

Collegium Sancti Laurentii

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From the Headmaster's Study

Dear Parents,

Happy New Year to you all and I hope that 2025 is prosperous. Many of you will know that Pope Francis proclaimed 2025 as a Jubilee Year with the key theme of 'Pilgrims of Hope'. We will revisit this as a school throughout the year.

Sara and I have been bowled over by the support and good wishes that we have received as I start my tenure as Headmaster. We feel very blessed, thank you.

There was a slightly inauspicious start to the term as the weather took a turn for the worse just before everyone travelled back to school. As I write, the snow is still here and the children, if the scenes I witnessed watching our Junior House students sledging down from St Aidan's are anything to go by, have made the most of the opportunity.

I am in my fourteenth year at the College and extremely proud to lead the school as Headmaster. I am very lucky to work with excellent and dedicated colleagues. I would like to pay tribute to Peter Roberts for his leadership during his time as Head and it was fitting that the school community prayed for him and Marie to enjoy their well-earned retirement in our whole school assembly on Tuesday. I hope that my Headship will bring continuity to the good work that has been going on and a prolonged period of stability for our community while we focus on being the best we can possibly be in all areas.

Thanks to the whole Ampleforth team, I inherit a thriving school which is growing in confidence and also in number, even with the difficulties that families are feeling because of the government-imposed VAT. I am really pleased by your support in response to this imposition and share the belief in the value of the unique education that Ampleforth offers.

In our first assembly this term, I spoke about the huge variety of opportunities on offer at Ampleforth. So many of our students take full advantage of this and my hope is that even more will do so in 2025 and beyond. I asked them to be bold and to try new things – please do ask them how they are getting on with this and encourage them.

My promotion to Headmaster has necessitated some staff changes. In the last College newsletter of 2024, we announced the excellent news that Matthew Glendon-Doyle will be joining us as Deputy Head Pastoral and Safeguarding in September 2025, following eleven years at Radley College. To cover the next two terms, Gabrielle Foster, Ceri Dent and Oliver Beveridge will be sharing the duties of leading pastoral care while Miriam Cook becomes Deputy Head Safeguarding and Designated Safeguarding Lead.

We have some other interim roles for the rest of this academic year: Piers Butler is Head of Year 9 and Jeremy Mitson Head of Year 10. Hugh Ainscough is Head of Christian Theology, with Gaelle McGovern, who many parents will remember as a former Housemistress and member of SLT, returning to Ampleforth as Head of Christian Theology from September 2025. Lee Carbutt is Head of Academic PE.

You may be aware that we have been refurbishing the former St Thomas' House so it can be used to receive visiting prep schools, alumni, families and other school guests. Sebastian Phillips has taken on this exciting new venture as the Housemaster of Becket House (as St Thomas' has been renamed). Mike Slingsby has become Head of Junior House and has moved into St Edward's and St Wilfrid's with his wife Robyn. They are lucky to be joined by a new Gap student, Ella Handke, who has arrived from Australia.

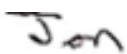
To support extra need in Science, we have appointed Stephanie Gilpin in Chemistry on a temporary basis. Stephanie is multi-talented and is also teaching Christian Theology. Steven Banks joins us as a part-time Classicist to cover the gaps left by Peter Roberts and me before our permanent replacement, William Bunce, joins us from Blundell's school in April.

We are delighted to see Phoebe Smith Andrew back after her maternity leave and welcome Philip Wilkinson who will be sharing the DT Instructor Technician role with Phoebe.

I wanted to let you know that we have made some changes to prep and to mobile phone access in the Middle School. To enable more opportunity for socialising between Houses for Years 9 and 10, reading time and prep have been moved back by half an hour to start at 19.00, in line with all Senior year groups. For students in Years 9-11, we have moved the hand-in of mobile phones to earlier in the evening to encourage better bedtime routines and healthier sleep habits. These students will have access to their mobile phones between 17.00-19.00. For Year 10, this is a reduction in the time they have access to their phones. For Year 9, although this looks like an increase in mobile phone time, in reality, these students are regularly in activities between 17.00-18.00 and have supper between 18.00-18.30. This means they are busy and in places where use of mobile phones is prohibited for much of this time.

I am looking forward to welcoming Year 10 parents to the valley this weekend to hear how their children are progressing and hope to see many more of you in the Valley over the course of the year. I always enjoy hearing from parents so please do be in touch.

Best wishes



**Jon Mutton**  
**Headmaster**  
**Ampleforth College**