



*Our amazing Boarding Community*



## A letter from the Headmistress

Our Assembly this morning celebrated our International Boarders' music and dance production and this was a chance for our whole school community to enjoy their hard work together. It was a colourful array of round the world artistry and planning and an impressive performance from all who took part. Well done to the boarding community for their hard work and true sense of camaraderie and pride.

I continue to build our partnerships and connections for Godstowe and I have been on several school visits in the last week to St. Mary's Calne, Davenies and Caldicott and we welcomed the team from Muddy Stiletto's who visited to write their new article on Godstowe. We have also welcomed a range of educational consultants who are so enthused by the school and are now waving the flag for new families.

We are working hard to expand our alumnae database and please do encourage anyone you might know to visit the school website and sign up. We shall be hosting a wonderful alumnae event in July and hope to welcome as many old girls back to Godstowe as possible.

As I visited St Mary's Calne yesterday, I was greeted by a St Mary's mother who was an ex Godstowe girl herself and she had just arranged the launch of their 150th school anniversary celebrations. Apparently, she was one of the best event planners they had ever worked with. Well naturally, she had started her days at Godstowe – only the best here! Have a wonderful weekend and good luck to all girls playing in matches tomorrow.

### Key Dates for next week

#### 6th February

- Fourths' Revision Week
- Young Voices Concert, OVO Wembley Arena

#### 7th February

- all day U13 IAPS Netball at Cranleigh
- 3.15pm U9 Netball vs Berkhamstead (home)

#### 8th February

- 4.30pm Student Recital
- U9-U13 Cross Country Bucks Schools Championships at Stowe (away)
- 4.30pm U10 A-C Netball vs RMS (home)

#### 9th February

- Open Morning for Lodge and Main School
- 12.30pm Ski Trip departs
- 6pm DT Taster Evening for Lower School parents

#### 10th February

- 3pm Online Safety Presentation, Recital Hall
- HALF TERM - No enrichment curriculum for Main School or Lodge

Lodge enjoyed an assembly on Tuesday from all the girls in U1111, who talked to the children about how we can care for the environment. They looked at the examples of David Attenborough, Greta Thunberg and Jane Goodall and gave us suggestions of things that we can do at home and school to help prevent global warming.

This week we revisited the topic of Space as the children had some questions about Space that they would like to find the answer to. We have looked at how to find answers to our questions, including using the internet, books and also sharing the knowledge of others. Some highlights of the week have been using pastels to make smudged planet pictures, making number rockets and exploring some very exciting fine motor skill activities. In cookery, we made the most delicious focaccia bread, learning how to knead dough in the process. The sound of the week has been g and for this we made goldfish.

We made an exciting discovery in Beginners this week! We returned from lunch to find giant dinosaur footprints in our classroom and out on the veranda leading into the garden. Thus began our detective work to find out who had left these footprints and where they had disappeared to. The footprints led us to the woodland area where we discovered some dinosaur eggs! We decided to take care of the eggs and bring them back to our warm, cosy classroom. We wrote all about what happened and used our phonic sounds brilliantly. In Maths we have been using dinosaurs to count, add and fill in the missing numbers. Our sounds of the week are ai and ee; see if you can spot them while doing your reading this weekend!



Kindergarten children have used their new Literacy topic, Edward Lear's "The Owl and the Pussycat", to learn about character descriptions and story maps. Continuing with this theme, they have enjoyed designing and creating their own Owl and Pussycat diorama in Art/DT, using the shoeboxes kindly sent in last week. The children sat wide-eyed as they watched a short piece of film, shot over 100 years ago, depicting the Antarctic explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton's boat, Endurance, getting crushed by the ice. They went on to learn about his bravery and determination to save his crew, when the expedition did not go to plan. Not only an interesting historical event but also a good PSHE reminder never to give up!

This term, Transition pupils are having a focus on Food Technology and have started by looking at how to be hygienic in the kitchen. The children have also been learning how to use the bridge hold to cut soft fruit safely and have enjoyed making face creations with the slices. We have been continuing to use rulers to measure in centimetres in our Maths lessons as well as working on our times tables. We are now focusing on the four times table, so any reinforcement of this at home would be useful. We would like to give a special thank you to both Meredith's father and Audrey who spoke to both classes about Chinese New Year last week.

Transition are very much looking forward to visiting All Saints Church in High Wycombe next Tuesday.

## Main School

We have been treated to some fantastic assemblies this week. Monday started with Mrs MacDougall and her topic of our planet. She also launched her litter picking campaign for the girls to start after half term.

Wednesday was our Lower School and Upper School assemblies and two classes from Upper Thirds performed their presentation for their Dove Diploma. They all read their parts so well and had obviously researched their topics thoroughly.

Then Friday's assembly became a true celebration of Godstowe's International Community. The Boarding houses had been practising for their show on Sunday and Miss Bailey was so impressed that the girls were asked to share it with the rest of the school and staff this morning. And wow! What an incredible display. Every continent was represented with music, dancing and some cultural history. A big congratulations to all the Boarding Family!

## Dove Diploma

The girls in Upper School are working hard on their Dove Diplomas. They are enjoying embracing new skills, attending clubs, running assemblies and much more. They are all working hard to sign off their challenges in time for the May half term deadline. At the end of the year we are planning an awards evening to celebrate all they have achieved.

### Theodora has signed off her 'New Skill' challenge this week by learning German on DuoLingo.

'I have had many German au pairs since I was 4. I started to learn German with them and have begun to learn it now in more depth. Duo started me off learning how to order food and drink. It has really helped me with tricky sounds. I have to practise every day for 15 minutes to keep my winning streak. In December we had a German family stay with us and they gave me a lesson. I am currently in 7th place in the Sapphire league. I can even read German books now! Tschuss.'



### Jemima spent her Christmas holidays raising money for her Church.

'I had decided to send some money for a Christmas lunch hamper, each one cost £35. I had raised £245 so I was able to buy 7 hampers. I then delivered the money to families.'

### Mair has been giving her time to support her local rugby club.

'I've played rugby for High Wycombe RFC for the past five years and for the first four years I was the only girl in the team. I have played for the Belles (girls team) since September and played for them at Twickenham in November. In October I started coaching the under 6s - it is harder than you think but worth it to see the smiling faces at the end of a training session. It is a lot of fun wherever I go in the club.'

The Upper Thirds have been working on their 'Collaborative Project' challenge this week. They presented assemblies about the environment. UIIIL presented a lovely Bluey inspired assembly to Lodge. UIIIA presented their assembly to Lower School and UIIIP to Upper School.



# Boarders' Corner

Our exciting weekend started off on Saturday with our usual routine of working hard to finish off our prep and practising our lovely music, which like always, sounded beautiful. To ensure we had plenty of energy for our rehearsals, we had some delicious lunch. And off we went to rehearsals, while F1 and F2 had an important but fun job in the art room making cultural creations, which were used in the dining room decorations. They were the centre pieces on the tables and looked beautiful. After rehearsals and cultural creations, we had super yummy and filling supper. We then all settled in the common room, with our pillows, teddy bears and of course some sweet tuck, and watched 'Puss in Boots'.

Sunday was the day we have all been waiting for! We had delicious pancakes and waffles for breakfast and then our teams call with our families. Its always nice to see them! For lunch, we had an Asian Fusion feast. The food was delicious and a real treat, the lunch was thoroughly enjoyed by all! Thank you so much Chef Adrian and all the kitchen staff. And then it was show time!! The performances were by far the best part of the day and even the weekend! So much talent on display, it was truly wonderful to see all the hard work and talent of the boarding community here at Godstowe.

The performance included music, dance and some history of all the countries represented within our Boarding Community. We had flamenco from Spain, Umbrella dancing from Japan, choreographed dance to a modern soundtrack from the girls from Nigeria. We also had girls playing flutes, piano and songs sang embracing their cultural diversity. An amazing afternoon!



## Sports Snippets

On Saturday 28th January, we had a double fixture against Abbots Hill. It started with U13A lacrosse and U12A-C Netball and then switched over to U12A lacrosse and U13A-C Netball. It was amazing to see so many girls representing Godstowe.

The U12s had terrific netball matches with all teams coming away victorious! The girls are beginning to put the drills into practice and it is great to see such fantastic netball being played.

The U13s also came away victorious which is a huge confidence boost for those that are heading to IAPS. As always the girls were a credit to the school and we look forward to our next set of fixtures.

Our U13 lacrosse team started strongly, quickly scoring several goals. Abbots Hill started to catch up after half time but Godstowe remained in control and won the match 10-5. This was, without a doubt, our best match so far.

The U12's played next and again scored quickly, showing off their new shooting skills. They too had a strong game scoring 8 goals to Abbots Hill's 4. Another win for Godstowe.



On Tuesday we welcomed Pipers Corner to our school to play against our U9 red, blue and green teams. All three teams played very well and the green and blue teams walked away victorious. Well done to all that took part, it is lovely to see their hard work during lessons and the new U9 club paying off. We are looking forward to welcoming Berkhamsted on Tuesday, with the girls playing an exciting new format in line with England Netball.

On Wednesday it was our turn to travel to Pipers Corner. Our Middle Third girls had a really lovely time and our teams were very strong with A-C winning by a huge margin and D narrowly missing out on a win. The girls showed great team spirit and were able to put lots of skills learnt at training into practice. Well done to all.

# Tips for Encouraging Open Discussions about DIGITAL LIVES

The online world is an entirely familiar and commonplace part of life for today's children and young people, far more so than for previous generations. There are many positives to children being able to access online materials, so it's important not to demonise the internet, games and apps, and limit the benefit of their positive aspects. At the same time, we do have a responsibility to educate children about the hazards they may encounter online (just as we would about real-world dangers) so it's essential that we don't shy away from talking to them about the complex – and often sensitive – subject of what they do and what they see when they're online.

Here are some suggestions for kicking off conversations with your child about their digital life ...

## MAKE YOUR INTEREST CLEAR

Showing enthusiasm when you broach the subject signals to your child that you're keen to learn about the positives of their online world. Most children enjoy educating adults and will happily chat about what they use the internet for, or what games and apps they're into and how these work. Asking to see their favourite games and apps in action could help you spot any aspects that may need your attention – such as chat functions which might require a settings adjustment to limit contact with strangers. Keep listening even if your child pauses for a long time: they could be considering how to phrase something specific, or they may be gauging your reaction.

## BE OPEN AND HONEST, APPROPRIATE TO THEIR AGE

At various stages, children and young people become curious about puberty and how their body changes; about relationships; about how babies are made; and about sexual health. If your child knows that they can discuss these sensitive subjects with you, they tend to be less likely to go looking online for answers – which can often provide them with misleading information and, in some cases, lead to them consuming harmful content. Don't worry if you don't immediately know the answers to their questions – just find out for yourself and go back to them once you have the facts.

## REMIND YOUR CHILD THEY CAN ALWAYS TALK TO YOU

In my role I work with many children and young people who admit being reluctant to tell a trusted adult about harmful content they've viewed online, in case it leads to having their devices confiscated. Emphasise to your child that you're always there to listen and help; reassure them that if they do view harmful content, then they are not to blame – but talking about it openly will help. Children shouldn't be expected to be resilient against abuse or feel that it's their job to prevent it.

## KEEP TALKING!

The most valuable advice we can give is to keep talking with your child about their digital lives. You could try using everyday situations to ask questions about their online experiences.

## DISCUSS THAT NOT EVERYTHING WE SEE ONLINE IS REAL

Here, you could give examples from your own digital life of the online world versus reality – for example, those Instagram posts which show the perfect house; spotlessly clean, never messy and immaculately decorated. Explain to your child that there are many other aspects of the online world which are also deliberately presented in an unrealistic way for effect – such as someone's relationship, their body, having perfect skin and so on.

## TRY TO REMAIN CALM

As much as possible, try to stay calm even if your child tells you about an online experience that makes you feel angry or fearful. Our immediate emotions frequently influence the way we talk, so it's possible that your initial reaction as a parent or carer could deter a child from speaking openly about what they've seen. Give yourself time to consider the right approach, and perhaps speak with other family members or school staff while you are considering your next steps.

## CREATE A 'FAMILY AGREEMENT'

Involving your whole household in coming up with a family agreement about device use can be immensely beneficial. You could discuss when (and for how long) it's OK to use phones, tablets, consoles and so on at home; what parental controls are for and why they're important; and why it's good to talk to each other about things we've seen or experienced online (both good and bad). Explaining your reasoning will help children to understand that, as trusted adults, we want to make sure they are well informed and kept safe. Allowing children to have their say when coming up with your family agreement also makes them far more likely to stick to it in the long term.

## Meet Our Expert

Rebecca Jennings of RAISE (Raising Awareness in Sex Education) has almost 20 years' experience delivering relationships and sex education and training to schools, colleges and other education providers. A published author on the subject, she also advises the Department of Education on the staff-training element of the RSE curriculum.



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