George Stephenson High School

October 23 2026

"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

Henry Ford

Dear Parents and Carers,

Celebrating Success in Year 11

This week, I have been meeting with Year 11 students who have been identified by their teachers as having made a particularly impressive start to the year. I have enjoyed talking with them about their progress and have sent letters home to share our congratulations with their families. It was also pleasing to see so many of them come to our Sixth Form Open evening last night.

Mrs Williams and I also met this morning with students who have achieved exceptional effort grades across their subjects. They have made a fantastic start, and we are incredibly proud of their commitment and attitude to learning.





I look forward to meeting more students next half term and seeing them continue to make progress. It is important that we recognise and celebrate the hard work, determination, and positive attitudes that contribute to success.

Working Together for Our Children

How schools grow and develop is important to all of us. Recently, I heard an excellent speech by Jonathan Uttley, who spoke about the importance of schools collaborating rather than competing.

For many years, the English education system has encouraged schools to compete for pupils, results and reputation. While this has driven improvement in some areas, it can also create barriers to schools working together.

Southgate, Killingworth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 6SA
T: 0191 216 1115
E: enquiries@gshs.org.uk
W: www.gshs.org.uk

Headteacher: Peter Douthwaite BSc (Hons)
Deputy Headteacher: Kathryn Williams BA (Hons)
Deputy Headteacher: Louise Dunn BA (Hons)

The argument is that we need to move towards a system in which success is not measured solely by what individual schools achieve, but also by what we achieve collectively for our communities.

In practice, this means sharing expertise, taking collective responsibility, supporting one another, improving outcomes for all children and building stronger local partnerships.

This is something I strongly believe in. At George Stephenson, we have always been committed to sharing our practice with other schools. We are fortunate to have excellent relationships with schools across North Tyneside and neighbouring local authorities. We regularly visit one another, share ideas and work together on common challenges and areas for improvement.

Ultimately, we are all working towards the same goal: ensuring that every child receives the best possible education and has the opportunity to succeed.

Our work with parents and carers is an equally important part of this commitment. By listening to your views, learning from your experiences and working together, we can continue to strengthen our school community.

Our Parent Partnership group is an excellent example of this in action.

Parent Partnership Update

Thank you to all the parents and carers who have contributed to our Parent Partnership meetings this year. Your feedback has provided valuable insight into what is working well and where we can make improvements.

Parents have told us that they value the support provided by staff, the positive ethos of the school and opportunities to communicate directly with teachers and leaders. You have also highlighted the importance of clear communication, knowing who to contact, understanding how to support learning at home and having easy access to information about progress and the curriculum.

In response to your feedback, we have already taken a number of actions:

- **Improving communication:** We have streamlined our online enquiries form so that parents receive an acknowledgement email when submitting a query, and enquiries are directed more quickly to the most appropriate member of staff.

- **Sharing subject expertise:** We have invited lead staff from English, Maths and Science to Parent Partnership meetings to explain how these subjects are taught and answer questions about supporting learning at home.

- **Updating our website:** We have reviewed and updated departmental information to ensure it is accurate, relevant and easy to access.

- **Making the curriculum clearer:** We are updating curriculum overviews for every subject and year group so that parents can see what their child is studying at different points throughout the academic year.

- **Making information easier to find:** We continue to review how information is shared, reducing duplication and improving signposting so that parents can find what they need more easily.

- **Supporting learning at home:** We are developing resources and examples of what good work looks like in different subjects, alongside practical guidance to help parents support learning and revision.

We are committed to continuing this work in partnership with parents and carers.

Our next Parent Partnership meeting will take place on **Tuesday 17 November, from 5.00pm to 6.00pm**. We will share and review the new curriculum overviews and invite feedback from parents before they are finalised.

All parents and carers are warmly welcome, including those who have not attended previous meetings and those who are new to the school. We are always keen to hear a wide range of views and welcome new members to the group.

Further information about how to sign up will be sent after half term.

MFL Trip to Andalucía

Finally, I would like to wish our Modern Foreign Languages department and the students travelling to Andalucía next week a fantastic trip. I hope they enjoy the experience, make some wonderful memories and have the opportunity to practise their language skills.

The weather forecast looks fantastic, so they have certainly picked a good time to go!

Reminders

Mobile Phone Pouches

Students have adapted well to the introduction of our mobile phone pouches. We have asked teachers for feedback and will also be gathering students' views after half term.

The initial feedback from staff has been very positive, with **96% of teachers reporting a positive impact**.

Here are just a few of their comments:

“The new policy has had a positive impact on breaks and lunchtimes. When on break duty, I see more students sitting together having a conversation, instead of trying to sneak their phones out to check them!”

“It has been great to see the students understanding the reasons for the policy and buying into the change, although it is hard for some!”

“Brilliant! Best thing to happen in education for years.”

“The policy has been really well implemented, with tangible benefits in terms of learning and general student wellbeing.”

Thank you for your continued support. Creating the right environment for learning is a collective effort, and we appreciate the role that parents and carers play in helping us make this policy successful.

The pouches are very robust, but should a student break or damage theirs, replacements can be purchased here:

[Purchase a replacement mobile phone pouch]

Parking Near the School

Mobile camera vehicles have recently been operating near the school. While this is not a school initiative, I would like to remind everyone to avoid stopping or dropping off in the bus turning circle outside the school, even for a few seconds.

This is a no-stopping zone, and penalty notices of £70 can be issued even for very brief stops. These restrictions are set and enforced by North Tyneside Council, rather than the school. Any queries should therefore be directed to the council on **0345 200 0107**.

I appreciate that dropping children off near the school can sometimes be challenging, particularly at busy times. However, parking legally and considerately helps to keep everyone safe. Where possible, please consider parking a little further away and allowing your child to walk the final part of the journey.

Thank you for your understanding and for helping us to keep our children safe.

Have a Wonderful Half Term

I hope you and your families enjoy a relaxing and enjoyable half term. Thank you, as always, for your continued support of George Stephenson High School.

I look forward to welcoming everyone back for the next half term.

Best wishes,



Peter Douthwaite
Headteacher

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

November
Half Term Monday 26th October – Friday 30th October
Andalucia trip Monday 26th October – Thursday 29th October
Return to School – Monday 2nd November
Year 11 Mock Exams – 2nd-13th November

Year 8 Parents Evening – Thursday 19th November
INSET Day – School Closed – Friday 27th November

December
Year 8 Sikhi Day – Friday 4th December
Year 9 Parents Evening - Thursday 10th December
Christmas Concert – Thursday 10th December 6pm
Year 7 iLearn Human Rights Day – Friday 11th December
School closes at 1.30pm for Christmas – Friday 19th December

January 2027
School reopens to students - Tuesday 5th January 2027

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