



22 December 2022

“I never lose: either I win, or I learn”

Nelson Mandela

Dear Parent/Carer,

The end of a year is always a good time for reflection – not just on the positives but also the things that didn't go as we wanted or hoped and how we can learn from them going forward.

There have been many positives this term and these have continued this month where we have had the pleasure of a daily musical advent calendar ran by the ever enthusiastic Mrs Lee and the Performing Arts students culminating with a moving performance of 'Believe' from the Polar Express superbly performed by Sixth Formers Summa and Erin to our staff this week.

We have also welcomed two new parent governors to the governing body. Jenny Brady and Joanne Tierney were both successfully elected from a large and strong field as parent governors. They have attended their first full governors meeting and are keen to serve the school and the community well.

Nelson Mandela liked to affirm: “I never lose: either I win, or I learn.” He would also say: “Don't judge me on my successes, judge me on the number of times I have fallen and gotten up again”. It is the resilience to learn from any setback that leads to valuable lessons.

In my last newsletter we wished England well in the World Cup but unfortunately it wasn't to be, but we hope that they learn from the experience and are stronger as a result. It is the effort and reflection that is important when growing and developing and something we encourage in our young people. Seeing so many certificates and rewards being handed out this week in rewards assemblies to our students is a testament to this and a deserved recognition of their efforts. It is not just students but also our staff who we encourage to develop this mindset. I would highly recommend young people or potential leaders listen to the excellent High-Performance Podcast. If you have any time over Christmas. The [Eddie Howe](#) and [Jonny Wilkinson](#) episodes are particularly thought provoking.

There are some things however that are difficult to improve no matter what we do and one of those is the condition of school buildings. It's fair to say that schools are more about the people who are in them than the building itself, but our young people really do deserve the best and anything that can improve their learning environment can only be a good thing. I am therefore pleased to share some very exciting news. The DfE made an announcement on Friday 16th December relating to the next round of schools identified for investment via the Schools Rebuilding Programme and I am delighted to say that **George Stephenson will benefit as one of the next 239 schools across the country that will be rebuilt or substantially refurbished within the next 5 years.**

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We don't know the exact timing or scope yet, but I am sure you will agree that the provision of a modern and sustainable learning environment will enhance the high-quality educational experience we already provide. This is great news for students, staff and the wider community and a fantastic way to end the year. I will keep you informed on any updates in the new year as and when I get them.

Finally, the voting for Young Mayor and Member of UK Youth Parliament across NT is now live and the link is open until 12th Jan 2022. We have three candidates this year - Sarah Foggon, Sharon Zeng and Khaled Issa.

Please encourage your child to vote. Young people aged 11 to 18 years or up to 25 years with special education needs who either live or study in North Tyneside can vote once in both Young Mayor and Member of Youth Parliament election first in the online election via this link:

<https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/493/get-involved-and-have-your-say>

A few reminders for next term. Please be aware that it is our policy to keep the school open wherever possible. The Department for Education recognises the delivery of education as an essential service, as do we. If we do have to close, parents/carers will be informed through ParentMail, the school website www.gshs.org.uk or the North Tyneside Council website www.northtyneside.gov.uk Please continue to assume the school is open unless you hear otherwise.

When schools are closed over the holidays, we recognise that this can be a worrying time for young people and parents for lots of reasons. You might be experiencing problems at home, struggling with your mental health or lots of other issues that families deal with daily. You can speak to a social worker by calling the Front Door Service in North Tyneside on 0345 2000 109. They are open 8.30am – 5pm, Monday – Thursday and 8.30am – 4.30pm on Friday. Outside of those hours you can call the After Hours Service on 200 6800. You can also email at childrenandadultscontactcentre@northtyneside.gov.uk

If you have an immediate concern and feel that a child is at risk of significant harm or danger, please contact the police on 999. Finally, there is a whole range of services you could contact available here on our school website <https://tinyurl.com/4f2x9x7r>

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you of our uniform and dress code requirements in advance of the holidays when some of you may be buying new uniform for your child. Please see the guidance on our website. I would like to thank parents and students who have supported our uniform expectations again this year. There will also be a consultation on uniform coming out next term.

It has been a thoroughly enjoyable term at George Stephenson High School. The kindness, care and generosity of our students and community reflects the best of the festive season. I hope that you all have a very Merry Christmas, and we look forward to welcoming the students back to school on Monday 9th January 2023.

Best wishes,



Mr P. Douthwaite
Headteacher