



28 March 2024

**“There is no such thing as a perfect parent. So just be a real one.”**

Sue Atkins

Dear Parent / Guardian,

As we come to the end of a short half-term and the beginning of a long Easter break, I would just like to thank you all again for supporting the school and encouraging your children. As parents and carers, we are the key people in our children's lives and make an enormous difference, not only to their values but their attitudes to school and education and you really do a fantastic job – even though it can feel thankless at times! If you have a child taking exams in the summer and want to support your child, Easter is a key time. I would recommend you look at the tips for parents on this page on our website <https://www.gshs.org.uk/parents/exam-information>

My own daughter is studying for her A levels this summer, and it is hard to strike that balance between support and being seen as interfering, but we can only do our best!

It has once again been another exciting term at GSHS. We can never cover everything in the newsletters so please check our twitter account to keep up to date with the latest news and announcements.

Shrek the musical was a fantastic success this year – watched by more than 800 people in total and I know all who went had a wonderful evening. The cast and crew were outstanding and thank you to Mrs Lee and all the other staff involved for another superb show.



This week our Year 10 students are taking part in their work experience visits. This is really important to us as a school. It may not be the industry they end up working in but it gives our students a real insight into the world of work. We look forward to them returning after Easter where they will discuss their experiences as part of their career's lessons. This is just one element of a substantive careers program across the school which ensures we regularly have the highest percentages of students across the region who go into further education, employment, or training when they leave school.

A huge congratulations to the Year 7 and 8 dancers who performed in the North Tyneside Dance Festival at Whitley Bay Playhouse!

Thank you to all the staff involved and Mrs Patrick for organising. Obviously, a huge congratulations goes to all the students for working so hard. They were amazing and did the school proud!



We are also delighted to say that we are once again full in Year 7 next year and look forward to welcoming our new students and their families over the coming term with a wide range of activities to help their transition to GSHS.

As a school we continue to be committed to doing all we can to support students with their emotional and mental well-being, as well as their academic progress. In fact, we feel that these two things are inextricably linked. In addition to the pastoral support team within school, which includes your child's Guidance Manager, Achievement Support Co-ordinator, Tutor, Senior Mental Health Lead and School Counsellor, we also work with a range of external services. These include the Mental Health Support team (MHST), who visit the school regularly to support students who need that little bit extra, and Someone Cares, who support students with a wide range of emotional and mental health needs. Additionally, the school has an excellent relationship with the Northern

Guild, who train psychotherapists in the North East. We currently have three students on placement with us, who all offer one to one support for students. We also liaise closely with Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Acorns and HIVE. If you feel that your child requires more support, please do not hesitate to contact their Guidance Manager.

We also realise that supporting students who are struggling with their mental health is tough for parents and carers. The second of our Parent and Carers Hub meetings, supported by the MHST, will be held at George Stephenson High School on 25th April, following a very well attended first meeting in December. A survey has recently been sent out to parents so that we can best understand what you need from us, and details will follow once the MHST have looked at your feedback. If you are finding supporting your child difficult, or you just want some extra advice, then I would urge you to come along. Please look out for the booking link in your Parentmail account soon. You are not alone.

As you might already be aware, this year we are applying to become a School Of Sanctuary and today's non-uniform day supported this. This means joining a network of schools across the country who are committed to creating a culture of welcome, understanding and belonging for those who have been forced to flee their homes. Staff and students in our school are working together to create a culture of kindness and compassion, and we are making a number of changes to our systems, school environment and policies to help those who might arrive in our community in traumatic circumstances. We have also been supporting the Walking With Refugee Centre in Wallsend this year with food and clothing donations. These have been gratefully received. Our students have additionally begun a series of visits to the Centre, talking first hand with refugees to get a better understanding of their experiences and helping out with the work of the centre. The maturity, empathy and kindness shown by our students has been truly impressive.

Our annual George Stephenson Ski Trip this year was to the Salzburger Sportwelt, Amade, Austria. We have established a real skiing tradition in the school over the last decade and a half and run one of the biggest ski trips in the north of England. 77 students and 9 staff skied the Amade area for five days, including trips to Flachau, Zauchensee and Flachau Winkl. Our beginners made especially good progress this year, and everyone was up to the top of the mountains by the end of the week. Our experts pushed themselves to the limit with some great off-piste skiing and, as is always the case skiing, the views were spectacular. It was a brilliant trip and we would like to thank the students themselves for their part in making the trip fun not only for themselves but also for the staff. Next year we are off to Les Deux Alpes, with another sold out trip. We are already looking forward to it!



We also wish our students an enjoyable time on their fantastic trip to Iceland this Easter and we look forward to hearing all about it on their return.

I hope you all have a relaxing and enjoyable Easter Break. Should you find you need any help at all please click the link [here](#) for a list of support and contact numbers available.

Wishing you all the best,

Mr. P. Douthwaite  
Headteacher