

# St. George's School Newsletter

Friday 16th January 2026



## From the Head

It has felt like a week focused on the future here at St George's. Whether that's our Year 13s completing their mock exams, or our 16+ evening on Tuesday where we welcomed the next generation of pupils in to see our Sixth Form, the focus has been on what happens next. We were also delighted to welcome back several Old Georgians (Genevieve Abum - '25, Maddie Evans - '20 and Dan Gill - '22) who returned to share their experiences of Oxbridge life with our students. Meanwhile, our Year 11s have been busy with Morrisby interviews, exploring potential career paths and their strengths.

It is a wonderful reminder that life at school never stands still, and for our young people, the next exciting chapter is always just around the corner.

## Talking About... Mathematics with Mr Wright

In the second edition of our "Talking About..." series, I sat down with Mr Wright, our Director of Learning for Maths and Computing, to discuss a sound that might surprise some: the sound of a talkative Maths classroom.

Often, when I go into a maths lesson at St George's, there is a lot of discussion and debate taking place. While some might remember maths as a silent subject of copying from a board, our approach is very different. Here is what you need to know about how your child is learning to "talk like a mathematician".



## The Mastery Approach: Why Talk?

At St George's, we use a "Mastery" approach. This means students don't move on to a new topic until they have a deep, conceptual understanding of the current one. Mr Wright explained that talking is the key to this depth. "Writing an answer down can feel high-stakes," Mr Wright noted. "Sharing an idea with a partner is 'low-stakes.' It allows students to bounce ideas off one another, take risks, and try out different ways of solving a problem without the fear of being 'wrong' on paper."

By discussing a problem first, students find the subject less intimidating. Rather than being shown a method to repeat ten times, they are often presented with a problem and asked: "*How does this differ from yesterday's work?*" This trains them to be independent thinkers who can tackle unfamiliar challenges.

## Precision in Language

We also discussed the importance of vocabulary. Mr Wright is passionate about using the right words because, as he puts it, "If you don't have a name for something, it's hard to use it properly."

For instance, you might notice our teachers avoid the word "minus." Why? Because it's ambiguous—it could mean the operation of subtracting, or the property of a negative number. By using specific terms like "subtract" and "negative," students gain the tools to explain their logic with absolute clarity.

## From Discussion to the "Textbook Answer"

How do we ensure this talk leads to the right result? Mr Wright explained that the teacher acts as a guide. Once the class has explored a concept, the teacher formalises it.

They might even use a student's specific method - labelling it "Jane's Formula," for example - to show how a peer's idea led to a mathematical truth. This gives students a sense of ownership. They still leave the lesson with a clear "textbook" method in their example book, but they understand the *why* because they helped discover it.

## How You Can Help at Home

It can be tempting to show a child the "quick" way to get an answer, but Mr Wright suggests these three ways to support the St George's approach:

- Answer a question with a question: If they are stuck, ask, "*Which part is tricky?*" or "*How would you solve a simpler version of this?*"
- Use the "Example Books": Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have example booklets in their folders; Years 9–11 have blue notebooks. Ask them to explain a specific example from their notes to you to help when they are stuck.
- The Maths Clinic: If a problem is really difficult, encourage them to visit the Maths Clinic, held every Wednesday and Thursday lunchtime. Teachers and senior pupils are always there to help.

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## Bebras Challenge 2025

The Bebras Challenge is an annual international competition for students that develops computational thinking skills. This year 527,000 students entered the UK competition, with 642 from St. George's.

The online challenge is to solve as many logic puzzles as possible within a 45-minute time limit to earn points. The results are collated afterwards and students are ranked both within their school and nationally. This year our students were awarded an outstanding 76 gold certificates, which means they are in the top 10% nationally.

Notable high achievers include Daniel H (Seniors). Leo B (Intermediates) and Edward M (Juniors). In particular, Edward (pictured) achieved an exceptional result, placing 1<sup>st</sup> out of 156,557 participants. For the pupils who did not reach these dizzying heights, there is always next year's challenge to look forward to!



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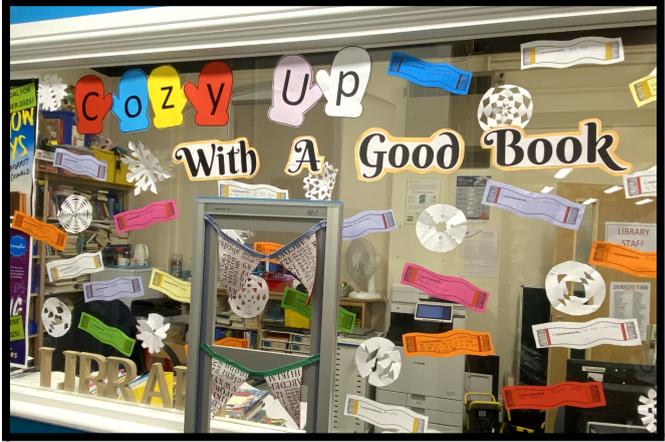
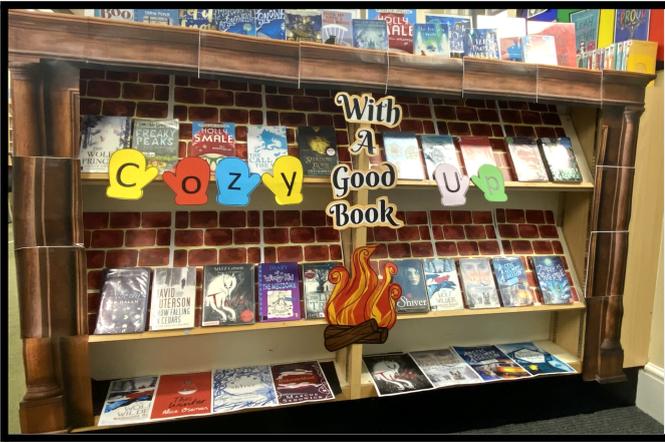
## Does anyone own a metal detector, or know someone who does?

Our site team would value having a metal detector that no one wants any more, or access to someone who has one and who would be able to come on site every now and again. This will help with mapping below surface pipework etc. Any detectorists out there? Please contact: [siteteam@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk](mailto:siteteam@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk)

# Cozy Up with a Good Book!

The National Year of Reading 2026, a Department for Education initiative in collaboration with the National Literacy Trust, aims to promote and encourage reading for pleasure in the UK. Reading expands our world and sharpens our minds, yet fewer people are making time to read. The campaign invites the nation to 'Go All In' on their passions and interests for 2026 and discover how reading can unlock the things they already love – be that music, football, sci-fi, travel...or anything!

To kick-start the Year of Reading, our students have been busy filling out colourful scarves with some fantastic suggestions of books they would like to cozy up with on a cold, wet or snowy winter day. Fantasy, mystery, thrillers and historical fiction are proving to be very popular, with some classics and some newer titles suggested too. Seeing and hearing book recommendations from other students, family or staff is one of the key motivators in encouraging reading for pleasure – it's lovely to overhear students and staff recommending their favourite books to each other in the library and around school. Your suggestions are always welcome, so please keep them coming!



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## Talk Consent: Keeping our students safe and informed

As part of our Personal Development Programme, we are committed to ensuring that all students receive high-quality, age-appropriate education on positive relationships and behaviours to help them navigate their lives with confidence, respect, and care for others.

Over the last two Friday 5 sessions, we have had visiting speakers from 'Talk Consent' to speak to year ten and year 12 students about consent and sexual harassment.

'Talk Consent' have extensive experience delivering education on consent and preventing sexual harassment and violence to young people across the country. The content is grounded in the reality of students' lives and presented in a relatable and sensitive manner. They respect all perspectives, including those rooted in different cultural, religious, and personal beliefs. Their ethos is built on everyone having the right to safe and have positive relationships. They want everyone to understand consent and respect others to prevent the serious, often devastating impact of sexual harassment and violence.

Year 10 Consent talk focused on the importance of aiming for positive and enthusiastic consent and what that means. In addition, what causes grey areas and confusion in relationships or sexual situations and how to manage those to ensure everyone is safe, healthy and respected. They also address the impact sexual harassment and violence can have on victims.

Year 12 Active Bystander talk focused on why it is important to challenge negative behaviour and sexual harassment and violence and what needs to be challenged and how certain beliefs and attitudes can enable this to happen. In addition, giving all students the tools to help them feel confident challenging someone in a way that ensures they stay safe.

If you would like some support on how to have challenging conversations with young people about positive relationships and staying safe, then the following resource is useful: [Lucy Faithfull](#)

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## Aspiring for Excellence: The Road to Oxbridge and Medicine

On Tuesday, we were delighted to welcome back three of our distinguished Old Georgians—Genevieve A, Dan G, and Maddie B—to deliver an insightful talk on the intricacies of applying to Oxbridge and medical school.

The session was attended by 60 students from Years 11 and 12, all of whom are beginning to navigate the challenging but rewarding path toward higher education.

Our guest speakers provided a wealth of practical advice and personal reflections, covering several key areas of the application journey:

- **The Admissions Process:** An inside look at entrance exams, the importance of "super-curricular" engagement, and how to craft a standout personal statement.
- **Interview Preparation:** Demystifying the interview experience by sharing first-hand accounts of the rigorous questioning and problem-solving required.
- **Life at Top Universities:** A realistic glimpse into the workload, social life, and unique opportunities available at Oxford, Cambridge, and within demanding medical programs.

We are extremely grateful to Genevieve, Dan, and Maddie for giving up their time to return to the college. Seeing our alumni succeed is a source of great pride, and their willingness to mentor the next generation of Georgians is truly inspiring.

This session has left our students feeling better informed, more confident, and highly motivated to pursue their academic ambitions.



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## 16+ Evening

It was a pleasure to welcome so many families to St George's for our recent Information Evening on Tuesday. For those who were unable to attend, or for those who wish to revisit the presentations, we have made all resources available online: [16+ Evening](#)

**Watch** – Our Head and Sixth Form talk

**Explore** - Our Sixth Form Prospectus offers extensive details on our curriculum and school life.

**Archive** - You can also view subject slides and videos from last year to help prospective Sixth Form students make more informed decisions regarding their A Level subject choices.

For further information, please visit the Sixth Form Admissions page on our website and Sixth Form Prospectus page, or contact Sixth Form via email. Students have been sent their email and login details from Applicaa. Applications close on **Friday 6th February at 12 noon**.

We are now accepting applications from students in local and surrounding areas [Admissions](#). The application process closes on Friday 6th February at 12 noon.



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## Year 11 A Level Subject Fayre

This exciting event is on Monday – for all year 11 students to come and explore subjects they are interested in taking/studying. They will have the opportunity to talk to students about the subjects involved and where it can take them.

Next week is also the Subject drop-in sessions with subject leads. Do encourage your young people to get fully involved to help them with their decision making for next year

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## Co-Curricular Update

We are now fully back into our Co-Curricular programme with many students taking part in lunchtime and after school activities. The Co-Curricular donation is now live on parent pay and can be found under “other items”. If your child takes part in our clubs, please can you log on to Parent Pay and tick the “Consent” box. You may have noticed this is now being done on a termly basis rather than annually. We will be looking at the students who take part and permissions next week so please ensure you have ticked your consent if you would like your child to continue with their activity.

Lacrosse games this Saturday are against Guildford at home. It would be great to have supporters as usual and we are still fortunate that we are able to offer Teas, Coffees and bacon rolls thanks to our valuable parent Volunteers who are organised by George Wright – Thank you.

Next week, as well as our Inter House Badminton competition taking place, our Lacrosse games against Putney are now AWAY at Wimbledon Rugby Club, Barham Road, London. SW20 0ET. Parent transport will be required. We will potentially run a minibus if anyone is struggling for transport but we will need to know by Wednesday (21<sup>st</sup>) next week. Please email: [Louise Bebbington-Crombie](#) if you are unable to find transport.

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## Quad Pod: opening soon

Get ready, Year 11! We are thrilled to announce that their exclusive Quad Pod is opening in Grant Quad very shortly.

This isn't just a snack bar; it's a dedicated hub designed to support and fuel them as they power through on their final exam journey. Here is what they can look forward to:

- **VIP Access:** Skipping the long lines and saving time
- **Brain fuel:** Grabbing a wide range of delicious and healthy snacks at break time to keep their energy high and focus sharp.
- **Exclusive space:** A special privilege for a very hard-working year group to recharge before heading back to the classroom.



Stay tuned for the grand opening!

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## Understanding Access Arrangements: Information for Parents and Carers

At our school, we want every young person to have the chance to show what they can achieve. Some students face particular barriers that make it harder for them to demonstrate their abilities in formal examinations. Access Arrangements - such as Extra Time, a Scribe, or the use of a laptop - are designed to ensure that eligible students are not placed at a disadvantage.

These arrangements are regulated nationally by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), and all schools must follow the same rules and processes.

### What Access Arrangements are:

- Access Arrangements are reasonable adjustments for students with specific learning needs or disabilities. Their purpose is to support students in accessing exams fairly, not to give an advantage.
- Arrangements are only approved when there is clear evidence that they are both necessary and appropriate.

### What Parents Need to Know

#### 1. External Assessments Do Not Automatically Lead to Access Arrangements

Private assessments, medical reports, or external diagnoses can be very helpful in understanding a student's needs. However, JCQ regulations require schools to provide their own evidence before any arrangement can be approved.

This means we must show that:

- the support is already used regularly in school,
- it reflects the student's normal way of working, and
- without it, the student would be at a clear disadvantage compared with their peers.

#### 2. Support Must Already be in Place in School

Access Arrangements cannot be introduced solely for GCSE exams. To meet JCQ requirements, the support must already be used consistently in:

- lessons
- class tests
- mock exams

If a student does not routinely use a particular type of support in school, we are not permitted to apply for it for formal examinations.

### 3. The School Leads the Process

Even when families provide external reports provide external reports, the school must:

- carry out its own assessments using trained staff,
- gather evidence over time, and
- ensure that all JCQ criteria are met.

This is a national requirement that all schools must follow.

### 4. Timelines are Important

The process takes time, so we begin gathering evidence in:

- Year 9 or early Year 10 for most students.
- In Year 11, new arrangements are usually only considered where there is a recent, significant medical need.
- Late requests that do not meet JCQ criteria cannot be approved.

### 5. Our Commitment

We are committed to ensuring that every student receives the support that is:

- appropriate,
- reasonable,
- evidence-based, and
- fully compliant with JCQ regulations.

We look at each student individually and work carefully to ensure that any arrangements put in place genuinely support their needs and reflect national guidance.

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## Urbex - what parents need to know

The "urbex" (urban exploration) trend involves exploring abandoned human-made structures like factories, hospitals, and tunnels, gaining huge popularity through social media (TikTok, Instagram) by sharing photos or videos, but it carries significant dangers (structural collapse, asbestos) and legal risks (trespassing), prompting warnings from authorities about younger participants risking injury or worse for online views.

### What Urbex Involves

- Exploration: Venturing into derelict buildings, underground systems, or forgotten spaces.
- Documentation: Photography and videography are central, with platforms like [TikTok](#) and [Instagram](#) fuelling its spread.
- Types of Locations: Abandoned schools, power stations, old homes, bunkers, and even rooftops.

## Why It's Trending

- Visual appeal: Viral clips and photos offer dramatic, atmospheric content.
- Adrenaline and curiosity: The excitement of forbidden or forgotten places
- Social media: Hashtags and short-form video make it accessible and shareable.

## The Dangers & Concerns

- Physical hazards: High risk of injury from falls, structural collapse, electrocution, and exposure to toxic materials like asbestos.
- Legal risks: Entering property without permission is illegal; while often a civil offense, it can escalate to criminal charges.
- Youth safety: Authorities warn minors against the practice, citing a lack of experience and the dangerous pursuit of social media attention.

If you think that your child might be vulnerable to these types of risk-taking, please talk to them about the dangers.

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## Collecting Exam Certificates

If your child was unable to collect their Summer 2025 A Level certificates, a parent or sibling can collect them instead provided they bring a photo ID and the student has submitted a completed 3<sup>rd</sup> party collection form. Certificates can also be posted for a fee. Please check the exams section of the [school website](#) for further details. The school has the right to securely destroy them following 1 year after publication if they have not been collected.

GCSE certificates from Summer 2025 will be distributed during morning tutor time by house next week beginning 19<sup>th</sup> January. Further details can be found on the [school website](#). If your child misses their collection day, they are welcome to pop by any time during the school day to the Exams Office.

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## Director of Finance Recruitment

The role of Director of Finance is reopened for applications following the retirement of the previous post holder. We came really close to an appointment at the end of last term following a successful interview process, but our preferred candidate ultimately decided that now wasn't the right time for them to move to a new role.

The role is an exciting opportunity to join an amazing school at a senior level, and to help drive the next stage of our school's financial development and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of our financial operations. The role may suit someone with direct school experience seeking career progression or a new environment, or equally a skilled professional from another sector motivated to bring their experience to our specific context, and offers the chance to have a direct impact on the lives of young people within a fantastic school community.

Please continue to share this role with colleagues and friends who you think might be a good fit and are looking for a move. The application details are on My New Term at [Click here](#).

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## Follow us on Facebook!

Press the link and join the St. George's Community: [Facebook](#)



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## St. Georges Prayer Group: Invitation to pray for the life of St George's School.

### Dates:

Mon 26th Jan - Green Room  
Mon 9th March - Green Room  
Mon 11th May - classroom tbc  
Mon 22nd June - social offsite.

A group of parents from any ecumenical 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. They usually meet in the Green Room at School 7:45 - 8:45 p.m.

We also now have a zoom link which you can join on if you are unable to make it in person:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86114696403?pwd=i6fiqODiL9WCWwF7lhglyglyiQ8BnX.1>

This is a dedicated link which can be used for our prayer meetings anytime 🙏

Please join the WhatsApp group if you would like to be reminded and kept up to date: [WhatsApp Group Invite](#)

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## News from the PSA

### Next PSA Meeting, Monday, 19th January

Our next PSA meeting will take place on **Monday, 19th January at 8:00 p.m.** in a **Goddard Classroom**. All parents and caregivers are warmly invited to attend.

The meeting will include **school updates** and an overview of PSA plans for the term ahead. It's also a good opportunity to ask questions, get to know other parents and help shape our activities and events. The meeting agenda is available [here](#).

Whether you're already involved, considering volunteering, or simply want to find out more about what the PSA does, you're very welcome to join us.

### Christmas Ball Survey Have Your Say

Thank you to everyone who supported this year's Christmas Ball. Whether you attended or not, we'd really value your feedback to help us understand what worked well and how future events can be improved.

The survey is short, anonymous, and should take no more than a few minutes to complete. It will close **this Friday**, so we'd be grateful for your responses by then: <https://forms.gle/5bGqLc5NoU1XrJVe9>

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and for your continued support.

## Can You Help? Upcoming School & PSA Activities

### School Giving Day: Wednesday, 12 February

The school will be holding a Giving Day on Wednesday, 12th February, and we're looking for parent and carer volunteers to help wrap chocolate bars and sell them at break and after school as part of the Giving Day Golden Ticket fundraiser. It's a simple but important task, and any time you can spare would be very much appreciated.

### Year 10 Parents' Evening: Wednesday, 12 March

We're looking for volunteers to help with refreshments at the Year 10 Parents' Evening on Wednesday, 12th March. This is a small but very welcome way to support both the school and our parent community.

### Summer Fete

We're also still looking for 2 - 3 volunteers to support the planning and delivery of this year's Summer Fete, working alongside our existing lead. It's one of the school's key fundraising events, and any extra help really does make a difference.

If you're able to help with either activity, or would like to find out more, please email [psa@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk](mailto:psa@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk). Thank you, as always, for your support.

## Youth Mental Health First Aid Training

FREE

1 day Champion course designed specifically for school professionals working with 8 to 18 year olds.

**You will learn:**

- An understanding of common mental health issues and how they can affect young people
- The ability to spot the signs of mental ill health in young people, and guide them to a place of support
- Knowledge and confidence to advocate for mental health awareness
- Skills to support positive wellbeing

Friday 21 Nov 2025 9.30am to 4pm	Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 8ER	School Professionals	Parking available on site
Friday 5 Dec 2025 9.30am to 4pm	Hertfordshire County Council, Robertson House, Stevenage, SG1 2FQ	School Professionals	Parking available on site
Friday 23 Jan 2026 9.30am to 4pm	Peartree Spring Primary School, Stevenage, SG2 9GG	Parents/Carers	Parking available on roads near venue
Friday 6 Feb 2026 9.30am to 4pm	Springmead Primary School, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 2HB	School Professionals	Parking available on roads near the venue
Friday 27 Feb 2026 9.30am to 4pm	The Hub, Fleetville Junior School, St Albans, AL1 4LW	School Professionals	Parking available on site
Friday 6 Mar 2026 9.30am to 4pm	Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 8ER	School Professionals	Parking available on site

2 day First Aider course suitable for everyone who teaches, works, lives with or cares for 8 to 18 year olds.

**You will learn:**

- An in depth understanding of young people's mental health and factors that affect wellbeing
- Practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues
- Confidence to reassure and support a young person in distress
- Enhanced interpersonal skills, such as non judgemental listening
- Knowledge to help a young person recover their health by guiding them to further support
- How to engage with parents, carers and external agencies
- How to support a young person with a long term mental health illness to thrive
- Tools to look after your own wellbeing

Thursday 6 & Friday 7 Nov 2025 9.30am to 4pm	Peartree Spring Primary School, Stevenage, SG2 9GG	School Professionals	Parking available on roads near venue
Thursday 15 & Friday 16 Jan 2026 9.30am to 4pm	Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 8ER	School Professionals	Parking available on site

To book your place please email [schoolsmh@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:schoolsmh@hertfordshire.gov.uk)  
Places are limited to two representatives per education setting

# HAVE A MINUTE?

## Are You a Parent or Carer of a Child from an Asian Background?

We want to hear about your experiences accessing mental health support for your child

1

Scan the QR Code on this Poster

2

Fill Out a Quick 5 Minute Survey

3

Have Your Voice Heard

Any Questions? Reach out to us on: [sandbox@mhfinder.co.uk](mailto:sandbox@mhfinder.co.uk)

Delivered by

## The Sandbox

Free online mental health support for young people

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

## Family Lives Online Programme Spring 2026

**Less Shouting, More Cooperation**  
(6 weeks)

**Tuesday 20th January to 3rd March, 7.00pm to 9.00pm**  
Do you feel you are constantly nagging or shouting at your child to get what you need? Learn how you can change the way you communicate with your child, respond better, and feel more in control.

**Monday 9th February to 23rd March, 9.45am to 11.45am**

**Less Shouting, More Cooperation**  
(6 weeks)

Do you feel you are constantly nagging or shouting at your child to get what you need? Learn how you can change the way you communicate with your child, respond better, and feel more in control.

**Dads Together**  
(6 weeks)

**Wednesday 4th February to 18th March, 7.00pm to 9.00pm**

Calling all Dads - join our free online group, come along and receive support from other dads and learn how to change the way you communicate with your child, respond better and feel more in control.

**Tuesday 3rd February to 17th March, 7.00pm to 9.00pm**

Is your teen feeling anxious or isolated? Are you concerned about their mental health and struggling to get help? You may have an FFA, CIN, or CP in place and need more support. Learn how parents can best emotionally support their teen and feel confident and prepared for whatever challenges might arise.

**Getting on with Your Pre-teen or Teenager**  
(6 weeks)

For more information, call **0204 522 8700/8701**, email [services@familylives.org.uk](mailto:services@familylives.org.uk) or scan the QR code for our online form.



**We build better family lives together**

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

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## Warhammer Alliance Club

Join us for our new, weekly Warhammer Painting Club for children aged 8-12.

We have a collection of miniatures you are welcome to paint, or you can bring your own project!

Make new friends, work on your army, and have fun!

Starts 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026!

Every Thursday, 4-5PM

**£4.40 Per session.**

Spaces are limited.

**Book at Enquiry Desk.**

