



# Newsletter

## Guildford County School SPECIALIST MUSIC COLLEGE

September Issue 2024



### The Value of Partnership

Partnerships are at the heart of everything we do as a school community. Whether it's working closely with individuals or coming together as part of a larger group, partnerships drive our success and growth. On a personal level, my partnership with my wife is one that continually reminds me of the strength and balance that comes from working alongside someone with shared values and a common vision. This partnership has shaped not only our personal lives but also the way that I approach collaboration within our school. But partnership extends beyond individuals. It's a collective effort that unites us all. Here at County, we are fortunate to work as a

group of dedicated staff who share the same goal: to provide the best education and opportunities for our students through living our **C.A.S.T.L.E.** framework of values and behaviours. Our partnership with our governors ensures that every decision made has the long-term well-being of our school community in mind. Our Trust is also a vital partner in this journey, providing the support and strategic direction that allows us to achieve more than we could alone. We must also acknowledge the role of our families, whose involvement and support are invaluable in helping to create a nurturing environment for our students. Our partnership with them is based on trust and mutual respect and together we are able to enrich the educational

experience for every child. Finally, I want to highlight our ongoing partnership with our friends at Tormead School. Together, we are working hard to redevelop the sports provision at Urnfield sports ground. This collaboration is an example of how two schools, working together, can create something truly special that will benefit not just our students but the broader community. In all of these partnerships, we find strength, unity and the ability to achieve so much more than we could ever do alone. Partnerships are what make us, as a school, resilient and future-ready. Let's continue to build and nurture these relationships as we move forward together.

*Steve Smith, Headteacher*

**We are County**

# A warm **County** welcome

Dear Families,

Welcome back to the new term; we hope you have had a restful summer and are prepared and excited for the year ahead! We would like to welcome our new Yr7s starting here at Guildford County. This is a nervous, but very exciting time, and we encourage you all to get involved in as much as possible, from our sports clubs to music and all the House events, with House Drama just round the corner. We both started our journey here in Yr7 and remember the ups and downs of it all, but secondary school is such a special place, so get out there, make friends and join in.

To our Yr8s and Yr9s ... be prepared for the next year, work hard, but try new things too, whether that's a new sport or joining a new choir. When walking around school, offer a friendly face or smile to our new Yr7s. Remember to enjoy the year! Yr10s and Yr11s ... looking to the year ahead, spend your time wisely, studying and getting ahead. However, also enjoy your time here; County is such a special place with lots of opportunities, so really make the most of it!

Yr12s and Yr13s ... firstly welcome to all our new Yr12s; we hope you settle in well and discover the joys of the freedom and independence that Sixth Form provides! Make sure to involve yourselves in the running of House events, working with other years and developing many skills along the way!

We also wish Yr13 the very best with their mocks and working out whatever comes next!

We want to wish good luck to all our students here. We are already looking forward to seeing how much money we can raise from the Sponsored Walk and are excited to watch all the House Drama performances!

**Best wishes,  
Lily and Violet**

**A letter to our students from County's Student Presidents ...**



## The Appetizer ... Yr7 Summer School 2024

### Welcome to all new Yr7 students, parents and carers ...

Over the first two weeks of the term, it has been a delight to be the Head of Yr7. Here is what they have been up to so far!

- Yr7 have attended 37 lessons across 7 subjects.
- They have watched 3 assemblies with Mr. Smith, Miss Young and Mr. Cooper
- They have been to Tutor sessions in which they have been learning about friendships and the growth mindset

Here are some comments from our Yr7s about their first two weeks at County:

***"I have been in County for two weeks now, and during that time, I have had the most epic experience in my whole life! There is something for everyone, the chefs are really kind and they always serve with a smile! The school is not so big once you get used to it and it's really likely that other people are going in the same direction as you are. The coolest lesson so far has been English in the library. Using the MUGA has been really good fun too. County is amazing and all the students are really kind."*** James 7S

***"I've enjoyed my time in County very much. All the teachers are super kind and I've learnt so many things in the lessons already. All of the older kids and teachers are brilliant at helping you find your way around and even the lunch staff are really kind. There is a brilliant balance between help and independence."*** Millie 7H

***"I have really enjoyed County so far. Yr9 & 10 have helped me find my classrooms. I enjoyed my lessons - mostly! English is the best subject because the teacher is the best - Miss Young. In County, they are really serious about uniforms, learning, and anything else you can think of. The teachers and students are great."*** Cedric 7H

Long may their positivity, inquisitiveness and love of learning continue.

With very best wishes,

**Georgina Young  
Head of Yr7**



**This is our C.A.S.T.L.E.**



# Going for Gold in The Lakes

To us **GOLD** DofE was an invaluable experience, due to the soft skills learnt during the expedition, which you sub-consciously then apply to lessons and future prospects. We had the privilege of a practice day with hiking experts, where we got to see geographical lessons relating to the real world (such as many of the U-shaped glacial valleys we traversed). We were also split up from our original group, so were forced to act as a team with people we may have never properly talked to, or got to know before. The lessons learned on this practice day were hugely important when it came to our unsupervised expedition in the Lake District. Understanding the shape of the landscape around us gave a better idea of our route ahead and where we needed to go. It also gave us a very good idea of the kind of challenges we would face during the main expedition. The terrain was very hilly and our training day allowed us to make subtle changes to our routes, making them safer and quicker for everyone.

During our expedition there were many highs and lows. The lows mostly came on the first day, when, after walking down a steep hill, we could see dark rainclouds rolling over the mountain top. They were approaching quickly and reached us before we got to our campsite. The problem was, this was our wild camping night and a spot to pitch was becoming increasingly hard to find in the hilly terrain and poor visibility. We ended up in a very remote environment and around 400m to the nearest water source, which was not too easily accessible. Along with this, the bug count was off the charts! No amount of bug spray was sorting out the swarms of insects around our tents in the morning.

However, throughout the whole DofE experience, our routes contained beautiful views of the Lake District. This was especially true on the second day, where you could see the entirety of Lake Windermere and surrounding villages from a hill called Wansfell Pike. It was a sight to behold and one that you do not see often enough in the bustling towns and cities of the south. Our second day camp was much more pleasant. The skies were blue, bugs were gone and we had a nearby stream that was fairly close to the source of the river. This meant that we could see many different river features within the space of 100 metres: rapids and waterfalls, small rockpools and "hot tub like" formations. It was a very nice place to relax after a long day of walking, enjoying some digestive biscuits and a very welcome chilli con carne ration pack! *Team Gold, Yr12*



The place where we excel



# Barcelona 2024



## The 2024 Barcelona trip was certainly one to remember ...

from the highs of the Montjuic Cable Car in 30°C heat, to the lows of sitting in *Gatwick Arrivals* doing the most exciting thing we could do ... watch Mr Morris sleep.

Although we had some setbacks, we still managed to see the incredible architecture that Barcelona had to offer. The Sagrada Familia has to be seen to be believed; it's so magnificent and the story behind it is even better.

The art didn't stop there, as we were also lucky enough to visit the Picasso Museum, entering a world of creativity. Genuinely, we could (and would) have spent the whole week there.

And Barcelona's culture just kept on coming; on Day 3 we visited the Camp Nou Stadium and its museum – the only stadium with the (unofficial) award for 'Longest Time to Build a Stadium'...

NEWSFLASH ... it still isn't finished! However, the museum housed the fascinating history of FC Barcelona (including a whole wall dedicated to Messi), great interactive displays detailing past and present players, and a circular immersive experience putting you right in the centre of the pitch. It's pretty safe to say that the majority of students spent most of their money at the gift shop there!

Also, we can't forget about the beach: Barceloneta. We had so much fun, whether it was playing catch in the sea, or simply honing our tanning routine on the sand.

Despite everyone running out of money, the Mercat de la Boqueria food market was definitely a huge success - mainly because no one got lost - and it's safe to say there was no chance we were going to run out of choices! It was absolutely stacked with Spanish street food, fresh fruit and veg, and the most delicious looking seafood.

All in all, we think everyone gained a massive amount of experience, and it was a brilliant test of patience, even just getting back home (come on Microsoft, couldn't you have waited a couple of hours before causing a global IT outage!).

**We would like to end this article by thanking the staff members for handling every obstacle that came our way, and for such a brilliant trip – THANK YOU!**



# Safeguarding at County

'Keeping children safe is our number one priority at County, and all staff work together to make that happen. Some of the key names and faces in this effort are below. If you have any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child, please contact one of the team listed. If a child is in immediate danger, always call 999. Lastly, if your child wants to speak to someone about something that is bothering them, but might find it hard to begin that conversation, they can email [me@guildfordcounty.co.uk](mailto:me@guildfordcounty.co.uk).'



**Jack Houghton**  
Deputy Headteacher  
**Designated  
Safeguarding  
Lead**



**Jemma Boddington**  
Senior Home-School  
Link Worker  
**Deputy  
Designated  
Safeguarding**



**Steve Smith**  
Headteacher  
**Deputy  
Designated  
Safeguarding  
Lead**



**Antonella Bosco-Reid**  
Senior Deputy Headteacher  
**Deputy  
Designated  
Safeguarding  
Lead**



**Daryl Bond**  
Assistant Headteacher  
Director of Sixth Form  
**Deputy  
Designated  
Safeguarding  
Lead**



**Helen Nurton**  
Assistant Headteacher  
**Deputy  
Designated  
Safeguarding  
Lead**



**Charlotte Barlow**  
Assistant Headteacher  
Director of SEND  
**Deputy  
Designated  
Safeguarding  
Lead**

## Safeguarding News

### Launching our 90-Second Nuggets

It's difficult to live a busy family life and keep up to date with all the information school sends your way.

Safeguarding, especially, can feel like a subject where there is a lot to digest.

Knowing where to start can be a challenge in itself.

To help, we've launched

### County's 90-Second Nuggets

These are a series of short videos that cover all the basics of safeguarding.

This month, we've been talking a lot with children about **consent**, so why not check out our video all about it, so that you are ready to have the right conversations at home:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKEV7U9fpW8>

Please like, subscribe and share these videos: the more people who get to see them, the better.



**Georgina Young**  
Head  
of  
Year 7



**Jon Thorpe**  
Head  
of  
Year 8



**Rachel O'Rourke**  
Head  
of  
Year 9



**Hana Stewart**  
Head  
of  
Year 10



**Sam Strong**  
Head  
of  
Year 11



**Mark Grimmatt**  
Head  
of  
Year 12



**Chloe Kemp**  
Head  
of  
Year 13


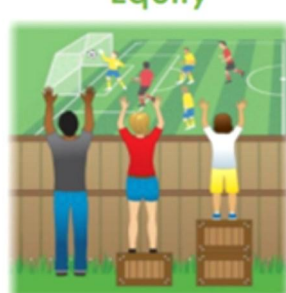
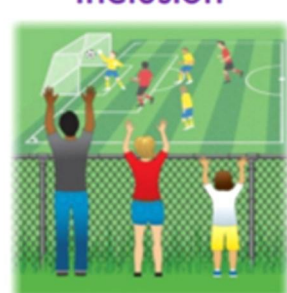


# Equity, Diversity & Inclusion



At County, **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)** are central to everything we do. We believe that every student, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstance, should have the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

By fostering an environment where differences are celebrated, we aim to empower students to become compassionate, open-minded individuals who contribute positively to society.

Equality	Equity	Inclusion
		
The assumption is that <b>everyone benefits from the same supports</b> . This is equal treatment.	<b>Everyone gets the supports they need</b> , thus producing equity.	All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because the <b>cause(s) of the inequity was addressed</b> . The systemic barrier has been removed.

EDI is not just a policy - it's a commitment to creating a school community where everyone feels valued, respected, and heard. We work diligently to ensure that our curriculum, school culture, and practices reflect the diversity of our students and the world around them.

We hold **Included@County** sessions once every half term to make sure that every student's voice can be heard. We encourage all students to come along to ensure that County is a **place of welcome and belonging for all**.

If there are any questions, concerns, or ideas, please send an email to [included@guildfordcounty.co.uk](mailto:included@guildfordcounty.co.uk)

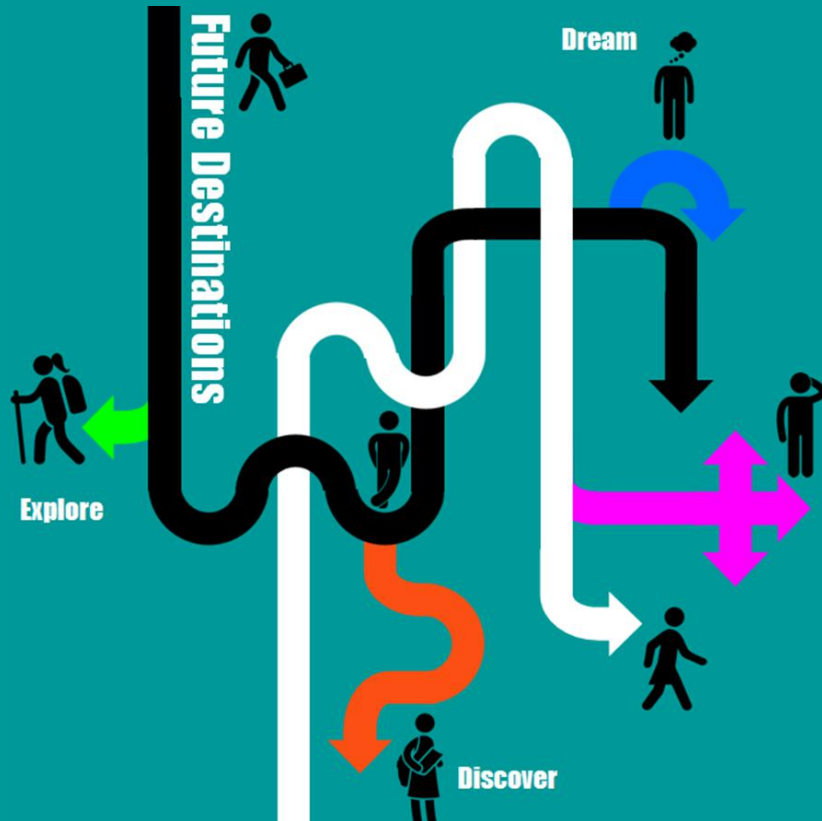
*Performance Cols Beraha, EDI Lead*



The place where we excel

# Future Destinations ...

The Future Destinations Team concluded the academic year with a Yr10 Careers Day and an impressive array of Work Placements for Yr12 students. The Careers Day was filled with engaging activities designed to inspire and inform our students. In the Business Game, they explored the world of entrepreneurship by designing and creating keyrings to be given to our Yr7 summer school students. Mock interviews, speed networking, and Career Escape learning sessions offered invaluable practical experience. Students also explored the **Unifrog** platform to investigate potential career paths. Whilst our Yr10 students were immersed in their busy day of activities, our Yr12s were gaining invaluable work experience through placements.



From the Home Office and Westminster to Willmott Dixon in central London, Surrey University, and sectors such as IT, psychology, environmental studies, creative arts, law, architecture, politics, and business, our students were actively involved in projects, honing their teamwork, communication, and presentation skills.



The Yr10 Business Game

The end of term marked a successful conclusion to the Future Destinations initiatives. We are incredibly proud of our students' achievements and their enthusiasm for exploring future opportunities. Looking ahead, we are excited to embark on new ventures and continue supporting our students on their academic and career paths.



The world of entrepreneurship

Photography courtesy of James Anthony

Mrs H Gay | Future Destinations Leader  
 hgay@guildfordcounty.co.uk  
 futures@guildfordcounty.co.uk



Speed Networking



## Our Sixth Form Correspondent reports . . .

Two and a half months of holiday was not long enough!

After revising relentlessly for over six months, it feels as though our brains have only just recovered from the all-nighters, the stress, the boredom and the home stretch of our GCSEs. However, on Tuesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 2024, the new Yr12s, alongside eager Yr7s, were welcomed into County.



As a returning student, the transition from the Main School to Sixth Form did not seem *too* daunting, but for those new to County, the prospect of navigating a **C.A.S.T.L.E.** must have been nerve-wracking.

Seeing Yr7s trying to differentiate between B2 and B2A also stirred up memories of me and my friends thinking, "We'll never be able to find our way around *this place*." For the new students reading this, trust me, it gets easier! With so much going on, finding your way becomes only one of many tasks.

## House Drama – bring it on!

For example, the launch of House Drama on the 10<sup>th</sup> September, has added not only excitement, but also an atmosphere of competition amongst Sixth Formers. This event gives Yr12s the opportunity to write, direct and produce original productions, in which the Yr7s, 8s and 9s can perform. As someone who loves drama, I cannot wait for rehearsals! The introduction of such a full-on event, so early in the term, highlights the school's drive and eagerness to get us all settled into County life as soon as possible. This is a key attribute of County: there's always so much to do.

Nicole, Yr12

House Drama 2023



**So, try new things,  
discover what you're passionate about,  
and wear your uniform with pride!**

## Friends of County

# Yr7 Families Welcome Event



Thank you for your help, Yr12



On Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup> September, we held our Yr7 Families Welcome Event. Over 300 people took up the opportunity to get together in the sun for refreshments, sports, fun games and chat. It was brilliant to meet and greet so many of our new families and we look forward to welcoming them to many more events during their time at County. Many thanks to all our volunteers and brilliant Sixth Form helpers for your support on the day. We hope everyone in our school community had a lovely weekend.

Amy & Friends of GCS Team  
guildfordcountyfriends@gmail.com

### Friends Upcoming Events - take note

**Friday 27th September @ 09:00-10:00**

Parents and Carers Coffee Morning in the Dining Hall. An informal opportunity to get together over a hot drink and a sweet treat.

**Tuesday 1st October @ 19:00**

Friends of GCS AGM in the Sixth Form Centre  
ZOOM details on Parentmail

**Saturday 14th December @ 14:00-16:00**

Friends' Christmas Fair **SAVE THE DATE**



### Dates for the Diary:

Thu 26 Sep	Yr7 Information Evening
Thu 03 Oct	Open Evening for 2025 entry
Fri 04 Oct	Sponsored Walk
07, 09, 11 Oct	County Open Mornings for 2025 entry
Fri 11 Oct	Yr12 BBQ



# Lettings at County



## Guildford Karate Club

celebrated Yellow Belt success for some of its students, including Tobias & Oliver - both pupils at County - shown here with their Instructor Sensei Mike Abbot 3rd Dan. Huge congratulations to them!  
For more details about Guildford Karate Club, contact Barry Wilkinson: [barrywado@aol.com](mailto:barrywado@aol.com) or come to Guildford County School (Main Reception) on a Monday evening @ 7.45pm - the first trial session is FREE

Thank you to all who attended the **GO GOLD** Charity Fitness Night on Monday 9th September at Guildford County School. We danced, we moved and sang - all in aid of Sophie's Legacy Charity and Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in September.

We appreciated all your incredible support, making the night so special.

**We raised an incredible £975 in total.**

A special thank you to The Jungle Body Guildford UK and HH Personal Training who kindly offered time to organise and run the night's classes.

**Thank you also to Guildford County School**

for providing their Main Hall free of charge for this special event.

Go to [sophielegacy.co.uk](http://sophielegacy.co.uk) to find out how the charity supports children and families locally and nationwide.

## Discover the Fun of the Sparks Film Set



- ★ Book a Free Trial Class
- ★ Register Now for Half Term

**Book Now:**  
[sparksarts.co.uk](http://sparksarts.co.uk)



**Looking for a new experience this year?**  
**Become a Surrey Volunteer Police Cadet!**  
We will offer you a unique insight into policing, the chance to learn and develop new skills, and the opportunity to support your community through volunteering (all whilst having fun!)  
Our Guildford Volunteer Police Cadet Unit meets in your school on Thursday evenings from 6-8pm.  
To find out more and apply contact us at [cadets@surrey.police.uk](mailto:cadets@surrey.police.uk)



**Guildford County School. Thursdays 18:00**

Join Sparks Filmmaking Classes with Matt Toogood, which take place on Saturday Mornings and Holiday Camps at Guildford County School

For this Autumn term's filmmaking classes, we're excited to introduce and explore the brand new theme of **Finishing Touches**.

In the quest for cinematic glory, what happens on set is only half the battle. This term, we're looking at what happens next, as we explore all the finishing touches needed to take a bundle of footage and turn it into a masterpiece!

Every term at Sparks Film School's filmmaking classes, young film students explore a different creative theme, which helps us to introduce a wide variety of filmmaking techniques and styles. Over time, filmmakers develop a well-rounded knowledge, understanding and awareness of many filmmaking practices.

For more information head to [www.sparksarts.co.uk](http://www.sparksarts.co.uk)

**The place where we excel**