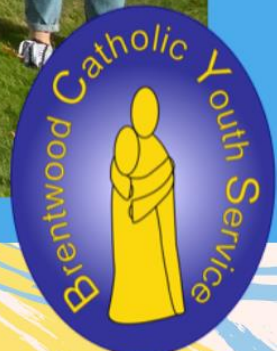


# RETREAT PROGRAMMES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

## WALSINGHAM HOUSE AT ABBOTSWICK 2023-2024



Thank you for your interest in booking a retreat with the Walsingham House Team. We have always endeavoured to provide enlightening and engaging programmes that bring our shared Catholic faith alive for young people in all schools of the Diocese. In 2018, after the move from Canvey Island to Abbotswick House, the Walsingham House Team have tried to redesign programmes to keep things fresh and exciting for the thousands of young people we welcome on retreat at Walsingham House and on Outreach in your schools.

After several years of settling in and the Covid-19 pandemic, we have decided to create a package for all Chaplains and Teachers in order to showcase what we are able to offer. We have always tried to accommodate consider any particular requests you have, but we have learnt that for us to be the most effective in leading retreats, we needed to create cohesive programmes and sessions that are not repeated in different year groups. Therefore, please take some time to browse the retreats and decide which would suit your school's particular wishes at this time.

One of the main differences for this coming year is due to generally having low bookings for Key stage 3 and Key Stage 4 retreats each year, we will be offering the same programmes for Years 10s & 11 and the same programmes for Years 12 & 13. Therefore, if you would like retreats for these year groups, please prioritise one over the other. Along with this, we are offering a separate programme designed for Year 10/11 and Year 12/13 Leadership Teams (Head Students/Chaplaincy Prefects/House Captains etc.) which may interest you.

We have also decided that currently outreach retreats, which have been popular options in the past, are not feasible for us at this moment in time. Therefore we are only running retreats at Walsingham House.

We find that retreats work best with a class/form of roughly 30 young people, therefore most of our programmes are designed with that model in mind. This allows us to allocate a ratio of 1:10 and allows for a more personal retreat experience.

Finally, we are all aware that the Covid-19 pandemic has been a troubling and difficult time for us all and is not over yet. We are continually reassessing our Risk Assessments and Policies in order to keep everyone safe. We have been exceptionally blessed by support from so many Schools, Teachers, Chaplains, Catechists, Clergy and many other people throughout the pandemic. In 2020 we moved to mainly online provision of resources and in 2021/22, despite the ups and downs, we have been able to run retreats at Walsingham House and in schools due to the commitment of so many individuals, so thank you and we look forward to continuing to provide experiences for your students.

# Why Retreat? - Section 48 and the RE Curriculum Directory

## Section 48

Retreat Provision can be used as evidence in the 'Outstanding' grade descriptors for the following sections:

### Catholic Life

*"The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school"*

- *'The entire curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person. The school provides extensive opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all pupils and staff.'*
- Under the Catholic Life heading, 'retreats & visits' are explicitly referred to alongside chaplaincy provision providing spiritual and moral development for all members of the school community.
- 'Students show a deep respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God.' In our year 7 retreat we focus largely on the gifts and talents of each and every young person and our Key Stage 3 retreat is based around empathy and understanding the journeys that refugees face when leaving their homes.
- Similarly, this fulfils the provision that 'Pupils...joyfully offer their gifts in the service of others' through our year 7 retreats, our year 8 retreats focussed on the Fruits of the Holy Spirit and in our key stage 4 & leadership retreats.
- Also on our year 7 & on our Key Stage 3 Retreats, the programmes use sessions based on Catholic Social Teaching which are linked to CAFOD sessions based around the link between climate change & poverty and the refugee crisis in our world. This meets with understanding 'the needs of others and seek justice for all within and beyond the school community.'
- 'In proportion to their years, they show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They are quick to congratulate others.' Retreats can fulfil this descriptor through the fact that each retreat begins and ends with prayer often focusing on thanksgiving. Furthermore, on residential retreats we have the facility to offer youth led reconciliation services via a network of local priests we have.
- 'They take a leading role in activities which promote the school's Catholic Life and mission both within school and in the wider community.' This final provision we feel is easily met by the Leadership retreat we offer for year 11 & year 13 students, but is a golden thread throughout all of our retreats.

## Religious Education

“How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education”

- Retreats will help support: “Pupils...to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. As a consequence they are fully aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.”
- We genuinely believe that youth led retreats for young people are one of the most powerful tools for evangelization, so that young people understand that there is a whole world outside their school and Church full of young and vibrant Catholics, living out their faith.

## Collective Worship

“How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship”

- ‘Acts of Collective Worship engage all pupils’ interests and inspire in them deep thought and heartfelt response.... Reflected in...the quality of prayerful silence and the depth of reverent participation in communal prayer.’
- Retreats encourage and facilitate active engagement in times of communal worship through times of prayer that are hopefully slightly different than anything they have experienced before, which involve both ‘interactive’ participation and prayerful silence. All times of prayer are also age appropriate and allow each young person to understand prayer in a deeper sense.
- ‘They are creative and resourceful in their planning on liturgy.’ Whenever Mass is provided for a retreat, our main aim is that it is led by the young people on retreat, by unpacking and bringing the readings to life, providing the music for the liturgy where appropriate and possible and using art to illuminate and illustrate the liturgy.

## The RE Curriculum Directory

### Ages 11-14

#### Revelation

- Passages from Scripture which speak of God: as Father, source of all blessing; as Son, the Word through whom all things are made; as Spirit, actively present in the world, the Church and human hearts and minds.
- Humanity as created by God.
- The human vocation to seek communion
- The Church's use of scripture in worship, teaching and prayer.
- The life and ministry of Jesus, his teaching, parables and miracles.
- The role of the Holy Spirit in Old and New Testament –
- **Our retreats at Walsingham House are always centred on Scripture, which ties the whole day together through the opening prayer, every session and ending again with prayer.**
- **Our different retreats also meet some of the above elements about Revelation through our Year 7 Retreats focussing on Community and being the Body of Christ – 'seeking communion' with others.**
- **Also, our Year 8 retreat is built around gaining a deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit through the Fruits in St Paul's letter to the Galatians.**

#### The Church

- The Church's vocation to have special care for the poor and oppressed.
- The Church's role as witness in society.
- **As mentioned above, our Year 7 retreat includes CAFOD's Climate Change Challenge, which helps unravel the call to help protect our 'Common Home'.**

#### Celebration

- The universal value of some signs and symbols.
- The participation in the Eucharist and different ministries
- The Gospel accounts of Jesus' compassion in his words and his healing miracles.
- The variety of prayer forms and their significance in Catholic life and history & prayer as God's gift.
- **We always offer the Sacraments of Mass on residential retreats, which help young people open up the liturgy of the Word and Eucharist in new ways.**

#### Life in Christ

- The Church's faith that all human life is God's gift.
- Opportunities for the exercise of freedom and responsibility in family life, the local church and society: at local, national and global levels.
- Images and accounts in Scripture of human success and failure to build and sustain community.
- Gospel accounts of Jesus' response to issues of justice and relationship.

## Ages 14-19

### Revelation

- The human experience of faith, faithfulness and the challenge of commitment.
- The Church's teachings on the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and the individual Christian.
- The Church's teaching on respect for the work of the Holy Spirit in all people.
- **As an aside here, it's important to note our confirmation weekend retreats that we run for Parishes, where we build our retreat around the Holy Spirit working in our lives and the lives of the Saints. Therefore, we do not want to repeat sessions to avoid young people experiencing the same retreat twice in a year.**

### The Church

- The Church as the holy People of God, the communion of saints.
- Jesus' ministry as a prophetic sign, especially evidence of struggle and conflict
- The Church as a 'sign of contradiction' (e.g. speaking out on contemporary issues of justice).
- The opportunities and challenges presented by active membership of the Church.
- The Church's mission to proclaim the Gospel.
- **On this point, I think it's clear to note that retreat sessions are not RE, or catechesis, but are a chance to encounter Jesus in a personal way, whilst still allowing the chance to seek answers to tough questions from young Catholics living out their faith and therefore can compliment the curriculum about The Church, but is specifically Catechetical or educational.**

### Celebration

- Worship as an expression of faith in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- The presence of Christ in the Eucharist in Word, priest, people, bread and wine.
- The Church's teaching on forgiveness
- Reconciliation as a human value for all community life.
- The nature and qualities of worship and prayer.
- The Lord's Prayer as a summary of Christian life.
- **We always offer the Sacraments of Mass and Reconciliation on residential retreats, which help young people open up the liturgy of the Word and Eucharist in new ways.**

### Life in Christ

- The Church's understanding of the relationship between God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and human persons.
- Signs of the influence of Christian values in social situations.
- Ways in which Christian values might influence situations of conflict and injustice.
- Choices that turn out to be destructive.
- Unity and disunity among people.
- The Church's understanding of its role as the sign and source of reconciliation and unity.
- The Church's teaching about and work for justice, unity and peace.
- Social and moral implications of loving neighbours as oneself.
- **Our Key Stage 4 programme meets many of these points by meeting regarding justice for those most on the margins of society. By thinking about how to empathise with and help refugees.**

## **Year 7 - Community**

### *'One Body Many Parts' - 1 Corinthians 12:12*

Our Year 7 Retreat is based upon St Paul's letter where we are all told that we have our own unique gifts and talents that help build up all the different communities we belong to; be that school, family, friendship groups etc. We also look at our Global Community and how we all play a role in protecting our world, which in the words of Pope Francis, is our 'Common Home' by using the CAFOD Climate Change Challenge.

### **Opportunities for Year 7:**

- 1 night residential  
(Tues-Wens or Wens-Thurs)
- Day Retreat at Walsingham House  
(30 students)

### **Key retreat components:**

- a) CAFOD climate change challenge
- b) 'Who is the greatest disciple?' mediation
- c) Poster created about recognising the forms different gifts & talents

## **Year 8- The Holy Spirit**

### *'Fan Your Spirit into a Flame' - 2 Timothy 1:6*

With Year 8 students, we focus on the Holy Spirit and how it plays a part in all of our lives. We bring to life what the Holy Spirit is through the 'Fruits of the Holy Spirit Auction' where young people must compete to win the Fruits of the Holy Spirit from Galatian's 5:22-23.

They must then, using the fruits that they have won, make interactive presentations to convince others which is the most important Fruit. We also feel that this topic helps lead and prepare those young people who will soon be completing the Sacrament of Confirmation in their Parishes in the coming years.

### **Opportunities for Year 8:**

- 1 night residential  
(Tues-Wens or Wens-Thurs)
- Day Retreat at Walsingham House  
(30 students)

### **Key retreat components:**

- a) The Fruits of the Holy Spirit Auction
- b) Team building challenges based on the Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- c) Presentations, pitches, dramas and posters about the 'most important' Fruit

## **Year 9 - 'What is Truly Important?'**

### *The Rich Young Man - Mark 10:17*

Year 9 Retreats challenge the young people we work with – and Team Members alike – by asking 'What is truly important in my life?' This is a tough challenge which is also presented to the Rich Young Man in Mark's Gospel. Is it my physical belongings? Or is it really the deeper things in my life; my gifts & talents; my relationships with friends & family; my faith?

### **Opportunities for Year 9:**

- 1 or 2 night residential  
(Tues-Wens/Wens-Thurs or Tues- Thurs)
- Day Retreat at Walsingham House  
(30 students)

### **Key retreat components:**

- a) Football Manager or similar simulation game
- b) The Rich Young Man Mediation
- c) A creative session focusing on what is truly important

## **Key Stage 4 - Journeys**

### *The Road to Emmaus - Luke 24:13-32*

On Year 10/11 retreats we use the Road to Emmaus as the focal point of our retreat, to remind us all that Jesus is walking alongside us individually, as well as everyone else in the world. We explore this concept interactively by taking part in a simulation activity, where we walk a mile in the shoes of the 60+ million refugees in our world. People who have to leave behind all their belongings beside what they can carry, but retain their dreams and relationship with God.

### **Opportunities for Key Stage 4:**

- 1 or 2 night residential  
(Tues-Wens/Wens-Thurs or Tues- Thurs)
- Day Retreat at Walsingham House  
(30 students)

### **Key retreat components:**

- a) Refugees Simulation Activity
- b) Road to Emmaus Mediation
- c) Prayer/Activity around the Footprints in the Sand poem

*NB: We are aware that we have run this programme for some year 9s in the academic year 2021-2022, therefore we would look for alternative programmes for year 10s in 2022-23 to ensure no repetition.*



## **Key Stage 5 – Do Not Be Afraid**

*‘Do not be afraid, for I am with you’ - Isaiah 41:10*

With Sixth form Students, we focus on the words from the Prophet Isaiah, which affirms all of us that God is with us, walking by our side, through the highs and the lows. We all know that these years of young people’s school lives can be fraught with worry, so our programme majors on letting go of things that hold us back in order to help us focus on God’s plan in our lives and helping us find our vocation.

### **Opportunities for Key Stage 5:**

- 1 or 2 night residential  
(Tues-Wens/Wens-Thurs or Tues- Thurs)
- Day Retreat at Walsingham House  
(30-40 students)

### **Key retreat components:**

- a) Prayer & Testimony from Team Member focusing on ‘God puts the best things in life on the other side of Fear’
- b) Reflections – Video clip and Artistic design on mirrors with words of affirmations
- c) Solarium – Discussion based activity using images to share thoughts and feelings
- d) Ask the Team Members – a chance for students to ask team members about their experiences in sixth form/university/Walsingham House and any of the ‘Big Questions’

## **Leadership Retreats - Servant Leadership**

(Designed for Year10/11 or Year 12/13 Leadership/Chaplaincy/Prefect Teams)

### *The Washing of the Feet - John 13:1*

This more bespoke retreat is designed at helping a leadership team that has responsibilities within the school to help bond with each other, formulate plans for the year upcoming and delve deeper into their own personal faith. Focussed around sessions and games that help young people consider how others look to them to set an example and how our best example of servant leadership is our Lord Jesus Christ.

We find these retreats can be exceptionally profound for the students and the Team and are mutually beneficial, as it is from these particular groups of young people that we often receive applications for Walsingham House volunteer team members for years to come.

- 1 or 2 night residential  
(Tues-Wens/Wens-Thurs or Tues- Thurs)

### **Key retreat components:**

- a) Leadership Simulation Game – Football Manager or Diplomacy which teaches fairness, leadership and strategy skills
- b) Ask the Team Members – a chance for students to ask team members about their experiences in sixth form/university/Walsingham House and any of the ‘Big Questions’
- c) Make a difference in the Community – a pitch based challenge, where groups compete to create plans for the most inventive school events
- d) Time for the leadership team & teachers/chaplains to plan ahead for the year

### Notes for Residential Retreats

*Please see below some polite requests to ensure we can be as accommodating as possible.*

- *We understand the costs for schools to bring young people on residential trips is exacerbated by the cost of travel via coach and the cost of cover for those staff members attending. However, we truly believe that residential retreats are always the most profound experiences for young people and therefore are always preferable to Day retreats and Outreach provision.*
- *We therefore always do our best to keep our costs as low as possible to ensure our retreats are accessible for all schools and young people.*
- *Walsingham House can accommodate up to a maximum of 39 young people + 2 leaders, depending on the gender split of the group.*
- *Residential retreat prices vary depending on arrival and departure times because of meal provision. We can accommodate groups to arrive at 10am or 2/3pm Day 1 and depart at 2/3pm on the final Day. Please confirm with us which of these you are planning when booking.*
- *Every group receives two free places for staff members to attend with the group. We can normally accommodate more staff members at your request, but it always depends on the size of the group and the gender split.*
- *Due to the nature of our work, we tend to have residential bookings each weekend with Parish groups; this is why we do not offer residential retreats that finish on a Friday.*

### Notes for Day Retreats at Walsingham House:

*Please see below some polite requests to ensure we can be as accommodating as possible.*

- *During the Autumn and Spring term we can accommodate classes of roughly 30 young people. During Summer we can take groups of up to 60.*
- *With day retreats each schools arrival and departure times differ depending on their travel times, therefore please confirm with us the rough time you intend to arrive and depart when booking your retreat*

## **Other Opportunities for your Students**

### **Open Retreats**

#### **Advent Retreat** – Mid-December at Walsingham House

- A chance for your students to enter into the spirit of Advent and prepare for Christmas with fun, festive and faith-filled activities

#### **Lent Revision Retreat** – Lent (March/April) at Walsingham House

- An opportunity for students to take advantage of our beautiful house for some time to revise with help and assistance from our Team, as well as Lenten themed sessions & prayers to help relax in such a stressful period.

### **Other Events**

**Monthly Youth Mass:** First Thursday of the month at Brentwood Cathedral

**Youth Gather:** October at Essex Outdoors, Mersea Island

**Summer Lourdes:** July, Lourdes, France



**FOR BOOKING ENQUIRES  
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