

St. George's School Newsletter

Friday 7th February 2025



From the Head

This week, we have marked **Mental Health Week** at St. George's, and I want to take a moment to reflect on what an important topic this is for our community. Firstly, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Mrs Kirsten Robertson and the Mental Health Team for organising all that has taken place this week. The activities and discussions served as an important reminder of the role we all play in fostering a culture that values mental health and well-being—not just during this week, but throughout the year, for our children and for ourselves.



Good mental health is a foundation for so many aspects of life. It enables our young people to embrace challenges, build meaningful relationships, and develop a strong sense of self. When individuals are supported to grow in confidence and self-awareness, they can realise their potential and thrive. As a school community, we work in partnership with you to create a whole environment where this growth can flourish.

I saw this partnership and its results vividly during the **School Captain interviews** which also took place this week. The final eight candidates were truly remarkable young people, demonstrating a level of self-awareness and maturity that would impress on *any* interview panel. They spoke with confidence about their strengths and areas for growth, showing introspection and emotional intelligence that is not often found in adults, let alone teenagers.

What moved me even more deeply was that five of the eight candidates chose to speak about how their faith plays a crucial role in shaping their identity. Their openness and the value they place on their faith as a guiding principle was inspiring. It was a reminder of how important personal faith can be in shaping a young person's identity and guiding them to become thoughtful, confident individuals.

Being part of this process was a privilege. The final eight candidates exemplified the qualities we strive to instil at St. George's—self-awareness, maturity, and a sense of purpose.

Thank you for your continued partnership in helping our students grow into their best selves.

Announcement of Our New School Captains

I am very proud to announce that the following Year 12 students have been appointed as our School Captains:

Phoebe N-D

Honrick C

Toby M

Zoe B

The calibre of all the students who made it to the interview process was exceptional. Each of them impressed us with their commitment, leadership skills, and passion for the school. It is fair to say that any one of them could have been appointed, which made the final decision incredibly difficult.

Our School Captains play a vital role in the life of St. George's. They work closely with senior staff, acting as a conduit for pupil voice and representing the school both internally and externally.

To ensure a smooth transition, the newly appointed School Captains will spend the next few months shadowing our current School Captains, learning from their experience and preparing for their new responsibilities.

We will also have the opportunity to express our gratitude to our current School Captains in a few weeks' time when they officially hand over to the next cohort. For now, congratulations to Zoe, Phoebe, Toby and Honrick!



Our new School Captains on the right, with the outgoing team on the left

Keep the Christmas Ball Sparkling – a request from the Head for your help!



We are so proud of the fantastic partnership between the School and the PSA, and the Christmas Ball is a shining example of what we can achieve together. This year's Ball raised an incredible **£17,000**, all of which directly benefits our students.

However, with the current team stepping down, we need new volunteers to step forward to ensure this much-loved event continues. If you've ever attended the Ball, you'll know what a memorable and enjoyable evening it is.

Are you someone who loves event planning or has a flair for creative ideas? The outgoing team is ready to offer their guidance, ensuring you'll have plenty of support to make this year's Ball another huge success.

Key arrangements, such as booking entertainment, need to be made soon, so they'd love to hear from you if you'd like to be involved. Taking on this rewarding role is a wonderful way to contribute to our school community and help keep one of our biggest fundraisers thriving.

The PSA would be delighted to hear from you - **please email psa@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk** – let's keep the Christmas Ball a highlight of the year!

Warning: Skullet Incoming

We are all excited to see Mr Tookey's fashion-forward new hair style next week... That's right, the skullet is on! It's not too late to donate via the [JustGiving page](#). All the money raised is going to the charity Mind in Mid Herts who are joining us in school for the transformation on Monday.



Tickets have been selling fast so if your young person wants to watch the ~~humiliation~~ haircut live, they need to bring in £2 cash and get a ticket from their house office.

Mr Tookey is incredibly grateful that The Alternative Barbering Co. (8 Station Road, Harpenden) are supporting the rehabilitation of his hair style out of sympathy, kindness and charity. Please consider them next time you or your child needs a trim!

A big thanks to our Chapel Volunteers

Meet the lovely Chapel volunteer team - they do a fantastic job making our chapel beautiful with flowers and displays all the year round.

We would like to thank them for their ongoing work and all that they contribute to the heart of the school.



Sixth form applications

Students, parents and carers of year 11 are reminded that the deadline to apply to sixth form is **9.00 a.m. on Friday 14th February** [Click here for application form](#)

The application process is all online. Applicants will need to set up an Applicaa account and can save their application as they go along but must have submitted it by the deadline.

Students can speak to form tutors or subject teachers if they have any queries and for any other questions please get in touch with Mrs Beaman via 6thformadmin@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk

SEND Coffee Morning

Our spring term coffee morning is held on 12th February at 9.00 a.m. and we are pleased to be welcoming 'Elevate' who are running the session for us on 'Study Skills and Revision Techniques'. All parents of students with SEN and / or in receipt of Pupil Premium are invited and encouraged to attend. Please sign in at Goddard Reception between 8:30 a.m. and 8:55 a.m. for a prompt 9.00 a.m. start and we look forward to seeing you then.

Senior Physics Online Challenge hits gold!

All 24 of our year 12 Physicists took part in the Senior Physics Online Challenge at the end of January - this is a national physics competition taken by many of the top achieving students in the country (nearly 7,200 this year). It encourages problem solving outside the constraints of the curricula and students can develop their confidence in the subject without the high stakes of formal exams.



We achieved 4 Gold Awards (17% of our students compared to 16% in the country), 8 Silver and 11 Bronze. Congratulations to all our students but special recognition goes to Munesu M, Michael Adom A, Timothy M and Jack P for their Gold Awards.

Spanish Theatrical Production Wows students

On Monday morning this week, there was a theatrical treat for all our Spanish students who enjoyed a 50 minute Spanish play - *Primera Cita* (First Date) all in Spanish thanks to the very talented @onattiproductions.



The dialogue was pitched at just the right level and the action centred around two characters getting ready for their first date with much hilarity as they asked the audience for advice on what nail varnish and clothes to choose as well as advice on their English homework. Lots of audience participation and George and Will (both year 8) even took to the stage too - amazing!



The French play *Prendre Sa Revanche* (Taking revenge) is coming to St George's on Tuesday next week and the German production *Auf dem Campingplatz* (At the campsite) after half term. We hope these are equally enjoyable learning experiences for the students.

GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition: Fish Masterclass

Last Friday, our Year 10 GCSE Food class had a fantastic two hour Fish Masterclass with Mr Simon Gray. Pupils had the opportunity to watch exciting demonstrations making calamari and fish goujons. Students then prepared (gutting and filleting!), cooked and ate pan-fried mackerel, served on a chickpea and chorizo stew. The aim was to learn complex skills to then be able to repeat, independently in year 11, as well as encourage more positive attitudes to eating UK-sourced seafood. The experience was positively received by the whole class.

Mr Gray, has a wealth of expertise in food having joined the Royal Navy as a chef aged 16 and served for a number of years. He went on to open and run a fish restaurant, and then re-trained as a food teacher. In his current role he delivers Masterclasses in Fish across the country and promotes the use of seafood to students.

St George's was invited to host the Masterclass, which is part of the The Fish in School Hero programme, funded by The Fishmongers' Company's Fisheries Charitable Trust. On Saturday 1st February, Mr Gray delivered a Masterclass to 17 Food teachers, who prepared, cooked and ate - Thai style mussels, pan-fried mackerel with chickpea and chorizo stew, followed by plaice with a creamy white wine sauce.

Many thanks to Mr Gray for imparting his knowledge and skills over these two days.



Internet Safety Day 11th February

Next week, we will be marking Internet Safety Day so we thought that we would start early by flagging up GCSE Pod that students in year 10 and 11 have access to. Not only is this a safe and assured learning platform for our youngsters but it also contains lots of free resources for our parents and carers. Please use this link: [Parent Resources - GCSEPod](#)

A Musical Treat

On Monday evening, students and parents experienced a breath-taking recital, performed by Dom and Claire Childs (saxophone and flute). We were treated to an expansive array of music, from the moving Rhapsodie by Debussy and Hamilton Harty's In Ireland Fantasy, to developments of more modern musical theatre, with a suite from West Side Story. The evening culminated with a lively flute, soprano sax and piano trio.

We also welcomed back Alison Far, who perfectly accompanied Dom and Claire with the help of Sebastian Tekell-Mellor (a year 13 A level music student) as a flawless page turner . It was a delight to listen to such extraordinary music, and the talent of all 3 musicians was immeasurable.

Freya Bromfield, Daniel Green, Nicole Mendonca year 12



Year 10 Careers Interview Morning: We need you to volunteer!

This term, we are holding a year 10 interview practice morning on the **12th of March**. This will hopefully prove to be a very useful and informative experience for our students who will gain tips, advice and feedback on their interview techniques helping to equip them for their next stages in education and employment. To prepare them for this morning, students will be working hard on their CVs and interview skills and will be applying for one of the exciting fantasy jobs on offer.



We are looking for 40 volunteers who would be able to give up their time to complete up to four practice interviews with our year 10 students in the assembly hall. We know that our parents and carers have a lot of talent and experience so don't be shy in signing up.

We will be providing job information, interview questions and examples of feedback you can give the students as well as an initial briefing with coffee and pastries.

If you are interested in taking part in this exciting and worthwhile morning, could you click the link here: [Click here](#) or use the QR Code. Alternatively, you can email directly to: careersinterviews@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk
Thank you very much.

Celebrating Children's Mental Health Week

This week at school, we have been busy talking about mental health and getting children and staff involved in a wide range of activities ranging from tutor base activities involving self-care snappers; mindfulness in the chapel and our Health Ambassadors speaking in house assemblies. Students have also been encouraged to complete our Health and Well-being Survey so we can monitor how each year group is doing and review how we can support them. Please can you check that they have completed it - we emailed the link to them.

How you can support your child's mental health (From The Sandbox)

- Be open about mental health: It's important for children to know that they can be open about their mental health and how they are feeling
- Lead by example: children learn from watching others and home is a great place to start with practicing positive mental health practices like self care and open conversation

- Set up routines: there are certain things that are known to have a positive impact on our mental health like time outside. Set up a routine when times are good so they're easier to maintain when times are tough
- Limit screen time: Social media and mental health have a tricky relationship and sometimes a break is good for everyone. Taking time away from the screen will help reset.
- Identify early: The signs that your child is struggling can come in lots of different forms including losing interest in previous hobbies, finding it hard to concentrate or missing meals
- Focused time together: find time to spend alone time together without talking about mental health so they know you are there for them when they are ready to talk
- Don't assume: the problem may be something you haven't even thought of before. Don't assume you know what is wrong or that you immediately know the answer. Take time to really listen to what your child is saying.
- Get help when needed: Mental health is a difficult thing and sometimes professional help is needed. Don't be afraid to seek support when you need it.

Getting the right support for a child in a mental health crisis

Some parents and carers have said they think that the best way to access Hertfordshire's Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS) is to go to A&E, but this is a myth. Watch this short @HPFT.NHS film clip for the facts about the best services to contact for reliable advice and help, if your child is experiencing a mental health crisis: <https://buff.ly/3VPTKxF#ChildrensMentalHealthWeek>

Mental health support for all children and young people in Hertfordshire

Always remember: it's OK to not be OK. Talking shows strength, not weakness. If you or your child need support with improving emotional wellbeing/mental health, there are lots of self-help resources and services available in Hertfordshire all year round.

Please always ask for support if you need it. Don't ever struggle alone. The services below are all free. They don't need a professional referral, so you can contact them directly.

[Emotional wellbeing information and resources to help young people in Hertfordshire](#)

In school support

Please let us know if your young person is struggling with their mental health as there is so much that we can do to support them. We have a wide range of adaptations that we can make whether it's a timeout card, a queue pass, a class buddy or some sessions with one of our mental health team.

If you are worried about your child, do get in touch as we can help. Email our Mental Health Lead, Heather Grainger: hgrainger@stgeorges.herts.ch.uk

St George's School Sailing Club Laying Up Supper and Awards

On Saturday 1st February, the St George's School Sailing Club held its annual end of season event, the 'Laying Up Supper'. This was an occasion to celebrate a successful year of sailing in 2024 and to look forward to the new season, beginning after Easter. The event, held in the Old Library, was an evening of fun and celebrations for the Sailing Club members and their families. Guests were treated to a quiz, Godfrey's fish and chips, a sailing-themed challenge and the Club's annual awards for 2024. Awards included the coveted Interhouse Regatta trophy, won by Monk House, the Commodore's Shield for Emily C, the Race Series Champion for Chris F, the Commodore's Pennant for Tim M, Best New Sailor for Edward T and Most Committed Sailor for Dan A.

The Club will be sailing again after Easter. We meet every Sunday at school at 12.00 noon, and travel to Rickmansworth Aquadrome. If anyone is interested in sailing with us, whether you have lots of sailing experience or have never ventured on the water before, you will be made very welcome. For more information see our [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2708423926110546) (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2708423926110546>) or contact andrea.gott@hotmail.co.uk



National Apprenticeship Week Parent/carers Survey

Next week (w/c 10th February) marks National Apprenticeship Week 2025. In partnership with our local Careers Hub, our school is participating in the annual Hertfordshire Parent/Carer Apprenticeships and Technical Education Pathways Survey. It doesn't matter whether you have strong views or have little knowledge of apprenticeships to be able to complete this survey. Some of you may have completed previous years' surveys – some questions have been added or slightly amended since last year.

All completed surveys are completely anonymous, and responses will be collated directly by Amazing Apprenticeships who have been commissioned to complete the survey across Hertfordshire. If we receive more than 50 responses our school will receive its own individual report which will be incredibly helpful for us in planning future careers activity for both students and parents/carers. Thank you.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/st-georges-parents-25>

Sixth Form Leadership Conference

The participants of the Leadership Foundations Course joined over 70 students from St. Columbus, Loretto, Samuel Ryder, and Nicholas Breakspear to attend a Leadership Conference led by STEP. It was a privilege to spend the day with our delightful students, connect with other schools, and take time to reflect on the qualities of good leadership—our values, skills, and unique contributions to it.



GOSH Monk House did well

On Thursday, Monk House parents and students came together for a special bake sale in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital. Thank you for the generosity of time, cake and donations. They are pleased to announce that they have raised over £340 for a fabulous cause. One staff member commented “ Amazing tuck shop at break!!! Fantastic to see the whole school come together to support such a good cause”
Thank you to everyone that helped support!



Can you help Woodend Primary School?

Their PSA are trying to raise money for their sensory garden and are hoping to do a mystery book day on World Book Day for all the children and they really need donated books suitable for children aged 7-13.

Mystery Book Day is a lot of fun for the children where they pay £1 for a wrapped book to see if they get the golden ticket. There is a winner per class and if they win they receive a £5 voucher in the celebration assembly. The children loved it last year but they were only able to offer it to ks1 as they didn't have enough books suitable for ks2. This year they are really hoping to have ks2 involved and to raise money for their new sensory interactive garden we plan to open in spring.

If you have suitable books to donate, please send them in with your child to leave at Goddard Reception and we will get them to Woodend School. Thanks.

NOTICES

Online Safety: Free Parents Events run by Cyber Protect & Choices (Prevent) Officers Hertfordshire Constabulary

Course One - Introduction to Cyber Choices and Online Risks

This session is suitable for parents/carers of children in Year 5 (age 9) and above. This is an opportunity to learn and ask questions regarding your child's online world. This session will introduce you to the Cyber Choices programme and will provide:

- An overview to parents and carers on what cybercrime is
- What the risks to young people are.
- How the Cyber Choices programme supports at-risk individuals.
- How you can refer a young person into Cyber Choice

You will also receive an overview of:

- Some of the potential risks that children and young people may experience online.
- Advice to support parents to make informed decisions and keep their children safer online.

Register here: [Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#)

Course Two - Tools and techniques to improve the cyber security of your family

This session is suitable for parents/carers of children in Year 5 (age 9) and above. This is an opportunity to learn and ask questions regarding your child's online world.

This session will:

- Provide advice on how to improve your personal cyber security.
- Help you to identify and protect your (and your children's) key accounts.
- Identify threats and techniques that cyber criminals may use to target you / your family.
- Highlight the benefits of family accounts.
- Identify parental controls on your router.
- Signposting to useful resources.

Register here: [Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#)

Drop-in Support Group

for parents and carers of neuro-diverse children in Harpenden



Join us in the Charles Hill Lounge in **Harpenden Trust Halls** above the Coop in Southdown from 1.30-3pm every 2nd Tuesday of the month

We are here for you whether you want to talk through your difficulties, meet other parents or have a chance to stop for an hour! A group for all patients registered with a Harpenden GP, supported by the PCN and Harpenden Trust and run by experienced volunteers.

Harpenden Health PCN

- ◆ Davenport House Surgery
- ◆ The Elms Medical Practice
- ◆ The Village Surgery



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