



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, 16th January 2025

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Now that we are settled into the second week of term, I am pleased to share several important updates and highlights from within our school community.

Year 8 Enrichment Visit: Inspiring Codebreakers at Bletchley Park

Our Year 8 students spent an inspiring day at Bletchley Park last week, exploring the historic centre of wartime codebreaking and discovering the remarkable role women played in its success. As they moved through the huts and exhibitions, students learned how thousands of young, highly skilled women and men, working in complete secrecy, made vital contributions that shaped the outcome of the war and laid the foundations for modern computing.

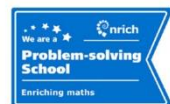
Hands-on codebreaking workshops gave our students the chance to put their teamwork and problem-solving skills into practice. A particular highlight was the opportunity for every student to press a key on one of the original Enigma machines used during the Second World War.

The visit was an empowering reminder of how women's intelligence, resilience, and determination have long driven innovation, encouraging our students to imagine themselves as the next generation of trailblazers. As Eva Y reflected: *"Bletchley Park has been the best learning experience. Thanks so much for this wonderful opportunity."*



Year 9 GCSE Options

Parents of students in Year 9 have been sent an email with information regarding the GCSE Options process. We look forward to welcoming families on **Tuesday 27th January** to school for our **Year 9 Options Fair** – details are in the email.



Year 10 Assembly: Understanding JCQ Guidance on AI Use in Coursework and NEAs

This week, Year 10 students attended an assembly on the appropriate and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in coursework and Non-Examination Assessments (NEAs). As a school, we are committed to embracing the exciting educational possibilities that AI offers while ensuring that its use aligns fully with the national regulations set by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) for GCSE and A Level courses.

It is essential that students understand what is permitted and what is not when using AI for assessed work. To support this, every student has received a summary infographic outlining the key JCQ guidance, which is also attached for your reference.

If your child has any questions or concerns about how they have used, or intend to use, AI in their coursework or NEAs, they should speak directly to their subject teacher or to their Head of Year, Ms Marcel.

Year 11 students received this guidance before the Christmas break, and Years 12 and 13 will attend their assemblies later this half term, ensuring all exam year groups are fully briefed on JCQ regulations.

Thank you for your continued support as we help students navigate these developments thoughtfully and responsibly.

Subject Captains: Celebrating Our New Year 12 Leaders

Congratulations to the Year 12 students who have been appointed as Subject Captains this week. Subject Captains act as ambassadors for their chosen subjects, representing them at key events such as subject fairs, and leading enrichment opportunities including clubs and mentoring programmes for younger students.

These roles are always highly competitive, and those appointed should feel extremely proud of their achievement.

Supporting Children's Digital Lives – New Guide for Parents



We would like to share an important new resource published by the Children's Commissioner, Rachel de Souza: *What I Wish My Parents or Carers Knew – A Guide for Parents on Managing Children's Digital Lives*.

Supporting children's safety is a shared responsibility between families, schools, and wider society. As children's lives become increasingly intertwined with the digital world, many parents find it challenging to balance protecting young people from online harm with giving them access to digital spaces that are central to learning, socialising, and play.

This guide has been created with the direct involvement of children and young people across England. It reflects their honest views on what helps, and what doesn't, when it comes to managing online habits and setting boundaries. The guide offers clear, practical advice for parents and carers on navigating the complexities of children's digital lives, including tips for fostering open conversations and establishing firm, informed limits.

We encourage all parents and carers to read the guide and use it as a tool to support safe, healthy, and positive online experiences for children. You can access the guide using the link below:

['What I wish my parents or carers knew...': A guide for parents and carers on managing children's digital lives | Children's Commissioner for England](#)

At SHSG, we remain firmly committed to working in partnership with families to safeguard the well-being of all our students and to support them in navigating the online and offline world safely and confidently.

The CognateUK Future Ready Programme

Several of our Year 12 students have been invited to take part in an exciting pilot programme designed to prepare them for entry into leading UK universities, particularly Oxford, Cambridge, and other Russell Group institutions. This is a prestigious opportunity with limited places available nationally. To be eligible, students needed to be in Year 12 and studying Mathematics and either Biology or Chemistry.

The programme consists of four 90-minute online sessions delivered throughout January 2026 by two leading experts:

- **Jeff Greenidge**, Director for Diversity and Governance at the Association of Colleges, with more than 30 years' experience in education.
- **Professor Graham Ball FRSB**, Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology and Professor of Bioinformatics.

Across these sessions, students will explore a range of topics including personal development and goalsetting, life sciences career pathways, hands-on experience with artificial intelligence in biology, and effective study habits and action planning for university success.

Participants will also receive three months' access to the **CognateUK Academy**, a secure AI-enabled learning platform offering personalised academic support.

PE Lesson Changing Rooms

Students will have access to the changing facilities from **Wednesday 21st January**, and should therefore return to normal uniform expectations and standard changing arrangements from this date.

Sports Fixtures

These fixtures may be subject to change, and all details are posted on the relevant PE Extra-Curricular Microsoft Teams pages. If your child has not yet been added to their year group's page and needs access, please ask them to speak to a member of the PE Department. Thank you.

- Monday 19th January: U13 Basketball away v Thorpe Hall School
- Tuesday 20th January: U13 Football Home V Forest School
- Wednesday 21st January: U14 Netball away v FitzWimarc

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.

Mental Health & Wellbeing at SHSG



Southend-on-Sea- Youth Fest – Saturday 14th February

Southend-on-Sea City Council is pleased to announce Youth Fest, a community event dedicated to promoting wellbeing and supporting young people and their families as part of Children's Mental Health Week.

Youth Fest will offer families the opportunity to access information and guidance on a wide range of child and youth services, alongside activities designed to encourage positive mental health. The event will feature interactive sessions, live music, and stalls providing practical resources to support emotional well-being.

We warmly encourage families to attend and make the most of this valuable opportunity to learn more about mental health support available within our community. Please see the poster below for further details.

At SHSG, we regularly explore how to look after our mental and physical health in lessons and during tutor time. If you need support, or would like information about managing your emotions, you can visit the **Mental Health & Wellbeing** section of our school website for guidance and resources. You can find it here: [Mental Health & Wellbeing - Southend High School for Girls \(shsg.org\)](https://www.shsg.org).

There, you will find a range of articles, videos, and useful links. The school has also created dedicated Padlets, one for Lower and Middle School and one for Sixth Form, to help you explore helpful resources whenever you need them. Please find the links below:

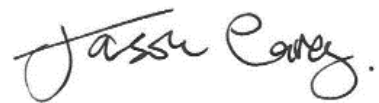
[Lower and Middle school SHSG Mental Health Board \(padlet.com\)](#)

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

Key Dates

The calendar on our school website is updated regularly and includes all key dates, activities, and events taking place at SHSG. You can view the full list [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