



9 January 2026

**“Only a night from old to new;
Only a sleep from night to morn.
The new is but the old come true;
Each sunrise sees a new year born”**

Helen Hunt Jackson ‘New Year’s Morning’

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you all had a relaxing and restful Christmas. It has been a pleasure to welcome all the students back during this snowy week and to see them catching up with their friends. Year 11 returned for their Mock Results Assembly on Monday. There were some excellent achievements at this early stage but I think the poem above is something for them—and all of us—to reflect on: that each day is a new start.

Roger Federer, who won 80% of his matches but only 54% of his points, gave this advice at a student commencement in 2024:

“When you’re playing a point, it has to be the most important thing in the world, and it is, but when it’s behind you, it’s behind you. This mindset is really crucial because it frees you to fully commit to the next point, and the next point after that, with intensity, clarity, and focus. The truth is, whatever game you play in life, sometimes you’re going to lose a point.”

Continuing with the theme of looking ahead, we are entering an exciting—and potentially transformational—stage for the school. We had a fantastic Ofsted inspection and an excellent set of results last year. The new Stephenson Centre, together with our pastoral team and support staff, has been instrumental in providing extra support for our students. Thank you also for your efforts in ensuring that attendance has improved. We continue to be oversubscribed and have a strong and vibrant sixth form.

Our values of Ambition, Respect, and Community are the foundations of our work, and I want us all to continue building on these. The process of securing our new school building will begin in earnest next year, making this an ideal time to review and refresh our goals. I genuinely believe that, by working together, we will have an outstanding modern provision at the heart of the community—one that makes us all proud. I have had discussions with our MP, Emma Foody, who has agreed to do whatever she can to support us in this effort.

As we develop our plans going forward, we want the views of teachers, parents, and students on what we can do to achieve this goal. I would therefore really appreciate it if you could take some time to complete the survey below and help inform this journey.

[Parent Survey 2025/2026 – Fill out form](#)

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)

You will be aware that temperatures have dropped dramatically over the last week. Please remind your child not to go onto the lake if it freezes, no matter how safe they think it may be.

Finally, the culmination of an exciting few weeks before Christmas saw Mr Scott and Mrs Bell reach the final of our Traitors competition. Sadly for Mrs Bell, Mr Scott was revealed to be a Traitor! It was great to see all the students getting involved and discussing their theories with staff, while also raising a significant amount of money for charity in the process.

Wishing you all a happy and prosperous 2026,



Mr. P. Douthwaite

Headteacher

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

January

Year 11 Preparation for Success Day – Tuesday 15th January
Year 11 Parents' Evening with Exams Information session for parents – Tuesday 15th January
Year 11 Mock Exams 2 begin – Monday 19th January
Year 10 Progress Report 2 published to parents – Monday 26th January
Year 9 Options Evening – Thursday 29th January
Year 9 Holocaust Memorial Day – Friday 30th January

February

Year 7 Progress Report 2 published to parents – Monday 2nd February
Year 13 Mock Exams 2 begin – Monday 2nd February
Year 12 and 13 National Apprentice Show – Tuesday 3rd February
Year 12 and 13 Parents Evening – Thursday 5th February
Year 11 MFL speaking mock exams – Monday 9th – Friday 13th February
Iceland Trip Parents Meeting – Wednesday 11th February

School Closes for Half Term – Friday 13th 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