

October 9th, 2026

**"Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow."
Anthony J. D'Angelo**

Dear Parents and Carers,

This week we have completed our final tours of the school for prospective parents and as Headteacher it is always a pleasure to show off the school and your children in action. During one tour I was asked by a parent, 'what is the key thing you are working on as a school?'

Our priority is always to ensure we provide the best care and support by developing our staff and teachers. Continuously reviewing these areas ensures that our students can continue to be happy and successful once they leave our care. As a school, we strive to provide the best opportunities, support, challenge and advice for our young people.

There are many measures that can be applied to schools, but the current issue nationally is the number of students who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Nationally this is at 13%. For the North East this increases to 17.5%. I am proud that this figure is consistently low for our students and in the latest figures was only 3%, meaning 97% of our students have sustained a positive destination for the last 2 years.

NORTH TYNESIDE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – KS4 DESTINATIONS (2023 LEAVERS)						
<i>Sustained destination measure (DfE, published April 2026, updated July 2026)</i>						
Rank	School	Education (%)	Apprenticeship (%)	Education / training (Education + Apprenticeship) (%)	Employment (%)	Sustained positive destination (Education + Apprenticeship + Employment) (%)
🏆 1	George Stephenson High School	85%	11%	96%	1%	97%
2=	Kings Priory School	93%	2%	95%	1%	96%
2=	Whitley Bay High School	91%	3%	94%	2%	96%
4	Marden High School	86%	7%	93%	2%	95%
5=	St Thomas More Catholic High School	83%	7%	90%	1%	91%
5=	Burnside College	82%	5%	87%	4%	91%
7	John Spence Community High School	79%	7%	86%	3%	89%
8	Longbenton High School	75%	10%	85%	3%	88%
9	Churchill Community College *	-	-	-	-	87% *
10	Monkseaton High School	74%	10%	84%	2%	86%
11	North Gosforth Academy	70%	10%	80%	2%	82%
12	Norham High School	76%	2%	78%	2%	80%
North Tyneside average (all state-funded secondary schools):		79%	6.5%	85.5%	2.5%	88%
* For Churchill Community College, the overall sustained positive destination figure of 87% is taken from DfE Compare School Performance (2023 leavers) due to inconsistencies in component data from secondary sources. Sustained destination: Participation in education, an apprenticeship or employment for at least two terms during the academic year 2023/24. Note: Figures may not sum exactly due to rounding.						

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As educators, our days are spent developing curiosity and driving progress in the classroom. Yet, the heart of great pedagogy—the method and practice of teaching—lies in our own willingness to model the very behaviour we expect from our students. Our absolute commitment to your children is to never stop refining our craft, ensuring we are the best teachers we can possibly be.

We believe that learning is a lifelong journey. When our staff approach their own professional development with passion, it directly transforms the classroom experience. Following on from the question from the parent, I want to give you a window into our world and share some of the specific educational strategies we are currently working on to ensure your children receive the highest quality education.

Building on Our Successes

Last year, you may have heard your children mentioning a few new techniques in their classrooms. Our staff focused heavily on embedding four key strategies designed to boost engagement and focus:

- **Think, Pair, Share:** Giving students dedicated time to think individually, discuss with a partner, and then share with the wider class.
- **Breaking the Plane:** Ensuring teachers move out from the front of the classroom and actively circulate the room to support learning.
- **Deliberate Practice:** Breaking complex skills down into small, focused tasks so students can master them step-by-step.
- **Golden Silence:** Using short, structured windows of absolute quiet to allow for deep, independent concentration.

These foundational habits are now a natural part of our daily school life.

Our Focus for This Year

To ensure we continue growing as professionals, our teaching team is focusing on three new core areas this academic year:

- **Seating for Learning:** We are looking strategically at classroom layouts. By intentionally planning where students sit, we can maximise collaboration, minimise distractions, and ensure every student is in the best possible position to focus.
- *What does this look like in practice?* Because secondary students move between different subjects, their environment needs to adapt to the discipline they are studying. In a science lab, a teacher might seat students in specific collaborative groups to safely manage practical work. In a history lesson, seating may be arranged to facilitate whole-class debate, with students paired strategically to challenge and develop each other's arguments.
- **Ambition for All:** We believe there should be no ceiling on what our students can achieve. This strategy focuses on "high-challenge" teaching, ensuring that lessons stretch every learner and support them in reaching their full potential, whether they are preparing for public examinations or mastering foundational concepts.
- **Literacy (with a focus on Writing):** Communication is the bedrock of future success. This year, we are placing a special emphasis on academic writing across all subjects—not just English. Whether writing a science report, a geography essay, or a business evaluation, we want to help our students articulate complex ideas clearly, accurately, and confidently.

Working Together

Great schools thrive on strong partnerships, and your support at home is vital. As students navigate the increased demands of secondary school, encouraging them to discuss their learning makes a significant difference. When speaking about their day, you might want to ask them what strategies help them retain and recall information and what makes things “stick”. By discussing and sharing the same high expectations, we can ensure every student continues to grow, thrive, and achieve.

Parking near the school

We have been made aware that mobile camera vehicles have been operating near the school recently. This is nothing to do with the school, and we have no jurisdiction over it, but want to remind you not to park or drop off in the bus turning circle outside the school, even for a few seconds. It is a no-stopping zone, mobile camera vehicles may be operating, and £70 penalty notices can be issued even for very brief stops. These restrictions are set and enforced by North Tyneside Council, not the school, so please direct any queries to the council on 0345 200 0107. I am sure we all want to park legally and considerately – it may be better to park a little further away and for students to walk for the last part of the journey. Thank you for helping to keep our children safe.

Best wishes,



Mr. P. Douthwaite
Headteacher

Key dates this half term (Please check the school website for updates)

October

Thursday 22nd October – 6th Form Open Evening 5pm-7pm

Half Term Monday 26th October – Friday 30th October

Andalucia trip Monday 26th October – Thursday 29th October

Student support and safeguarding

Designated Safeguarding Leader: Mrs Louise Dunn

Deputy Safeguarding Leaders Mr Alex Lunn

SENDCo: Mrs Rebecca Bennett

Please remember that we are here to support you and your child at any time.

You can contact us via the main office (phone) or by email enquiries@gshs.org.uk

For queries regarding attendance or absence, please email absence@gshs.org.uk