

AUTUMN TERM, 2026

YEAR 7 NEWSLETTER 1



YEAR TEAM MESSAGE

We are so pleased to share that Year 7 have had a brilliant start to their time at GSHS. They have settled in very well and are engaging well with high school life. Already, students have joined enrichment activities, after school and lunchtime clubs, and been involved in the school council! We are really proud of them so far and we are excited to see what they can achieve next.

Year 7 have also been fantastic at wearing their uniform and arriving ready to learn with all their relevant equipment, PE kit and timetables each day. Thank you for all of your support at home in helping to ensure your child is organised and prepared each day.

We are very impressed with Year 7's attendance so far, with over 97% attendance across the whole year group! Thank you for supporting us with your child's attendance and we ask for your continued support into the Autumn and Winter months in ensuring your child is attending school every day. We place a strong focus on punctuality and attendance, and we ask that all students maintain attendance above 95% so they can achieve the best outcomes they possibly can.

At GSHS we have high aspirations for all our students, and we are especially looking forward to seeing what Year 7 can achieve after such a positive start! Thank you for your continued support in fostering such an ambitious year group here at GSHS.

Miss Spooner, Mr A'Court and the Tutor Team

KEY DATES

- Monday 5th October: Staff Training Day
- Wednesday 4th November: Progress Report 1 (Settling In Check)
- Friday 27th November: Staff Training Day
- Monday 30th Nov - Friday 11th Dec: Synoptic Assessments 1
- Monday 4th January: Staff Training Day
- Monday 27th January: Progress Report 2
- Friday 5th March: Dimensions Day
- Thursday 18th March - Parents Evening
- Monday 10th - Friday 21st May: Synoptic Assessments 2
- Friday 25th June: Staff Training Day
- Monday 30th July: Progress Report 3



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WHAT WILL YEAR 7 STUDY THIS TERM?

English: Students are currently studying the introductory "Story of English" unit. They are reading a variety of texts including 'The Lady of Shalott' by Lord, Alfred Tennyson and 'Mythos' by Stephen Fry. They are also exploring how the English language has developed through history.

Maths: Students are focusing on core maths skills, including place value, the four operations, and an introduction to algebra.

Science: Students are transitioning into KS3 by studying the fundamental principles of Science introduced in KS2. They are starting to develop their disciplinary literacy as a scientist, beginning with Cells, Particles and Energy.

Art: Students will begin the year with a project based on 'Insects'. Through this skills based unit, students will continue to develop skills, knowledge and understanding of using a variety of mediums in Art.

Computing: Students are learning how to navigate and use the school network responsibly, developing their presentation software skills, and exploring key e-safety topics including the impact of cyberbullying, respecting others and online safety.

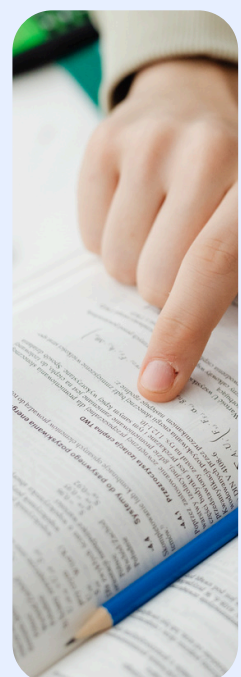
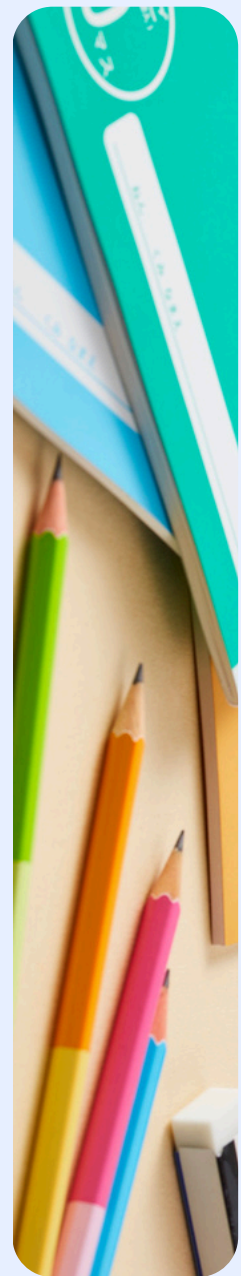
Design Technology: Our theme this year is 'Time for Tea' students will reflect on the classic book, 'Alice in Wonderland' and draw inspiration from the stories and characters. They will develop their understanding of Textiles through practical tasks including embroidery, mark making and surface decoration.

Drama: Students will be exploring the genre of Commedia Dell'arte, developing students knowledge of physical skills. Students will also have the opportunity to explore mask work.

Geography: Students are currently exploring the three types of Geography, describing and locating places around the World. Students will also explore map skills, interpreting ordnance survey maps and how maps can be important politically.

Health Education: Students are exploring what makes a person healthy – including mental and physical health, healthy and unhealthy diets. They will also identify different influences on decisions regarding diet and exercise.

History: Students are studying the theme of control, beginning with the Norman invasion of England, including the Battle of Hastings, the development of the feudal system, and the role of castles in securing Norman rule.



WHAT WILL YEAR 7 STUDY THIS TERM?

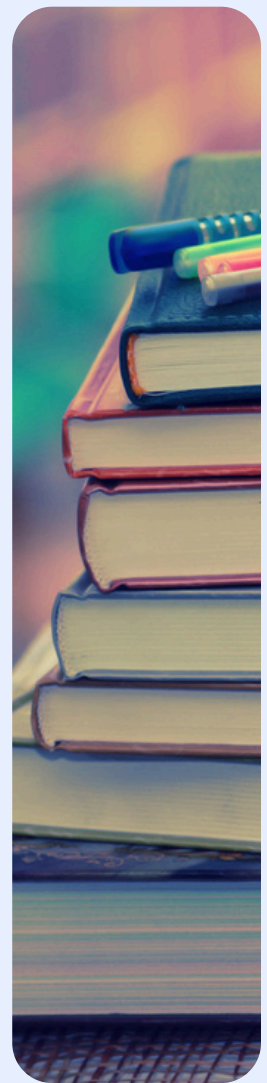
iLearn: Students are finding out about how our brains work and how they can use this knowledge to help them become more successful learners. After half term, students will make a time capsule about themselves.

Music: We are exploring 4 elements of music: Dynamics, Instruments, Rhythm and Tempo (D.I.R.T) using singing and body percussion.

Physical Education: During the first term, students will be taking part in Team Sports with a focus on Rugby, Netball, Football and Basketball as well as Orienteering and Leadership Activities, Fitness and Dance.

Religious Education: This term we are looking at what are religion, philosophy and ethics, considering whether football is a religion, what are our personal philosophies for life and exploring ethical questions if you could go back in time.

Spanish: We are learning how to introduce ourselves and greet others in Spanish. We will learn how to describe family members and talk about pets. We will also be learning the sounds of Spanish so we can pronounce Spanish words correctly. At the end of the term we will be learning about how Christmas is celebrated in Spain.



YEAR 7 SYNOPTIC ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

In the fortnight beginning Monday 30th November, Year 7 students will be taking synoptic assessments in English, Maths, and Science. These assessments give us a helpful overview of their learning so far and allow us to understand each child's strengths and areas for development. This helps us to provide the right support and stretch to ensure all students make strong and expected progress as they move through Key Stage 3

To support students in preparing for these assessments, English, Maths, and Science teachers will post on ClassCharts the dates of both the revision lessons and the assessments. Revision materials will be shared with students via ClassCharts and teachers will also complete a revision lesson with students prior to the assessments so that students have the opportunity to ask questions and become familiar with the structure of their assessments.

The results of these assessments will be shared with you as part of your child's next progress report. The report will include each assessment score, a subject-specific target as well as an effort score for all subject areas.





SOTW POSTCARDS

We ran a Year 7 competition to design a scientific postcard this term. There was a lot of competition, but the five winners were Sam, Chloe, Holly-Rose, Zara and Jasmine! Their creative designs will be used for all of the postcards that are sent home for students that win "Scientist of the Week" throughout the year.

Thank you and well done to all entrants!

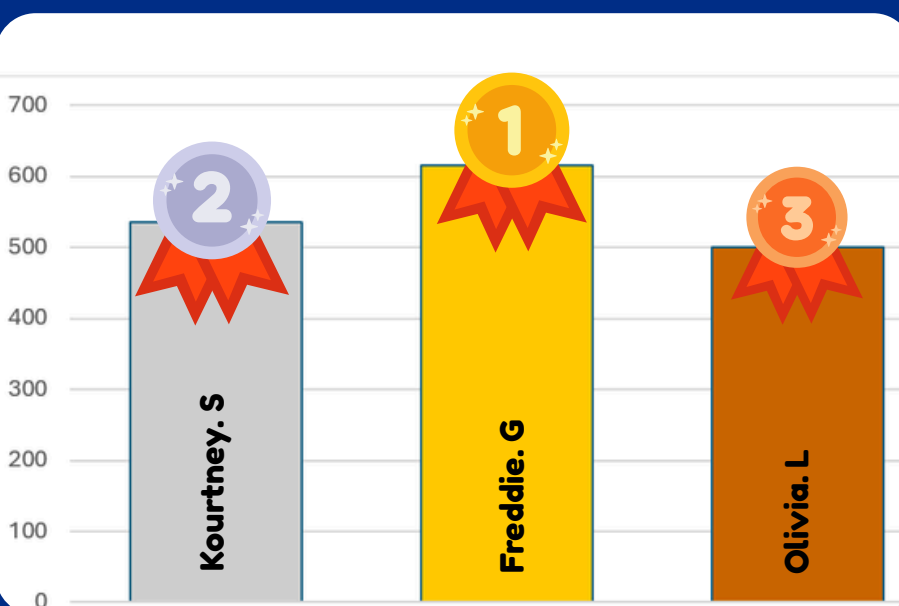
OUR VALUES - REWARDS

The first Hot Chocolate Friday winners thoroughly enjoyed their sweet treats as a reward for their brilliant start to year 7! Teachers nominate students for their excellent attitude to learning and for upholding our school values of Respect, Community and Ambition.

There were 95 nominations that went into the prize draw this time, and there will be many more nominations and chances to win throughout the year!



POINTS UPDATE



A big well done to all of Year 7, who have collectively achieved over 58,000 positive points so far!

Congratulations to our top 3 points scorers in the year group too!

Freddie. G (1st)
Kourtney. S (2nd)
Olivia. L (3rd)



YEAR GROUP COUNCIL

The Year Group Council is off to an amazing start, with a wide variety of projects being debated to improve the school and help the local area. The council have had two meetings so far and have confirmed their plans for this year.

They are planning an exciting event in the local community for the winter term to help raise money for children's charities at Christmas. They are well underway with arranging a variety of activities that should be fun for all involved and raise some money for a great cause during the festive period!

The council are also looking into ways to improve the school too. Based on the feedback from student votes from across the school. They are already putting plans in place to improve the break and lunchtime experience for all students. They are also aiming to run a whole school survey to help expand the variety of lunchtime and after school clubs that we offer so that there is something for everyone!



MEMBERS

**7A: Liam. D and Connie. M | 7B: Chloe. D and Winston Y | 7C: April J. and Alexis. K
7D: Julia. S. and Noah. D | 7E: Maya. R and Oscar. G
7F: Chikamso. N and Constantine. B | 7G: Ethan. C and Oliver. C
7H: Hugo. S and Emily. C. | 7J: Olivia. L. and Taylor H**



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

English

How can I help my child improve their reading at home?

The single most effective thing you can do is encourage your child to read regularly. Aim for at least 20 minutes of reading several times a week. Ask them questions about what they are reading, such as: What has happened so far? Who is your favourite character and why? What do you think will happen next? Reading a range of fiction texts, non-fiction texts, newspapers and magazines will help develop vocabulary, comprehension and confidence.

What books should my child be reading in Year 7?

We encourage students to read books that challenge them appropriately while still being enjoyable. Suitable choices include modern novels, classics, historical fiction, fantasy and mystery texts. Students can also use our school library recommendations. The most important thing is that they are reading regularly and developing a love of reading.

What will my child learn in English this year?

Year 7 students study a variety of texts and skills, including: Reading fiction and non-fiction; Analysing language and structure; Developing creative and transactional writing; Improving spelling, punctuation and grammar; Building speaking and listening skills. Students will cover the following topics and texts: The Story of English; 'Oliver Twist' by Charles Dickens; 'The Tempest' or 'Henry V' by William Shakespeare.

How is my child assessed in English?

Students complete a range of assessments throughout the year. These may include reading comprehension tasks, analytical responses, creative writing and speaking activities.

My child finds English difficult. What support is available?

We are committed to supporting every student. Teachers provide guidance in lessons, targeted feedback and differentiated activities where needed. Additional support may include intervention sessions, literacy programmes, reading support or recommendations for activities that can be completed at home. If you have concerns, please contact your child's English teacher so we can work together to help them succeed.

For more information about Maths please contact Mrs H. Bell (Curriculum Lead) or visit www.gshs.org.uk/english.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Maths

How are the classes structured?

Students are in two parallel populations. In each population we have 4 classes; set 1, set 2 and then 3 and 4 are mixed attainment. We review classes and sets periodically over the year to ensure students are placed in the correct class for their ability. We use assessment data and teacher input to inform any class changes.

How is home learning set?

Homework is set on Sparx maths every Wednesday for the following Wednesday. Homework is used to consolidate understanding of topics that have been previously taught. Sparx has built in videos to help support your child. Students are welcome to come to Sparx club in the library afterschool on Thursdays between 3 and 4pm should they need any support or just a place to do their home learning.

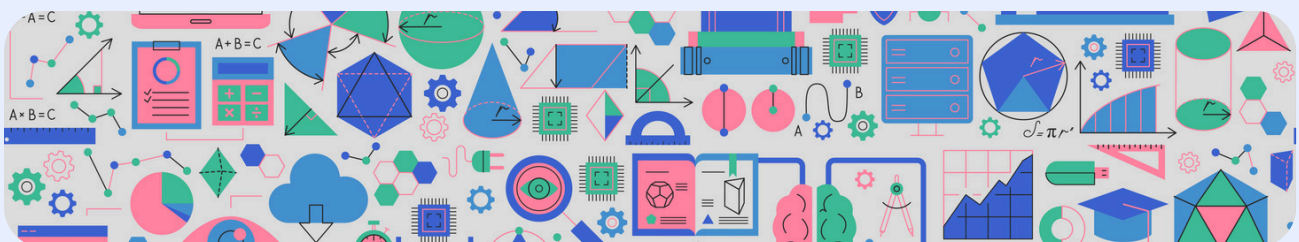
How are the students assessed?

Students receive a baseline assessment at the beginning of year 7 and are assessed formally three more times over the year on the content they have been learning in lessons. Students are given advance notice of their upcoming assessments by class teachers, and via announcements on Class Charts. The announcement on Class Charts will contain revision topics and links to support independent study. For synoptic assessments, a revision lesson is hosted by all class teachers beforehand.

What do the students learn?

Over the year students cover a variety of topics including algebra, statistics, geometry and probability. All students follow the same scheme of work in year 7 regardless of class. Teachers ensure that within each topic, each class is provided with the correct support and challenge for their ability.

For more information about Maths please contact Miss J. Torbitt (Curriculum Lead) or visit www.gshs.org.uk/mathematics.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Science

What will my child learn this year?

We begin with the fundamental principles in Science which underpin the knowledge and understanding of the KS3 then KS4 curriculum, spiralling and building upon scientific content and skills through retrieval.

What does home learning look like in Year 7?

Students will receive 3 sets per topic. Curiosity booklet quiz to raise awareness of links to real-world contexts, career forms to raise ambition and awareness of specific career skills and revision using flashcards and past paper questions. This is alongside any bespoke home learning the teacher may feel appropriate to support the class.

What do assessments look like?

Assessments beyond the classroom are either informative end of topic Key Assessed task, or synoptic, twice per year, which assess your child's knowledge and understanding of a range of topics. Key assessed tasks consist of flashcard recall questions (10) and application-style questions (15), where students must use their knowledge of key terms and definitions to access and evidence higher-order thinking skills e.g. new contexts, method evaluation, data analysis.

Are there sets/streamed classes?

Classes in Year 7/8/9 are completely mixed. We have 2 top sets in Years 10 and 11 and 1-2 Separate Science classes, depending on the cohort and student progress and attainment. Top sets are based upon attitude towards learning, home learning record and attainment in Key Assessed Tasks and synoptic assessments.

What is the difference between Combined Science and Separate Science?

Combined Science rewards 2 GCSEs at Higher (grade 9-43) or Foundation Tier (grade 55-11). Separate Science rewards 3 separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics at higher tier only. The exam board at GCSE is Edexcel.

Is Separate Science needed for A Level or Applied Science?

Entry requirements for A Level are grade 6 in Combined Science or 6 in all 3 Sciences, alongside ideally 6 in Maths to support the numeracy demand in A Level Science. Applied Science requires 55 in Combined Science higher or Foundation, alongside ideally 5 in Maths. Further education and STEM careers prioritise higher order thinking skills over number of GCSE grades e.g. 77 in Combined Science is more beneficial than 6 6 6 Separate Sciences.

For more information about iLearn please contact Mrs C. James (Curriculum Lead) or visit www.gshs.org.uk/science.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

iLearn

1. What is iLearn?

iLearn is an ambitious attempt to develop students' metacognition and self-regulation. We want to support their learning in other subjects during Year 7, throughout their GSHS career and in their lives once they have left our care.

2. How many iLearn lessons do students get?

The iLearn course is just taught in Year 7. Students get 4 iLearn lessons each fortnight.

3. Who teaches iLearn?

iLearn is taught by teachers from a variety of subject areas including History, Geography, Maths and DT. Staff from a large number of different departments have taught iLearn in the past because we want students to be able to take what they learn about themselves in iLearn and apply it in other lessons. Teachers across the school can help them with this.

4. What will students learn?

The curriculum is sequenced to support students in their development of metacognition and self-regulation. Each unit is half a term long. The first unit introduces the students to some brain science and lets them briefly explore how the things they are learning about might relate to themselves. They learn to transfer what they are learning into and out of their iLearn lessons. The units that follow on from that are designed to challenge them to complete independent projects (individually first, and then in bigger and bigger groups).

5. Will students get home learning?

In line with our whole-school policy, Year 7 students will not get home learning in iLearn until after Christmas. They will then receive up to 3 home learnings per half term – a reading/Quiz, some extra research and then revision of Tier 2 words.

For more information about iLearn please contact Mrs H. Smith (Curriculum Lead) or visit www.gshs.org.uk/ilearn.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ICT, Digital Wellbeing and Online Safety

1. How does the school help to keep my child safe when they are using computers and the internet?

School devices and internet access are filtered and monitored. We also use Impero monitoring software, which helps staff identify potentially concerning or inappropriate activity when students are using school computers. Any concerns identified can then be followed up by appropriate members of staff.

2. What does my child learn about online safety at school?

Online safety is taught across the curriculum. In Computing, students complete a dedicated online safety unit in Year 7, which introduces the key knowledge and skills they need to use technology safely and responsibly. Online safety is revisited through another dedicated unit in Year 9 and is explored in greater depth through the Health curriculum.

3. What online safety topics will my child learn about in Year 7?

Students learn about issues such as protecting personal information, privacy and security, communicating safely online, social media, cyberbullying, digital footprints and what to do if something they encounter online makes them feel uncomfortable or concerned.

For more information about Computing please contact Mrs N. Fenn (Curriculum Lead) or visit www.gshs.org.uk/computing.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE - EVERY DAY MATTERS

A strong start to secondary school matters, and we want every Year 7 student to develop the habit of regular, consistent attendance from the beginning. Our aim is for students to maintain at least 95% attendance, helping them build friendships, establish routines and keep up with their learning.

National data shows that absence tends to increase as pupils move through secondary school, making positive habits in Year 7 particularly important. Department for Education research also shows a clear relationship between higher attendance and stronger academic outcomes. By establishing strong attendance now, we can work together to give your child the best possible foundation for a happy and successful five years at GSHS!





PARENT SURVEY FORM

Our partnership with parents and carers is very important to us and we value your input into continuing school improvement. Please complete the 2026/27 Parent Survey using the QR code or via <https://tinyurl.com/53j3pdcj>.

SCHOOL LIBRARY

The School library opening hours are:

Monday: 8.00am - 4.30pm

Tuesday: 8.00am - 4.30pm

Wednesday: 8.00am - 4.30pm

Thursday: 8.00am - 4.30pm

Friday: 8.00am - 4pm

Students can attend Book Club and/or Manga Club which run weekly, use the facility for independent study or home learning. Also, look out for themed events throughout the year!



HARRY POTTER
THEMED EVENT



EXTRA CURRICULAR

PE EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Half Term 1 Timetable:

Monday: Football (Boys)

Monday: Netball

Wednesday: Football (Girls)

Thursday: Basketball

All clubs run from 3:00 - 4:00pm. For more information speak to Mr O'Dea.

CAREERS SPEED DATING – 01.10.26

As part of our Careers curriculum, Year 7 students took part in a Careers Speed Dating event organised by North Tyneside Learning Trust on Thursday 1st October.

Students interacted with a range of employers who shared information about their setting, roles and responsibilities. Students met with over 15 organisations including the NHS, North Tyneside Council and the British Army. It was a fantastic event which introduced students to the world of work in a fun and informative way.



CAREERS
EVENT

