

St. George's School Newsletter

Friday 20th December 2024



From the Head

As my first term at St George's draws to a close, I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to all of you for your warmth in welcoming me since September. It has been a genuine pleasure to meet so many of you over the course of the term. For those I have not yet had the chance to meet personally, rest assured that there will be plenty of formal and informal opportunities to connect in the months ahead.

Unfortunately, like many members of our school community, I have been unwell this week with a virus. I was particularly disappointed to miss some of our most cherished Christmas traditions, including the Carol Services on Sunday and the Christmas Lunch. However, I have heard wonderful accounts of these events from colleagues and have enjoyed seeing the photos capturing the festive spirit. One colleague who helped serve the Christmas Lunch shared how every child took the time to say "thank you" to them. This simple gesture highlighted to me the core value of obvious kindness we nurture at St George's. I am so pleased to be part of a community where gratitude is expressed easily and openly by our pupils.

In turn, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the term, and especially for making this final week so special for our pupils. Whether in the classroom, in co-curricular activities, in pastoral care roles, or in supporting the administration of the school, every member of staff contributes to making St George's a remarkable place to live and learn.

Finally, I would like to wish you a safe and joyful Christmas. To those travelling long distances, particularly our boarders, I hope your journeys are smooth and safe. May everyone in the St George's community enjoy a peaceful and fulfilling Christmas, returning refreshed and ready for the Spring Term 2025. Together, we will continue to aim higher for every individual in all that we do.



A year 7 Christmas French baking challenge

Many year seven students have been busy in their kitchens at home over the past week or so taking on a challenge set by their French teachers to create their own version of the traditional French Christmas pudding - a *Bûche de Noël* or yule log. We were incredibly impressed by the response to this challenge

and the levels of creativity, culinary skill and attention to detail have been amazing. Mme Bradley our French language *assistante* had the difficult job of choosing the top entries but in the end, we awarded the following:

First place – Lena K – *Superbe!*

Second place – Sienna B – *Une bouche appétissante!*

Joint third place - Edward T – *simple mais semble délicieuse!* and

Lowry T – *Une jolie célébration de Noël!*

Special mention – Niall Lowndes for documenting his cookery process so thoroughly!



Joyeux Noël et bonne année on behalf of the MFL Department.

Question Time at St. George's

Last Friday, we hosted the fourth 'St George's Question Time' in the chapel. The event was attended by the whole of Year 12 and some Year 13 students.

Based loosely on the 'BBC Question Time' format, we covered a number of topical issues and the event went extremely smoothly. We are so grateful to all of our guests who took time out of their busy schedules to take part in 'StGQT'. The guests included a set of panellists with over 300,000 followers on X! We also wanted to give a big shout out to the student representative on the panel - Ed Watkins who acquitted himself superbly.

Events like these not only promote oracy but also give our students the opportunity to either witness or take part in high quality debate and the importance of considering all sides of an argument.

Students who have just begun debating in Year 7 or Year 8 can aspire to take part in these showcase events when they are in sixth form.



Next term is our busiest one for debate: with events including house debating, Round 7 of the Harpenden Schools debate competition, regional rounds of the rotary competition and the Oxford Union debate competition. Thanks to all students, teachers and guests who have been involved with St George's debating in 2024! We are looking forward to an even more exciting year in '25.

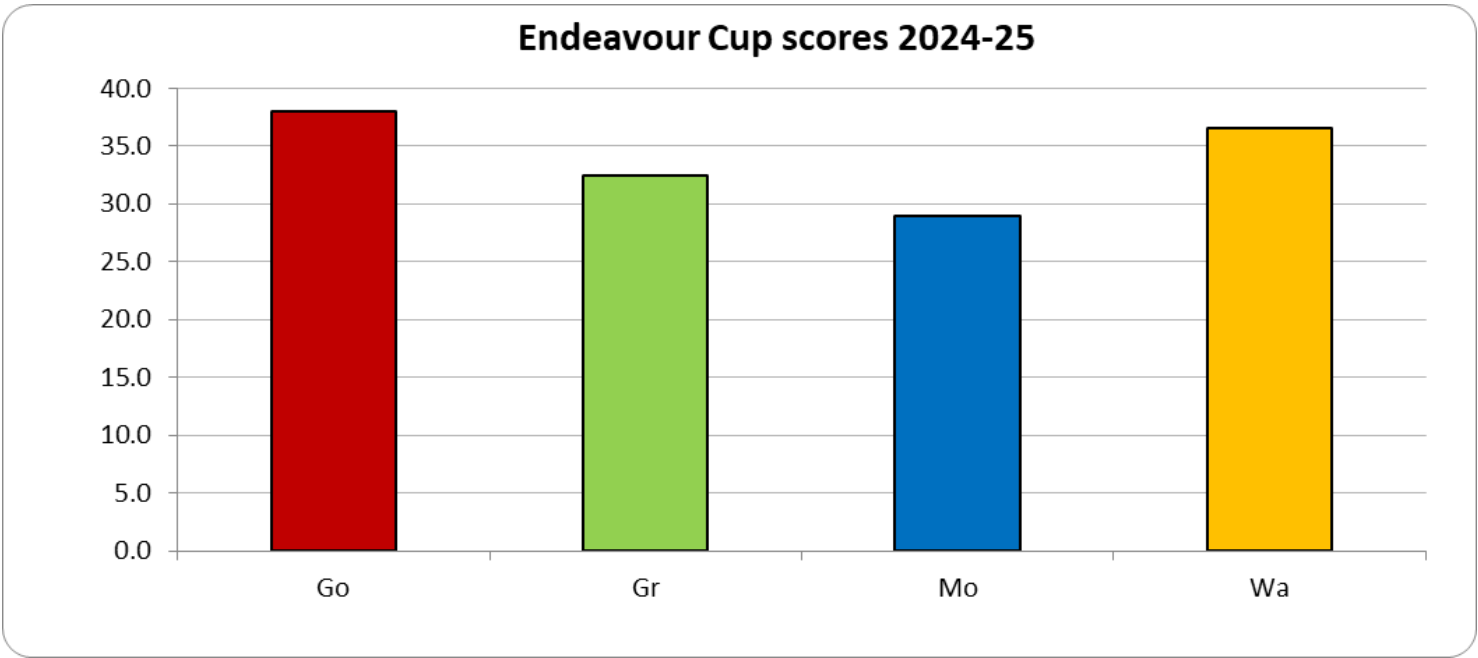
Is my child too ill for school?

This can be a challenging decision for parents and carers to make! If in doubt, please refer to the NHS guide: [Click here](#). This outlines when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't. If your child is going to be absent from school, please notify us via Edulink by 8.15 a.m. on every day that they are absent from school. Thank you.

Click here for guidance on how to access Edulink: [Edulink](#)

Exciting Endeavour Cup Update

The Inter-house Chess results are in and have been added to the scoreboard. It was a three-way tie between Goddard, Monk and Watts, with Monk coming closely behind despite winning the lower school competition. The atmosphere was electric and chess pieces were falling like well - chess pieces.



Well done to Goddard for maintaining their lead. Watts are only 1.5 points behind with Grant on 32.5 and Monk 29.0. Anything can happen next term - are your children ready for the badminton, swimming, debating, drama, basketball, netball, rugby and Lacrosse competitions. Start their training over Christmas!

Time to top-up your ParentPay

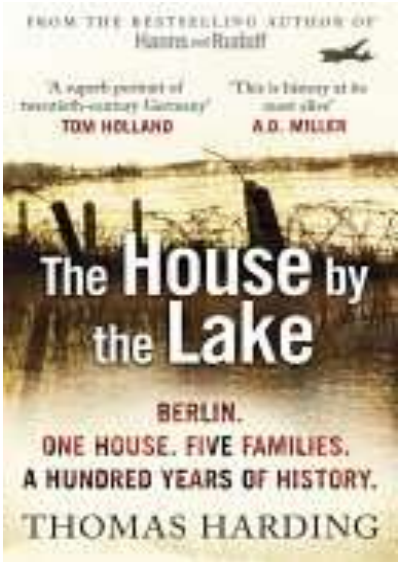
Please take time over the next week to top up your child's ParentPay account so that they are able to have lunch when they come back in January. There are quite a few accounts which are overdrawn which makes it hard for our staff to manage at the tills. Thanks very much.

History GCSE Book Club

A group of Year 12 historians are running a History Book Club for GCSE students in year 10 and 11 in the Spring term. The book club will run every other week on a Tuesday lunchtime in Week 1 - Go101. The first book they have chosen is: 'The House by the Lake' by Thomas Harding. Copies are available in the school library.

On the outskirts of Berlin, a wooden cottage stands on the shore of a lake. Over the course of a century, this little house played host to a loving Jewish family, a renowned Nazi composer, wartime refugees and a Stasi informant; in that time, a world war came and went, and the Berlin Wall was built a stone's throw from the cottage's back door.

Please encourage your year 11 historians to get involved.



Whipsnade Winners

During Activities Week, the current year 8 went to Whipsnade zoo and studied adaptations of animals and their habitats. They then designed posters of their chosen animal and its adaptations. The best five were made into postcards, which the Science Department will use throughout the year. The standard of entries received was really high.

Congratulations to the lucky winners, who were awarded their prizes in end of term assemblies:

Lyla K	Watts
Georgia F	Watts
George G	Watts
Sophia G	Watts
Layla P	Grant



Festive Fun in the Library Continues

The festive fun culminated this week in Thursday's grand finale with the unwrapping of six books (numbers 19-24) from the library's book advent calendar. Our student librarians thought it would be a great idea to invite the four Heads or Deputy Heads of House on the last day, so we were very pleased to welcome Mr Day, Mr Muriss, Mr Ede and Miss Kimmings. They were joined by Reverend Warner and Athena C (Year 10), who between them opened an interesting selection of new fiction and non-fiction books. The library is now well stocked with twenty-four new books for students and staff to enjoy in the New Year!



Winners of the Christmas Writing Competition

Well done to everyone who took part. The standard was very high indeed. Well done to the winners featured here:

Emily W - 1st

Caia T - 2nd

Nathania L -
3rd

Emily W, 9CCC.

A black cat came into my home,
Sheltering itself from all the snow.
Listening, positioning, its midnight fur glistening
Unaware of all the stories that the world might know

It struck me, there, that little did it think
It was a sign of bad luck, its fur black as ink
A terrible omen to all those that meet him
Belonged in a story, a tale so grim.

So there then I fed it on this cold Christmas Eve
Looking beyond all the stories they'd told me
The greatest Christmas gift I ever did receive
And so, it went and I let it leave.

Nathania L 7ALD

Can you hear it?
The sound of laughter,
Filling the air!

Can you see it?
The gifts in the shops,
That children stop and stare!

Can you feel it?
Though the bitter winter is here,
The comforting warmth lingers!

Can you smell it?
The Christmas dinner,
Wafting through the air!

Can you taste it?
As the warm food fills your tongue,
Your family laughs and enjoys it!

I can hear, see, feel, smell and taste,
The festive spirit arising with joy,
And many presents waiting to be opened,
When it's Christmas day! Hooray!

Caia T 8KM

The smell of mince pie and ginger filled my nose. Warmth of the fire wrapped me tight, as I listened to the crackling of the irate fire. I watched the snowflakes twirl and land softly on the thick icy blanket, covering the grass.

I imagined myself out there, the biting wind snapping at my fingers and blowing my hair in all sorts of directions. I let myself wonder for a while, gaze fixed on the window, until a voice, loud and sharp, shouted "Ev! Come set the table, dinner will be ready soon!"

Snapping back into reality, I looked around the room, almost expecting something new. Christmas lights engulfed the living room, blinding my eyes. The colours danced fervently around the room and a large brighter star was the attention of it all. It was sitting on top of a plastic tree that was decorated with sparkling baubles and dazzling ribbon.

As I opened the door to the kitchen, the smell of turkey hit me. The kitchen was busy; people were walking out the kitchen, entering it, cooking or washing vegetables. Plates were clattering and the sound of scraping spoons and forks were banging in my ears.

I pushed my way through the crowd and reached the drawer that contained some tablecloth. Wrapping the cloth in my arms, I pushed my way back, occasionally walking into someone or almost falling over.

Once I had laid everything out, dishes and drinks were set on the table and it was time to eat. As I picked my way through the Brussel sprouts, I noticed a small tree battling against the wind in the garden. It was plain and undecorated, aside from the label: young spruce tree.

When we had finished our dinner, the family and some friends gathered in the living room. Chatter ringed in my ears, as I approached the group of people, who were laughing and screaming. Boxes of board games piled on top of each other at one side of the circle. Dad was handing out scrabble pieces and mom was laying out the board.

I noticed a box of old Christmas lights and ornaments that my dad brought about 5 years ago. This year he brought new ones, which are displayed on our plastic Christmas tree.

I carried the box to the kitchen. The box was surprisingly light, compared to the size. I placed the box next to 'the young spruce tree' and sat down beside it.

I started to decorate the tree. Occasionally being pricked, I wrapped the dusty lights and ribbon around it and sprinkled baubles on it. At last, I stuck the star at the top.

I stood back, and admired the tree. The lights bounced around the room, and the colours sprung up and down the tree. The bright lights and vibrant colours contrasted against the tree and the glitter sparkled in my eyes. It was mesmerising. More beautiful than the fake tree outside the kitchen.

Supporting our Community over Christmas

For anyone who needs some support right now. ❤️

CALM - 0800585858
Mind - 03001233393
No Panic - 08449674848
Bereavement - 08088081677
PAPYRUS - 08000684141
Samaritans - 116 123
SHOUT - Text SHOUT to 85258
Abuse - 0808 2000 247
Refuge - 020 7395 7700

Stay safe this Christmas.



Please look after yourselves over the Christmas period.

Next Steps for Students in Year 11, 12 and 13

The Next Steps Group is run by two Youth Talks counsellors, starting in March 2025. The Next Steps Group is for young people worried about leaving school and their next steps.

This group will be running from Southdown, Harpenden on a Thursday night 5.30 p.m. until 6.20 p.m.

Please encourage your child to join up if they may be struggling with their next steps.

Here is the quick link for referrals: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VHKTVS2>

YOUTH TALK
We're listening.

Sign up today



**Leaving School?
Feeling anxious?**

Come and join our Next Steps group

Scan me



01727 868684
info@youthtalk.org.uk
www.youthtalk.org.uk

Registered charity no. 1042092

Let's talk



Are you leaving school to start a new job/apprenticeship or go to college/university?

Are you feeling anxious about these next steps?

Would you like a safe and confidential space to share your concerns with people who are experiencing the same worries as you?

Use the QR code to find out how to join our Next Steps group starting:

Thursday 6th March 2025
in Southdown, Harpenden



#WeAreListening

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Calling all budding lawyers at St George's School

**Want to take part in a Harpenden
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a busy solicitors' practice, we'll also arrange for a day to be spent at
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so you can include your entry and participation in the competition
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experience to talk about in interviews! Keep reading to find out how
to enter**



RAYDEN SOLICITORS
Work **experience**
competition!



Stage 1
Writing Competition

- You will be provided with a family law scenario along with a summary of the relevant law and your task is to write up your thoughts on how you think the case should/could be resolved.
- You don't need any legal experience, just an ability to present your 'case'!

Stage 2— May 2025 Mock Trial

- The students whose written submissions show the most promise will be chosen to participate in a 'mock trial' based upon a case scenario.
- The students will be split into two teams, each team representing the opposing parties. You will be competing with students from other Harpenden Secondary Schools!
- During the 'trial' you will work with Rayden's senior solicitors and barristers from Pump Court Chambers who will guide you through your 'case', giving you top tips on opening cross examination and closing submissions.
- A member of the Rayden team will act as 'Judge' to deliver their verdict.

The two students who give the most compelling all round performance will be offered the work experience to take place at a later date.

To find out more about Rayden Solicitors, visit
www.raydensolicitors.co.uk or one of our social media pages.



THE **TEENAGE** **BRAIN**



(& HOW TO SURVIVE IT!)

"CHILDREN ARE LIKE PUPPIES

AND TEENAGERS ARE LIKE CATS"

Come and discover how adolescence rewires the brain and how we can help our entire household navigate this life stage together.

Claire Banham is Director of The Haven, a charitable project based in St Albans, that helps young people build up their mental resilience.



Thursday 30 January 7:30pm

High Street Methodist Church, Harpenden

Book your place at

highstreet.church/teenagebrain

highstreet.church
the church in the high street

