



**George Stephenson**  
High School

1 February 2024

**“To know what people really think, pay regard to what they do,  
rather than what they say.”**

George Santayana

Dear Parent /Carer,

I hope that you have had a good start to 2024. We have certainly hit the road running at George Stephenson High School and have had a packed half-term already. Here are some of January's highlights.

Year 7 Health week where students learnt about the importance of mental health, body image, healthy breakfasts, and dental health with a full year group workout at the end of the week! They also had a fantastic Careers Speed dating day.



Year 8 hosted the Collingwood Learning's 'Smashed' project addressing underage drinking, causes and impact and ways to help.



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Year 9 experienced a cross-curricular day as part of Holocaust Memorial Day where the theme was 'the fragility of freedom'. Different subjects were delivered with a holocaust theme or message. Students also listened to the testimony of Rudi, a holocaust survivor and wrote some wonderful postcards. A lovely postcard from one of our students is at the end of this newsletter. Students also listened to a reading of "After the War: From Auschwitz to Ambleside" by Tom Palmer and wrote their feelings and names of loved ones on a flame to add to our holocaust memorial display.

Students in Year 10 experienced an enjoyable and engaging This is Creative Enterprise (TICE) event organised by Mrs Douglas working with the textiles sector.



Newcastle United Foundation, who have a permanent base at our school, started their careers delivery for students in Years 9 and 11



Year 11 students received their Mock Exam results in a formal Mock Exams assembly. As with any results day there were a range of emotions. The importance here is for students to learn from this experience and appreciate that they still have time to give their best to ensure they get the results they really deserve. This week we had 55 students at the first Modern

Foreign Languages Breakfast Club which is an excellent turnout and shows how determined our students are to do their best preparation.

It was a pleasure to talk to so many parents at the Year 11 parents evening with almost 85% of families in attendance. We also have a Year 11 Exams Information session for parents which will take place in school on Thursday 15 February from 5.30pm to 6.30pm. Doors will open at 5.10pm. This is a terrific opportunity for you to find out more about the exams and how you can support your child. Those who attended last year said it was really helpful and we already have 25 families signed up so if you would like to come along, please fill in this [form](#).

Tonight is our NE12 Sixth form open evening held at Longbenton from 5pm. This is open to year 10 and 11 students and parents. Our shared Sixth Form has an excellent track record of results, enrichment, and destination data. We hope many of the students make us their first choice if the courses they want are available amongst the 30+ we offer. Student voice is always positive and when Ofsted visited the school students said, "they felt lucky to be part of our sixth form".

Finally, I would like to thank you for all your efforts to support your child's attendance at school. Attendance is still lower than where we were before the pandemic, and we are concerned about students missing even more of their education so please continue to work with us if you need any help at all to support you or your child coming to school. We have an excellent Education Welfare Officer and a team of experienced Guidance Managers who are here to help you.

We know that at this time of year, we are all more susceptible to colds and minor illnesses. In most cases, these have minor symptoms which can be treated easily and do not require time out of school. If your child is well enough to be in school, please send them in.

It's never too late to benefit from good attendance: more than half (54%) of pupils who were persistently absent in Year 10 and then rarely absent in Year 11, passed at least 5 GCSEs, compared to 36% of pupils who were persistently absent in both years.

Of course, attendance is important for more than just attainment. Regular school attendance can facilitate positive peer relationships, which is a protective factor for mental health and wellbeing. You may find the following links useful for further guidance and information on attendance <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/> , <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/09/28/what-are-ghost-children-and-why-is-school-attendance-important/> and <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2021/09/03/mental-health-resources-for-children-parents-carers-and-school-staff/>

Finally, our Eco-Enthusiasts this week have entered Duracell's 'Big Battery hunt', we would like to invite all pupils, parents/carers and staff to bring in used batteries to school where the Eco-Enthusiast group will collect and add them to our tally.

We have collected 624 batteries since entering the competition on Monday. Our aim is to collect over 4000 before the deadline of Friday 12th July with the hope of potentially winning a variety of prizes. Current leaders have over 8000 but with the support of our amazing GSHS community, we hope to compete against schools across the UK.

Sorry we cannot collect every battery and can only accept the following: AAA/A/C/D (see picture below)



We are only collecting these batteries. They will have been used in things like remote controls, toys and torches.



Thank you once again for your support and I wish you all the very best for 2024.

*P. Douthwaite*

Mr. P. Douthwaite  
Headteacher

Dear Ruth,

Thank you so much for taking the time to share your story. It really touched my heart. Hearing about what you went through made me realise how lucky I am and all the things I take for granted. You should not feel guilty for taking the food from the bottom of the pan, you did not steal from others.

It is not your fault that all of these terrible injustices happened to you. I just hope that the world of today can learn from this and not make the same terrible mistakes. I will never not to overlook how lucky I am to have my freedom, friends, family, food, shelter. I pledge to challenge all discrimination and prejudice.

Thank you,  
Catherine.