

St. George's School Newsletter

Friday 14th February 2025



From the Head

This week, our school has been alive with the energy of the Inter-House Debating Competition. I have witnessed some remarkable debates from pupils across all sections of the school. The topics tackled have been challenging and diverse, ranging from whether there is justifiable cause to fear the rise of China, to whether effort or talent is more important in life. There are more details of what the debaters have been up to in the newsletter below, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Ellis for all he does to nurture debating at St George's, not just through the House competition, but throughout the year.

What has impressed me most is the poise and confidence our pupils have shown. Their ability to handle “points of information”—spontaneous and challenging mid-speech questions—has been particularly striking. These interruptions, which might unsettle even experienced speakers, have been met with calm, rational responses and eloquence, showing their grasp of the topics and critical thinking under pressure.

This competition has served as a reminder of the importance of critical thinking in today's world. In an era of misinformation and soundbites, skills like thorough research, reviewing sources, and crafting strong arguments are invaluable. These are not just debating skills but life skills, helping young people navigate complex information and articulate their views effectively.

These abilities are also developed beyond debating. Across the school, in many subjects and discussions in PSHE, we equip pupils with tools to engage thoughtfully with the world. This is central to our mission—to prepare them not just for exams, but for life beyond school.

As we reach the half-term holiday, I want to thank you for your continued support of St George's and all that we are doing to aim higher for our young people. I am so proud of what our pupils and staff have accomplished this half-term. I wish you all a happy, restful, and safe half-term holiday.



The Skullet

On Monday, in front of a live audience and a representative from *Mind in Mid Herts*, Mr. Tookey bravely allowed Oscar to transform his hair into a skullet! The results have certainly divided opinion - "horrendous," "kind-of-cool," "ridiculous," "brave," and "youthful" - but one thing's for sure: it's brought plenty of smiles while raising an incredible amount for charity.



Thanks to generous donations through the [JustGiving page](#) and ticket sales, over £2,400 has been raised so far! It's not too late to contribute - every donation helps support the important work of Mind in Mid Herts. It would be amazing to reach £2.5k!

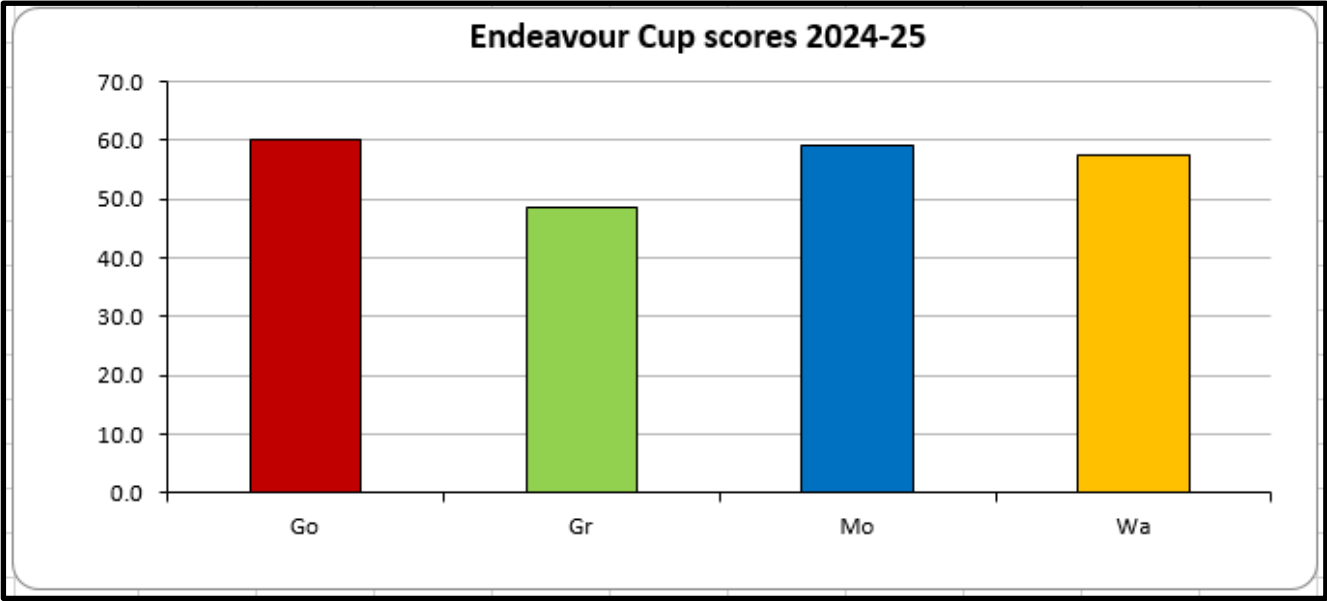
Now, the big question: what can The Alternative Barbering Co. (8 Station Road, Harpenden) do with what's left of Mr Tookey's hair? Thanks to them also for supporting the effort.

House Swimming - A Splashing Success!

The annual House Swimming Gala made waves once again, with students diving headfirst into the competition. As each house went stroke for stroke, they showcased incredible speed, technique and the occasional splash! Well done to all the swimmers who put in an *oar-some* effort, whether they finished first or just kept swimming to the end all houses were fully represented and the competition was incredibly close.

Results for 2025: 1st - Monk 2nd - Goddard 3rd - Watts 4th - Grant

Current Endeavour Cup Scores on the Doors



The Endeavour Cup competition is certainly getting tenser than a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs. The recent win for Monk in House Swimming has helped them to paddle back into second place, leaving Grant trailing in its wake. The Mighty Goddard will be worried about the narrow one point winning margin whilst Watts is hoping to grab back their lead after the House Debating results come in. It's all to play for! Hoorah!

Next Half-term's House events

Please encourage your youngsters to look out for notices and announcements about house events. Heads of House always publicise them in assemblies and there are sign-up sheets on house notice boards. Coming up, we have:
House Drama - rehearsals are underway and performances are on the 5th and 6th March.
House Basketball and House Netball start on 17th March.

Super Saturday (LAX and Rugby House Finals) is on the 22nd March. This is a fantastic day out for the whole family so pop it in your diary.

House Photography

This year's theme is 'A Day in the Life of ...' and the first round submission deadline is Tuesday 1st April. All students are invited to enter this competition and they are required to submit two A5 photographs on this theme. They have been encouraged to think about composition, leading lines, interesting scenes and foreground interest. The main thing is that they go out and have a go and have some fun!

Safer Internet Day Tuesday 11th February

Tips for Parents and Carers: Keeping you and your loved ones safe online

This Safer Internet Day, we have been having conversations about how to spot, respond to and report all types of scams online. Scams can take many forms and may target anyone, including young people. Use these top tips to keep you and your loved ones safe online.



Enjoy going online together and talk regularly about your family's online lives: The internet is amazing and can help us all to access information and entertainment. Spend time online with your child to understand how they are using technology and talk together about the good and the bad parts of being online. Talk about your own experiences and find other opportunities to get the conversation started, like stories in the news. Make sure your child knows they can talk to you about anything that they see or experience online.

Take online security measures seriously: The internet can be a tool used by criminals to target their victims, but a few [simple steps](#) can help keep you and your accounts secure. Use [strong and separate passwords](#) for online accounts and [set up two step verification](#) where it's available. You may also be able to [set parental controls](#) to prevent unwanted online purchases and limit children's access to harmful content.

Look out for warning signs that someone or something online cannot be trusted: "It just seems too good to be true!" – Other common signs of a scam include contact that you weren't expecting or being asked for money or personal information (think: bank or contact details, passwords, or phone numbers). Scammers use [other tactics](#) to manipulate their victims into paying, like playing with your emotions, or building a sense of urgency so you are rushed into making a decision. If you aren't sure it's reliable, don't risk it.

Remember that anyone can be a victim of a scam: Scammers are good at what they do and will target anyone. We all need to stay vigilant and support those who are most vulnerable including children and the elderly by helping them recognise what to look out for. If anyone in your family has been scammed, talk openly about it. There should be no shame in being victim to a scam and it's never your fault.

Know where to get help if something goes wrong: If you or someone you know has been the victim of a scam online, you're not on your own. Help is available and you are not to blame for what has happened. You can report fraud and cybercrime online to [Action Fraud](#) or by telephoning 0300 123 2040. (Advice from [saferinternetday.org.uk](#))

Please contact the school's Safeguarding Team for information and support as there is a lot that we can do: safeguarding@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk

News from the PE Department



Rugby

Year 7 played some excellent rugby on Saturday morning. We had a mixed A and B team game and a mixed C and D team game between ourselves. Super efforts from all involved!

LAX

U14 Counties: A team - 4th; B team - 3rd

U13 Counties: A team - 2nd; B team - 2nd; C team - 3rd

It was great to see so many girls out playing lacrosse at their end of season tournaments this week. Everyone played well and together as a team. Congratulations to all involved!

Girls' Cricket

U13 MCC Lords Invitational Cricket Tournament

On Tuesday, we took 8 girls to play in an invitational tournament. They were superb all day and ended up winning the tournament after 7 competitive games! We also got a tour of Lords which was a real highlight for the girls! Well done to all involved.



Year 7 Indoor Athletics Tournament

On Thursday, we took part in the Annual District Indoor Athletics Tournament. Both teams were exceptional and ended up winning their categories! This means we were combined schools' champions and we are now heading onto the county round!

The school would like to thank the PE Department for all of their hard work, commitment and for always going above and beyond to give our young people the best sporting experiences. They give up so much of their free time and family time every week. Thank you!

Netball

This week we had our last match for U13 for the year against Samuel Ryder. U13As started off strong with great communication and defensive play. As the game went on they pulled away finishing the match 18-6!!

U13Bs took a second to warm up but they soon started getting some lovely interceptions and moving well on court. Even with an A team member joining the other side they kept their passes tight and finished their match 7-6!



Coaches MVPs this week were Holly for some lovely rebounds and great marking throughout and Ellie for her movement on court and communication with her team.

Students' Review of their trip to Barcelona

After arriving at school at 5 O'clock in the morning, we set off on the bus to Heathrow with nothing but music, each other, and anticipation keeping us awake. We arrived at the airport with no issues, got through security quickly with teamwork and pushed through the plane flight. After landing, we made our way to our hostel, which was nice and comfortable with beautiful views of Barcelona. Eager to explore, we headed straight to the breathtaking Sagrada Familia, taking in its intricate details and towering spires. After that, we indulged in delicious churros before heading to the Hard Rock Cafe for dinner. To end the night, we strolled down the vibrant Las Ramblas, soaking in the atmosphere, before taking the metro back to our hostel, ready for the adventures ahead.

Thursday was such a fun and exciting day! We started by going to a Spanish school to meet our pen pals from Spain. It was so nice to meet them and speak to them in both languages. Then we visited Park Güell, where we explored the park and there were amazing views of Barcelona. Walking through the park and seeing Gaudi's designs up close was incredible. After a great time exploring, we went to Fresco Buffet for dinner. The food was really nice and everyone had a fantastic time!

On the third day of our trip, we visited Camp Nou, Barcelona's football stadium, where we took part in an immersive self-guided tour that portrayed the rich culture and spirit encapsulated within the football club and stadium. This tour was an insightful experience, allowing us to see the significant role football plays in Barcelona. Afterwards, we were given plenty of time to explore the stadium's shop and purchase any desired items. Following this, we took part in a guided tour around the Barri Gothic quarter, known for its many courtyards and squares filled with a lively and charming atmosphere, where we learned about the fascinating and captivating history of Barcelona. Additionally, we were given the opportunity to indulge in some delicious ice cream and explore plenty of shops. For dinner, we ate at Fresco, which offered a range of options to suit everyone's tastes. Finally, we finished off the night with a surprise trip to the cinema, where we saw *Gladiator 2*, accompanied by popcorn and sweets.

On the final day of our trip, we took the metro to the science museum, where we explored a variety of fascinating exhibits, including a large enclosure housing enormous fish and alligators. After immersing ourselves in the museum's displays, we returned to the hostel to relax before making our way to the airport. The journey through security was mostly seamless, aside from a moment of panic when someone realised they had left their bag at McDonald's—fortunately, it was swiftly recovered. Despite encountering some turbulence, the flight home was relatively smooth. Once we landed, we boarded the bus back, enjoying a playlist of great music along the way. After an unforgettable trip, we were all tired but content, ready to return home with lasting memories.

Sophie, Martha and Panashe



Thank you to all the staff who organised and went on the trip. We are very appreciative of the many hours that it takes to run these experiences.

ParentPay Top up Time

Please can you remember to check your child's ParentPay balance and add funds for next half-term. Your account always needs to be in credit. Thanks.

Debating News

It has been an action-packed half-term of debating at St George's. Our students have competed in the Harpenden Schools Debate Competition, Oxford Union schools competition and the Rotary regional finals. All of our students who competed represented the school magnificently.

We have also continued to run a thriving debate club, which has included a teachers vs students debate (which was played out in front of a packed Old Library) and was narrowly won by the students!

This week has seen our house debating competition, which has involved around 60 students (either debating or helping out with organisation).

We are really proud of how St George's debating has developed over the last few years and is now feeding down to the whole school oracy. Next term, we will be visiting local primary schools to run debate club sessions led by our debate captains and staff. We also have more fixtures against a number of local schools.

Thanks to all who have supported debating, and mostly thanks to our students who are operating at such an impressive level in all of their debates. A big thank you to Mr Ellis who dedicates so much time to debating and inspires our students.



Music Department Update

The Music Department is pleased to announce that tickets for their concert on March 20th are now available on ParentPay. "The Big Country" will feature music from America and American composers, from the Wild West to the Jazz Clubs of Chicago, with some Cyndie Lauper and Joan Jett in between.

We will be enjoying performances from the Senior Concert Orchestra, Jazz Band, Junior Concert Band, Junior Choir, Senior Choir and Chamber Choir - plus a number of smaller ensembles too.

We are also pleased to announce that Concerto Saturday will take place on Saturday 29th March, featuring soloists from the Upper School and the senior orchestra accompanying. Tickets will be on sale after half term. Thanks as always for the support and help getting young musicians and their instruments to rehearsals every week!

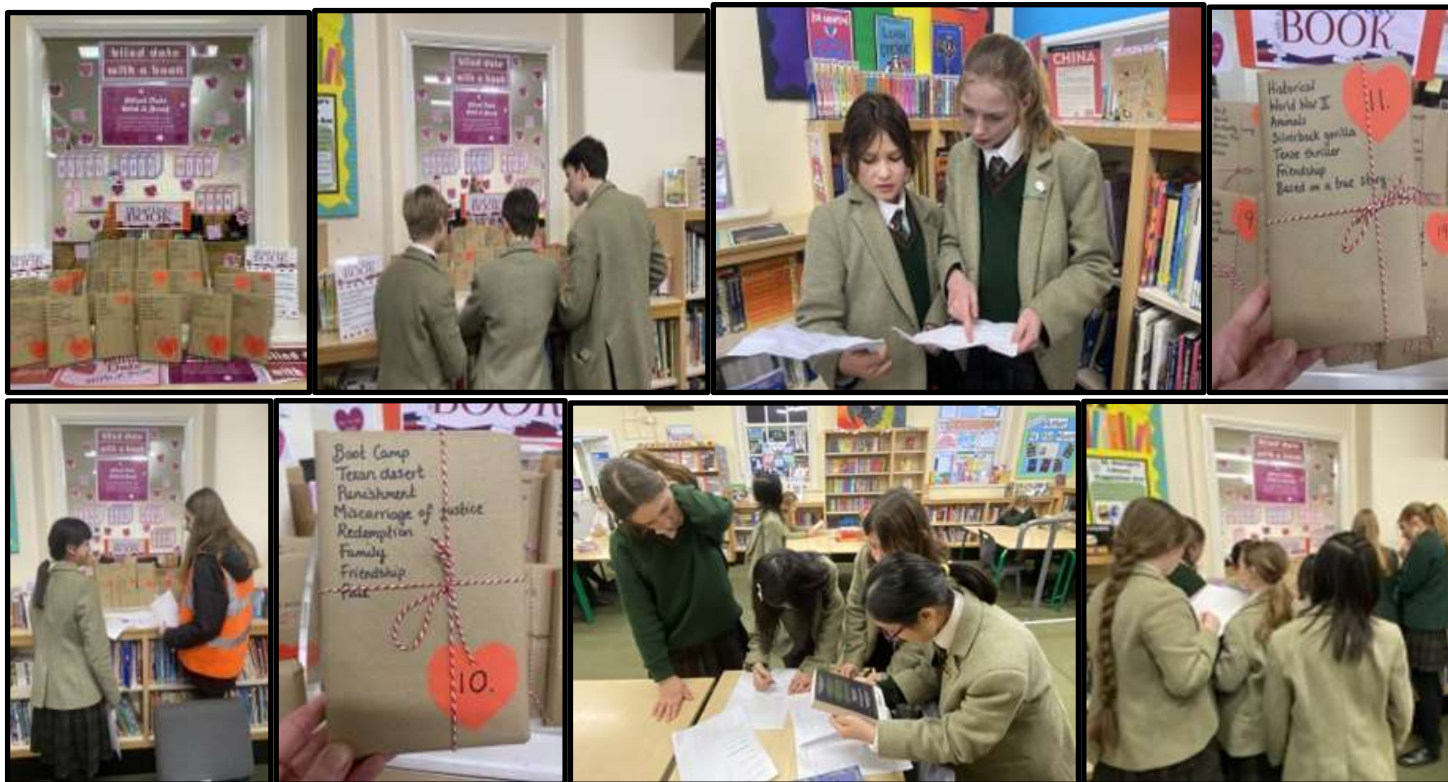
Free Careers Webinars for Students

During National Careers Week (**3rd - 8th March 2025**) WWF are hosting five free webinars with guests including TV presenter and architect Kevin McCloud, scientist and filmmaker Lizzie Daly, TV Pharmacist Thorrun Govind and a variety of WWF staff. Students will learn more about different career journeys, how the guests started out and what inspired them, what they do now and how they play their part in creating a sustainable future. If your young person is interested in sustainability, then direct them to the website for more information: [Sustainable futures showcase | WWF](#)

Spread a little love

Love is in the air! There has been a lot of excitement in the Library this week with students trying to guess what's inside our fantastic display of 20 beautifully wrapped mystery books. With a few carefully chosen clues written on the front of each book, the idea is to encourage students to chat about books with each other. As readers, it's all too easy to get into the habit of reading the same author, series, or genre – sometimes it's good to try something completely different. It's been lovely to see so many students enjoying the Library at break and lunchtimes. The incredible collaboration and kindness shown to other students has been really impressive this week.

Follow the Library on Instagram [@stgeorgeslibrary_](#) to stay up to date with news, events, book recommendations, book reviews and more.



Inter-House Drama Tickets are now on sale!

We are thrilled to announce that tickets are now on sale via ParentPay for this year's Inter House Drama Competition.

The Drama Captains for Goddard, Grant, Monk and Watts House have been working hard to present a short play for your entertainment. We have four very different tales - each filled with excitement, humour, mystery and suspense! It is going to be a brilliant event and we can't wait for you to see the hard work each cast and crew member has put into this event. This year we will be running a matinee performance starting at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday 5th March. The final, adjudicated performances will be on Thursday 6th March starting at 7.00 p.m.

This year, our House plays will be adjudicated by the very talented Jamie Davis who is the writer and creator of the ITV drama YOU AND ME. It was described as 'a sharp original drama', 'deftly written' and 'profound' by The Guardian, and Jamie was singled out as 'a promising new writer' by The Times. He has since been selected to be part of the BBC Writers Academy and has written extensively for both CASUALTY and EASTENDERS. He began his career as an actor appearing in a wide range of television programmes and on stage for the Royal Shakespeare Company.



We expect this to be an incredibly exciting night and can't wait for you to join us!

Changes to Local Bus Fares for Children

The £2.00 single fare cap ended on 31st December 2024, with the new single fare cap of £3.00 effective from 1st January 2025. With the increase in the single fare cap, the Student and Child Direct tickets that are available to you, may be a more cost effective way to pay for travel. Tickets can be accessed via www.arrivabus.co.uk/monthlytickets.

- Scroll down and click on + next to Herts and Essex
 - Then scroll down and click on 'Click here to arrange your Direct debit'
 - This will then take you to the sign up pages to set up your arrangement.
- If you have any questions, please contact us via email at talktous@arriva.co.uk



PSA Dates for your Diary

Quiz Night – Saturday 8th March

Calling all Quiz Whizzes! If you fancy a night out with a few drinks and some friendly competition, come along to the PSA Quiz Night on Saturday 8th March—there are still spaces available, but they are going fast!

Tickets are only £15 per person which includes a delicious choice of curry, and doors open at 7pm. You'll need a team of eight for a table or pick up a pair and we'll build your team for you!

www.tickettailor.com/events/stgeorges

Painting Day – Saturday 15th March

We are looking for as many parents as possible to roll up their sleeves and help spruce up the school on Saturday 15th March. No experience needed, just plenty of enthusiasm! You can give as little as an hour of your time and we'll make sure you're fed and watered.

Look out for the sign-up link on the What's App groups. Not on What's App? Email psa@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk if you'd like to get involved.

Christmas Ball – we STILL need you!

The Christmas Ball is the biggest and some might say most enjoyable fundraiser in the school calendar, raising an incredible £17k last year - but without new volunteers, it won't happen in 2025. We're still looking for two enthusiastic parents to take the lead and keep this fantastic event going!

The outgoing team is ready to hand over the reins and will give you plenty of support so you won't be starting from scratch. If you're interested in finding out more, please email psa@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk. Thank you!



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SATURDAY & SUNDAY
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14:30 – 15:45
16:00 – 17:15

Min 1 Adult Hirer must be present
Maximum Guests 40

Age: Year 6 – Year 10

£295 includes:

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Add your own music to personalise your party!

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introductory
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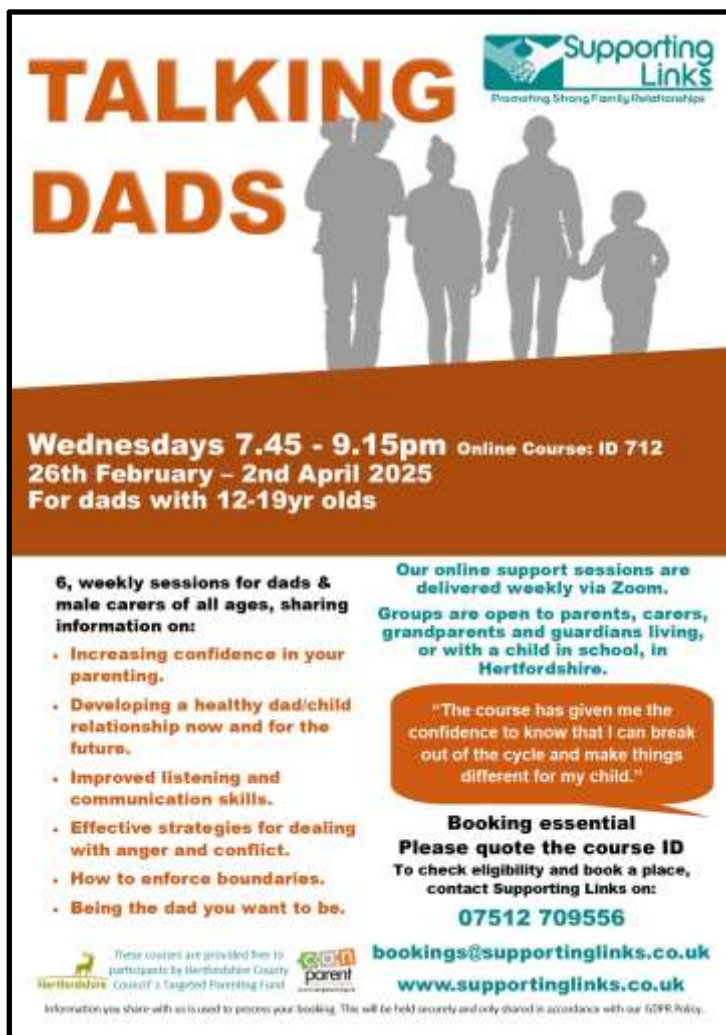
FRIDAY 28 MARCH
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TALKING DADS

Supporting Links
Promoting Strong Family Relationships

Wednesdays 7.45 - 9.15pm Online Course: ID 712
26th February - 2nd April 2025
For dads with 12-19yr olds

6, weekly sessions for dads & male carers of all ages, sharing information on:

- Increasing confidence in your parenting.
- Developing a healthy dad/child relationship now and for the future.
- Improved listening and communication skills.
- Effective strategies for dealing with anger and conflict.
- How to enforce boundaries.
- Being the dad you want to be.

Our online support sessions are delivered weekly via Zoom.
Groups are open to parents, carers, grandparents and guardians living, or with a child in school, in Hertfordshire.

"The course has given me the confidence to know that I can break out of the cycle and make things different for my child."

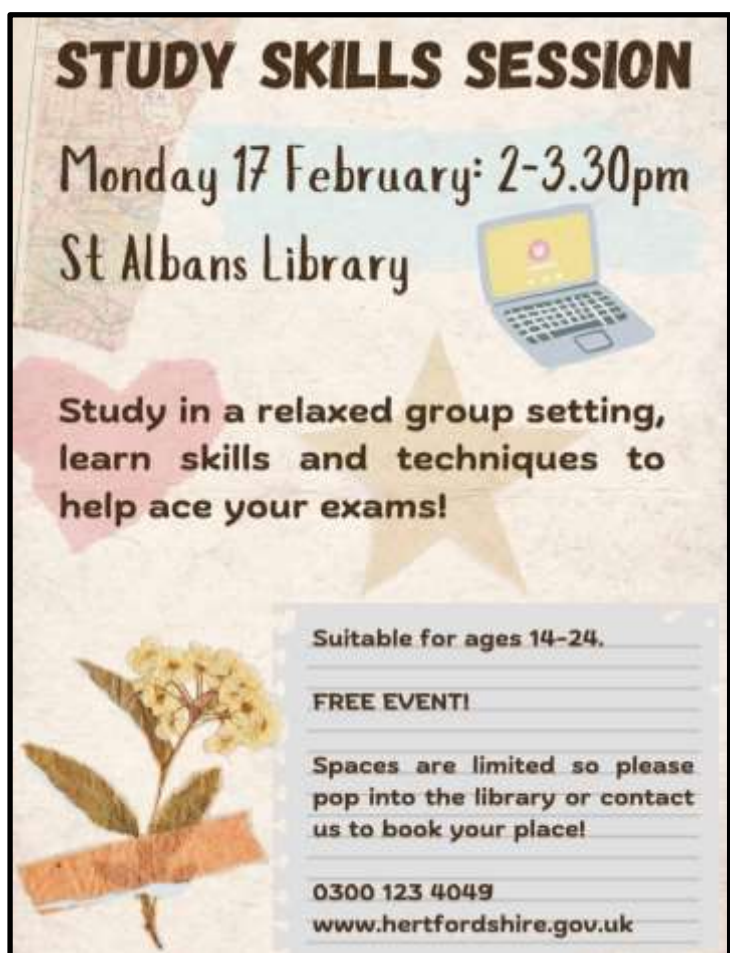
Booking essential
Please quote the course ID
To check eligibility and book a place, contact Supporting Links on:

07512 709556
bookings@supportinglinks.co.uk
www.supportinglinks.co.uk

These courses are provided free to participants by Hertfordshire County Council's Targeted Parenting Fund

parent

Information you share with us is used to process your booking. This will be held securely and only shared in accordance with our GDPR Policy.



STUDY SKILLS SESSION

Monday 17 February: 2-3.30pm
St Albans Library

Study in a relaxed group setting, learn skills and techniques to help ace your exams!

Suitable for ages 14-24.

FREE EVENT!

Spaces are limited so please pop into the library or contact us to book your place!

0300 123 4049
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