

St. George's School Newsletter

Friday 11th July 2025



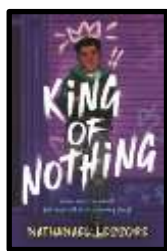
From the Head

Summer Reading Suggestions

At St George's, we are passionate about reading. Throughout the year, pupils have had countless opportunities to engage with books; independently, within their tutor groups, and across a wide range of curriculum subjects. I regularly speak with pupils about what they're reading, and it's always a pleasure to hear their recommendations and insights.

Habits of reading are caught and not taught. As adults, we must model reading to our children if we want them to see it as valuable. So I would like to offer some suggestions for reading this summer that you might like to consider. These books collectively explore the challenges of identity, resilience, and communication faced by young people today, while offering practical insights and hope to support their wellbeing and growth.

Fiction - these recommendations come from our pupil Carnegie Medal group and are books aimed at teenagers, but very readable for adults too:



King of Nothing (11+) – Nathanael Lessor

A sharp, funny, and moving coming-of-age story that explores identity, masculinity, and belonging. Set in a London secondary school, this novel speaks directly to teenage readers, particularly boys, with honesty and heart, while challenging stereotypes along the way.

Glasgow Boys (13+) – Margaret McDonald

A compelling and gritty coming-of-age novel set in Glasgow, exploring themes of friendship, loyalty, and the struggle to find one's identity amidst hardship. McDonald's vivid storytelling captures the challenges faced by young people growing up in a tough urban environment, offering both realism and hope.



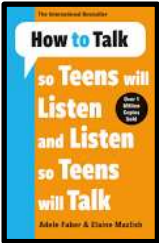
Little Bang (13+) – Kelly McCaughrain

A powerful and moving novel that delves into family, grief, and the resilience of young people facing difficult circumstances. McCaughrain's sensitive portrayal of emotional struggles offers readers a deeply human story about healing and hope.

Non Fiction - Books recommended to help with raising young people in today's world:

How to Talk So Teens Will Listen & Listen So Teens Will Talk – Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

A practical, empathetic guide to communicating with adolescents. Part of a wider series, this book offers specific, actionable strategies that help build trust, defuse conflict, and support your child’s autonomy, all rooted in deep respect for the teenage experience.

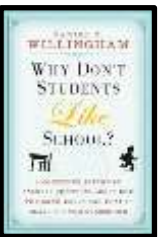
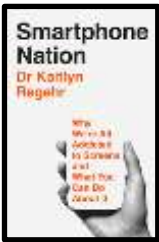


Quiet Power – Susan Cain

For those seeking to advise quieter children, this is a thoughtful exploration of how more introverted people can thrive in a world that often celebrates the loudest voices. Cain offers reassurance, practical advice, and a powerful re-framing of quietness as a strength.

Smartphone Nation: Why We're All Addicted to Screens and What You Can Do About It – Dr Kaitlyn Regehr

A new book this year, exploring how smartphones shape our attention, relationships, and wellbeing. Drawing on research and with practical advice, Dr Regehr offers all of us ways to break the cycle of screen dependency and assess our digital habits. Great for adults as well as teens!



Why Don't Students Like School? – Daniel T. Willingham

A detailed, yet accessible, exploration of how cognitive science can help us understand our teenagers better. Willingham’s key message is that understanding how the brain works helps us become more effective, and more empathetic, parents and teachers.

Ultimately, it matters less *what* we are reading, and more that we are reading. I hope you and your family find time to enjoy reading together over the summer holiday when it comes!

Activities Week! Opportunity to say thanks!

Last week provided a wonderful opportunity for our students to engage in new activities and trips, enriching their learning beyond the classroom. You can find reports about what took place last week below.

The week in numbers:

- 94% of students reported having an outstanding or really good experience in our student survey
- 18 different trips and activities were planned, coordinated, and led
- 546 students participated in residential trips, staying away from home
- 762 medical forms were completed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils on trips and activities
- Nearly 2,000 miles were travelled in total
- 18 coaches were used to transport students and staff
- 42 members of staff spent nights away from their families to support these events

The top 4 things your children said they loved the most:

1. Spending time with their friends
2. The range of activities from coasteering to raft building, to the festival of sport and trips to Ironbridge and Whipsnade

3. The historical education, culture experiences in the markets and the creativity on the inspector calls and creative days
4. Meeting new people and bonding as a year group - isn't this wonderful to hear! This is why we put in all the effort to plan this week!

Their top improvements will probably come as no surprise...

1. Food - more variety and more snacks!
2. More free time (there are obvious reasons why we provide supervision around the clock!)
3. A handful of students commented on wanting 'better bedding quality'

Interestingly, only 1 student out of 300 suggested taking their phone on the residential trip would have improved their experience. We believe this shows how pupils really appreciate the break from tech and being able to connect with each other. In fact, we didn't have any phones on any trips (as is our policy) and it was wonderful.

Activities week takes place alongside our busy school calendar of trips, visits, inter-house & co-curricular activities. Providing this for pupils takes a *huge* amount of staff time. We'd love to collate your thanks and any feedback for the staff that have given their all this academic year to enriching the lives of our pupils. Please send us your comments here: [Thanks & Feedback](#)

France 2025

Last week, we enjoyed a hugely successful trip to France, packed with enriching experiences across history, Geography, RE, and French.

Day 1 began with a sweet start at a traditional caramel factory, before we explored the significant sites of Pointe du Hoc, Omaha Beach, and the American Cemetery. These powerful visits offered moments of reflection as students considered the experiences of those who landed in Normandy on D-Day.

On Day 2, we ventured into the historic city of Rouen for a town trail, taking in the magnificent Cathedral and key landmarks linked to Joan of Arc. The afternoon brought fresh sea air and stunning views during a coastal walk, where students had the chance to observe and sketch a range of coastal features first-hand.

Day 3 gave students the opportunity to practise their French language skills at a bustling local market. We then visited the immersive Arromanches 360 cinema, the British Normandy Memorial, and Pegasus Bridge—each offering further insight into the region's rich history.

The students were a credit to the school throughout the week, and we hope they return with lasting memories and a deeper understanding of the subjects explored.





Shropshire – Year 8

On a blazing hot Monday morning, over 180 purple t-shirts climbed into four House coaches and travelled to Shropshire for fun in the sun. We arrived at 10.30 a.m. and it was straight off to our first activity – some to disco, some to aerial trekking, and some to abseiling. Other activities we enjoyed were the VR session and the raft building on the hottest day was brilliant. All groups had a member of St George's staff and some of these decided to join in with the activity!

Our day out in Ironbridge took us to an open air museum where we could ask questions about the jobs held by Victorian people and how they lived. The old fashioned sweet shop and the fish and chips were definite favourites! We also spent time in the Museum of Iron, finding out about how iron has been used over the years and discovering random facts like the earliest English recipe for ice cream is older than the United States of America. Enigunity was great fun and we enjoyed discovering how dams worked and how turbines could be used to drive engines. We had a chance to visit the Iron Bridge itself and completed a field sketch before walking over the bridge.

Home on Thursday and more people were asleep on the coach than awake! We had 'the best trip ever'. All photos taken on the trip will be available on a student google drive.



Year 7 Whipsnade Zoo Trips: A Roaring Success!

Year 7 students embarked on two exciting and enthusiastic day trips to Whipsnade Zoo, where their map-reading skills were put to excellent use as they eagerly navigated their way around the sprawling park.

After the blistering heat, the cooler weather was a relief. The first day was marked by cold and spitting rain, but this did not dampen the students' spirits. The students showed an active interest in the animals, diligently completing their work booklets and discussing adaptations and habitats. Highlights included the delightful sight of a baby zebra spinning in circles, engaging conversations with knowledgeable zookeepers, and the thrill of a wooden troll hunt. The lion cubs also proved to be a popular attraction, captivating the students with their playful antics.

The second day brought warm and sunny weather, perfect for further exploration. Students continued to clock up impressive step counts, with some reaching 16,000 by the end of the day. The animals, seemingly undeterred by the previous day's gloom, were out in full force, observing the students with much interest. Mr Harris scared off the tiger much to the dismay of the other groups; the red panda put in a guest appearance; and as always, the multi-coloured Macaws, with their amazing aerial display, undoubtedly stole the show.

Both trips were filled with excitement and learning, leaving students and staff exhausted but enriched with a plethora of ideas and inspiration for the science post card competition.



Year Sevens Identity and Justice Day

On Tuesday and Wednesday of Activities Week, our Year 7 students participated in an 'Identity and Justice' Day, led by Step (the St Albans and Harpenden Christian Education Project). Through a series of interactive workshops, they explored concepts of personal identity, individual values, and the unique qualities that make each of us special. Our big games session encouraged teamwork, and revealed both competitive and collaborative sides of our students!



One session, themed around Fairtrade, prompted discussion on global injustice and how each of us can play a part in making a positive difference. Among the most thought-provoking moments was a workshop with an asylum seeker, who shared his journey to England. It offered a powerful opportunity to reflect on the difficult decisions faced by many within our wider community, and how recognising the diversity of experiences and starting points in life can deepen our empathy and strengthen our collective contribution to a more inclusive society.



New Calendar

We are migrating to a new website in the autumn and this is why the existing calendar on the school website is not showing all the events next academic year. In the meantime, please follow this link to our calendar and if you click on the “calendar sync” on the left hand side you can link to your own calendar so it populates automatically. [Calendar](#)

Tuesday is Sports Day!

Our Endeavour Cup season comes to an exciting climax on Monday and Tuesday with our house sports days. The field events and longer distance runs take place on Monday and Tuesday morning and then (weather permitting) the whole school will go out to watch the shorter track events on Tuesday afternoon. We do invite parents on Tuesday afternoon and would ask that you sign in at the desk in the Aim Higher car park (outside the chapel by the entrance to the field) and watch from the marked out parent area. The races start at 1.40pm and there will not be any parking available on-site. We look forward to seeing some of you there.

St George’s Prayer Group

A group of parents from any faith denomination meet regularly to pray for the life of the school. Everyone is welcome to come along. Please don’t feel you have to pray out loud, if you come along.

Dates for 2025-2026:

- Mon 29 Sept
- Mon 17 Nov
- Mon 26 Jan
- Mon 9 March
- Mon 11 May

Mon 22 June (Social) - offsite (not within the school).



We also have a WhatsApp group and if anyone would like to join please text Susan Smith (07542 608131) and she can add you.

Final reminder from the Exams Office

Please remember to pay via ParentPay for GCSE or A' Level certificates that need to be posted. The deadline for payment is the end of term. Thank you.

Notice from SG'S Drama and Music Departments



The Drama and Music Departments are joining creative forces to stage a production of the hit musical FAME to be performed in November 2025!

We will be auditioning in 2 phases - the first auditions took place on today and will continue on **Monday July 14th** for students in Years 8 - 12 (principal roles and chorus) and again in September for Years 7 and 8 (current Y7) in the **Drama Studio**

Chorus auditions will be in a group setting (group singing / movement / acting) and Principal roles will be asked to prepare a solo Check out the songs 'Bring on Tomorrow' and 'Hard Work' (the opening) for early preparation! Sign up for the Fame 2025 Auditions here! [Fame starts here](#)

Get ahead for September with ParentPay

Why not add some money now on to your young person's account for September so they will be ready for school and you will have ticked a job off your back-to-school list!



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Hertfordshire County Council Services for Young People HOLIDAY ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

**Hemel Hempstead
Young People's Centre**
1st floor XC Centre Jarman Park
Hemel Hempstead HP2 4JS

Join us this summer!
Monday – Thursday each week
28 July to 14 August 2025
10am-2pm each day

For young people aged 12-16
Priority booking for those eligible for
benefits-related free school meals

Free summer holiday activities

- Fun physical activities such as sports, dance and team games
- Creative activities such as music production, cooking, and arts and crafts
- Informal healthy lifestyles workshops
- Socialising with other young people and making new friends
- Free healthy food every day
- Information about other local services

Use the QR code below or contact
SFYP Dacorum Team to sign up.

Tel: 01442 454080
Text: 07860 065195
sfyp.dacorum@hertfordshire.gov.uk
www.servicesforyoungpeople.org
X f i @HCCSYF



Hertfordshire County Council Services for Young People HOLIDAY ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

Links Academy
Woollam Crescent
St Albans AL3 6EJ

Join us this summer!
Monday – Thursday each week
28 July to 14 August 2025
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For young people aged 12-16
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Use the QR code below or contact
SFYP St Albans Team to sign up.

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