La Retraite
Roman Catholic Girls' School

ATKINS ROAD, CLAPHAM PARK
LONDON, SW12 0AB
020 8673 5644
LARETRAITE.CO.UK
HEADTEACHER: MR D MALINS

21st October 2026

Dear Parent/Guardian,

It has been a lovely start to the academic year and it has been great to see the staff and students working so well in so many activities, in the classroom, on trips, competing for the school and aiming to do their best. The Tallawah Centre is officially open and it feels like it has always been part of our community. When visitors come to the school, they are super impressed at the politeness of our young people and their kindness. Thank you for you great support in making that happen.

**Welcome**

With great pleasure we welcome the following new staff this term and we look forward to them having many successful years as part of the La Retraite family

| | |
|---|---|
| Ms Amaechi | Learning Support Assistant |
| Ms Ansah | Year 9 Pastoral Support Manager (Maternity Cover) |
| Ms Batour | School Chaplain |
| Mr Blakemore | Lead Practitioner, Business and Economics (Head of Business & Economics) |
| Ms Breadmore | English Teacher |
| Ms Brinton | Art Teacher |
| Ms Honey | Health and Social Care Teacher |
| Ms Igali | Lead Practitioner, English (Head of English) |
| Mr Ezeh | Science Teacher |
| Ms Stedman | RE Teacher |
| Mr Jones - Douglas | Science Technician |
| Ms Tahir | Senior Science Technician |
| Ms Morais | Lunchtime supervisor |

We also say good bye to our long serving lunch time supervisor, Ms Carew-Lorde. I know that the students will miss her greatly. We wish her good luck with her future career.

## Oscar Romero Innovator Award

The Oscar Romero Award
Aspire to be more

I am very pleased to announce that we have been awarded the Oscar Romero Innovator Award. This is awarded to schools where social justice is embedded in every aspect of the school's life and where the school works with other organisations to promote Catholic Social Teaching. There are fewer than ten other secondary catholic schools in the whole country that have this honour and it is a fantastic acknowledgement of how our well-established multi-faith population supports each other and others in need, as well as promoting stewardship of the natural world. Particular thanks should be given to Mrs Appiah-Kubi, Assistant Headteacher, Miss Abbot, (Chaplain until July 2026) and Ms Batour (current Chaplain) for achieving this prestigious award.

## Faith Life of the School

The start of the academic year has been a busy and joyful time for our school community. It was a great privilege for students and the staff to attend the annual ***Beginning of the Year Mass*** at St George's Cathedral Southwark, alongside schools and colleges from across the Diocese. This special celebration brought students and staff together in prayer and strengthen our sense of belonging to the wider Catholic community.

Throughout the term, students have embraced opportunities to put their faith into action. We welcomed our new Year 7 students and their families at the Year 7 Welcome Mass, while our Year 13 students celebrated Mass on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary as they begin their final year at La Retraite. Students also took part in rosary-making workshops and supported fundraising initiatives following an inspiring visit from Mary's Meals, including cake sales and gift-wrapping activities.

## Sycamore: An Invitation for Parents

Are you interested in exploring the Christian faith, asking life's big questions, or simply meeting others in a welcoming and relaxed environment? Sycamore is an informal course that offers the opportunity to reflect on faith and its relevance to everyday life through short films, discussion and conversation.

The course will take place at **St Bede's Club on Mondays from 2 November to 14 December**, with breakfast available from 9.00am and sessions running from 9.30am to 11.00am. No prior knowledge is needed, and everyone is welcome.

To register, please email Father David [davidhowell@rcaos.org.uk]. Those wishing to support the programme through prayer can request a prayer card by emailing prayerteamsycamore@gmail.com

## Dates for your diaries:

- The **Sports Pitch** will be undergoing much needed refurbishment starting during half term. A new surface will be laid and the students should really notice a big improvement. It does mean, however, that the pitch will be out of action for 2 to 4 weeks after the half term holiday and there will be some adjustments to PE lessons
- Early finish on Thursday 19th November at 12.05pm for all years except Year 11 for our **6th form Open evening**.
- **6th Form Open Evening**- Thursday 19th November 4pm to 6pm
- **Year 11 & 13 Mocks** after half term for 3 weeks. Please ensure your child is revising and has the correct equipment for these exams.

### Parents Evening dates for the diary (3.40pm to 6.40pm):

- **Year 11 Parents Evening** Thursday 10th December 2026
- **Year 13 Parents Evening** Monday 14th December 2026
- **Year 12 Parents Evening** Thursday 28th January 2027
- **Year 9 Parents Evening** Thursday 11th February 2027
- **Year 7 Parents Evening** Thursday 15th April 2027
- **Year 8 Parents Evening** Thursday 29th April 2027
- **Year 10 Parents Evening** Thursday 15th July 2027

## Arbor

If you have still not been able to log in, please email admin@laretraite.co.uk and let us know. It is very important that you have access to the system so that you can receive up to date information about your child's progress

## Extra-curricular trips

Thank you to the staff who havce organised a wide range of activites this first half term:

- The Cadets visited Queen Elizabeth's HM Naval Base Portsmouth
- Year 11 & 13 Geography students visited Whitstable Coast
- Year 11 Art students visited the Tate Modern Gallery
- All Year 7 classes attended a STEM workshop at the Science Museum
- Flag Football competition at Crystal Palace
- Year 12 Art visit to Hayward Gallery
- Careers Event at Overbury head office for T Levels Week
- A Level Drama visit to watch Fences and Thelma & Louise in Theatre
- Milk and Honey Bees conference
- Librarian visit to an event at Clapham Library

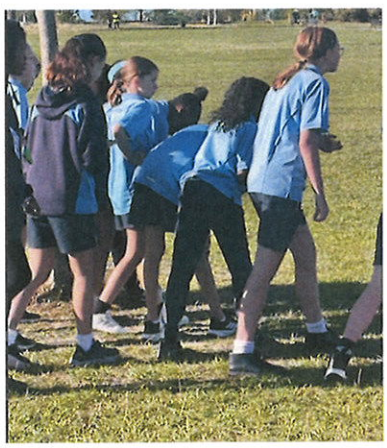
Please see the attached leaflet with details of the wide range of extra-curricular clubs that are offered this term

## Cadets

On Wednesday the 7th of October, cadets at La Retraite welcomed the Mayor of Lambeth, Councillor Paul Valentine, during his visit to our CCF Royal Navy Contingent. The visit was organised by YOU London (Youth Organisations in Uniform) whose aim is to help young people to reach their full potential. We were delighted by his presence, and the cadets had the amazing opportunity to discuss our programme and all the skills they learn in our sessions.

During his visit he was given a unique tour by our cadets around the school, experiencing some of the fantastic facilities available to the students. He also spent time observing the cadets as they completed command tasks to save 'endangered tennis balls' and witness the new cadets developing teamwork through military drill."

## La Retraite Sporting Life



It has been a very active half term. It was amazing to see so many Year 7 and 8 students competing in the 2k cross country competition with some excellent times:

- Daria and Latoya 11.56 minutes
- Gabby 12:13
- Alexis 12:11
- Kessiah 13:52
- Eliana 12:40

- Shyla 13:14
- Alina 12:46

In the year 9/10 competition, Joy came 2nd with a time of 8:51 minute and Kaira Hawley, (9:17) and Fatima Badjie (9:47) came joint 5th. Very impressive!

In the year 7 Interform Football competition there was a tie for first place between Patience and Wisdom. It was great to see so many players involved, we look forward to our Netball Interform after half term

*Kendal training for volleyball club*

## Attendance matters!

Thank you for all your support so far this academic year and ensuring the excellent attendance of your child to school. As we complete the first half term and head into the second half of the autumn term, where it will get darker and colder, I wanted to remind you of the follow guidance (some from the NHs);

1. Support for anxiety in children - https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/anxiety-in-children/ - Your child's Head of Year, Pastoral Support Manager as well as the SEND and Safeguard TEAM are also available to help.
2. Is my child too ill for school - https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

Please also find attached a helpful guide on the impact of attendance, which can also be found on the school website.

We are here to help support your child, and you, as best as we can, so please don't hesitate to let us know if there are any issues affecting your child attending school so that we may resolve them as soon as possible as we are always happy to help and support, while we can rather than allowing the issue to become a major concern and detrimentally affect your child's attendance.

## Achievements

The following students have achieved an amazing number of Merits. The score below shows their score after taking off any consequences.

| Year 7 | Points | Year 8 | Points | Year 9 | Points | Year 10 | Points | Year 11 | Points | Year 12 | Points | Year 13 | Points |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Joyanne | 139 | Testimony | 129 | Aiza | 107 | Nina | 118 | Hania | 103 | Maiyah | 88 | Julie | 67 |
| Mani | 132 | Naeemah | 110 | Mehal | 83 | Lasharna | 108 | Jayla | 78 | Destiny | 82 | Junaid | 48 |
| Shani | 125 | Jessica | 109 | Porshia | 82 | Nyiaah | 97 | Faith | 76 | Trinity | 79 | Desiree | 42 |
| Gabby | 118 | Eliana | 107 | Ava | 80 | Safoorah | 91 | Francisca | 74 | Elijah | 73 | Onyinyechi | 41 |
| Daria | 116 | Kaja | 104 | Diana | 80 | Kayla | 88 | Lia | 74 | Hayley-Rose | 67 | Razan | 39 |

## School Fund (Parental Contributions)

As you probably know, school budgets have really been hit hard over the last 2-3 years (which has included La Retraite) with school funding from the Government not taking into account a multitude of costs which have risen sharply, and to avoid your child losing out on all the good things that make this school such a

great learning environment that enriches their lives, we desperately need families to make a financial contribution. For instance, the school had to pay over £70,000 to subsidise instrumental music lessons last financial year which impacts our budget hugely.

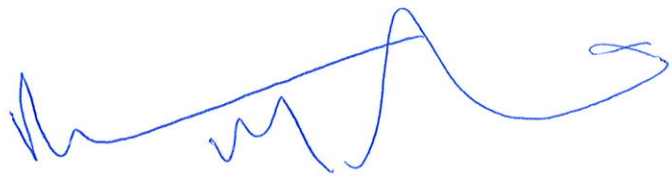
For guidance on how to make a payment, please follow this link: www.laretraite.co.uk/School-Fund

A huge thank you to those families that have already paid the £70.00 for the new academic year.

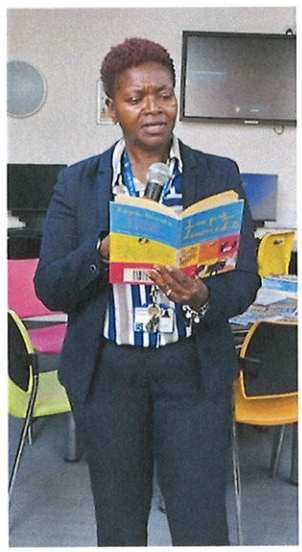
**Finally** – a prayer inspired by Oscar Romero:

"Peace is not the product of terror or fear
Peace is the generous,
tranquil contribution of all
to the good of all.
Peace is dynamism.
Peace is generosity.
It is right and is a duty."

I hope you all have a lovely holiday and just a reminder students return to school on Monday, 9th November 2026.



**Dominic Malins**
**Headteacher**



*Mrs Robinson reads during the Poetry slam*