

# St. George's School Newsletter

Friday 13th December 2024



## From the Head

### The Power of Reflection

As we approach the end of term, it's a great time to reflect on everything that has been achieved over this last term. I hope that for your child(ren) this term has been full of challenges, learning opportunities, and moments of pride.

I had the opportunity to reflect on the term at St George's when I was interviewed by *The Georgian* (the student magazine). It was a privilege, not only to see the student journalists in action, but also to be asked to reflect on my first months here. They asked fantastic (and very difficult!) questions.

Reflection is a powerful tool for growth. It allows us to pause and consider not only what we have achieved but also how we have grown along the way. When you are driving or walking somewhere, why not ask your child(ren) some reflective questions:

- *What was a highlight of this term for you, and why did it stand out?*
- *What would "you" of today advise the "you" of September? What have you learnt?*
- *What challenges did you face, and how did you overcome them?*

As we look ahead to the coming term, I encourage all of us – students, staff, and parents – to continue embracing a reflective mindset. Together, we can ensure that St. George's remains a place where everyone is supported to grow, achieve, and thrive.

### School Closure – Thankyou

Thank you for your support in managing the school closure yesterday due to a water outage beyond our control. Taking the decision to close the school early on Thursday was not easy, but I want to thank the whole school community for the way they responded. The pupils behaved brilliantly, leaving the site in a calm manner and going straight home to continue learning online. Staff were calm and professional, with many going above and beyond to look after pupils, especially our boarders, who had to remain on site.

### Times Parent Power Success

I want to congratulate all staff and governors that St George's has been ranked by *The Sunday Times* as the 8<sup>th</sup> best Comprehensive School in the South East. St George's is also ranked as the 136<sup>th</sup> best school in the country (and is the 14<sup>th</sup> non-selective School). This is a great accolade for the school, and testament to the hard work of so many. Congratulations!

# PSA Christmas events raise over £22,000 for the School!!!

## Record Breaking Fundraising at the Christmas Fayre!

The pennies have been counted and we can confirm the Christmas Fayre was our best ever, raising £5,261 for the school! As we always say, we couldn't do it without the support of you, our fantastic school community. Thanks to all those who donated, and in particular to the parents and businesses who generously gave some really fantastic raffle prizes. If you helped to run a stall, took the time to bake something for the Christmas café, or attended on the day, you have contributed to raising essential funds that support your children's schooling.



There really are too many to thank individually – you know who you are, and you are enormously appreciated! We say a big thank you and a farewell to Carol Rule and her team, some of whom have been at the helm for 7 years, and welcome to our new team led by Kasia Skrzypek and Carol Stevens.

## The Mistletoe and Lanterns Christmas Ball

This year's Christmas Ball was a spectacular, festive evening of eating, drinking and dancing with entertainment led by the Fabulous Feedback band. Thanks to the incredible generosity and support of everyone involved, the ball raised an astonishing £17,023!



The Ball team was led by Suzannah Goodchild and Sarah O'Rourke who worked tirelessly behind the scenes for months and whose efforts made the evening truly memorable. Thank you to those who transformed the hall on the night, the bar staff, auction donors and auctioneers for their essential roles, and to the catering team who were a dream to work with and found solutions to every problem thrown at them! A special thanks go to our sixth form helpers and site team whose energy and helpfulness were a huge part of the evening's success.



Money raised from these events will go towards comprehensive refurb of the Assembly Hall including repainting, improving flooring, providing new chairs and curtains, and a revamp of the technology.



## Save the date!

We will be back in the New Year with our next fundraiser, the Second Hand Uniform Sale on 18th January.

## Many hands...

The PSA is always looking for new helpers. Even if you can only spare an hour of your time, every little helps. Get in touch to find out more at [psa@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk](mailto:psa@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk)

Best wishes for a lovely Christmas. The PSA Committee

## Inter-house Creative Writing Results

It was an exciting competition and all those who took part really impressed the judge and their teachers. The final results are:

1<sup>st</sup> Grant

2<sup>nd</sup> Monk

3<sup>rd</sup> Goddard

4<sup>th</sup> Watts

A Massive congratulations to Grant House and to all the winners (named below), but also a huge 'well done' to all the finalists, who are an extremely talented bunch! 28 fantastic pieces of writing - an impressive achievement!

- First place overall - Grant (Mel B, year 9)
- Second place overall - Goddard (Kalane V, year 12)
- Third place overall - Grant (Tom R, year 11)

### Year group finalists

- |                                       |                                          |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Year 7 first place - Monk (Millie S)  | Year 8 first place - Monk (Lehanri S)    |
| Year 9 first place - Grant (Mel B)    | Year 10 first place - Grant (Georgia H)  |
| Year 11 first place - Grant (Tom R)   | Year 12 first place - Goddard (Kalane V) |
| Year 13 first place - Grant (Emily W) |                                          |

A big thanks to Paddy Storrie for judging the competition and giving up so much of his time to do this.  
**Mel's winning short story features at the end of the newsletter.**

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## Christmas Jumper Day is Wednesday 18th December!

Please encourage your youngsters to get into the Christmas spirit by wearing their Christmas jumper next Wednesday (the same day as the school Christmas dinner).  
They will just need to wear it instead of their normal school jumper (all other uniform requirements are expected!)

## Christmas Dinner

Please be advised Parent Pay will be open until Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December until 5.00 p.m. for Christmas dinner payments. Boarding parents do not need to pay for their child's Christmas lunch. It is a great event and we hope that as many students take part as possible. This will be the only lunch option on this day.

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## Progress Reviews for Years 8, 9 & 13 are now available

Progress Reviews have now been released for these year groups giving feedback on how your young people are getting on in their subjects. If you have a child in any of these year groups then do take a moment to view their Progress Review that is now available via the documents section of their Edulink account. Please login via your own Edulink account rather than your young person's so that we have a record of who has accessed this information. Thanks.

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## Air Ambulance donation

We have benefitted from the support of an air ambulance on two occasions this term. As a sign of appreciation, our four houses have grouped together to send a donation of £500 to the Magpas Air Ambulance charity from house charity tuck shop funds.  
We are very grateful for their support...but hope that we will not need their services again for a while!



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## News from the PE Department about this Weekend's fixtures

Unfortunately, due to the pitch conditions and therefore risk of injury, we have had to cancel all of our Lacrosse and Rugby games for our OGs Christmas tournament, which were due to take place tomorrow morning. This also includes the OG's game that was due to start at 12.30pm.

## Strictly Sixth Form

Over the past couple of Friday afternoons, our Year 13's have been busy learning the steps and spins to the waltz which will be the first dance played at their Winter Ball next week. Under the guidance of our dance leaders, Olivia, Amelia, Jessie & Emily, the sports hall was filled with the beautiful instrumental sounds of '[Kris Bowers Strange from Bridgerton](#)', as they all learned the moves. It was magical to watch them all embracing their inner rhythm, dancing in pairs and having fun.

A perfect way to end the school week after what has been a very half term with UCAS applications, revising and EPQs.

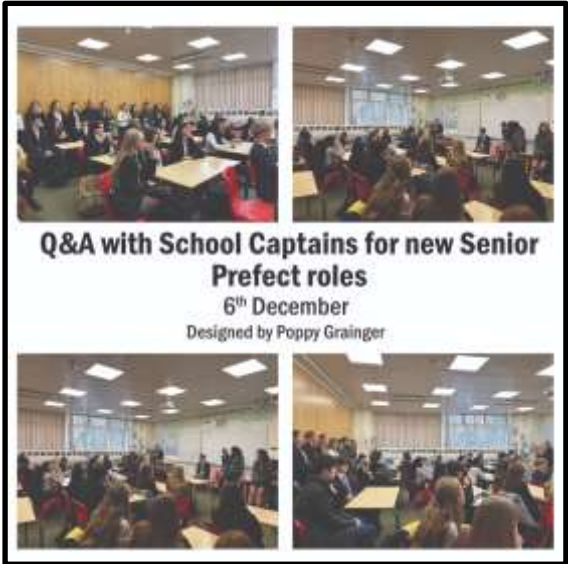


## Student Leadership

We are incredibly proud of our student leaders who contribute so much to the school and who help to shape leadership skills through role modelling. This takes place in many shapes and sizes.

On Friday lunchtime, the School Captains led a Q&A with Year Twelves who are interested in senior prefect positions. Around 40 students attended and listened to the application process and the role they play within the school.

The House Captains also spoke about what they do and how their role differs. It was great to see so many people who were so keen to take on this responsibility next year. Good luck to anyone who chooses to apply!



## Festive Fun in the Library

The Library has been busy running a book advent calendar during December. Twenty-four new books have been beautifully wrapped, labelled, ready for students and staff to open at break every day until the end of term (although we will have to open 6 books on the 19<sup>th</sup> December!). The festive fun continued this week with Miss Woodburn revealing Mike Tranter's, 'A Million Things to Ask a Neuroscientist', followed by Zhee C and Poppy R (Year 7) opening '21% Monster' by P. J Canning and 'Murder at Snowfall' by Fleur Hitchcock (both great reads). Kate H (Year 9) was thrilled to discover Josh Silver's 'Happy Head', which is not going to be on the shelves for long. The week finished with Mrs Holton-Gaus opening 'Musical Truth' by one of her favourite authors, Jeffrey Boakye, whilst Mr Williams unwrapped 'Africa is Not a Country' by Dipo Faloyin, a book he had suggested that the Library consider purchasing! There are plenty more books to be opened next week. The countdown continues!



## Christmas Crafts

It's now looking very festive in the Library thanks to all the students who participated in our lunchtime Christmas craft sessions over the last two weeks. Students have enjoyed recycling old magazines into book Christmas trees and decorating them with 3D stars, as well as creating some festive wreaths. They look very effective! Follow the Library on Instagram [@stgeorgeslibrary\\_](#) for news, book recommendations, book reviews and more!



## Attendance Award

Thank you to parents and carers for instilling the need for good attendance at school. When attendance becomes patchy, this can have all sorts of knock-on effects for a young person - for example, becoming anxious because they are behind in work or because they have missed a social event.

If you are worried about your young person's attendance, please do contact your Head of House or our Mental Health Lead, Mrs Grainger, for support and advice: [hgrainder@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk](mailto:hgrainder@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk)

There are an awful lot of strategies that we can put in place for students who are struggling to get into school.



## Some Christmas Online Safety Information

The chances are that your young person may be having more access to the internet over the festive period so it's a good idea to brush up on your knowledge of online safety. Below is a list of recommended resources for parents and carers:

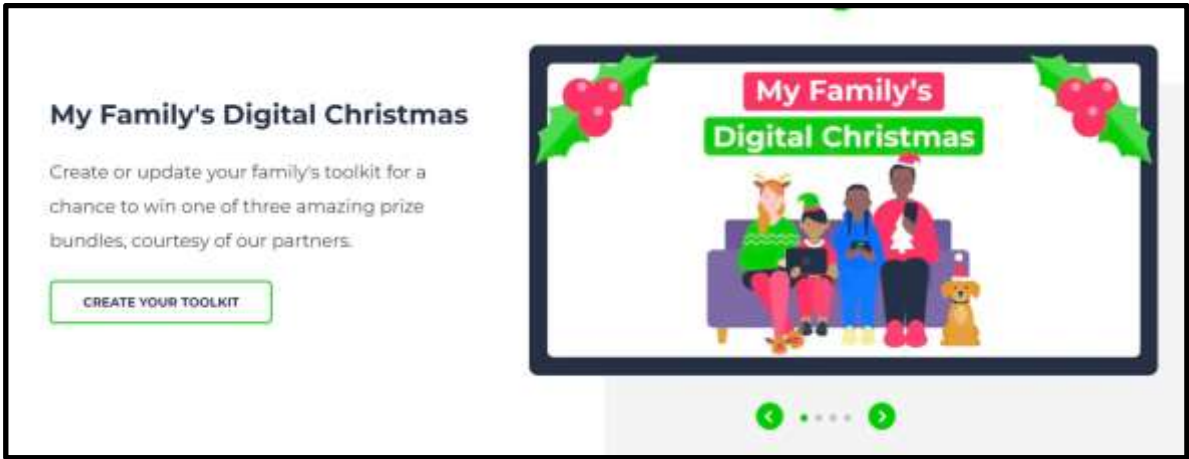
[Parent Info](#) - provides high quality information to parents and carers about their children's wellbeing and resilience.

[UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - online Safety tips, advice and resources to help children and young people stay safe on the internet.

[Childnet International](#) - an organisation working directly with children, parents and teachers to ensure that the issues of online child protection and the safe and positive use of the internet are addressed.

[ThinkuKnow](#) - the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre's own website which has been designed and written specifically for children, young people, teachers, parents and carers.

[Internetmatters.org](#) - specific help on how to set up internet controls at home. Guidance and articles for parents about keeping children safe online.



Why not have a go at creating your own family digital Christmas: [Click here](#)

## Inter-house Creative Writing Overall winning short story by Mel B Year 9

Staggering, retching, Langdon clutched his pounding head as he collapsed. Everything was dirty, corrupted, mud dragging him down. Never letting him free. His heartbeat was too loud. Bullets ripped through the air, but the scene was tinged with red. When he brought his hand to his face, it was wet and stained. This was it, he thought. There was no coming back from this; the realisation settled in his blood. The horrors had been dragged to another field (if they could be called fields, these graveyards of mud, blood and fallen bodies). It was just him, and the distant lull of battle, drowned by the pulse that screamed in his ears.

Distantly, he became aware of another man approaching. After a few moments, his vision focused, then tunnelled, as a face shone out from the hellish panorama.

“Lis...Lister?” he slurred, blood trickling into his mouth.

“Langdon?” the arrival responded, his crisp accent cutting through the haze of the invalid’s pain like gunshot through silence. “Come on, pal, time to get you back to the trenches.”

But his body refused to submit to his brain’s feeble demands to rise. Surely it would be easier to stay lying down? To give up? He had a brother waiting for him. Maybe he would see him again. Maybe then the pain would finally cease. Why was he still suffering? When would it all be over?

“Lang.” the voice repeated, firmer and louder this time. Closer. Langdon felt calloused hands seize his soldiers and haul him upright, even as his head dropped further. But the older man’s touch flickered tongues of warmth through Langdon’s chest, reminding his heart to keep beating. His eyelids fluttered open – even the tiniest movement heartwrenching torture – and there was Lister, his beautiful, terrified face reminding Landon’s heart what to keep beating for.

“Li-” he choked, his own vomit lodged in his throat, blood still sputtering from his lip, bitter mixing with sharp. No poison could possibly taste worse. But he sucked on bitter, drew on sharp. It was how he had grown up, how he endured pain. Langdon had to keep fighting or he would fall. And oh, how far he had fallen.

A gentle hand brushed across his cheek, a tenderness he hadn’t known since his brother. “I’m here. I’m here.” the older man repeated like a mantra, like it would save him, cradling his comrade’s broken form. “It’s going to be okay. You’re going to be okay. Je t’aime...”

That triggered the ghost of a smile, Langdon’s face too exhausted to commit to anything greater. Lister’s heart shattered, each fragment shrapnel from a mine. He held Langdon’ wrist with one hand, the other carding through his hair, matted with blood. He held a faltering star in his arms. A universe. All he’d ever longed for, the home he had finally found. The light in Langdon’s eyes guttered out. Lister hadn’t known such a light could be extinguished, yet here they were. A sun weeping over a fallen star.

# NOTICES

## **Support for Parents and Carers from DSPL7**

Hertfordshire Local Authority commissions local groups and charities to provide SEND training and workshops for parents on a range of topics. DSPL7 compiles all the different training opportunities into a termly training booklet (please see the link below). Courses should be booked via the provider.

[DSPL7 Parenting Support Spring term 2025](#)

## **DSPL7 and VISTA SEN coffee mornings**

Monthly SEN coffee mornings are organised by VISTA and DSPL7. These are for parents and carers who would like advice and support for any issues they may be experiencing at home with a child with SEND. VISTA school family workers and DSPL7 staff are available to chat to, and to signpost to other agencies as needed. The coffee morning also provides opportunities to meet other parents who may be experiencing similar things.

In addition, bookable 30 min appointments can be made with a SEND professional. These provide a chance for parents and carers to gain specific advice and strategies for different areas of need.

Please click on the link to find out more details:

[DSPL7 & Vista SEND Coffee mornings](#)

## **EBSA Coffee Mornings for Parents**

EBSA stands for emotionally based school avoidance.

DSPL7 and Services for Young People run coffee mornings for parents with a child/young person in Years 5-11 who are struggling to attend school because of emotionally based needs. Services for Young People can provide activities for any young person who may also wish to attend with a parent or carer.

[EBSA coffee mornings 24-25](#)