



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, 13th February 2026

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

It has been another action-packed week at SHSG, filled with exceptional achievements, enriching experiences and a wonderful sense of community spirit. From inspiring guest lectures and national competitions to creative celebrations and whole-school activities, our students have once again shown their enthusiasm, curiosity and commitment in everything they do.

A Showstopping Week at SHSG!



Following a sold-out run, this year's whole-school production of *Guys and Dolls Jr.* proved to be a true triumph. Across four evening performances, and two special matinees for local primary pupils and our own Year 7 cohort, audiences of staff, students and families enjoyed a vibrant, polished and wonderfully entertaining show. We were especially delighted to welcome Year 5 pupils and staff from Bournes Green Primary School, whose enthusiasm added to the brilliant atmosphere.

There was a real buzz around SHSG throughout the week, culminating in exceptional performances from students who had worked tirelessly both on stage and behind the scenes to bring this funny and fantastic musical to life. With costumes and sets designed and created entirely in-house, the production showcased the remarkable creativity and talent within our school community. Iconic numbers such as *Luck Be a Lady* and *Sit Down, You're Rockin' the Boat* were delivered with power and precision, supported by lively, jazz-inspired choreography that lit up the stage.

Students from Years 7 to 12 brought each character to life with humour, confidence and flair, filling the show with energy and charm. Many spoke about how much they had enjoyed the experience and the friendships formed along the way, a testament to the SHSG family spirit that shines through these productions year after year.

A huge well done to everyone involved, and a heartfelt thank you to all families and friends who came to support the show. It was a memorable week and a wonderful celebration of the talent, teamwork and dedication that define our SHSG community.

National Apprenticeship Week

This week we marked National Apprenticeship Week 2026 with a vibrant programme of events, shining a spotlight on degree apprenticeships as an exciting alternative to a traditional university pathway for ambitious students.

We were delighted to welcome back alumni now working at Deloitte, JP Morgan Chase and the BBC, who shared their experiences and offered invaluable advice on applying for some of the country's most competitive apprenticeship schemes. Year 12 students spent the morning in a rich array of presentations led by young apprentices across sectors including finance, law, media and utilities.

Alongside this, we hosted an apprentice fair, delivered tutor-time activities, welcomed the University of Exeter for a specialist workshop on degree apprenticeships, and arranged classroom visits from current apprentices keen to answer questions and demystify the process.

Harry J (12PJS) said, *'it's been such an informative day. It's opened my eyes to the possibility of getting a degree without the fees, as well as gaining real-world experience from day one.'* Ara K (12KJA) added, *'it was so informative learning more about this pathway. I enjoyed hearing about apprenticeships in media from an ex-SHSG student; she shared some good pointers for how to make my application stand out.'*

We were also proud to welcome back alumna Izelda Lala, now an apprentice with Brentwood manufacturing firm Baker Labels and the school outreach lead for [Outer Circle](#), the UK's first youth-led apprenticeship community. Izelda played a key role in coordinating the week. She said, *'the activities today have opened up the idea of apprenticeships to a lot of students who might find this a better route for them. For me, an apprenticeship has been a great way to use my skills proactively in a setting where my professional contributions have been valued from day one.'*



University of Exeter Year 13 Student Finance Workshop

We were pleased to welcome colleagues from our partner institution, the University of Exeter, who delivered an informative workshop to Year 13 on student finance and budgeting. Students explored the real costs of university life, learned practical approaches to managing a budget, and received clear guidance on applying for a student loan. This session will be followed by a parental webinar on Wednesday 25th February, taking place online from 6pm to 7pm. We warmly encourage all parents of Year 13 students to attend. The [link to attend is here](#). Please see the letter from Mr O'Brien, Head of Year 13, for further details.

A Level Physics - SPC Online Competition

On Friday 23rd January, our Year 12 physicists took part in the Online Senior Physics Challenge, a national competition run by the British Physics Olympiad. This was our first year entering, and we are exceptionally proud of the results. Of all students who participated, an impressive 96% achieved a bronze certificate or higher, with our top performer, Hope H (12DSO), earning a silver award.

One of our physics students shared their experience:

"As keen physicists, we were very excited to take part in the SPCO challenge. It was a fun and engaging experience where we were tested on more than the just skills and fundamentals learned in the classroom. The challenge helped widen our view on the world of physics as it was a great opportunity to encourage us to think, analyse and evaluate like a real physicist does. Many of us are also pleased to have such an excellent achievement to support our UCAS applications. This experience made us all realize how important it is to study and explore the subject you are passionate about outside of the classroom."

Well done to all our Year 12 physicists on this outstanding achievement!



Sixth Form Drama Theatre Visit

On 3rd February 2026, our A-Level Theatre Studies classes travelled to Chelmsford Theatre to see *The Woman in Black*. The performance was a remarkable experience and a powerful reminder of the impact live theatre can have. Through its atmospheric staging, evocative lighting and sound, and sharply executed physical performances, *The Woman in Black* left a lasting impression on our students and provided excellent preparation for their course. Many described leaving the theatre with chills down their spine: an unforgettable experience that will undoubtedly enrich their study of drama and performance.

Year 9 Parents' Evening, Thursday 5th March

A reminder that the Year 9 Parents' Evening will take place online on Thursday 5th March. Please be aware that where staff teach multiple classes, it is not always possible for them to meet with every family. In these cases, teachers will schedule appointments in advance with the parents of pupils they most need to see before the booking system opens to all. Further information will be shared in a letter on Wednesday 25th February.

Year 12 Psychology Guest Lecture

On Wednesday 4th February, Year 12 Psychology students had the valuable opportunity to attend an online guest lecture with Professor Becky Milne from the University of Portsmouth. Professor Milne has an extensive background in psychology and criminology, and of particular interest to students was her work with police forces in developing the Cognitive Interview, a technique designed to improve the accuracy of eyewitness testimony.

Professor Milne has collaborated not only with police departments across the UK and Ireland, but also internationally, including in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. Her influence spans both research and practice, she has contributed to policy development, delivered specialist police training, and worked on several high-profile cases.

Students thoroughly enjoyed hearing about her first-hand experiences, gaining a valuable insight into how psychological research directly informs real-world practice and deepens our understanding of human memory. We are very grateful to Professor Milne for giving up her time, and we hope to welcome her back again in the future.

PE Fixtures Week Beginning Monday 23rd February

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.

- Tuesday 24th February: Year 7 & 8 Essex Schools' Cross country Championships at Melbourne Park
- Wednesday 25th February: Year 9 Netball Home v WHSG
- Wednesday 25th February: U18 Netball Essex Cup Home v SEEVIC
- Wednesday 25th February: Year 12 and 13 Cricket coaching
- Thursday 26th February: U13 Football Away v Kingston
- Friday 27th February: Year 11 GCSE PE Netball NEA

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.

Upcoming Non-Uniform Day in Aid of Havens Hospice – Friday 27th February

We are pleased to announce that our next non-uniform day will take place on Friday 27th February in support of Havens Hospice, a local charity providing vital palliative care and support to families. This event has been organised by our House Captains, who are passionate about raising funds for this important cause. We are asking for a £2 donation, which can be made via ParentPay. Thank you in advance for your generosity and for helping us support the incredible work of Havens Hospice.

House Captains Valentine's Day Bake sale in aid of HARP Homelessness Charity



SHSG was filled with excitement today as the House Captains organised a spectacular bake sale in support of HARP, a local homelessness charity. Students across all year groups showcased their baking talents, offering a delightful selection of treats, from heart-shaped cookies to red velvet cupcakes. Thanks to the enthusiastic participation and generous contributions, we raised over £600! A huge congratulations to the House Captains for their hard work and to everyone who took part in making this event a great success.



Essex football selection for Lucy

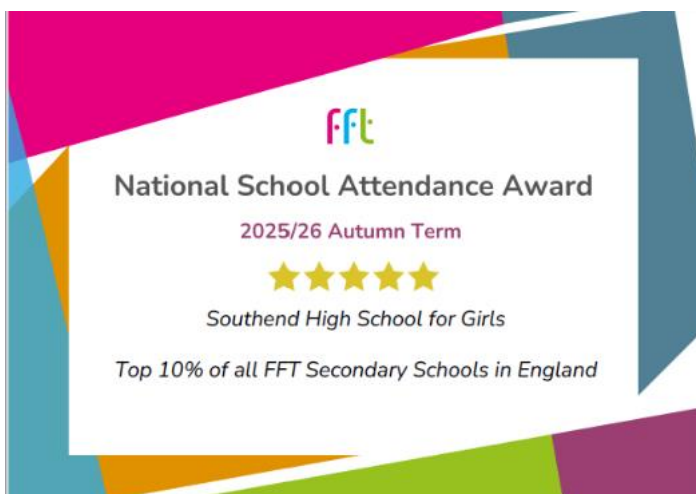
Congratulations to Lucy R (year 8) on her selection to represent the Essex Under 14 football squad. As a year 8 this is a huge achievement as she was up against year 9s as well. Well done to Lucy and good luck for the rest of the season!



Diving success for Francesca

Last weekend, Francesca P in Year 11 competed in the Scottish National & Open Diving Competition in Edinburgh, an elite event where divers aim for selection to England and GB squads. Francesca took part in the Platform event, performing a new 10m dive for the first time in competition. She placed 8th out of 20 competitors, narrowly missing out on a place in the final. In the Platform synchro event, Francesca and her Southend Diving teammate delivered an exceptional performance, securing the gold medal and earning the titles of British and Scottish National Champions. This is an extraordinary achievement!

Francesca has now qualified for the Platform events at the Aquatics GB Next Generation Diving Championship in April, and we wish her the very best of luck as she continues her impressive diving journey.



Attendance Matters

We are pleased to share that we have received another national award in recognition of our excellent attendance last term. Regular attendance is one of the most significant factors in helping children achieve their academic aspirations, develop essential life skills, and maintain positive wellbeing. To help us continue supporting your child's attendance, please avoid:

- booking medical appointments during the school day wherever possible,
- keeping children at home for minor illnesses such as coughs or colds, and
- arranging holidays or trips during term time.

Your support makes a real difference, and we thank you for working with us to ensure students benefit fully from everything their education has to offer. If you have any concerns regarding attendance, then please contact your child's Pastoral Support Officer or Head of Year for additional advice and support.

Mental Health & Wellbeing at SHSG

This week, we celebrated Children's Mental Health Week and explored our shared sense of belonging within the SHSG community through a wide range of activities.

We began on Monday with our positivity board, where students were invited to write uplifting and inspiring messages to display in the foyer. It was wonderful to see so many thoughtful contributions that brightened the space throughout the week.

Each lunchtime, students took part in a skipping rope challenge, earning house points while enjoying a fun and active break. This proved particularly popular with Years 7 and 8, though older students, and even a few staff members, were keen to join in as well.

On Thursday, students from all year groups took part in a lively treasure hunt around the school. It was a joy to see so many smiling faces and so much enthusiasm as they worked together to complete the challenge.

A special thank you goes to the Year 10 students who helped to organise and run the events. Their commitment and leadership played a key role in making the week such a success.

Eating Disorders Awareness Week (23rd February – 1st March)

Eating disorders are serious mental health conditions that can have lasting effects on young people and their wellbeing. Eating Disorders Awareness Week is a national campaign which this year focuses on the power of community, the vital role that family, friends and wider support networks play in helping someone who may be struggling.

We know that conversations about eating disorders, or concerns around eating habits, can be difficult for children and young people to initiate. If you have any worries about a child in school, please do not hesitate to reach out for support. Our pastoral and safeguarding teams are here to listen and to help.

NATIONAL
**EATING
DISORDERS**
AWARENESS WEEK



You can do this through:

- Speaking to your child's Pastoral Support Officer or Head of Year.
- Speaking to your GP.
- Contacting the school nursing service in Southend on 01702 534843.
- Online through **Beat** ([The UK's Eating Disorder Charity - Beat](#)) or **ChildLine** ([Eating problems | Childline](#))

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 \(shsg.org\)](#).

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 \(padlet.com\)](#)

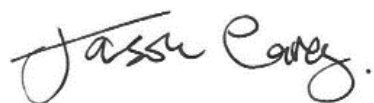
Year 9 Road Safety Talk

On Wednesday 25th February, Year 9 students will take part in a road safety programme delivered by Collingwood Education, in partnership with Southend County Council. The programme, titled Travel Hacks, aims to raise awareness of effective road safety among adolescents and to equip students with practical strategies for staying safe when travelling independently.

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](#).

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