



George Stephenson

High School

1 May 2024

“Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you had a good Easter Break and all the students who are revising are feeling prepared for the final push towards the summer exams. I would once again recommend you look at the tips for parents on this page on our website on how you can support students at this time <https://www.gshs.org.uk/parents/exam-information>

Thank you for your generosity on our non-uniform day before Easter where we were able to make a kind contribution towards the Walking With Centre as part of our School of Sanctuary work. A number of students have visited the centre recently and have been moved by the stories they have heard.

We hosted another mental health hub for parents last week and ran by the Connect Mental Health Support Team. As parents/carers you are the primary person in your child's life so we continue to look at ways we can support you with your child in these areas in a practical way. These sessions have been well received so will be running again in the future.

You will be aware that funding for Schools is incredibly difficult, and I thank parents for their understanding around this. Staff continue to work hard to secure funding by other means, well beyond their normal work, so we continue to provide the best we can for our young people. We have managed to develop an in-school gym and secure grants and funding to develop the 'Stephenson Centre' which you can see on the way into school. This will be a specialist centre to work with young people who need some additional support. We also continue to innovate within the curriculum but your support and understanding of what we can reasonably do with the resources we have is always appreciated. As we approach local elections, and at some point this year a general election, I would encourage you to research, ask and challenge representatives on how they are going to support schools and education – and ultimately your children, at this key stage in their lives.

Last week we welcomed Mary Glendon MP for North Tyneside to the school and we discussed these issues. She also had a tour of the school and was really impressed with what she saw. She spoke to a group of students planting flowers and boxes at the

front of the school. Looked at the progress being made on the “Stephenson Centre”, visited our new gym, discussed the work of the Newcastle United Foundation in our school and met with a group of year 8 students who were brilliant. They talked about the local area and their concerns around, litter, vaping stores in the Killingworth Centre and how a small number of students can let the school down in the community and how this does not represent the school.

Mary could not believe that they were only in Year 8. We are fortunate to have Mary and North Tyneside Mayor Dame Norma Redfearn, back in school soon to meet with our Sixth Form Politics students.

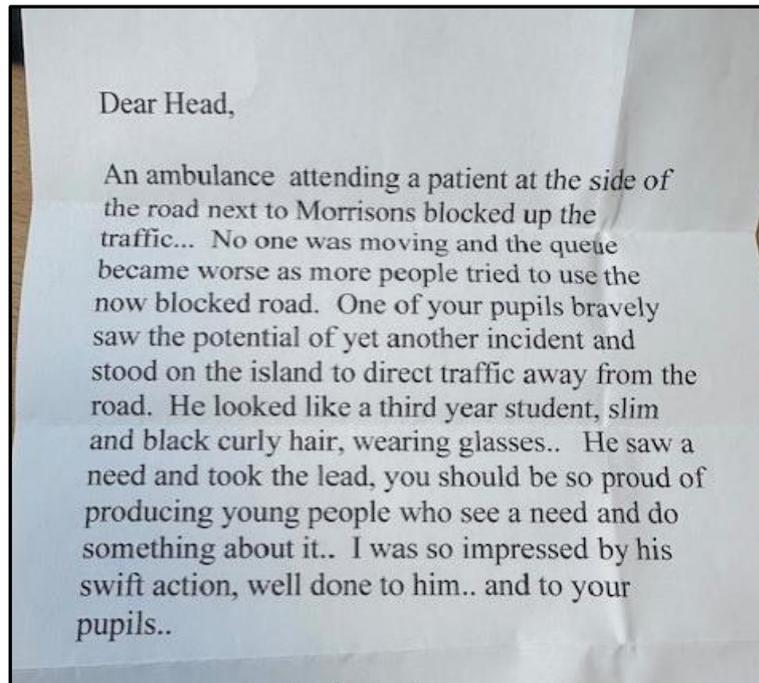
We also welcomed our students back from a once in lifetime trip to Iceland. It was a packed itinerary so students could make the most of their experience. On the first day students visited the Bridge between the continents, Gunnuhver hot springs, Reykjanes Lighthouse, Stampar Crater, Sky Lagoon and Hveradalir Geothermal area. The following day they visited Reykjavik, Thingvellir National Park - a setting in Game of Thrones (see photo), Geysir Geothermal Area and Gullfoss Waterfall. On the final day they headed to the Lava Centre and then onto a range of waterfalls including Skogafoss and Seljalandsfoss. They walked up to see a glacier and headed to Reynishverfi beach to see the impressive coastal features on the black sand beach.



The students were exceptional and an absolute pleasure to take away, they certainly did GSHS proud.

We are planning another trip to Iceland in 2026.

We had a worrying incident the week before Easter when a student was knocked into by a car. They are going to be ok, but it is timely to remind our young people to of being careful when crossing roads, particularly when they are part of a group. We did have one student who went above and beyond, and we received a kind letter from a member of the public. With a little investigation we found out that it was the fantastic Owen Hodgkiss in year 7. Well done Owen! It is always pleasing to see our students looking to see how they can help others and being excellent ambassadors for the school.



A group of Sixth formers enjoyed a trip to the Common Rooms in Newcastle for a BBC Young Reporters: Production Unlocked event. It was based around careers and skills needed for a future in the media sector. They also got to meet Apollo from Gladiators!



Students got involved in workshops including digital journalism, making music to tell a story and using special effects make up. They represented our school fantastically! Particular praise goes to Millie for being the first to volunteer to get up to make music and Kate for doing some incredible special effects make up. They were all amazing.

Finally, I have just written to the parents of our new intake in September and look forward to welcoming their children to our school for transition activities this term. Once again, we are oversubscribed and have several appeals which is a credit to the hard work of colleagues. We continue to enjoy working in partnership with you to provide the best possible education for all our students through our core values of ambition, respect and community.

Wishing you all the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Douthwaite'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mr. P. Douthwaite
Headteacher