

THE YARDLEIAN



DECEMBER 2025 EDITION

SUCCESS AND SEASON'S GREETINGS

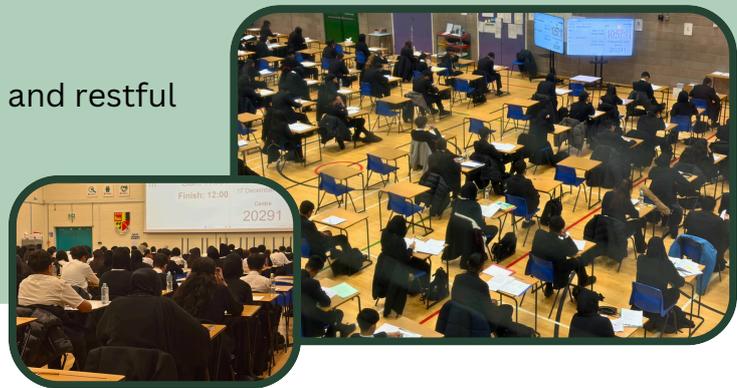
A MESSAGE FROM OUR HEADTEACHER

As we publish the final edition of the Yardleian for this calendar year, we would like to wish our entire community a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. It has been a wonderful term, and we are extremely proud of our students for consistently demonstrating effort, care, and commitment in all that they do. They truly embody the Yardleys values each day, and I have been particularly impressed with the way they approached themselves during the end-of-term assessment week.

This edition celebrates not only our students' academic achievements but also the wide range of learning opportunities they have enjoyed beyond the classroom since our last issue. I would like to thank all parents and carers for their continued support in helping our students at Yardleys to thrive. We look forward to welcoming everyone back in the new year.

Once again, we wish you all a very happy and restful Christmas break.

MR. G BASRA
HEADTEACHER



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ANTHONY COLLINS SOLICITORS INSPIRE YEAR 9 STUDENTS

We were delighted to welcome nearly 30 staff from Anthony Collins Solicitors for a morning of engaging activities with our Year 9 students. The session was designed to broaden horizons and give students a real insight into the world of law and professional careers. From interactive tasks to thought-provoking discussions, our students rose to the challenge—asking intelligent questions, sharing ideas confidently, and demonstrating the enthusiasm and curiosity that makes Yardleys so special.

The visitors were hugely impressed by the maturity and engagement shown throughout the morning, and it was fantastic to see our students embracing opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. A huge thank you to Anthony Collins for their time, expertise, and energy in making this event such a success. This is what an inclusive school looks like: every child being aspirational and inspirational, developing the skills and confidence to thrive in the future.



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BBC BITESIZE CAREERS TEAM INSPIRES YARDLEYS STUDENTS

We were delighted to welcome the BBC Bitesize Careers team, who met with Year 7–10 students to share insights into careers both in front of and behind the camera.

As always, Yardleys students were brilliant—engaged, enthusiastic, and eager to learn about the exciting opportunities in media and broadcasting.



CHILDREN IN NEED FUNDRAISING SUCCESS!

A huge thank you to everyone who took part in the Children in Need fundraising efforts! We enjoyed a week of fun sports activities, including a lively staff vs. students netball match (which staff won, of course!). Thanks to your generosity and enthusiasm, we raised an incredible £565.71 for this amazing cause. Well done, everyone.



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CAPTURING BIRMINGHAM THROUGH THE LENS

Our Year 10 Photography students headed into Birmingham city centre for a day of creativity, capturing stunning architecture and the festive atmosphere of the German Market as part of their coursework project. After walking over 20,000 steps and taking hundreds of photos, a well-earned rest on the train was the perfect way to end an inspiring day.



YEAR 9 EXCEL IN NATIONAL CYBER LEAGUE COMPETITION

We're proud to celebrate the incredible achievements of our Year 9 students in the National Cyber League competition, organised by GCHQ. Competing for the first time, our teams showcased exceptional problem-solving and code-cracking skills, earning impressive regional rankings out of 363 teams: 34th place for Tasmia, Ikram, and Zaynab; 45th for Ishaq, Hasnain, Hamza, and Ismaeel; 56th for Lubna, Hajira, Dua, and Mehreen; and 191st for Zak, Ahyaan, Musa, and Mustafa. Huge congratulations to all participants—you've set an incredible standard for future competitions.



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ART COURSEWORK SHOWCASE



JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN COLLEGE VISIT

A group of outstanding Year 10 students attended an A-Level science taster day at Joseph Chamberlain College, impressing teachers with their exceptional knowledge and practical skills—one teacher even remarked they were ahead of some Year 13 students!

They took part in three challenging sessions: Biology, where they used advanced microscopes to prepare plant slides and create scientific drawings; Physics, where they built complex circuits with LEDs and resistors to explore wavelength and voltage relationships; and Chemistry, where they performed precise titrations to determine iron sulphate levels in iron tablets. Their enthusiasm and skill made the day a resounding success.

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CATERING GCSE MOCKS



INSPIRING STORIES WITH HASAN ALAM



Our amazing EAL students recently enjoyed an incredible workshop with Hasan Alam, a fitness and online coach. Hasan shared his inspiring journey from Iraq to England and spoke about his achievements over the past few years.

The students were captivated by his story, asking endless questions and leaving the session truly motivated. A huge thank you to @getfitwithhas for making this experience so memorable.

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SPORTS

STAFF TRIUMPH IN 5-A-SIDE SHOWDOWN



After a full day of lessons, Year 11 faced one last challenge: a high-energy staff vs. students five-a-side football match. Hopes were high for the students before kickoff, but the staff delivered a commanding performance, sealing a 16–3 victory.

Goals came courtesy of Vickery, Mjanja, Stavrou, and Smith, leaving the students to head home humbled but smiling after a spirited contest.

ARCHERY IN ACTION

We were thrilled to host Jamila from Crescent Archers, who helped provide an exhilarating archery experience for our students.

With her assistance, everyone had the opportunity to acquire new skills and have fun with the sport. We are grateful for her expertise and enthusiasm, which made the event unforgettable.

Remember, we offer regular extracurricular archery sessions each week, welcoming anyone interested in giving it a shot.



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CATERING UPDATES

Our school meal service continues to be provided by abm Catering Limited. Their aim is to serve exciting, fresh food, using seasonal ingredients to create nutritious dishes. All meat served on site continues to be halal HMC certified.

From January 2026, there will be a small inflationary increase in the tariff. There are a range of meal deals on offer each day at £2.40, representing value for money. Please see below details of the tariff and our current menu including freshly prepared Hot Meals, Street Food, Grab 'n' Go and a range of Deli Baguettes and Sandwiches.

[CLICK HERE](#)



Mid-morning

HASH BROWN	£0.55
SHISH KEBAB	£1.35
PANCAKE	£0.60
TOPPED BAGEL	£1.25
SAUSAGE ROLL	£1.40
TOAST	£0.40
VG SAUSAGE ROLL	£1.40
PAN AU CHOC	£1.30
WAFFLE	£1.40
NACHOS	£1.20
VEG SAMOSA	£1.30
CHEESE & ONION PASTY	£1.50
CHEESE ON TOAST	£0.90
CHEESE MELT	£1.00
PIZZA BAGEL	£1.25
GARLIC BREAD	£0.50
CINNAMON BUN	£1.20
POTATO WEDGES	£1.20
HALAL CHICKEN HOT DOG	£1.40

LUNCH

MEAL DEAL	£2.40
MAIN MEAL	£2.10
JACKET POTATO (1 FIL)	£1.70
JACKET POTATO (2 FIL)	£2.00
BAGUETTE (STAND)	£2.15
BAGUETTE (PREM)	£2.30
WRAP	£2.10
BURGER	£2.25
STREET FOOD	£2.25
PASTA POT	£1.60
TOPPED PASTA	£2.00
PIZZA SLICE	£1.45

abm
catering solutions

• INSPIRED FOOD •
mint
• FOR EDUCATION •

DESSERTS & DRINKS

COOKIE	£1.00
JELLY POT	£1.00
CHEESECAKE	£1.15
HOME BAKES	£1.00
DESSERT POT	£1.10
FRUIT BAG	£0.90
RADNOR SPLASH 500ML	£1.20
STILL WATER	£1.10
RADNOR FIZZ AND SPLASH	£1.00
MILKSHAKE	£1.00
FRUIT JUICE	£0.90

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It can be challenging for parents and carers to know whether children are spending too much time on their devices. Furthermore, it's even more of a challenge to know whether a child is addicted to the internet and social media. As technology is becoming more pervasive, children and young people are experiencing tech-related dependencies. Do we as parents and carers have the knowledge to identify and support children and young people who may be developing an addiction to their devices?

47% of parents said they thought their children spent too much time in front of screens

What parents need to know about SCREEN ADDICTION



HEALTH & WELLBEING

Children as young as 13 are attending 'smartphone rehab' following growing concerns over screen time. There are now help centers in the UK which deal with screen addiction for children and adults showing the seriousness of device addiction. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has officially recognised gaming addiction as a modern disease. The condition was confirmed as part of their International Classification of Diseases (ICD) which serves as an international standard for diagnosing and treating health conditions.

LACK OF SLEEP

7 out of 10 children said they had missed out on sleep because of their online habits and 60% said they had neglected school work as a result. It is important that children get the sleep they need in order to focus the next day.

LOSS OF INTEREST IN OTHER THINGS

Your child may become less interested in anything that does not include their device. You may notice that your child is missing school time and generally being less engaged with other activities in the home. It is important to discuss this with your child as soon as you notice a behaviour change.



CONFIDENCE, SUPPORT & ADVICE

The Children's Commissioner report 'Life in Likes', explored how children aged 8-11 are using social media today. It showed that children are using their devices to speak to their online friends about their problems and seek acceptance and support, removing face to face interactions.

APPS CAN BE ADDICTIVE

Apps have been designed with 'psychological tricks' to constantly keep grabbing your attention. One example of this is on the app Snapchat, where you can gain 'streaks' when interacting with your friends. If you don't respond, you lose the streak. This addictive nature of apps aims to engage children and keep them coming back for more.



Top Tips for Parents



LIMIT SCREEN TIME

In today's digital age, technology is an important part of a child's development so completely banning them from their device will mean they are missing out on a lot, including conversations and communication with their friends. Rather than banning them from using their devices, we suggest setting a screen time limit. Work out what you think is a suitable and healthy amount of time for your child to be on their device per week. Remember that your child may need to use devices for their school homework so only set screen limits on recreational time on their device. Once you have established this, have the conversation with them to discuss why you are implementing a screen limit. There will be others in your child's friendship group who will not have screen limits set and will be sending messages when they do not have access to their phones.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Children model their behavior on their peers, so if their parents are constantly on their device, they will see this as acceptable. Try limiting your own screen time and follow the same rules you have set for them. If you have asked your child to not use their device at the table, make sure you don't. Try setting house rules that the whole family abide by.

REMOVE DEVICES FROM THEIR BEDROOM

Setting a rule about removing devices from bedrooms will help your child to get the sleep they need and be more focussed the next day at school. 20% of teenagers said that they wake up to check their social network accounts on their devices. Even by having a device switched off in their bedroom, they may be tempted to check for notifications.

LESS TIME MEANS LESS EXPOSURE

There are many risks associated with devices, such as cyberbullying, grooming, sexting, viewing inappropriate content etc. Less time spent on a screen means that a child will be less exposed to these risks.

ENCOURAGE ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

It may seem like an obvious solution, but encouraging children to play with their friends, read a book, or playing outdoors will help them realise they can have fun without their device. Playing football, trampolining, camping, going for a walk or swimming are all healthy replacements for screen time. Try to join them in their Outdoor activities to show your support.

MOBILE-FREE MEAL TIMES

Have you tried to settle your child by giving them a tablet at the dinner table or restaurant? This may seem like a quick fix to calm them down but in reality, it is encouraging them to use their device as a distraction from conversation and dealing with their emotions. We suggest removing all technology from the dinner table and having conversations with your family about how their day has been.

STATISTICS

52% of children aged 3-4 go online for nearly 9hrs a week

82% of children aged 5-7 go online for nearly 9.5hrs a week

93% of children aged 8-11 go online for nearly 13.5hrs a week

99% of children aged 12-15 go online for nearly 20.5hrs a week

Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report 2018

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON.

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/safety-over-the-festive-season>



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KEY DATES/EVENTS



**CHRISTMAS BREAK:
FROM FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER TO
FRIDAY 2ND JANUARY**

STAFF TRAINING DAY: MONDAY 5TH JANUARY (SCHOOL CLOSED TO ALL STUDENTS)

SCHOOL RE-OPENS TO ALL STUDENTS ON TUESDAY 6TH JANUARY

Thursday 22nd January 2026 - Year 11 Parents Evening. School closes to students at 2:15pm

Thursday 5th February 2026 - Year 10 Parents Evening. School closes to students at 2:15pm

Friday 6th February 2026 - Training Day – School closed to students

Monday 16th – Friday 20th February 2026 - Half Term Holidays

Monday 23rd February 2026 - School open to all students

FULL ACADEMIC YEAR INFORMATION & TERM DATES

IMPORTANT LINKS AND LETTERS
HOME LEARNING SUPPORT &
INDEPENDANT LEARNING

