

St. George's School Newsletter

Friday 6th December 2024



From the Head

We are in a busy season of mock exams at St. George's, so I want to take a moment to reflect on the vital role that testing plays in the learning process. This week, our Year 11 pupils are tackling their mock GCSE exams, while A-Level Art students have been fully immersed in their mock portfolios. During lunch earlier this week, a group of Year 8 pupils shared with me that they, too, are preparing for several end-of-topic tests. It's clear that the experience of testing is a key part of school life for pupils across all year groups.

But why do we place such importance on testing? Most obviously, mock exams and topic tests simulate the conditions and routines of high-stakes assessments, pupils are able to get used to the feeling of adrenaline and the stress, but their value goes far deeper. Research into **the testing effect** has shown that the process of being tested significantly strengthens our ability to retain information and apply knowledge. When pupils are required to recall what they have learned, they reinforce the neural connections in their brains. This effortful retrieval makes skills and knowledge more durable, ensuring they are remembered and used more effectively in the future.

Testing also helps pupils identify gaps in their understanding, allowing them to target these areas and grow in confidence. Rather than being viewed as a one-off measure of performance, tests should be seen as a powerful tool for learning. That's why lots of teachers at St George's carry out "no stakes" testing at the start of lessons.

We know that preparing for tests can sometimes feel overwhelming, which is why your support at home is so crucial. Encouraging your child to plan ahead, revise thoroughly and incorporate testing into their preparation—whether through flashcards, quizzes, or family-led question sessions—can make a real difference. Tests are not just a hurdle to overcome; they are an integral part of the learning journey.

As we continue to prepare pupils for future success, your backing when a test is approaching is invaluable. Together, we can help every child make the most of this vital element of education.

If you want to learn more about the testing effect, [here is a short article from Inner Drive](#).

Happy 25th birthday to the Tech Block!

On November 25th, the Technology Department proudly celebrated 25 incredible years since the building first opened its doors! Did you know? Before we moved into our current space, the department was scattered across the school, including where the Art Department now stands and in various other rooms.

Our school's passion for teaching Technology runs deep, with a dedicated technology room existing as far back as the 1950s and 60s—tucked behind School House and Maths. This celebration isn't just about the building; it's about honouring a rich legacy of creativity, innovation, and hands-on learning that's been inspiring students for decades!



The pictures below are from 1991 where students had separate rooms for designing and making. This was a hugely limiting factor for a subject moving forward in those times.



The block was built with a clear vision: to transform the school's facilities, paving the way for a modern, innovative future for the subject. It aimed to inspire students with cutting-edge design challenges while equipping them with state-of-the-art computers and CNC technology. The grand opening of the Burgin Technology Centre (as it's officially known) took place on November 25th, 1999. To mark this special occasion, none other than Trevor Baylis, the ingenious inventor of the wind-up radio, joined us to inaugurate the centre, setting the stage for a bright, creative future.

The department remains incredibly grateful for the foundation laid back in 1999, with much of the original equipment still in use today. Over the years, we've been fortunate to continue investing in our facilities,

thanks to funds awarded for teacher training support, as well as the generosity of Cecil Grant and the PSA. We were honoured to celebrate our 25th anniversary with staff past and present, including Norman Hoare, Chris Clarke, and Jason Honey, whose contributions have left a lasting legacy.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the parents of our school community. Your unwavering support—whether helping your children purchase food ingredients, assisting with coursework, or simply encouraging their efforts—has been invaluable to the department's success.

If you're curious to see what we've been working on lately, we'd love for you to follow the department on Instagram. Thank you for being part of our journey!



Scott Tweeddale (Head of Technology)



Christmas Dinner: Have you paid by ParentPay yet?

Christmas Dinner and for the whole school Christmas is on 18th December. The catering team does an amazing Christmas dinner; staff get dressed up to help serve and there is Christmas music playing. It really is a special event.

If you would like your young person to participate, please can you pay £5.00 via ParentPay. This will be the only lunch option on this day. Thanks.

British Film Institute French Film Study Day – Friday 22 November

Our year 13 French students (accompanied by Mrs Kelly and Mrs Mehta) travelled to London's South Bank for a French film study day and screening of "La Haine". The day started with a lecture in French explaining and comparing film techniques used by different directors from *La Nouvelle Vague* up to more modern well-known films such as "Amélie" - all in French so plenty of opportunities to absorb key vocabulary which can be recycled in A' Level essays!

We then enjoyed a screening of the iconic 1995 film "La Haine" with a new appreciation of the cinematic techniques and how they draw in the rich history of French cinema from the 1950s onwards.

Overall, a great day organised by the BFI education, and we hope to be back again next year with another group of St George's students.



News from PE Department

Netball

This week our seniors took on SJL in a senior league game. It was a close game that ebbed and flowed with players from year 11, 12 and 13 playing! SJL ended up coming out on top 38-36 but it was a competitive game throughout!

On Thursday, we took 8 enthusiastic Year 7 netball players to an aspiring netball festival hosted by Oakland College. This exciting event was led by a team of skilled Saracens Mavericks and International netball players. The girls had the opportunity to participate in various activities and games designed to enhance their netball skills and boost their confidence. The festival provided a fantastic platform for the young players to learn from experienced professionals and have fun with their peers. The girls thoroughly enjoyed the experience and returned to school with newfound enthusiasm for the sport. It was also fantastic to see one of our very own Old Georgians Alex Depilini, who is currently playing International Netball for Gibraltar.

Badminton

We currently have four boys playing in the county round of the competition at the Hertfordshire Sports village as they battle for a place in the regional finals. We wish them good luck.

Lacrosse

The Senior 1st X played in the South Schools competition yesterday where we had huge success getting to the semi-finals of the plate competition.

Fixtures This Weekend

Big weekend of fixtures with Rugby playing Roundwood Park and Lacrosse playing away at Claremount. If any fixtures are cancelled please keep an eye on Edulink and PE department social media pages. Instagram - @stgeorgeslax & @_stgeorgesrugby



Books, books & more books!

Good news travels fast – the long-awaited Year 7 Bookbuzz books have finally arrived. It felt like Christmas had come early this week as our lovely Year 7 students in 7A, 7D & 7E received their books during their English library lessons (7B, 7C & 7F will receive their books next week). The Cecil Grant Trust Fund (CGTF) very generously funded this reading programme which focuses on 'choice' (Year 7 had 16 books to choose from), which the National Literacy Trust promotes as a key factor in supporting students' motivation to read and also their reading engagement. We hope that these books will inspire and encourage Year 7 to enjoy reading for pleasure. For those students who had difficulty choosing which book they wanted, the other 15 books will be available to loan from the school library. We would be very interested to hear what Year 7 think about their book choice, so please pop into the library and let us know.



Safeguarding: Online tutoring

How you can keep your child safe whilst they are participating in online tutoring or another similar activity:

Choose Reputable Platforms: Ensure the tutoring platform is reputable and has strong safety and privacy measures in place. Check reviews and ratings from other parents and students.

Verify Tutors: Verify the qualifications and background of the tutors. Many platforms offer this information, but it's always good to double-check.

Supervise Sessions: Keep the computer in a common area where you can occasionally monitor the sessions without being intrusive. This helps ensure the tutoring environment remains professional. Avoid having online sessions in your child's bedroom and ensure that they are appropriately dressed.

Set Up Parental Controls: Use parental control software to monitor your child's online activity. This can help you keep track of what they are accessing and ensure it's appropriate.

Discuss Online Safety: Have an open conversation with your child about the importance of not sharing personal information, such as their full name, address, or phone number, during online sessions.

Use Strong Passwords: Ensure all accounts related to online tutoring have strong, unique passwords. Encourage your child to use passwords that are hard to guess.

Update Software Regularly: Keep your computer's operating system, antivirus, and other software up-to-date to protect against malware and other online threats.

Encourage Breaks: Remind your child to take regular breaks to avoid screen fatigue and to keep them focused during sessions.

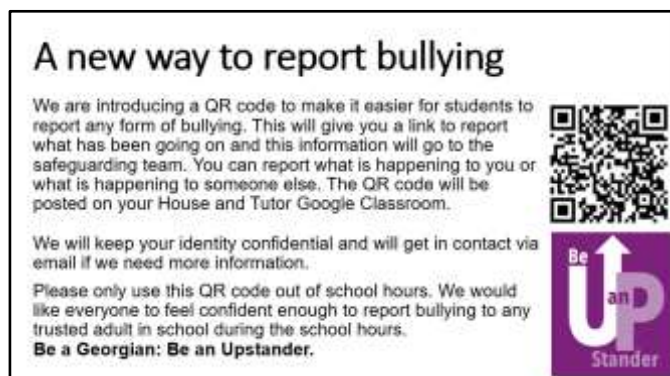
Review Session History: Many online tutoring platforms provide session histories. Review these to see what was covered and to ensure everything is appropriate.

Open Communication: Maintain open lines of communication with your child. Encourage them to share any concerns or uncomfortable experiences they might have during their online tutoring sessions.

Following these tips can help create a safer and more productive online learning environment for your child.

A new way to report bullying

This week, we have launched the new reporting bullying QR code to encourage students to report for themselves or for others. Our preferred method of reporting any concerns would always be face-to-face with a trusted adult but we know for some children, this will be challenging. Students in years 7 to 11 should not use their phone during the school day so this is an after school hours reporting mechanism. Going forwards, the QR code will feature in the students' handbooks.



'Tis the season to 'get merry'?

Thank you again to the many families who so generously contributed to the PSA Christmas Fair. As you can imagine, there are very few occasions when students are permitted to bring alcohol into school! Another such occasion may arise soon as some students choose to bring in Christmas gifts for staff. While gifts are absolutely not expected, they are always very much appreciated.

If your young person is bringing alcohol as a gift, please ensure they understand the importance of handing it directly to a staff member upon arrival. Their House office is the best place to drop it off, but the Goddard Reception team will also be happy to assist.

Thank you for your support and understanding!

Year Nines : L'arbre et la graine (The tree and the seed) Benoît Marchon.

Mlle Mallon writes:

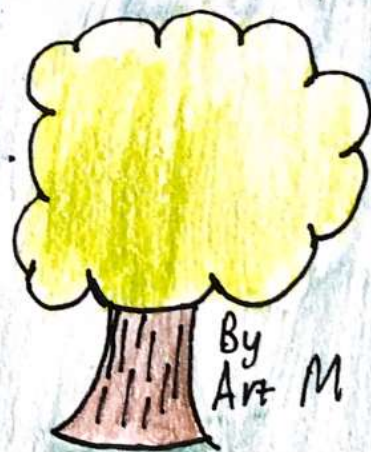
Year 9 students of French dedicated such creativity and reflection to a recent Prep, that they earned themselves not only a prize, but much admiration from peers and teachers alike. In classes 9R for La Toussaint (All Saints' Day) and 9T for Remembrance Day, we discussed a poem in French on the theme of Life and Death. For the latter, students drew upon their knowledge of War Poetry (Wilfrid Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, among others). Students were then tasked with writing the first three lines of a poem, in French, on this theme or another of their choice.

Nine poems, some illustrated, some not, were outstanding among the very high standard of work Year 9 produced. All poems are displayed on a dedicated noticeboard in Gr112.

Well done to Art Mk, overall winner, Theo W (second place) and joint third Teddy P and Sam G. Honourable mentions to Maria B, Emily W, Peter A, Katherine Y, Tim Cu and Jonathan C. Bonne continuation à tous.

L'arbre et la Graine : Échos de l'Espoir

Dans le siffle du vent, les histoires s'éveillent,
Les branches dansent doucement, sous l'ombre vermeille.
Un arbre se dresse, fort, sage et silencieux,
Ses feuilles murmurent aux cœurs luniers.
Une graine, enjoeie, porte un monde en son sein,
Prête à s'élancer, vers le ciel, un chemin.



News from the Rev

This Sunday is our first Carol service of the season. Junior Carols are 5.00 p.m. on Sunday and feature our year 7 and 8 pupils. Doors open at 4.30 p.m. for a 5.00 p.m. start. We encourage lower school students to attend this service.

Saturday 14th is our OG service at 3.00 p.m. where we will follow a Nine Lessons in carol format, followed by tea/coffee and mince pies. This service is open to all pupils past and present.

Sunday 15th is our Nine lessons in carols at 5.00 p.m. and 7.00 p.m. featuring our senior choir, chamber choir and musicians. All are welcome to join us for a special candle lit service.

Hope to see you at one of these services.

Introduction of No Right Turn exiting from Goddard coach bay

So that we can safely protect our students and improve school drop off and pick up for all, we have introduced a no right turn into Sun Lane from the Goddard coach bay exit. This will apply on school days between 8.00 to 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 to 4.00 p.m. We hope this will aid traffic flow and help with the congestion of cars turning right from Sun Lane into the coach bay entrance. As a reminder, the Aim Higher entrance off Carlton Road must not be used either before or after the school day.

Due to the layout of roads around our school site, which we cannot change, traffic will always be very busy at the beginning and end of the school day. Although we currently do allow parents and carers to drop off students at the Goddard coach bay before school, given the busyness of the roads and to help avoid any accidents, please do consider dropping off further away from the school entrance. This encourages independence and can help with our young people's physical health and wellbeing. Parents and carers are not allowed to use the Goddard coach bay straight after school. If there is a reason why your child needs to be picked up from the coach bay then please contact your Head of House so that we can issue you with a pass to show to staff supervising this area.



Thank you for abiding by these rules, which are there for everyone's safety and to help the school day run as effectively as it can for all, and for continuing to respect our staff who are there to protect and care for all our young people.

Computing Challenge Success

Mrs Sweeney, Maths and Computing Teacher, writes: The Computing Department once again entered all year 7, 8 and 9 students along with the GCSE and A-Level computer science classes into the BEBRAS computing challenge. The competition is organised in over 80 countries with over 3 million students taking part and is designed to get students all over the world excited about computing.



A total of 620 St George's students took part, with many achieving a certificate of Merit or Distinction. 90 students achieved in the top 10% nationally and were awarded a Gold certificate. These students will now be invited to take part in the invitation-only follow-on challenge which will take place in March.

Do please congratulate your young person if they come home clutching a certificate; this is a huge achievement and we are really proud of all who took part.

Careers News

It has been great to see so many careers and destination displays around school following our focussed staff training earlier this year.

This half term we have also welcomed an OG who works at Clifford Chance who gave a lunchtime Careers Talk to students in Year 10-13.

We have also updated our Careers Programme Overview which is available to see on the school website or through the link: [952D4A4E1764D03F89B47295B847767A.pdf](https://www.stgeorges-school.co.uk/952D4A4E1764D03F89B47295B847767A.pdf)



NOTICES

Support for Parents: Protective Behaviour Courses

We are pleased to provide details of our fully funded Protective Behaviours courses starting in January. Places are for parents and carers who may need support. There are courses for Mums, Dads and Carers with one for Dads and Male Carers who may need support. Courses are running online and in-person:



Online for Mums, Dads & Carers:

Daytime: 9.30am – 11.30am, 28 January – 25 March
[please click here for the poster...](#)

Evenings: 7.00pm – 9.00pm, 28 January – 25 March
[please click here for the poster...](#)

Online For Dads & Male Carers:

Evenings: 7.00pm – 9.00pm 30 January – 27 March
[please click here for the poster..](#)

In-person:

Hertford 21 January – 18 March 9.30am – 11.30am
[please click here for the poster...](#)

Broxbourne 24 January – 26 March 9.30am – 11.30am
[please click here for the poster...](#)

*To book a place on this course, please Tel: 01992 303331 Option 5

This evidence-based course can help parents and carers to:

Understand what may be influencing their child's behaviour

Understand how feelings, thoughts and behaviour link together

Respond to a range of feelings e.g. anger, frustration, anxiety, stress and worry

Improve communication to build better relationships

Build on their own and their child's strengths

Learn strategies to help them and their family feel safe

For all enquiries, and to reserve a place, please email enquiries@familiesfeelingsafe.co.uk or Tel 07850 518216

www.familiesfeelingsafe.co.uk

HOP Into Apprenticeships & T Levels

The Hertfordshire Virtual Careers Fair for parents and carers

Wednesday 29th January 2025

17:30 - 19:00

Online (via Zoom)

What is the Virtual Careers Fair?

Taking place on Wednesday 29th January from 17:30 - 19:00, this free of charge event is designed specifically for parents/carers and students who would like to explore the apprenticeship and T Level options available.

Who should attend?

This event is for all parents and carers but will be particularly useful for those supporting children in year groups 10, 11, 12 and 13. Students in these age groups are also welcome to attend.

Why attend?

This event offers many benefits, including:

- Free of charge to attend (fully-funded by Hertfordshire Careers Hub).
- Meet local training providers and colleges to hear about their apprenticeships and T Level programmes.
- Hear from employers about local vacancies available for talented young people seeking their next steps.
- Ask questions and gather information from the comfort of your own home.
- Discover more about the skills and training provision being offered within Hertfordshire.



- 1 Register for your free ticket by [clicking here](#).
- 2 Once registered, you will receive information to help you prepare for the event.
- 3 Please have access to the Zoom app before the event.
- 4 Log on and join the event online on Wednesday 29th January 2025 17:30 - 19:00

BOOK NOW ➔

Further information

Find out about the event by visiting:

<https://www.hopinto.co.uk/events/hop-into-apprenticeships-t-levels-the-hertfordshire-virtual-careers-fair-for-parents-and-carers/>

SCAN ME



The Hertfordshire Virtual Careers Fair is brought to you in partnership by: