

23 January 2026

**“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way”.**

**Viktor E. Frankl – ‘Mans Search for Meaning’ (1946)**

**Dear Parent/Carer,**

As January gradually fades behind us and the mornings start to get brighter. It's helpful to frame it as an optimistic time of year and a chance to refresh, refocus and work on any new goals we have set ourselves. Over the last few weeks, we have surveyed teachers, staff, parents and students to look at what we can build on as a school and to help us to continue to drive us to be the best we can.

Thank you all for your feedback to the parent survey. We had 159 responses. Thank you for the many positive comments, particularly around the support that your child receives. The main area that came through to develop further was communication, and it was pleasing to see how many of you were interested in finding out more about working with the school to develop our parent partnership. Mrs. Dunn will be sending out more details of how to get involved soon.

The key themes from the feedback were:

Parents recognise and appreciate:

- The school's **care, values and inclusion**
- **Dedicated staff** who genuinely support pupils
- A safe environment where children can grow

At the same time, parents are keen to work with us to:

- Strengthen communication
- Increase visibility and understanding of progress
- Enhance partnership and engagement

**Thank you again for your honesty, support and commitment to working together for our children.**

Year 11 are currently working hard on their mock exams, as always, their attitude and approach have been exceptional. I have spoken to as many of them as I can to ask if they feel supported and prepared and that they know where to go to get help if they need it. They have unanimously said that this is the case, but please encourage them to ask for help or support at any time if they need it. To see so many of you at the Year 11 parents' evening was really encouraging too. I know how difficult it can be as a parent at this time having had

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my own children go through their GCSE's in recent years. There is a useful guide to support parents [here](#).

Year 9 are also at a key decision point in their high school lives as they prepare to make their option choices soon. They are getting lots of support at the moment and all the information about the process and their choices can be found here <https://www.gshs.org.uk/year-9-options>.

I would encourage Year 9 parents to attend the options evening on **Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January**. There will be a slot where you can meet with a senior member of staff to discuss their options, provide advice and reassure you that they are on the right track.

On a more practical level, following feedback from parents and guardians, Nexus have reviewed their bus schedule. As a result, they have made an adjustment to improve afternoon journeys: The change affects **Bus 656** only. Updates are highlighted in green on the attached schedule. A copy is also available on the school website. The change will take place from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January.

Next Friday is Holocaust Memorial Day and the following week students will have assemblies led by our Sixth Form Students who recently visited Auschwitz. It is a time of reflection that we hold with our students every year. It reminds us to be thankful for what we have, but also of the importance of standing up to any kind of persecution and the dangers that exist if we don't.

The quote at the start of this newsletter was from a book I read recently about Holocaust survivor, Viktor Frankl, the lessons he learned from his time in Auschwitz and how he applied these to his life and the importance of meaning. This was not a big picture view but very much about taking a strong attitude toward unavoidable suffering. Frankl goes on to discuss why it is important to nourish one's inner freedom, embrace the value of beauty in nature, art, poetry, and literature, and feel love for family and friends. He encouraged activities, relationships, and hobbies and noted that even simple pleasures can also give meaning to life.

Best wishes,



Mr. P. Douthwaite

Headteacher

**Key dates and the half term ahead (Please check the school website for updates)**

**January**

Year 10 Progress Report 2 published to parents – Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January

Year 9 Options Evening – Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January

Year 9 Holocaust Memorial Day – Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January

**February**

Year 7 Progress Report 2 published to parents – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February

Year 13 Mock Exams 2 begin – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February

Year 12 and 13 National Apprentice Show – Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February

Year 12 and 13 Parents Evening – Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February

Year 11 MFL speaking mock exams – Monday 9<sup>th</sup> – Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February

Iceland Trip Parents Meeting – Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February

School Closes for Half Term – Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February

**Student support and safeguarding**

Designated Safeguarding Leader: Mrs Louise Dunn

Deputy Safeguarding Leader: 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

For queries regarding attendance or absence, please email [absence@gshs.org.uk](mailto:absence@gshs.org.uk)