



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

16th October 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

I hope this weekly letter finds you well. I have included a reminder about the extra non-pupil day, along with updates and information about the last week leading up to half term.

Extra non-pupil day

We wrote to parents to inform you that Monday, 9th November 2020 will be a non-pupil day. This arrangement has been made in partnership with CSSE due to the need to organise the 11+ programme of exams over two days; each day will have two sittings. Due to the extra numbers on site on Monday, 9th November, and the health and safety considerations for COVID-19, we will not be able to accommodate our students and Year 6s. Staff will be on site supporting the organisation of 11+; students will use this as a catch up day for work and assignments.

Music clubs and enrichment

Since lockdown began in March, musicians across the country have had their access to ensemble music-making taken away, to devastating effect in the Arts industries worldwide. At SHSG we recognise the importance of group music-making both on students' practical ability but also on their wider academic progress and general wellbeing. We are therefore taking our first steps to reintroducing extra-curricular ensembles from after October half term, with the view to extend the provision each half term as national guidelines allow. You will be pleased to hear that the following ensembles will be reintroduced from November 2020:

- String Quartet
- String Quintet
- Piano Trio
- Novem Consort
- Chamber Choir (to be rehearsed in year-group bubbles)

We have a comprehensive risk assessment in place, considering social distancing, the use of PPE, restricting the sharing of music and equipment, and ensuring the adequate ventilation of rooms. In time we hope to broaden our provision towards the levels of pre-lockdown.

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Poet Laureate

Many of our talented students took the opportunity over lockdown to pursue and develop their hobbies and interests. Students were encouraged to share their accomplishments with their form tutors. Staff were delighted to receive examples of fabulous crafting, photography, music, film making and of course lots and lots of baking! We noticed that we had a very keen poet in our midst, Imogen F in 10A. Imogen's poems were a wonderful surprise over the summer, and several were published in the Gazette.

We have decided to award Imogen the role of 'SHSG poet Laureate'. She will produce poems that reflect the key events in the life of SHSG and our wider community.

Traditionally, the Queen pays the national Poet Laureate in wine; our Poet Laureate received a bag of wine gums today and will shortly receive a bespoke badge. We are hoping to expand the role over time and would like to appoint a poet for each key stage. We would also like to connect our poets over Teams and encourage them to collaborate with our musicians and visual artists to put their writing to music, art, and video. Any students interested in getting involved should contact Ms Casson at vcasson@shsg.org.

Black History Month

On Tuesday, we have an insightful afternoon planned for our celebration of Black History month at SHSG. This will provide an opportunity for students to celebrate and listen to other students' cultures and experiences.

Teachers will also be educating students on the history of Black History Month and Black history in general. This event is part of the launch for a full Black History Month programme in February 2021. We are very much looking forward to engaging with the topics and would like to thank Esther, Femi and Zoe for organising and leading the programme with Mr Barnett.

School Birthday

The School Birthday celebrations are well under way, ready to take us to the end of next week and the start of the half term holiday. Well done to the staff and tutor groups for making your videos and preparing activities for the day. Even within the restrictions of COVID, we will endeavour to make it a real celebration in keeping with the school's tradition. Year 13s are currently rehearsing their Panto!

SHSG Sixth Form Information for Year 11s

Next week is the start of our information, advice and guidance programme for Year 11s and their progression to Sixth Form. The Senior Team will be visiting tutor groups, and departments have prepared videos and information to ensure that Year 11s are fully informed about next steps. This information is in addition to the one-to-one career interview programme. We look forward to supporting Year 11 students as they begin to consider A Level choices.

COVID-19 updates

I am pleased to report that we have still only had the three positive cases since September and no other incidents.

I wish you an enjoyable and restful weekend.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Carey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

Jason Carey
Headteacher