



Southend High School for Girls

AN ACADEMY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Southchurch Boulevard, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 4UZ

Headteacher: Mr J Carey MEd (Cantab), BA (Hons), LLE, NPQEL

Friday, 7th February 2025

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Please find below information and updates from this week.

Houses and Charities News



SHSG House Charity Week – Monday 3rd – Friday 7th March

We are thrilled to announce a week filled with action-packed House activities at SHSG. From March 3rd to March 7th, the school will be buzzing with excitement as our sixth form House Captains host SHSG Charity Week! Across the week, students can participate in a series of lunchtime events. This is a week where we always see House spirit at its best! There will be lots going on, with students in Years 7-13 having the opportunity to support their peers and showcase their talents.

This year, we are raising money for 2 charities: Comic relief and HARP. Comic Relief is a major UK charity with a vision of a world free from poverty. They use the power of entertainment to drive positive change, addressing issues such as food insecurity, education gaps, and access to healthcare. Since its inception, Comic Relief has raised over £1 billion, helping millions of people in the UK and around the world.

HARP (Homeless Action Resource Project) is Southend-on-Sea's leading homelessness charity. HARP works tirelessly to prevent homelessness and support those experiencing it. They provide essential services such as hot meals, showers, and laundry facilities, as well as over 250 bed spaces ranging from emergency accommodation to supported housing. HARP also helps individuals tackle the underlying causes of homelessness, such as mental health issues and substance dependency, and supports them in their journey towards independent living.

SHSG Charity Week – Programme of Events:

Monday, 3rd March: *Sponge the Teacher*

Kick off the week with a splash! Our teachers have bravely volunteered to be on the receiving end of some good-natured soaking. This event promises to be a hit, so make sure to bring your enthusiasm and aim!



Tuesday, 4th March: SHSG House Olympics

Get ready to show your school spirit and compete in the House Olympics! Students will participate in a variety of sports and activities, earning points for their houses. It's a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate teamwork, athleticism, and house pride. Who will win the nail-biting penalty shoot-out and 1000 points for their House?

Wednesday, 5th March: SHSG TV

Forget Netflix - tune in for a special broadcast of SHSG TV! This programme will feature staff and students as you've never seen them before!

Thursday, 6th March: Family Feud

Join us for a retro gameshow-style competition with a twist! Family Feud will see teams of students from our six Houses going head-to-head in a battle of wits and quick thinking. This is always a fun-filled event with plenty of laughs (and custard pies)! Can anyone stop Hermes from winning this year?

Friday, 7th March: Talent Show

We wrap up the week with our highly anticipated Talent Show. This event is a platform for students (and staff!) to showcase their diverse talents, from singing and dancing to comedy and magic. Come and support your friends as they take the stage and shine! The winning act will be awarded 1000 House Points towards the House Cup!

How to Get Involved

Whether you are competing, performing, or cheering from the sidelines, we would like to see as many students as possible participating in these events. The House Captains will be visiting tutor groups in years 7-13 from Thursday 6th February to get participants signed up. The time and date for Talent Show auditions will be confirmed next week.

How to purchase tickets

Student tickets for events in the assembly hall (Family Feud, the Talent Show and SHSG TV) **will go live on ParentPay on Monday 10th February**. For the Sponge the Teacher and SHSG Olympics events, students will be able to donate money (cash or card) at the event itself. Due to high demand, tickets are expected to sell out quickly. We encourage you to purchase tickets as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. To secure your tickets, please visit ParentPay. Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to seeing you there!

House Captains Valentine's Bake Sale – Friday 14th February

Our upcoming Valentine's Bake Sale will be held on Friday 14th February to support the HARP charity through their "Have a Heart for HARP" programme. This event is being led by our House Captains. Students in Years 7-13 have shown tremendous enthusiasm and generosity by baking a variety of delicious treats for the sale. The bake sale will feature a delightful array of Valentine's-themed goodies, available for purchase during break and lunch times in the Art and Technology block. This is a wonderful opportunity for our students to enjoy some tasty treats while supporting a worthy cause. HARP (Homeless Action Resource Project) is a local charity that provides essential services to individuals experiencing homelessness. We encourage everyone to join in and support this event. To add to the excitement, we will be awarding House Points for the best bakers! Our judges will be looking for creativity, presentation, and taste. We can't wait to see the amazing creations our students come up with.



Non-uniform Day – Friday 28th February 2025

We are pleased to announce that the House Captains are hosting a non-uniform day on **Friday 28th February** to raise funds for Havens Hospice. This is a wonderful opportunity for our students to support a local charity that provides essential care and support to individuals with life-limiting illnesses. Havens Hospice offers a range of services, including respite care, symptom management, and end-of-life care, both in their hospices and in the community. On the non-uniform day, students are invited to come to school in their own clothes in exchange for a small donation of £2. All proceeds will go directly to Havens Hospice, helping them continue their vital work. In order for your child to participate, a **payment of £2 should be made via ParentPay no later than Thursday 27th February**. Thank you for your generosity and support.

Maths news



On Wednesday 29th January, 100 of our year 10 and 11 students were given the opportunity to participate in the UKMT Intermediate challenge. This promotes problem solving strategies and prepares students for their journey if they wish to continue mathematics at degree level, where they will need to do entrance exams such as MAT/TMUA or STEP papers.

The UK Maths Trust is the leading British Charity that advances the education of young people in mathematics. We look forward to seeing if our students make it through to the next round of challenges. Please do encourage your child to check their emails for the weekly mathematics competitions that we are currently running. We are now in Week 4 of the Alan Turing competition. Thank you to all those who have entered already. Prizes and certificates will be awarded during the celebration assembly at the end of term.

Have a go at the following questions:

10. What is the value of $\sqrt{2025^2 - 2024 - 2025}$?
A 2022 B 2023 C 2024 D 2025 E 2026
11. Emily multiplied two integers together. Her answer was 360. Finley increased each of Emily's integers by one and then multiplied the two new integers together. His answer was 400. What was the sum of Emily's two integers?
A 39 B 40 C 42 D 45 E 48

Parent Governor Ballot

A reminder that we are now holding a ballot for the Parent Governor elections. We strongly encourage all parents to engage in this important process. To cast your vote, please follow the link to the form provided in the letter previously sent to you. Kindly note that the closing date for the ballot is Monday, 10th February. Thank you for your continued support and involvement.

Frozen the Musical – A Specular Success!

This week, our production of *Frozen Jr* has captivated audiences, with two incredible performances already taking place and two more sold-out shows still to come.

On Monday, we had the pleasure of welcoming Year 5 students from St George's, Bournes Green and Greenways primary schools for a special dress rehearsal, which was met with overwhelmingly positive feedback. One school described the performance as "absolutely magical," praising the talented cast, stunning staging, and warm hospitality. In the afternoon our own year 7 students were treated to seeing the final dress rehearsal.

Not only has this been an opportunity to showcase the acting talents of our students, but they have also been responsible for the sound, lighting, backstage and props. The costumes, sets and even the puppets Sven and Olaf have all been made in school by our exceptional staff. Thank you!

It has been a fantastic celebration of the incredible creativity, dedication, and talent within our school community. Thank you to everyone involved in bringing Arendelle to life!



PE fixtures for next week:

These fixtures may be subject to change and all details are posted on the respective PE extra-curricular Microsoft Teams page. If your child has not been added to their year group page, and needs to be, please ask them to speak to member of the PE department. Thank you.

Tuesday 11th February: U14 Hockey away v KES
Wednesday 12th February: U13 Basketball away v Shoebury

Please be aware that for safeguarding reasons we cannot accommodate spectators on site for matches. Many schools apply this policy, so please check with the opposing school directly.

Karate Success for Year 7 student Hannah



Congratulations to Hannah S in 7 Hermes for her outstanding Gold medal performance this past weekend at the Kyu Grades National Championships!

This is a remarkable achievement, and we are incredibly proud of her dedication and hard work.

In addition to this recent success, Hannah has also been invited to train with the National squad because of winning another national competition in November last year. This invitation is a testament to her exceptional talent and commitment to her sport.

Well done, Hannah! We look forward to seeing your continued success and cheering you on in your future competitions.

Year 10 Geography Field Trip to Flatford Mill

Students' review:

'On Wednesday 29th January at breaktime, we embarked on our journey to Flatford Mill for our 3-day field work trip. Upon arrival we enjoyed a scenic picnic outside the historical Valley Farm House. We then got settled into our rooms and began to explore everything that the magical place had to offer. Later we were separated into our classes and set out to the fields where we had to draw a sketch of the delightful landscape we saw before us. Our instructor, the wonderful Irene, set us off on a "Bucket challenge" that lasted up until dinner- we all enjoyed the pizza and chips the chefs prepared. The evening consisted of lots of fun activities like back to base and puzzles.

We arose the next morning and to our delight blue skies were surrounding us as we got on the coach for a day in the river, investigating how the river changes downstream. After four different locations and lots of measurements (and a few flooded wellies) we had gathered all that we needed- special shout out to Emilia's bottle that floated down the river!

Friday morning was very rainy, but it certainly didn't dampen our spirits as we set out for the stunning Ipswich docks. Following a productive morning, we felt we owed it to ourselves to have a treat- pizza express! We finalised all our collected data that involved us venturing around this new area, and then had to depart back to school. However, this coach wasn't filled with music blasting from the speaker like usual, instead the quiet sound of snores could be heard echoing round the coach until we arrived back. Thanks to Mrs. Patel for an unforgettable experience that we don't think any of us will ever forget.'

(Ana DM and Jemima H Year 10)



British Biology Olympiad

I am delighted to inform you that SHSG students are participating in the prestigious British Biology Olympiad (BBO) this term. This competition is an excellent opportunity for our students to challenge themselves and showcase their talents in the field of biology. The BBO is designed to stimulate and inspire students with a keen interest in biology, encouraging them to expand their knowledge and skills. It also provides a platform for students to gain recognition for their hard work and achievements through publicly recognised certificates. All Year 13 biology students have been entered into the Olympiad, and our Year 12 students have also been invited to participate.

Students who achieve a "Gold" award will be invited to progress to the next stage of the competition, where they will have the opportunity to represent Team GB in the International Biology Olympiad. This is a remarkable chance for our students to shine on an international stage and gain invaluable experience. We wish all our participants the very best of luck and look forward to celebrating their successes.

Rotary Club Writing Success

Congratulations to Alexa S (13KMI) for winning the local heat of the Rotary Young Writer Competition. I would also like to congratulate Sitara S (11AUR) and Yeva S (10ART) who were awarded second and third place respectively. All the winners received certificates and book tokens. In addition, Alexa's story has now been put through to the regional heat.

Computer Science

All Year 8 and Year 9 students are currently preparing for the [UK Bebra Coding Challenge](#) - a national coding competition which is happening at the end of March and beginning of April. This involves drawing a series of complex shapes using a turtle. We look forward to seeing how our budding computer scientists do!

Scholastics Book Fair

We had a huge amount of interest in the book fair held on Thursday and today in the school foyer, as part of our celebrations for World Book Day. Should students still wish to buy books, it will be running on Monday 10th and Tuesday 11th February. Thank you for your support, which helps earn free books for our school. Thank you to our wonderful student librarians for staffing the staff, with Mrs Skinner, our librarian.



Sixth Form Careers events next week

Next week there are a series of events in school and online to support Sixth Form with post-18 progression. On Tuesday 11th February, we are hosting a representative from the University of Exeter who will be speaking to Year 12 about degree apprenticeships. This will provide a general overview of this increasingly popular - and very competitive - post-18 pathway, including how they work and the benefits of studying for a degree apprenticeship. It will also give information about the degree apprenticeships available at the University of Exeter.

In addition, the University of Exeter will be hosting a meeting for students with their parents and carers who are interested in a career in medicine. This will be online on Wednesday 12th February (6pm-7pm). The link to join is [here](#), and further details are included in a parental letter from Mr O'Brien.

Year 13 are having a workshop on Tuesday 11th February about student finance including information about fees, grants, loans, and financial planning. This will be followed up by a webinar for parents on Thursday 13th February at 6pm. The link to join is [here](#), and in the letter sent from Mrs Neil previously.

National Apprenticeship Week next week

SHSG will be marking National Apprenticeship week with a number of exciting events to enable students to further explore the opportunities available to them in the future. All Year groups will be taking part in activities during registration time and optional lunch activities. On Tuesday all students are warmly invited to attend a 'Meet the Apprentice' event at lunchtime in the Meeting room where several alumnae will be returning to SHSG to share their experiences and provide hot tips for getting through the challenging recruitment procedures many of these high-profile schemes run.

We would also encourage parents interested in degree apprenticeships to consider joining the online Unifrog Apprenticeship fair with their children. Details can be found [here](#). daughters/sons. This promises to be full of useful information.

Oxbridge Pathway KS4



Students in Years 10 and 11 are warmly invited to attend the Oxbridge Pathway meeting on Friday 14th February. We will meet in the Meeting room at lunchtime to watch and discuss the webinar on college life at Cambridge. We will also be discussing any webinars students attended this half term and look at applications for forthcoming events.

Medicine Pathway KS5

Year 12 were invited to attend the first session of the Hippocrates Medical Pathway on Wednesday lunchtime this week in Room 9. Students were introduced to realities of the medicine, veterinary science and dentistry application processes. They began their research into the 30+ medical schools, strategised how to secure work experience and volunteering opportunities and gained an overview of the entire pathway for the next 18 months. Our next meeting will look at the wider reading needed to support their applications and the UCAT entrance exam.

Birmingham Widening Access to Medical Sciences society (BWAMS) at the University of Birmingham is run by their medical and dental students and aims to support students from underrepresented backgrounds enter into healthcare careers. Throughout the year, they run free outreach events with exciting talks and workshops from a variety of healthcare professionals to provide insight into healthcare.

They have invited our students to their **Dr.eam Aspire Virtual Conference on Saturday 8th March for Year 10, 11, and 12 students**. This exciting online event aims to support students interested in healthcare careers, such as Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry and Pharmacy. Dr.eam Aspire is a free-to-join online conference held via Zoom Webinar and the day will consist of a variety of inspiring talks to provide insight into careers in healthcare and provide useful guidance for university application. Students will also have the opportunity to ask questions to our fantastic speakers, including doctors, dentists, nurses from around the country.

We would encourage any students who are interested in these students to attend by using our registration link (<https://tinyurl.com/dream-aspire2025>)

Internet Safety

Following on from the parent fact sheets circulated through my previous letters, I have attached two further fact sheets. One looks at the early exposure of young people to gambling behaviours through 'Loot Boxes' in popular on-line games and the potential dangers with this. The second, is concerned with the dangers of grooming and exploitation that exist once a young person shares personal information and images online with people that they consider to be friends but who are complete strangers.

Year 9 Vaccinations

Most students in Year 9 had their school vaccinations this week. I have attached a poster to this letter for any students who missed the vaccination sessions this week; it details where catch up clinics are being held in the local area.

Mental Health & Wellbeing at SHSG

At SHSG, we often talk about how to look after our health in lessons and in tutor time. If you need support or information about how to cope with your emotions, you can visit the school website and look at [Mental Health & Wellbeing - Southend High School for Girls \(shsg.org\)](https://www.shsg.org).

There, you will find some articles, videos and useful links. The school has also put together a Padlet for Lower and Middle school and one for Sixth Form for you to browse. Please find the links below:

[Lower and Middle school SHSG Mental Health Board \(padlet.com\)](#)

[SHSG Mental Health Board \(padlet.com\)](#)

Key Dates

The calendar on our website is regularly updated and contains key dates of activities and events that are taking place in school. A full list can be found [here](#).

Wishing you a restful weekend!

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Carey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Jason Carey - Headteacher

School Vaccination Catch up Clinics

Has your child missed their school vaccinations?

We are running local catch up clinics for their routine teenage vaccinations. **

Your nearest clinic is:

Leigh Primary Care Centre, London Road, Leigh on Sea
SS9 3NG

10am to 2pm

- Saturday 8 February

10am to 4pm

- Tuesday 18 February (half term)
- Thursday 20 February (half term)

It's easy to catch up, book your nearest clinic NOW on 0300 790 0597.

For information on school aged vaccinations please visit our website:
eput.nhs.uk/childrensvaccines

**HPV (from Year 8)
DTP & Meningitis (from Year 9)



#GetWinterStrong

Loot boxes and skins betting

What are they?

Loot boxes: a feature of online games where players pay to get unknown rewards, like items or modifications for their character. It's similar to gambling, because most of the time you don't know what you're going to get before you pay.

One example is 'player packs' in EA Sports FC or FIFA, where you buy a 'pack' of player cards, but don't know who you're going to get when you make the purchase.

Skins betting: where people use 'skins' as betting currency ('skins' are extra items in online games, for example visual upgrades for their weapons or character). You can earn real money if you win. People usually do this through specific websites that let you use skins to bet.

What's the problem?

- Some children say they end up chasing a win with loot boxes, like gamblers do
 - Skins betting is a backdoor way for children to gamble underage
 - Gambling can be addictive, like drugs or alcohol, with a severe impact on emotional health and wellbeing
 - Teens have reported spending hundreds of pounds in a year on loot boxes, and losing skins worth thousands through gambling
-

3 steps you can take

1. Make sure your child knows the risks

Your child might not realise they could lose hundreds or thousands of pounds. They might not understand the risk of addiction or that, in general, it's illegal to gamble when you're under 18.

Explain that websites that guarantee wins or have offers that seem too good to be true are using these to entice you. Behind these promotions is a business looking to make money.

Explain how loot boxes are also like gambling, as you take a risk for the chance of a reward.

Tell them they should report skins gambling websites to [The Gambling Commission](#).

2. Set limits on in-game spending to control how much your child can spend

This will also help you stop them from spending a lot of money without realising it.

Please note: when following the instructions below, the exact steps you need to take may be a little different depending on the device and software version you're using.

On **Xbox** (to do this, you'll need to set up a [Family Safety](#) account):

1. Go to family.microsoft.com and sign in with your Family Safety account
2. Find your child's profile and then select 'more options', then 'spending'
3. Select 'needs organiser approval to buy things'
4. Select 'Email me when they get stuff', and you'll be notified when your child tries to buy something

On **Android** devices:

1. Open the Google Play Store app on your child's device
2. Select the profile picture on the top right corner, then 'payments and subscriptions'

3. Select 'budget and history'
4. Select 'set budget', followed by the budget you'd like to set, or 'remove budget'
5. Select 'save'

On **Apple** devices:

1. Select 'settings', then 'screen time'
2. Select 'content and privacy restrictions' (enter your passcode if asked)
3. Select 'iTunes & App Store purchases'
4. Select 'in-app purchases', then set to 'Don't allow'.

On **PlayStation**:

1. Select 'settings', then 'family and parental controls', then 'family management'
2. Select the user you want to set a spending limit for
3. Select 'parental controls', then 'monthly spending limit'

You'll need to [set up accounts for family members](#), with adult and child accounts, and make sure you and other adults have family manager or parent/guardian status.

3. Know the signs of problematic activity

Look out for signs, like if your child:

- Is short of money or has unexplained sources of money
- Becomes secretive or starts lying
- Loses interest in school and other hobbies, as well as in their health and appearance
- Has mood swings if they're not able to access games or devices
- Speak to our school if you're concerned about your child, and seek support from organisations like BigDeal (<https://www.bigdeal.org.uk>) and The Gambling Commission

Sources

- [Skin betting: children as young as 11 introduced to gambling, BBC News, 12 December 2017](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-42311533)
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-42311533
- [Gambling and young people, Gambling Commission](https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/public-and-players/guide/gambling-and-young-people)
https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/public-and-players/guide/gambling-and-young-people
- [Gaming the system, Children's Commissioner](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/gaming-the-system/)
https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/gaming-the-system/
- [Use parental controls on your child's iPhone, iPad and iPod touch, Apple](https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201304)
https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201304
- [Set a budget for your Google Play expenses](https://support.google.com/googleplay/answer/9281767?hl=en-GB)
https://support.google.com/googleplay/answer/9281767?hl=en-GB
- [How to set parental controls and spending limits on PS4, PlayStation](https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/get-help/help-library/my-account/parental-controls/ps4-parental-controls/)
https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/get-help/help-library/my-account/parental-controls/ps4-parental-controls/
- [How to set parental controls on PS5 consoles, PlayStation](https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/support/account/ps5-parental-controls-spending-limits/)
https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/support/account/ps5-parental-controls-spending-limits/
- [Require kids to ask before buying from the Microsoft Store on Xbox](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/account-billing/require-kids-to-ask-before-buying-from-the-microsoft-store-on-xbox-ffa7554b-8681-0080-9c78-47d02386ec79)
https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/account-billing/require-kids-to-ask-before-buying-from-the-microsoft-store-on-xbox-ffa7554b-8681-0080-9c78-47d02386ec79

This factsheet was produced by **The Key Safeguarding**: www.thekeysupport.com/safeguarding

• PARENT FACTSHEET

• Financially motivated sexual extortion ('sextortion')

• What is 'sextortion'?

- Financially motivated sexual extortion (often referred to as 'sextortion') is a type of online blackmail. An adult (or group of adults) threatens to release nude or semi-nude images of a child unless they pay them money, or do something else to benefit them. It is a form of child sexual abuse.
 - Sextortion is often carried out by offenders in an organised crime group overseas, and is motivated by profit.
 - Sometimes adults pose as children, to make contact with them. They might:
 - Groom or coerce the child into sending nudes or semi-nudes and financially blackmail them
 - Use images that have been stolen from the child, taken through hacking their account
 - Use digitally-manipulated images, including AI-generated images, of the child
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• Signs to look out for

- If a child is a victim of sextortion, they might:
 - Spend more time online, or more time offline – they might try to avoid mobile phones, laptops and tablets entirely, for example
 - Complain of being tired because they were online all night, or have their phone going off a lot
 - Have stronger emotional responses or outbursts to being online – they may get unusually angry, upset or distant after checking their phone or using their computer/tablet
 - Be secretive about their use of the internet or a device – they may refuse to hand their phone in if they're asked to do so by a teacher, or refuse to tell you what they get up to online
 - Show signs of self-harm or suicidal thoughts. They might also show signs of hopelessness
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• How to protect yourself and your child from sextortion

- Encourage your child to be careful with the information they share online
 - Review your child's privacy settings on any accounts they use, so it's harder for strangers to contact them
 - Use strong passwords for each account you use online, so it's harder for criminals to break in and get information about you
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• What to do if you think your child is a victim

- Don't blame your child – criminals use sophisticated methods to trick young people
- Don't pay the person asking for money, and make sure your child stops engaging with them
- Don't delete any images, messages or videos, since they can be used by the police as evidence
- Do contact the police – you can make a report via the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) website (<https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>)

- If your child agrees to it, speak to our school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) [Insert your DSL's name and contact details]

Sources

This factsheet was produced by [The Key Safeguarding: thekeyssupport.com/safeguarding](https://thekeyssupport.com/safeguarding)

With thanks to education expert Aaron King for his help with this content

Internet Watch Foundation, [Advice for parents or carers of children who are being sexually extorted or 'sex-torted'](https://www.iwf.org.uk/resources/sex-tortion/parents-and-carers), www.iwf.org.uk/resources/sex-tortion/parents-and-carers