



20 January 2023

**Only a night from old to new;  
Only a sleep from night to morn.  
The new is but the old come true;  
Each sunrise sees a new year born.**

Helen Hunt Jackson, Extract from "New Year's Morning" (1892)

Dear Parent/Carer,

The new year is well and truly underway, and I hope at least a few resolutions are still going strong. It has been a delight to see all of our students return after the Christmas break with a fresh resolve and eagerness despite the cold conditions.

As well as welcoming students back, this week I have been delivering assemblies on the theme of respect. This was the key value that parents, students, governors and teachers all agreed we should hold high as a school. We talked about how self-respect leads to respect of others and that good role models are important in teaching our young people how to better themselves.

As parents, the role we have in setting examples to our young people can never be underestimated and we also need to highlight the good we see in others. A few years ago I visited Brother Leo, the Headteacher of St. Joseph's School in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The school had 3000 paying students (who were taught all their subjects in English), and at the end of the day the teachers put on free reading lessons for 200 of the poorest children from the nearby slum area who couldn't go to school. What he found upsetting at the time was how the paying students would treat those with less money and the lack of empathy they showed. I remember him telling me at the time that, 'society has a greater need for people of values than it has for scholars'. Whilst we will always push our students to be the best academically, the development of values will always be at the heart of what we do at GSHS.

Social media influencers have been in the headlines recently and concerns have been raised about the impact on our young people particularly around misogynistic views. This is something that we address through PSHE in school, and I am sure you will do at home but it is important that we tackle this in the right way. We have colleagues who have attended specific training courses on this issue and have shared approaches with staff. A guide for parents will be sent out soon.

We continue to provide as many enrichment opportunities as we can, and the last two weeks have seen 'This is Creative Enterprise' (TICE) in school which involved professionals working with our Textile students. On Wednesday all of Year 10 attended a careers fair at Burnside and 6th form students visited the engineering department at Newcastle University. Rehearsals for Mary Poppins Jr. are well under way, and we really look forward to our first live performance in front of an audience for a long time! The show will run from Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> - Thursday

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23<sup>rd</sup> March at 6:30pm and tickets will go on sale after half-term.



Year 10 TICE



6<sup>th</sup> formers at the Engineering Dept. at Newcastle University

Next week is Holocaust Memorial Day and our 6th form students who visited Auschwitz will deliver assemblies. There will be a cross-curricular day of activities for year 9 on Holocaust Memorial Day on the 27<sup>th</sup>. We also have our Year 11 mock results assembly on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>. Students have fed back in the past how helpful this process has been, both in motivating them but also identifying what they need to work on in the run up to the summer.

Thank you all for completing the recent uniform consultation. We have had more than 500 responses so far. Consultation finishes on 3<sup>rd</sup> February so there is still time to complete the form <https://forms.office.com/e/quUYZEirjr>. We are surveying students this week and will provide further information after half term.

Thanks also to all the students who voted for our Young Mayor and Youth Parliament nominations. Congratulations to Khaled in Year 7 who is through to the next stage for Young Mayor and Sharon in Year 9 who is through to the next stage to be a member of the Youth Parliament. Sharon campaigned to improve financial education in schools. We are meeting with Sharon this week to identify where we can further develop and support students in this area across the curriculum.

Finally, you will be aware there have been several dates identified for strike action in the coming weeks and months. We are undertaking a risk assessment to see if the school can remain open or partially open for the first strike day on Wednesday 1st February. We will do what we can to keep the school open to as many students as possible and I will inform you of our intentions next week.

Please be aware that there are other strike dates announced which could affect our school on Tuesday 28th February 2023, Wednesday 15th and Thursday 16th March 2023. We will keep you updated on the situation as each date approaches.

I hope 2023 is good to you all.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Douthwaite".

Mr P. Douthwaite  
Headteacher