



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, 2nd February 2024

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Please find below information and updates from this week.

Year 12 Parents' Evening

A reminder that the Year 12 Parents' Evening will be taking place virtually on Thursday 8th February. Details have been sent out this week regarding how to schedule appointments through the School Cloud system. Please note that the scheduling of appointments will close to parents at 6.00pm on Wednesday 7th February.

Whole School Production song sponsorship

The Creative and Performing Arts Faculty had the great pleasure this week of revealing the cast list for July's musical production of *Chicago*. We have done our best to allow as many students as we could the opportunity to appear on stage and, in order to support this, we would like to offer the opportunity to sponsor songs in the musical; monies raised will go towards providing costumes for our young performers. The songs available are listed below.

- 1) All That Jazz
- 2) Funny Honey
- 3) Cell Block Tango
- 4) When You're Good to Mama
- 5) All I Care About is Love
- 6) We Both Reached for the Gun
- 7) Roxie
- 8) I Can't Do It Alone
- 9) My Own Best Friend
- 10) I Know a Girl
- 11) Me and My Baby
- 12) Mister Cellophane
- 13) When Velma Takes the Stand
- 14) Razzle Dazzle
- 15) Nowadays

If you are interested in sponsorship, please email cladner@shsg.org to reserve your chosen song. This will then be removed from the central list. The School Bank will then open a window in Paypal allowing payment of a recommended £30 to help cover costume costs. Sponsors (either individuals or groups) are invited to write a message of support which will appear, with our great thanks, in the programme. Thank you for your interest.

Year 12 Applying for Medicine Webinar (University of Exeter)

Next Tuesday 6th February (6:30-7:30pm), all Year 12s interested in studying medicine are welcome to attend an online webinar run by our partner university, the University of Exeter. It will include an overview of the application process, including admissions tests and interviews, as well as current medical students giving an insight into their experiences. The link to join is [here](#).



National Safer Internet Day

National Safer Internet Day is on Tuesday 6th February 2024 and as part of our work to help keep our students safe online I have included a publication for parents and carers around the pitfalls of mobile phone apps at the end of this letter. I hope that you find it useful.

Mental Health & Wellbeing at SHSG

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 \(padlet.com\)](#)

Year 7 NHS Mental Health Support Team talks

From this week, all Year 7 will continue to receive talks from the NHS mental health support team on the 5 Steps to Wellbeing during one of their Life Skills lessons.

Wellbeing updates

This week, Key Stage 3 students took part in an assembly about vaping.

Next week is Children's Mental Health Week. Students will be able to purchase a yellow ribbon for 50p at lunchtime to support a local mental health charity. There will also be a range of wellbeing activities at lunchtime, including a yoga class delivered by a qualified Teen Yoga teacher, tips on digital wellbeing and a meditation session.

We hope many students will take the opportunity to engage in activities promoting wellbeing.

Student achievements

Congratulations to Holly B in Year 9 who has been selected for the U15 London Pulse Netball Academy. This is a huge achievement as the trials were extremely competitive and Holly will now have the chance to train and play within the Netball Super League pathway. Well done Holly!

Sanaa J in Year 10 won the badminton U17 singles silver medal and the U17 doubles silver medal at the Essex Futures 2* tournament held at Colchester last weekend. Well done Sanaa!

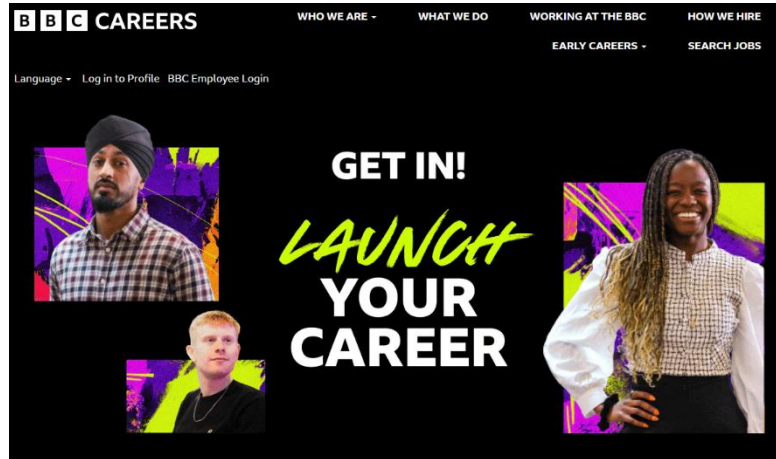


National Apprenticeship Week

National Apprenticeship Week starts on Monday 5th February. Students in Years 8-11 have had the opportunity to research and discuss possible post 16 apprenticeship routes in their forms.

We are very excited to be welcoming 'old girl' Bonnie to speak to forms during Monday morning registration time about her experience on the BBC Apprenticeship scheme. Bonnie has kindly offered to lead a longer in person lunchtime workshop for interested students.

Please use the QR code to express an interest.



Clubs

The school has a range of activities and clubs to offer. The latest list of clubs and activities for this term can be found on our website [here](#).

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 all a restful weekend!

Yours faithfully,



Jason Carey
Headteacher

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about PERSUASIVE DESIGN ONLINE

'Persuasive design' refers to the techniques that companies employ to influence our thoughts and behaviours when we're on the internet. These approaches can be spotted on websites, in apps and even as part of some video games. Persuasive design means that this content has been deliberately presented in a way that's intended to encourage you to spend your time or money (or both). These methods often prove highly effective at keeping people engaged and invested for longer than we might expect.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

POTENTIAL ADDICTION

In the digital world, persuasive design can make certain activities more addictive and harder to walk away from: some people may begin to feel anxious or irritated without access to their device or their favourite app, for example. It can also often leave users feeling isolated, as – if they spend most of their time on social media – they may start to find it difficult to talk to other people in real life.

MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

Scrolling online or gaming without regular breaks is proven to be harmful to our mental health. The constant bombardment of news stories (many of them negative), images and influencers' posts can create sensations of unease, uncertainty and FOMO (fear of missing out). Young people can get so immersed in this environment that they become less likely to spot misleading posts.

PROLONGED SCROLLING

Social media can draw any of us – regardless of age – into a continuous pattern of refreshing our screen, following posts and links down rabbit holes or reading countless comments made by others. This aimless scrolling can eat up time which could have been spent on more productive activities. It could also lead younger users into areas of the online world which aren't age appropriate.

SENSORY OVERLOAD

Repetitively scrolling, clicking on links or playing games can create an unending stream of new information and visual stimuli. Put it this way: social media isn't exactly renowned as a carefree, chilled-out environment. Such overstimulation can become too much for young people to handle, resulting in sensory overload and causing them to feel stressed, overwhelmed and exhausted.

COSTLY ADDITIONS

Video games sometimes display offers for downloadable content or loot boxes which can be bought with real money. While these 'microtransactions' temptingly promise to improve a player's gaming experience, most of the time they are money sinks. Young people in particular, excited by the chance of enhancing their game, could spend quite a sizeable sum very quickly indeed.

PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES

Hours spent sitting and scrolling means far less time moving around and getting exercise: hardly ideal for a young person's physical health. Additionally, prolonged exposure to the light given off by a phone's screen can lead to eye fatigue and discomfort, especially if viewing it in the dark. Extended phone use before bed can also impact on sleep quality, affecting mood and energy levels over the following days.



Advice for Parents & Carers

ESTABLISH LIMITS

Talk to your child about setting some time limits on how long they can use their phone, tablet or console in the evenings or at weekends – or perhaps how often they can go on a specific app, game or website. You could also decide to involve the whole family in creating this shared screen time agreement, making things fair (and healthier) for everyone.

NIX NOTIFICATIONS

Stop knee-jerk responses at the source by turning off push notifications and alerts. Whether it's a gaming notification or a social media update, these not-so-gentle reminders are designed to catch our attention and lure us back to our device. Switching them off – or even deleting any particularly intrusive apps – can help prevent your child from being reeled back into the online world.

ENCOURAGE MINDFULNESS

Acknowledging any addiction is key in overcoming it – and compulsive scrolling is no different. If anything mentioned in this guide sounds familiar, it could help to have an honest, open chat with your child about how much time they spend online. Get them to think about how often they scroll through social media aimlessly or habitually open it up whenever they have a spare moment.

MAKE A CHECKLIST

Considering a list of relevant questions can be an effective way of helping children figure out why they're scrolling on certain sites or consuming particular pieces of content. A checklist can prompt young people to ask themselves if they're learning anything or benefiting from this activity – or if they're wasting their time. Taking a step back can sometimes help us to see things more clearly.

Meet Our Expert

Believe it or not, we have more than 20 years' experience in the field of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). As well as delivering workshops and training for young people, parents and schools, she's also a subject-leader expert on RSHE for the Department of Education.



The National College

NOS National Online Safety

#WakeUpWednesday

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