



*Editor Ms G Adamou*

# AVS Newsletter December 2023



# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE



## **Gratitude and Reflection: Celebrating a Wonderful First Term Together**

Dear Avon Valley Community,

**A Heartfelt Thank You:** As we approach the end of my first full term as Headteacher, I find myself filled with gratitude for the warm welcome and overwhelming support I have received from both parents, students, and our dedicated staff.

**Celebrating Student Achievements:** I am delighted to commend our hardworking students for their dedication and commitment to their studies during this term. The effort, curiosity, and kindness have not gone unnoticed. The achievements, both academically and in demonstrating kindness towards one another, are a testament to the outstanding character of our student body. It was great to be able to award so many certificates and badges in our recent Gold Book assemblies.

**A Season of Giving:** I am proud to share that our school community has once again demonstrated its generosity by supporting our local food bank charity. The donations from both parents, students, and our staff will undoubtedly make a significant impact on those in need within our community. It warms my heart to see our school embody the spirit of giving during this festive season.

**Thanks to Our Dedicated Staff:** To our incredible teaching and administrative staff, thank you for your unwavering dedication and hard work. Your commitment to providing an exceptional learning environment is truly commendable. Your passion and expertise contribute significantly to the success of our students and the overall positive atmosphere at Avon Valley.

**Wishing You a Restful Christmas Period:** As we approach the Christmas break, I want to wish each and every one of you a restful and joyful holiday season. Take this time to unwind, cherish moments with loved ones, and create memories.

**A New Year of Possibilities:** Looking ahead, I am filled with optimism for the opportunities and achievements that the upcoming year holds for us. Together, as a community, we will continue to foster an environment of learning, growth, and kindness. Let us approach the New Year with enthusiasm, resilience, and a shared commitment to making Avon Valley School an even better place for our students.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt thanks once again for your support to Avon Valley School, and I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

***Mr Blake Francis***  
***Headteacher***



# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

## Student Leadership News

It's been a busy term for our student leaders in school. Since our return in September, Tutor reps have been feeding back to our Senior Student Leaders in school by discussing key themes and listening to our students' concerns. Our head boy and girl, deputies and events captain have attended extended senior leadership meetings to address the points raised by students.

We have reintroduced the bells, listened to feedback regarding our one way systems and are working on a project that will reduce the queues at lunch times. Our senior student leaders have really presented themselves well in these meetings.

Year 8 transition buddies have been supporting their linked tutor group by running tutor activities. Our Year 9 Pixl Edge ambassadors have been engaging well with students in Year 8 who are completing their Pixl award.

All student leaders supported the British Royal Legion by selling poppies and raising £348.

Keep up the good work.

**Mr C Hartfield**  
**Achievement Leader Garrick House**





# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

## Forest Schools News

Students from Forest Schools have been very busy on Wednesdays and Thursdays in November and December.

They were very lucky to go to the NEC to the Motorcycle Live Show. They were able to see many different types of motorcycle engines and styles of bikes and even have a go on a super bike and compete with each other.



Students had a fun day being shown around the Sherwood Pines Fire tour. They asked some very important questions and some are thinking of pursuing this as a career.

We have visited Warwick Castle, and explored the grounds and castle. Students also visited Wellesbourne airfield where we saw a Vulcan aircraft and popped into the town to pay our respects at the memorial and see the beautiful cascade of poppies.

Students braved the freezing cold waters of Rutland water by jumping off the pontoon and swimming to their kayak. They showed good team work and ensured they did not leave anyone behind.

This month, we visited Welford Christmas tree farm where they explored the many different kinds of Christmas trees and chose one to display in our school. They followed a trail, finding the elves along the way and undertook a fun Christmas tree quiz.

Next, we headed to St Joseph's Catholic Church in Monks Kirby to do some local gardening and made a wreath and a table centre piece from natural materials for Footprints the charity.

Students have also been volunteering at The Christmas Cracker Café, they have learnt new skills and have really enjoyed interacting with members of the public.

*Miss J Mortimer*

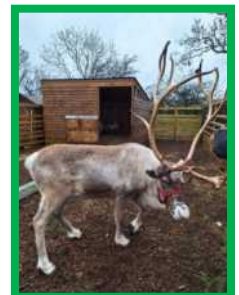
*Subject Leader of Forest Schools, DoFE*

*Teacher of Geography and PSHE*





# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE





# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

## Children In Need

On 17th November, year 11 students dressed in fancy dress in aid of Children in Need and the rest of the school dressed in non-uniform to raise money for this worthy cause.

Some very brave members of staff volunteered to be targets for the wet sponge throw. Students paid for the privilege to throw very wet and very cold sponges at their favourite staff member.

Thank you to Mr Patton, Mr Collins, Mr Jewell, Mr Challenger, Mr Francis, Mr Massey, Mr Dignum, Mr Owen and Mr Cunningham for being such good sports.

There were also activities in the sports hall for students to take part in and win prizes.

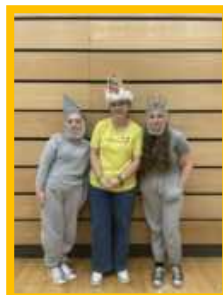
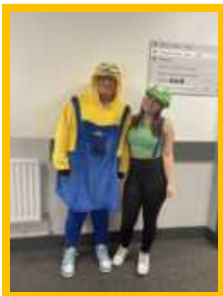
A big thank you to Mr Hartfield and our Events Captain Charlotte Amer for organising the day alongside the amazing PE department.





# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

## Children In Need





# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

## Students On-Stage at the RSC

**A Year 9 student featured in the opening night of *Cowboys*, a western with a difference which is running at the Royal Shakespeare Company's Swan Theatre.**

Phoenix House student, Robert Addi, auditioned for the role of 'Kid' in *Cowboys* and attended rehearsals three times per week in the build up to the curtain lifting on the show's opening night which was during the half-term break.

Previously, Robert featured as an actor on BBC Children in Need and had a part in the school's 2022 show, *Matilda*. Unsurprisingly he studies drama as one of his GCSE options.

*Cowboys* is a loud and proud western that's like no other. It's full of swagger but also joyous and hilarious. This tale upends gender stereotypes as it warns us all to be true to yourself.

Robert Addi, said: "It has been an amazing experience to be involved in *Cowboys*. I have learnt so much and am really enjoying being on stage with so many great actors. Performing in front of such a large audience in Stratford has been amazing."

Blake Francis, headteacher, commented, "The performing arts are the very heart of our school and we strive to give students as many opportunities as possible to learn about and be involved in the arts. It's therefore amazing to hear about Robert's success on stage at The Swan Theatre. He is a fantastic student and ambassador for the arts at AVS, who we are all very proud of I am sure he will have his name in lights again in the future."

***Mr D Phelan***

***Achievement Leader Fortune House***







# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

A huge thank you to everyone who has donated to our collection for [@RugbyFoodbank](#) we have received hundreds of items that will make a real difference to people in the local community. As always, we are really proud of our students for their tremendous generosity.



Once again at Avon Valley, staff have been supporting Norma Wilson, a Placement Support Worker, in collecting items for Christmas hampers for care leavers in Warwickshire.

Norma has been putting together hundreds of festive hampers for over 20 years. She creates the hampers for the Warwickshire Fostering Service to go to young people and asylum seekers who have recently left foster care and now live alone without family support.



For young people without families, Christmas can be a lonely and difficult time and many do not receive any gifts at all. As well as Christmas gifts, the hampers also contain essentials such as socks, gloves, mince pies, biscuits, soups, toothbrushes, and anything else that might be of use.





# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

## Leave of Absence

The Supreme Court recently reached a decision in the case of Platt v Isle of Wight Council which has clarified the law on unauthorised leave, including holidays, during term time. The parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they attend school on a regular basis. The Supreme Court has made clear that attending school 'regularly' means that the children must attend school on every day that they are required to do so. As such, the parents of any child who is absent from school without authorisation for any length of time are likely to be considered as committing an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996.

Head Teachers retain the ability to authorise leave in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. When considering such requests for a leave of absence, the school are obliged to act within the law. Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. If the leave is granted, head teachers are able to determine the number of school days a child can be absent for.

It is for the head teacher to decide what is 'exceptional' and it is at their discretion if the circumstances warrant the leave to be granted. The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the 'resident' parent.

*Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.*

Where applications for leave of absence are made in advance and refused, the child will be required to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, which may result in legal action being taken against the parent(s), by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Failure to make an application for leave in advance can also result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to the parent(s).

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service, part of Warwickshire County Council

**It is important to note**, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices in the amount of £120 each, totalling £240 for both children, this is reduced to £60 per child if paid within 21 days).

Where a Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid within the required timeframe as set out on the notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal proceedings under S444 Education Act 1996.

Fixed Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Warwickshire County Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices.

**Your child's progress academically as well as socially is our shared priority.**





# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

## Measles and the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine

There has been an increase in measles cases across the West Midlands including recent cases in Birmingham, Coventry, and Solihull. Before we reach the end of the school term, we wanted to take this opportunity to remind you of:

- the signs and symptoms of measles
- the importance of the MMR vaccine
- what action to take if you have a suspected case within your setting.



## What is measles and what are the symptoms?

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness and spreads very easily. It can cause serious complications such as blindness, pneumonia and meningitis and can be fatal. Young babies, people who have weakened immunity (are immunosuppressed) or pregnant are at higher risk of complications. Measles is a preventable disease; two doses of the measles mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine provides full protection.

## Measles symptoms to be aware of include:

- A non-itchy, blotchy red brown rash. This usually appears a few days after cold like symptoms (sometimes starts around the ears before spreading to the rest of the body). The rash can be harder to see on darker skin tones
- High temperature (fever)
- Cold like symptoms such as runny or blocked nose, coughing, sneezing
- Red, sore, watery eyes
- Small white spots appearing inside the cheeks and on the back of lips (for a few days)

Anyone who contracts measles is infectious for four days before any rash appears and for at least four days after the onset of the rash.

## What to do with a suspected case of Measles

Children or staff or who have signs or symptoms of measles should be asked to not attend school, college or nursery as measles is highly infectious. They are advised to phone their GP practice or NHS 111 for advice.

The Family Information Service (FIS) supports families across Warwickshire with information and signposting. You can get in touch with the team by emailing [fis@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:fis@warwickshire.gov.uk), calling [0800 408 1558](tel:08004081558) or finding support on [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies).





# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

In the lead up to our Remembrance activities, we asked members of our school community to share photographs of loved ones who have served. We received many photographs, which we proudly displayed in our reception area. Some of the photographs received, dated back over one hundred years. To accompany the photographs every student had the opportunity to write their own personal message of remembrance.



It was wonderful to see students and staff reading the messages, looking at the photographs, and reflecting on the service given by so many.

On Friday 10th November, we held our annual Remembrance Assembly. We were joined by two special guests, Wayne and Martin, from the [Royal British Legion Rugby No.1 Branch](#). During the assembly all of our students were able to see the RBL Standard dipped as the two-minute silence was observed.



We were also lucky enough to have a visit from some of the residents of Anya Court residential home in Rugby. They were very emotional and proud to see our young students performing for them once again. Students served the visitors tea, coffee and a slice of cake and had some engaging conversations about their experiences in the war.



A huge well done to all the students involved in the Remembrance assembly performances, and to our wonderful Performing Arts team. Also, thank you to Mrs Jesson for her creativity in making the Poppy dress mannequin and all the students who respectfully watched the performances, and those who contributed to our poppy appeal.

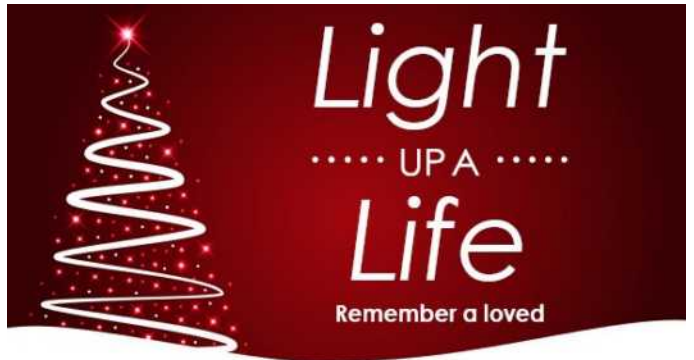




# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

On Friday 8th December Myton Hospice in Rugby held their annual 'Light up a Life' service.

Two students, Daisy Adamson 10ATI and Joel Tytler 10JDR, sang two beautiful songs, 'Wind Beneath My Wings' and 'Candle in the Wind' to remember loved ones lost. Both students sang beautifully, and brought joy and peace at this challenging time of year.



Members of the Myton support group also recited poems and the Rugby Male Voice Choir performed some beautiful carols.

**Mr J Collins**

**Subject Lead - Music**





# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

## Careers News

The week beginning Monday 6th November was Green Careers Week. A green career can be any job, role or occupation that contributes to preserving or restoring the environment and our planet.

These jobs can be in any industry, not just those immediately seen as 'green' like renewable energy, energy efficiency, green technology, such as electric cars, improving the environment or agriculture processes. **All students** have taken part in a TOTW as well as having daily videos to watch about potential green careers they may be interested in.

**Year 10 students** - In positions of leadership have had leadership interviews with Barclays and Nationwide Windows, to help prepare them for leadership interviews later in the academic year.

**Year 7-10 students** have had an assembly from Katie at Rugby Christmas Cracker. Christmas Cracker is a youth project raising awareness of issues in the developing world, with the aim of raising funds for a project in Bangalore and Kashmir. Katie was looking for volunteers to help with the running of a Café in the town centre, which is also a restaurant in the evenings. Students who apply will have a great work experience opportunity to put on their CV.

**Year 7 students** attended the Birmingham Christmas lectures recently. The topics of the lectures were:

- ◆ Smart Manufacturing: Transforming the Workshop into a Christmas Wonderland by Professor Richard Hood.
- ◆ Do Christmas trees provide us with evidence of climate change? By Jeremy Pritchard and Dr Samantha Dobbie.
- ◆ When can we move to the moon? by Leah-Nani Alconel.
- ◆ On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me...a much needed donor kidney by Jordan Parsons.
- ◆ Students had a tour of the University and found out about the myths of Old Joe.

**Mrs L Owen**  
**Careers Lead**





# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

**Year 11 students** have had their mock interviews this month. With the help of employees from Barclays Bank and Mrs Jones, students were questioned about their employability skills and had their CVs reviewed. Can I take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to Ben from Barclays for organising the event with me, and all the employees who gave up their time to help our Year 11 students. Many



students were sweating and very nervous prior to the experience, yet afterwards they were full of confidence about a future interview. Staff from Barclays reported that they would have employed some of them on the spot, their interview was so

good. Some year 10 students were also given an opportunity to have an interview in preparation for their future leadership interviews in the summer of 2024. Nationwide Windows were able to provide a mock interview to those who missed out on this experience.

Mr Ogali has now moved on to a new careers advisor job closer to home. He was a fantastic addition to the careers team and will be missed. Mrs Demaj has now taken on the role of careers advisor and WEX coordinator. She can be contacted at [ndemaj@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:ndemaj@avonvalleyschool.uk).

## AVS Work Experience (WEX)

This year WEX is from Monday 1st to Friday 5th July. It is the responsibility of students to find a placement. To assist them with this challenge, they have now written a letter to send to local employers. Once a placement has been agreed in principle, the name of the company and contact details are to be passed to Mrs Demaj who will then carry out the Safeguarding and Health & Safety checks before confirming the placement. All WEX enquiries should be directed to Mrs Owen at [lowen@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:lowen@avonvalleyschool.uk).

If you would like to take part in the AVS careers programme by giving a virtual talk, offering a work experience placement or would like to get further information about post 16 destinations / applications, please don't hesitate to contact Mrs. Owen ([lowen@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:lowen@avonvalleyschool.uk)), or look at the information available on the school website: <https://avonvalleyschool.uk/>. Careers can be found in the School Life tab.





# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

## Year 11 - Design & Technology students

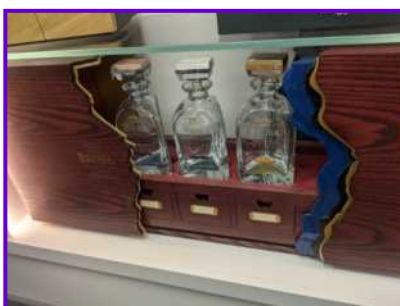
Do you think you could be one of the best bespoke furniture designers or makers? NEJ Stevenson have supported AVS students this year through work experience and also offers apprenticeships to the most suitable applicants. You can find more information about this by visiting [www.nejstevenson.co.uk](http://www.nejstevenson.co.uk) and clicking into job openings.

This half term Design and Technology students visited NEJ Stephenson to experience their workshop and in house production. NEJ Stevenson specialise in only the finest custom made bespoke furniture and their fitted interiors can be found around the world in elegant homes, executive suites and royal palaces.

The owner Neil Stevenson had stated that "if you're going to do something it has to be the best - "You have to be the best". Taking Design and Technology students on the visit really gave them a taste of industry experience, quality and what they can really achieve through hard work and dedication. The understanding of Design and Technology sunk in just that little bit more with the students during the visit because it helped them to understand that Design and Technology has so many pathways into different creative industries and more.

**Ms S Simon**

**Teacher of Design and Technology**







# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

On 29th November the AVS U14 football squad played against Arnold Lodge School from Leamington. It was such a thrilling match with Connor D scoring 3, Kallum M 2, Logan W 2, Tony N 2, Jordan T 2 and Shay R 1 goals, ending in a massive win of 12-0. We are through to the next round of the country cup.

The cup run for Avon Valley continued as this time, the U16 team played Princethorpe at Kilsby Lane. Thank you to Rugby Borough FC for their hospitality. The boys went on to win 4-2, after being behind twice. Goals came from Kofi O, Jacob S, OG and a goal from Yr 10 striker Henry.

Well done to both squads, we are very proud of your attitude and team ethic. We look forward to going on a cup run after Christmas.

*Mr C Hartfield*

*Achievement Leader - Garrick House*





# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE





# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

On Thursday 21st December our year 10 & 11 GCSE Music students attended a concert given by the world renowned City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra showcasing the most popular and famous Christmas film music.

As part of the GCSE syllabus students are required to study music for film and this festive concert provided an ideal opportunity for them to see and hear a top class orchestra perform live.

Students and staff came away feeling very festive, all students behaved exemplary, well done all.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

*Mr J Collins*

*Head of Music*





## Creative Writing Club

Students from the creative writing club have been busy writing these fantastic stories.

*Miss G Stanley - Teacher of English*

### An Unnoticed Forest

It is mid-winter, everything has a layer of snow, and the trees now reveal ugly knots, previously hidden by leaves. At least the birds have left us to farm on our own. Mostly.

The soil has completely frozen over. My skills might not be as practised as Crow but, I don't think you can grow crops like this. I look over to see him rest limply against a broken post; some birds have landed on him again.

I am going to head into the forest; there is nothing I can do here! At this he turns to face me, he has an unusual expression. Had he not seen the forest before now, it surrounds the lot so he must have. Maybe he had just never left the field.

Slowly reaching his arm out, I take his hand. Guess he is tagging along.

The fence is low and rotten, not difficult to pass. However, it is as if the trees will not let us through. Branches curl into the worn path at unnatural angles. It's slow progress through the thick woodlands lining our farm, at last it appears to spread out more evenly and a clear path forms.

It's slow progress but we stroll side by side through the thinning forest. Looking back, I can see the birds' greedy eyes staring us down as we walk. The trees open into a clearing with a small hill. All that stands is a giant tree.

The branches appear to have been blown up, the base slashed whilst the rest had been shot; a rope hangs on a branch barely clinging on. I hate trees, they all appear to mock me. I want to leave, to turn back to the farm, or punch it. Instead I just watch the branches crack and sway in the wind. Crow moves to the birds, giving in to all their stares. I hate it here, Where even is here!

I want to leave.

*Written by R.K Year 9*

### The December Christmas Frights

I will never forget what happened: Mum, Dad, Sissy, Bro. I watch their graves as I cry, blood spilling from my eyes.

Mum was making Christmas pudding, dad was shouting at the TV again, his football team was losing to my mum's. It was hard to just simply read.

The tornado siren went off. I was scared by the deafening scream of the siren. I was praying faster than my mum was cooking food and then next to my dad was my sister crying with my mum.

Then mum was gone. My family was picked up and squished like a bug.

*Written by K.H Year 9*





## Creative Writing Club

### Aurora Borealis

I wander through the snowy underbrush, over old, rotten logs and under branches for hours until I reach the entrance to a little wooden village. It's a nice place, I'd hate to be the one to tell them it's their last day on this planet but I need to get in.

I struggle to scale the wooden barrier then I jump down, dashing into a small crowd of people with my cape's hood up to avoid anyone spotting me. I need to find someone to watch the stars tonight, before I disappear.

I stroll through the streets for a while and then a young girl who looks around my age catches my eye. She is next to a small bakery, in which you can smell the delicious sweet treats sold half a street away. I walk slightly closer, my glasses should be able to search - ah, there it is. Gia, born in 1939 in late June, to a family of poverty, which makes her 14, wonderful! I walk gleefully past her and into the bakery.

It has a bright and cosy atmosphere for where it's placed, the walls seem to be more expensive wood than the others. Tables line the walls and the line is short, so I walk up and ask for the cheapest item and pay a shilling for a small slice of cake and walk out, to where Gia stands. She turns to me in confusion and I get a better look at her, wearing her dirty and torn summer dress with no shoes, her hair in a tangled mess.

"Who are you?" she says in a curious tone, so I reply by holding out the cake slice for her take. Gia greedily takes it and eats it as fast as humanly possible.

After she's done eating, which isn't long, I gesture at her to follow me and she responds with a shy, "okay," and we start walking.

I hold her hand as we wander through the streets and I speak up, "We could go walking, maybe Christmas shopping? Wait; let's do something a bit more exciting. Let us find flowers near the windmill. Are you okay with that?"

She responds with a small hum of approval, so I lead her to the snow-covered windmill by a cliffside. We sit there for hours, happily chatting and making flower crowns.

Before we even realised, it had turned night and I led her to sit at the edge of the cliff. I whisper to her, "It's okay, as long as we believe. Well, as if anything could go wrong on Christmas Eve. Either way, I'm glad you're here so that I can show you this before I disappear". I stand up, facing the Aurora Borealis and whistling, alerting them of my presence. I grasp her hand, pulling her to stand and watch the lights with me.

Moments later, a comet descends down into the valley below, and another one hits the village behind us. Wind chimes, chime with the screams on this beautiful winter night.

I always mess things up, don't I?

I just had to share this with someone.

**Written by I.L Year 9**





# THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE



Merry Christmas &  
Happy New Year  
from all the staff at  
AVS

## Upcoming Events

### 22nd Dec

Break up at 12.35

### 8th Jan 2024

Teacher Training Day

### 9th Jan 2024

All students back to school

### 5th - 9th Feb

National Apprenticeship Week

### 12th - 16th Feb

Half Term

