diverse range of historical and contemporary art by local, national and international artists. The work featured in The Baltic was a particular highlight with exhibitions focusing on the fragility of ecosystems, global environmental issues and deep sea mining. Students gained lots of inspiration for their upcoming 'Personal Investigation' projects. We even had chance to visit the Christmas Markets as we walked through the city.

CCF Rememberance Day



Seven of our Royal Marine cadets were chosen to represent our school at the Remembrance Day events at the Middlesbrough Cenotaph on Sunday, 9th November. Our cadets took part in the parades before and after the remembrance service. Other King's Academy students were also present, representing St John's Ambulance and the Army Cadets, as well as members of the forces, veterans and other dignitaries in the attendance. Highlights of the day also included the moment of reflection and the laying of the wreath at the foot of the cenotaph by Lance Corporal Isaac Hodkinson. Our students embodied the school's, and the Royal Marine's, values of excellence, integrity, self-discipline and humility throughout the ceremony.

Suez Energy-from-Waste Recycling



Sixth form Science and Engineering students recently visited the Suez Energy-from-Waste recycling plant at Wilton, gaining a valuable insight into modern sustainable waste management. Students learned how non-recyclable waste is safely converted into electricity, reducing landfill use and contributing to local energy supply. They observed the facility's advanced sorting systems, control room operations, and environmental monitoring processes. The visit deepened students' understanding of engineering, environmental science, and future career pathways within the green-energy sector.



Teesside Gas Processing Plant

Five Year 13 Physics students visited Teesside Gas Processing Plant providing valuable insight into real-world engineering. Students toured key facilities, learned how large-scale gas processing operates, and met engineers from instrumentation and control, mechanical, and electrical disciplines. The visit linked classroom physics to practical applications and inspired students to consider future careers in engineering and the energy sector.



Stargazing Evening

Astronomers from Kielder Observatory hosted a stargazing evening for students and their families, exploring the wonders of the night sky. On a slightly cloudy evening, visitors explored constellations, planets, and distant galaxies through telescopes and a planetarium show, guided by expert astronomers. Interactive talks explained how stars form, why planets shine, and what makes Kielder one of the UK's darkest skies. Students asked thoughtful questions and shared observations alongside exploring activities linked to light and viewing a meteor collection. The event sparked conversations with some curious questions from students and encouraged an interest in astronomy beyond the classroom.



Cafe Scientifique

As part of the science department's 6th form extra-curricular activities, students have the opportunity to attend our monthly visits to Café Scientifique, at ARC in Stockton. This term we have heard from Dr Patricia Lopez-Calcagno, talking about engineering photosynthesis, and Dr Chris Gibb, a Consultant Anaesthetist talking all about what anaesthetists need to do while a patient is unconscious. Lisa (Y13) volunteered to join Dr Gibb on stage to perform an intubation on the training manikin - well done! Mr King. Photos courtesy of Cafe Scientifique - Stockton on Tees.



The Royal Society

Students visited The Royal Society in London to attend the Practical Science Conference School's Showcase, celebrating hands-on scientific learning. The showcase brought together young people, educators, and researchers to explore how practical work builds curiosity, confidence, and scientific understanding.

Students presented their IRIS work on DNA origami and engaged with interactive exhibits from other schools and live demonstrations highlighting innovative classroom experiments and real-world applications of science. Students had the opportunity to ask questions directly to scientists, gaining insight into research careers and current challenges in science. The event encouraged collaboration and hands-on practical work, leaving students motivated to pursue science both inside and beyond the classroom.

Mrs Dean (Head of Physics) was awarded the Outstanding Teacher prize earlier this year for inspiring students to engage with science beyond the classroom. In addition to leading no fewer than seven in-school research projects, she has encouraged both students and staff to get involved and created opportunities with external organisations, including the Bragg Centre for Materials Research at Leeds University.

Congratulations to Mrs Dean on this well-deserved award.

Showcasing Exceptional Talent



VIVID 2025: A Standout Year 13 Music Concert Showcasing Exceptional Talent

On Wednesday 3rd December, the Year 13 Music Performance cohort delivered an unforgettable evening of live performance with their self-produced concert, VIVID. As part of their coursework, the students were tasked with planning, organising, and delivering a full-scale event—and they rose to the challenge with professionalism, creativity, and remarkable musical skill.

From staging and lighting to set lists and soundchecks, the Year 13 band managed every element of the production, demonstrating not only their musical ability but also their capability as event managers. The result was an exciting, and genuinely impressive show that highlighted the strength of performing arts within the sixth form.

The core band delivered a dynamic set that showcased both individual musicianship and tight ensemble work.

Together, they performed with confidence and flair, engaging the audience from the very first note. Lucie's expressive vocals paired beautifully with Cody's sensitive piano work, while Matilda and Ethan held the group together with a strong and assured rhythm section. Hayden's lead guitar playing added energy and colour to the set, rounding off a truly impressive performance.

The evening also celebrated the talents of other students across the school, with a series of standout support acts contributing to the atmosphere and variety of the show.



Mr Jones takes to the stage

A group of enthusiastic KS4 and KS5 students recently visited Darlington Hippodrome to watch the acclaimed musical "Come From Away". The production was nothing short of phenomenal, captivating everyone with its energy, emotion and outstanding performances. A particularly exciting highlight for our students was seeing our very own Head of Drama, Mr Jones, performing onstage as Kevin J. Witnessing a familiar teacher excel in such a high-quality production was truly inspiring. Many students commented on how motivating it was to see someone from our school community achieving success in the performing arts. It was an unforgettable and uplifting experience for all.





KING'S SPORTS NEWS



Students secure their place on the Durham County squad.

The King's Academy and Marton Furness Juniors are celebrating superb news as three of their players have secured places for Durham County hockey!

Lydia S and Isla G have been selected for the Durham Under 13 squad. Esme B has been chosen for the Durham Under 12 squad. Despite strong competition from other schools, their talent and determination stood out, securing their places.

The girls are now proudly representing Durham County and attending training sessions at the Durham University campus—a fantastic achievement for our students. Well done!



Jesse C selected for the England Women's Football Pathway.

Our very own Lioness! We are incredibly proud to share that Jesse's footballing talent has been recognised, earning her a place on the England Women's Pathway. Congratualations Jesse, you truly deserve it.

Luca P selected to represent England in MMA.

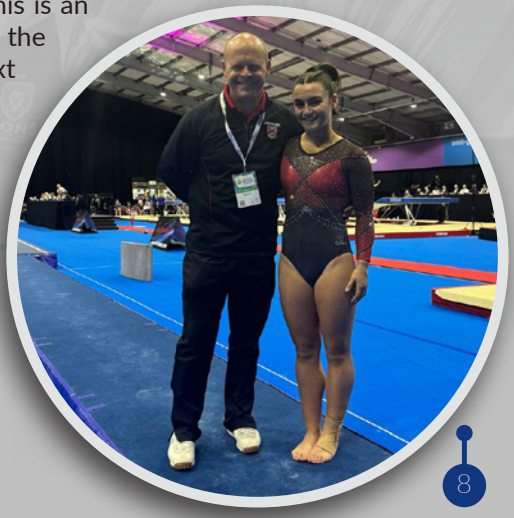
Congratulations to Luca in year 13. Luca has been selected to represent England Amateur MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) at the European Championships to be held in Serbia in February 2026. A fantastic achievement, well done.



Top Performers Net Sunderland AFC Signings

Congratulations to Isabella and Mya, who have both secured places with Sunderland AFC. This is an exciting achievement, and we wish them the very best of luck as they begin their next adventure with the club!

Well done to both players on what is a well deserved success.



Beth A selected for the England Tumbing Squad Programme.

Following an outstanding performance on the England Squad Programme in 2025, Beth has been invited to return to the England Tumbling Squad Programme for 2026 as a guest member. This invitation recognises her continued commitment to developing her skills, her professional attitude towards sport, and the coach's belief that she is on a strong upward trajectory. Well done Beth!

Unforgettable Opportunities & Experiences



GCHQ National Language Competition

November saw 14 would-be spies participating in the GCHQ National Language Competition, an online set of puzzles, conundrums and challenges.

There was fierce competition all week with over 2500 teams from across the UK putting their language skills to the test and battling it out for the top spot on the leaderboard. It was a closely fought race right up to the very end with teams pulling out all the stops to crack those codes and solve those language puzzles!

Team Garish Bulldog was the top scoring team in the academy, but really well done to all who participated.



CyberFirst Girls Competition

December saw a further 20 Year 8 girls step into the role of cryptic investigators. The CyberFirst Girls competition is a UK-based initiative led by the National Cyber Security Centre, designed to encourage more female students to consider future careers in cyber security.

Over the course of 10 days, students tackled a wide range of online puzzles, cryptic challenges and coding conundrums, testing their logic, resilience and problem-solving skills.

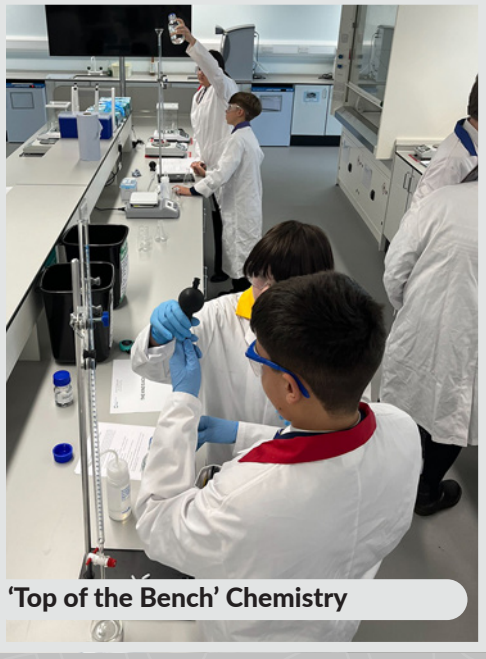
All of the girls worked incredibly hard and should be extremely proud of their achievements. A special mention goes to Iris K, who scored over 2,000 points for her team – a fantastic effort. Well done to everyone involved.



Christmas Literature Workshop

Our Year 12 students had the exciting opportunity to take part in a workshop delivered by Teesside University: "Christmas: Literature that Shaped the Season." Working collaboratively, students explored the common tropes of Christmas literature—uncovering more trauma than tinsel! They analysed a range of critical perspectives before using these ideas as inspiration to plan their own festive stories (keep an eye out for Revenge of the Reindeer!).

Overall, students left with a deeper appreciation of what it means to study English Literature and Creative Writing at university level, as well as a fascinating insight into the wide range of future pathways an English degree can offer.



'Top of the Bench' Chemistry



We welcomed MP for Middlesbrough South & East Cleveland Luke Myer to our Sixth Form in November. Luke led our assembly with a description of his role & shared his priorities for change in our local area, especially for the opportunities for young people. He then held an audience with our A-level Politics students, fielding a wide range of questions about his views, actions & intentions as our representative. We are very grateful to Luke for taking the time to speak to our next generation of voters.



Four brilliant KS4 scientists took part in the Royal Society of Chemistry's 'Top of the Bench' competition at Teesside University, competing against some of the brightest students from across the North of England. They worked well as a team to complete a gruelling research task, and challenged themselves trying to make a clock using chemicals, using precise techniques that would be difficult even for much older students. Really well done Sophie, Joseph, Panos and Erin - for impressing everyone with your intelligence, enthusiasm and hard work!

HOUSE EVENTS

House Writing Competition

There was an exceptionally high standard of entries this year for the creative writing competition. Joy was the theme this year! A number of our students across the Academy put pen to paper on this theme. The overall winner was Hollie J in year 9 with her thoughtful take on one of the best-known stories in classical mythology. Her poem alludes to the Greek myth of Icarus and the judges were really impressed with her originality and flair. Congratulations to Hollie and all the students who won in their House category.

Icarus by Hollie J

Icarus. The boy who longed for freedom. Father who spent years making his wings so he could fulfil his dreams.

As the boy received his wings, he was warned not to fly too close to the sun. So the boy flew away, into the clouds, leaving his past behind him. As the boy soared, he realised he was free. The most indescribable feeling in the world. Freedom.

The boy came across a golden orb, the most beautiful thing he had ever laid eyes on. So the boy flew closer. So close he could feel the blaze on his face.

But his wings slowly fell apart, bit by bit. The hot wax scorched his back and he started to fall. The boy wasn't filled with sorrow. He didn't even shed a single tear.

Instead, he laughed. He admired the sun as he fell. He admired the beauty. The incredible glow that illuminated the whole sky. The way it reflected off the water below.

He did not regret, because he had touched the impossible. To fall meant you had once soared. Maybe only for a short while. Soaring was his only true joy.

House Art Competition

We had so many wonderful entries to our House Art and Photography competition which made it rather difficult narrowing them down and choosing just two winners from each category. We think you'll agree that the entries from these students are worthy of the top spot. Well done!



KS3 WINNER!
Isla P



KS4-5 WINNER!
Jessica R

House Photography Competition



KS3 WINNER!
Benjamin L



KS4-5 WINNER!
Keira B



ANTHONY NOLAN

We hosted Anthony Nolan's Hero Project to recruit young people to make a lifesaving impact of stem cell donation to save the lives of leukaemia sufferers. At the lunchtime recruitment event, supported by a number of our sixth form volunteers, a large number of our sixth formers signed up to become a potential donor to help save the lives of people with blood cancer. We are now officially a Life Saving school

"A massive thank you again for having us— we truly appreciate the opportunity to speak with your Sixth Form students. We were blown away by the enthusiasm and engagement throughout the session. I'd also like to say an extra-special thank you to Ava, Anya, Shauna and Evie for all their incredible help. They were absolutely wonderful in spreading our cause and encouraging students to come over and talk to us." Sarah Kellaway



Who ate all the caramel ones?

To raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support and to help reduce plastic waste, if you have any empty, unwanted, plastic tubs (chocolate, biscuit, cracker etc.) this Christmas, please hand them to reception or tutors by the end of January. Volunteers from Y12 will organise for these to be collected and recycled via a national campaign, with all money raised from the project being donated to the Macmillan charity. Can we beat last year's total of around 500 tubs?!



Read for Good Readathon

We are still raising money for our 'Read for Good Readathon' and would welcome any donations. The Academy receives 20% of all funds donated to spend towards new reading resources for our students. We've raised over £150 so far but would love to raise more! To donate, please click here.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your donations of warm clothing to the Wrap Up Middlesbrough campaign.

"On behalf of the Rotary clubs of Middlesbrough Erimus, Cleveland, and Stokesley I would like to thank you for kindly hosting a collection box and supporting this year's WrapUp campaign. As you will know we sought to collect coats, scarves, gloves, hats and items of warm clothing which we then sort and pass on to charities working with those in need. We have had an outstanding response from all the 54 collection points, this has resulted in 2535 items of warm clothing being donated. This is a tremendous achievement which far exceeded our expectation."

Dave Whittaker (Community Service Chair)

WRAP UP MIDDLESBROUGH
WARM A HEART, GIVE A COAT

Term Dates

Monday 5 January: Teacher Training Day

Tuesday 6 January: Academy reopens to all students (8:20AM)

Friday 20 February: Academy closes 2:30PM for February half-term

Monday 2 March: Academy reopens to all students (8:20AM)

Uniform & Equipment

We look forward to welcoming students back in January with full uniform and equipment. Please, if you need to, ask Santa for a new pair of school shoes. Oh, and a scientific calculator please!

Online Safety Information for Parents

As young people become increasingly independent online during secondary school, open conversations, agreed boundaries and regular check-ins play a vital role in helping them stay safe and make responsible digital choices.



New Technology at Christmas

With many students receiving new devices, games or technology over the Christmas period, this is a timely opportunity to review parental controls, privacy settings and expectations around online use.

Games & Consoles

- Check PEGI age ratings, but also consider whether games include online communication features.
- Where communication is enabled, discuss appropriate use and adjust settings in line with your child's age and maturity.
- Review spending limits and account permissions on consoles and gaming accounts.

Parental control guides:

Xbox Family Hub | PlayStation 5 Parental Controls | Nintendo Switch Parental Controls

Tablets & Smartphones

- Review parental controls to help manage content access, purchases and app downloads.
- Discuss expectations around app use, screen time and online behaviour.
- Regularly review privacy, location-sharing and messaging settings together.

Support guides:

Apple (iPhone/iPad) | Android & Google Play | Further advice: Internet Matters

With new devices, often comes new apps

- There are thousands of apps available to download from the App Store or Play Store. Many of these apps allow communication with others. While this is often innocent, some apps may be used maliciously.

Chat Apps
Many chat apps allow the sharing of messages including photos and videos.
Age 13+: WhatsApp, Viber, Signal, Discord, Facebook Messenger, Snapchat and Kik. Age 16+: Telegram.
Many of these apps also include end-to-end encryption and the ability to send "disappearing" messages.

Randomised Chat Apps
Some apps/websites randomly connect users through text or livestreaming. Many are intended for adults, but weak age checks mean young people can access them. These platforms carry risks including inappropriate or sexual content and contact from unknown adults. Examples include Monkey and Omegle.

End-to-End Encrypted Communication
Some apps only allow the sender and recipient to read messages, including texts, images, videos and calls. Service providers, police and hackers cannot access them. While this improves privacy, it also means messages cannot be monitored which can cause barriers when supporting and protecting young people.

Disappearing Messages
Disappearing messages delete after viewing or time limits, which can create a false sense of safety. Content can still be saved or shared without consent, and disappearing messages make reporting harmful behaviour harder. These features exist on apps like Snapchat, Instagram and WhatsApp.

More information on all of these can be found on the NSPCC website.

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date released 01.12.25. The inclusion of any links does not imply any affiliation with or endorsement of the linked websites, documents, or videos, nor are we claiming any ownership or copyright in the content of the linked materials.

AI Chatbots & AI Companions

AI chat applications are increasingly common, with many rated 13+ or 18+.

Examples students may be aware of include Character.AI (18+) and My AI on Snapchat (13+).

Potential risks include:

- Over-reliance on AI for advice, friendships, homework or revision tasks
- Exposure to inappropriate or unmoderated content
- Privacy and data-sharing concerns
- Misinformation or biased responses

How parents can support safe use:

- Check age ratings and app permissions
- Talk openly about how and why AI tools are being used
- Agree clear boundaries around schoolwork and independent learning
- Encourage students to speak to a trusted adult if something online concerns them

Further reading: AI chatbots and young people

Nudify Apps

Have you heard of Nudify apps? Users upload a picture or video to a Nudify app and AI creates the nude image. This is obviously horrifying. Bark provides further information as well as what to do if this should happen to your child.

Further reading: Bark - Parents Guide to Nudify Apps

Calm Zone

Childline have an area on their website full of activities, tools and videos to help you let go of stress. It includes yoga videos, breathing exercises, calming videos and games. It also includes info on how to get further support should you need it.

Find out more here.

Meals Accounts: Please can we remind parents/ carers to ensure that their child's meals account is topped up before the start of the new term. The price of a two-course meal is £2.75 (not including drinks) so please add £14 to cover a week. Alternatively, please ensure you send your child to school with a packed lunch.

Household Support Fund: Middlesbrough parents/ carers with children in receipt of Free School Meals are eligible for a payment this winter from the Household Support Fund. Payments were sent by Middlesbrough Council automatically on 1 December (£70 per child) based on school records. Please see here for further information.

Holiday Activities and Food: During the Christmas holidays, Middlesbrough Council are putting on a range of exciting activities with food for primary and secondary aged children. Students who are in receipt of Free School Meals are eligible to attend activities without charge but places must be booked and are limited. Please click here to go direct to the booking site.

Contact details for external agencies during the Christmas holidays

If parents/carers need to access external support during the holidays, they can contact:

BRING IT ON! BORO REDCAR & CLEVELAND

Free festive activities and food for kids

There's free panto trips, visits to Newham Grange Farm's Winter Wonderland, swimming sessions, music workshops and Christmas crafts as part of Bring It On.

The programme provides free, fun activities and days out for children across Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland over the school holidays.

Every child who attends can also enjoy a tasty meal at each session.

Bring It On takes place between:
Saturday 20 December 2025 - Sunday 4 January 2026
(closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day).

Children aged 5 - 16 who get benefit-related free school meals can apply for a place by clicking the button below.

If you would like your child to enjoy Bring It On activities and they do not get free school meals, contact us by email or phone to book a place.

Support for Middlesbrough homes

The Household Support Fund helps local people with energy bills, food and essential costs like Council Tax. Depending on your circumstances, you may be eligible for help. During the year, we're releasing the money in phases so we can support the people who need it the most.

Visit our website to find out more and to apply for a voucher.

Stronger Families (Early Help): 01642 726 004. Stronger Families are able to support with: drug and alcohol issues; domestic abuse; mental health issues; money and housing problems; bereavement; relationship problems; children's health, development and behaviour.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS): 0300 2000 000. CAMHS provides assessment and appropriate treatment or intervention for children and young people up to their 18th birthday who are experiencing mental health problems, with the aim of positive mental health promotion.

Details of other support services can be accessed via the following links:

- Children and Families - Middlesbrough Children Matter
- Children, families, and safeguarding | Middlesbrough Council

Did you know? You can stay up-to-date with all the latest news and events by following us on Facebook, Instagram, and X. From celebrating attendance achievements to sharing sports updates and important dates, you'll find it all! Follow us @KingsAcademyESF.

Wishing you a
Merry Christmas
& A Happy New Year
From Everyone at The King's Academy

THE KING'S ACADEMY
Emmanuel Schools Foundation