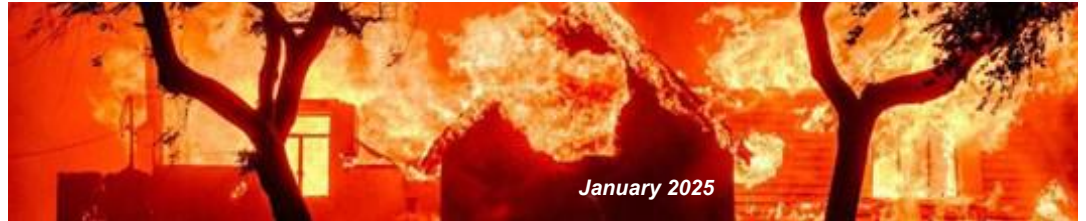




Newsletter

Guildford County School SPECIALIST MUSIC COLLEGE



Revision, AI and the California Wildfires . . .

As exam season draws near, many students are seeking ways to maximise their study efforts and improve their performance. The temptation to rely on AI tools like ChatGPT for quick answers and assistance may seem appealing, but it's crucial to remember the value of traditional revision methods - such as planning, self-study, and consistent practice. Not only do these approaches ensure that you truly understand the material, but they also help avoid the negative environmental impacts associated with excessive use of AI.

The Power of Revision and Planning

When it comes to exam preparation, nothing beats a well-structured revision plan. Rather than relying on shortcuts, focus on breaking down the material into manageable sections, setting clear goals, and revising regularly. Planning ahead will help you stay organised, manage your time effectively, and avoid the last-minute panic that often comes with cramming.

Active learning is key. By testing yourself on past papers, discussing topics with classmates, or explaining concepts out loud, you'll reinforce your understanding. Consistent effort and self-discipline are the keys to doing well in exams - and these habits will benefit you far more in the long run than any AI tool.

The Hidden Environmental Costs of Using AI

While AI can offer some useful tools for learning, its energy consumption and environmental impact should not be overlooked. Every query to an AI model like ChatGPT comes with a hidden cost - both in terms of electricity use and water consumption.

Energy Use:

A single query to ChatGPT consumes approximately 0.0005 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of energy, which is around 1.7 times more than a Google search. While that might not sound like much, consider the global scale of AI use. ChatGPT's daily power usage is equivalent to the energy consumption of around 180,000 U.S. households. If we extend this usage over time, we begin to see a significant impact. Training large AI models like ChatGPT-3 is an even bigger energy-intensive process. It's estimated that ChatGPT's annual energy consumption will reach an astounding 226.8 GWh. To put that in perspective, that's enough energy to power tens of thousands of homes for a year.

Water Use:

In addition to its energy consumption, AI also requires a lot of water to cool the data centres that host these systems. A single query to ChatGPT uses around 500 millilitres of water - about the same amount as a bottle of water. This may seem small, but if millions of users rely on ChatGPT daily, the water footprint becomes significant. For instance, if 16 million people used ChatGPT just once a week for a year, it would use over 435 million litres of water!

Water use doesn't stop there. The manufacturing of chips for AI, the power generation needed to run data centres, and even the cooling of the servers all require water. In an increasingly water-scarce world, the environmental cost of this water use cannot be ignored.

Links to Climate Change and Wildfires

Many of us will have been horrified to see the devastating impacts of the current wildfires in California and, as a Geography teacher, I am interested in the reasons behind the increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires. As the demand for AI technology grows, so too does its impact on the environment. The electricity used to power AI systems often comes from non-renewable sources like coal and natural gas, which release harmful greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. These emissions contribute to global climate change, which is driving the extreme weather events we've seen in places like California.

The rise in wildfires across California is linked to rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and increased aridity - conditions all exacerbated by climate change. The energy-intensive nature of AI only adds to these global environmental challenges.

Making More Sustainable Choices

While AI tools are useful, it's important to consider their environmental impact. So, how can we reduce the footprint of our technology use and still excel in exams?

- **Limit AI Use for Specific Tasks:** Instead of relying on AI to solve problems or generate answers, use it for research or clarification on specific topics. Engage more actively with the material yourself to retain the information.
- **Plan Your Study Sessions Efficiently:** Rather than searching for shortcuts, create a study schedule that allows you to review topics methodically. Use resources like textbooks, past papers, and study groups to reinforce your learning.
- **Embrace Sustainable Alternatives:** Try not to over-rely on AI and use it only when it offers the most value. A human brain - your brain - is more than capable of learning and remembering information without external help.

Conclusion: The Future of Exams and Technology

As you prepare for exams, remember that the most effective way to succeed is through careful revision and planning. While AI tools like ChatGPT may seem tempting for quick solutions, the energy, water, and environmental costs are significant and growing. By investing your time in structured study plans and focusing on active learning, you'll achieve more sustainable and lasting results, both academically and environmentally.

Let's be mindful of how we use technology and make responsible choices that help protect the planet. The skills developed through proper revision and planning will not only serve you in exams, but will also prepare you to make thoughtful, informed decisions about the world around you.

Helen Nurton, Assistant Headteacher

What better a way to start 2025

A New Year's resolution to get fit?

Students are welcome to come along to Run Club every Friday morning

07:30 - 08:15

Enjoy the scenic Surrey Hills into the bargain!

Ask the PE Dept for details



Thinking Ahead

From the beginning of this academic year, Miss Macadam (Assistant Head of Yr9) and I have emphasised the importance of independent thinking, and it is now more pertinent than ever.

As our Yr 9 students embark on the Spring Term, they are approaching an exciting and transformative stage in their school journey. The upcoming options process is a pivotal moment for students to begin shaping their academic pathways and considering their career aspirations. Choosing their GCSE options may feel like a daunting task and so we look forward to welcoming Yr9 students and their families on Thursday 23 January for Options Evening. This will be a great opportunity to be curious about new and current subjects before finalising decisions the following week.

Moving forward into the remainder of the school year, we encourage Yr9s to adopt an Upper School mindset; embracing increased independence, responsibility, and focus. This shift is a vital part of the transition, as developing effective study habits, managing their time wisely, and setting clear academic and personal goals will not only serve them well in their GCSEs, but also in further education and beyond.

Supported by their tutors, teachers and the Future Destinations team, I have no doubt that Yr9 students will rise to the challenge and make this a year of discovery and growth.

Rachel O'Rourke, Head of Yr9

Considering Options

Spotlight on Year 9

A Christmas Celebration

at Guildford Cathedral ... 2024



Hope

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.

It is not about ignoring the hardships we face, but about believing in the possibility of a brighter tomorrow.

Each of us is bound to one another in a delicate web of humanity.

When we recognize our shared destiny, we can embrace one another with open hearts,

knowing that we are stronger together than apart.

The holiday season reminds us that joy is found not in things, but in relationships.

It is in giving to others, in acts of kindness and love, that we truly find ourselves.

This is a time for building bridges, for healing divisions, and for celebrating the simple truth that love always wins.

Desmund Tutu



Photography courtesy of James Anthony

The place where we excel

House Public Speaking

This year was my fourth time taking part in our House Public Speaking event and it has got no less exhilarating, since the first time I took part in Yr7 - a horrifying five years ago! For me, public speaking has always been one of the most enjoyable of the House events, though that may just be because of how much I enjoy talking (especially when it's topics I'm passionate about). I seriously cannot recommend it enough to anyone who's even vaguely interested. No matter what role you end up taking on, the skills it helps you develop are invaluable - from effectively conveying your ideas; to learning to improvise; to getting over stage fright . . . public speaking provides endless opportunities to learn. *Oli Yr12*



Oli's 2024 speech addressed the topic of Controlling Gender in Sports



In 1936, Heinz Ratjen, a German high jumper, placed fourth in the final of the Berlin Olympics. According to the many articles that have discussed him since, Ratjen is the 'one known case of [Olympic] gender cheating'. They claim he was born a man and was forced to compete as a woman by the Nazis, an historic example of the misinformation campaigns we've seen over the last few years, claiming certain female athletes are 'men posing as women'. So why did it happen then, and why is it happening now?

Ratjen was born **intersex** – meaning his sex didn't fit neatly into the category of 'male' or 'female' – but was raised as a girl after being assigned female at birth.

Growing up, he came to realise that he wasn't a girl, but a boy. Despite this, Ratjen ended up competing in women's sports, at a very high level. On the train home from setting a new world record in 1938, he was arrested by Nazi soldiers who thought he was a cisgender man posing as a woman. He was forced to undergo an invasive medical exam, in which a doctor determined that he should be 'regarded as a man'.

Though it's likely that Ratjen wanted to, the Nazis still essentially forced him into living as a man, pressuring him to take a new name and receive new government documents, under the threat of violence faced by all who challenged Germany's gender norms. The impact of his

supposed 'cheating' far outlasted his own life.

A month later, a Nazi member of the International Olympic Committee, introduced a requirement for women to 'prove' their sex before competing. This policy lasted until 1999. However, today, we're once again seeing the tightening of rules around gender testing for women – whether they be cisgender, trans or intersex.

Regulations on women's bodies vary depending on the association, with some – like the IOC – relaxing their rules due to a 'lack of sufficient evidence'. However, a large amount, like World Athletics, have declared that female athletes must have under 2.5nmol/l of testosterone in their blood – when, just a decade ago, it was 10nmol/l – and those not assigned female at birth can't have undergone any part of male puberty. In contrast, few truly regulate the men's category – World Athletics simply requires an exemption to take testosterone. And for intersex athletes? Similarly, the majority don't discuss them, though the IOC and England Athletics require that under 2.5nmol/l of testosterone is present in a blood sample.

While these regulations seem fair, the (very limited) data we have suggests otherwise. A small cross-sectional study published this year, found that trans female athletes actually performed worse in the vast majority of metrics they looked at. A scientific review from 2021 found most studies were methodologically flawed or had small sample sizes – some not accounting for height or misrepresenting the effects of lung capacity. Others only used non-athletes or cisgender athletes in their research. Overall, it concluded any advantages were mitigated within a year of testosterone suppression. Interestingly, it also found the impact of social factors was greatly underestimated: social inequality and discrimination create systemic barriers that have a huge impact on athletes' abilities.

So, what's the actual purpose of these unevidenced regulations? They restrict the freedoms of trans, intersex and gender non-conforming individuals. When athletes like Imane Khelif or Lin Yu-ting are harassed about their appearance, it's not because they're cheating, or lying . . . it's because they're non-white masculine women. Their existence defies the norms set out by Eurocentric beauty standards and is therefore unacceptable. When transphobes try to get trans women banned from women's chess, it's not about 'protecting' women from a biological advantage – after all what feminist claims that men are intellectually superior to women – it's about discrimination.

When people try to talk to you about these apparent biological advantages, just think . . . is it actually about protecting women, or is it about perpetuating their bigotry?

Oli Yr12



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.'



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



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



Steve Smith
Headteacher
**Deputy
Designated
Safeguarding
Lead**



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



Jo Cole
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

Racism and Non-inclusive Language

Racism is a system of beliefs, practices, and structures that results in discrimination, prejudice, or unequal treatment of individuals based on their race or ethnicity. It is rooted in the idea that some racial or ethnic groups are superior to others, which can manifest in attitudes, behaviours, institutional practices, and cultural norms.

Derogatory name calling; racist jokes; 'banter'; malicious comments and non-verbal conduct such as racial material; graffiti; exclusion; damage to personal property are all examples of racial harassment. Racism and racial abuse or bullying can be really distressing for children and young people. It can lead to feelings of isolation, depression, anger or even shame about their race or how they look. At County we foster an inclusive culture which means an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and supported regardless of their background, identity or experiences. We know that being inclusive is not just about 'not being racist', it is about being actively anti-racist and challenging non-inclusive actions. If you would like advice on how to talk to a child about race and racism please follow the link below.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/children-race-racism-racial-bullying/>



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

New Year's Resolutions



As the New Year begins, people often think about setting **New Year's Resolutions**.

One that might get overlooked is **self-care** – making sure that you have time to recharge, relax and look after yourself.

Mindworks has lots of good ideas to make sure that we prioritise taking care of ourselves, so why not make a New Year resolution to try some different self-care strategies?

Charlotte Barlow, Assistant Head, Inclusion, SENDCo





It was fantastic to see our school families coming together for festive games and activities, and a seasonal catch-up, at our

Christmas Fair 2024

in December– a brilliant end to the year.

Thank you to everyone who donated hamper raffle prizes, made sweet treats, volunteered their time to support the event and/or came along to join the fun.



As well as providing what we hope was a lot of enjoyment, the Fair and hamper raffle raised over £1,000 of much-needed funds, which we will be able to pass on to school to support purchase of resources and experiences that they would not otherwise be able to afford.

This term, our two main events are our adult Quiz Night and our Easter Raffle. Unfortunately, Quiz Night has had to be moved from its original date in February - we will try to reschedule this and will update you when we have more news.



Friends of GCS

Events this term:

Friends of GCS Open Meeting (Zoom)
Thursday 6th March 7pm

Friends of GCS Coffee Morning
Friday 21st March 9-10am

Easter Raffle – Draw on 23rd of March with prize requests in early February and ticket sales from late February.

This is our most important fundraiser of the year and any support you can offer will be hugely appreciated.

Best wishes, Amy & the Friends of GCS Team

Questions?

guildfordcountyfriends@gmail.com

Alumni - Class of 1986



Steve Smith recently met up with Nick Hopkin, an alumnus of the school, who left County after the Sixth Form in 1987.

Nick now lives with his family in Perth, Western Australia and was thrilled to see his old school. It was also school's pleasure to show him around ... a real stroll down memory lane.

As we say, **you never leave the County Family.**



Dates for the Diary:

Wed	22 Jan	Yr11 Berlin Trip
Thu	23 Jan	Yr9 Options Evening
Wed	29 Jan	INSET Day
Thu	06 Feb	Yr11 Parents Evening
Tue	11 Feb	Lower School Concert
Fri	14 Feb	Sixth Form Ski Trip Departs
Fri	14 Feb	Half Term Begins



MENTAL HEALTH • MUSIC • MOVEMENT

THE JUNGLE BODY
Guildford UK

EVERY MONDAY & THURSDAY
19:30PM - 20:20PM
At Guildford County School

Lose yourself in the music!

To find out more go to [@thejunglebodyguildforduk](https://www.instagram.com/thejunglebodyguildforduk)

DARK ROOM - LOUD MUSIC - SUITABLE FOR ALL FITNESS LEVELS - JUDGMENT FREE - EVERYONE WELCOME.

TYGA THE TWERK DOWN
A BIG TWERK A HOUR

WHAT'S YOUR FLAYVA
THE FLAYVA FLAYVA FLAYVA

BOOTY BURN
FEEL THE BURN! BURN! BURN!

The Jungle Body® Guildford UK offers five Programs to sculpt, transform and shape the entire body.

Our secret Formula ensures:

- every class is easy to follow.
- allows every participant to work to their own intensity.
- a judgement free, safe space, to be YOURSELF!!

Gone are the days of classes you can't keep up with, or you are left shuffling around!

PLUS: You don't have to be a professional dancer - if you simply enjoy dancing, these classes are for you.

TIP: Incorporating dance and music into your fitness routine can provide numerous benefits for your mental well-being. You feel the good endorphins after every class!

JOIN MY TRIBE TODAY!

@THEJUNGLEBODYGUILDFORDUK
email: tjbguildforduk@hotmail.com

ANNA COATES YOGA

YOGA
at
GUILDFORD COUNTY SCHOOL

Wednesday
The Mayhew Theatre
6.00-7.15pm

Try your first class FREE using the code **FIRSTCLASSFREE** when you book online.

WANT TO TRY YOGA THIS SUMMER?

Join us for our NEW weekly yoga class designed to help you build strength in your body and feel more content in your life.

Each week you will work on strength and flexibility, improve your balance and energy levels and you'll soon enjoy better sleep, be calm and less overwhelmed and feel great!

Everyone is welcome.

COST:
As little as £12 per class.
PAYG or buy a class package.

WHERE:
The Mayhew Theatre
Guildford County School, GU2 4LU

BOOK ONLINE - GET IN TOUCH:
anna@annacoatesyoga.com
www.annacoatesyoga.com
[@annacoatesyoga](https://www.instagram.com/annacoatesyoga)

Lettings at County

JOIN YOUR TRIBE TODAY - a few ways to get fitter at Guildford County School

Happy New Year from Guildford County School Lettings, I hope you had a great festive break and are enjoying the New Year so far. Here's a few reminders about classes you can join in 2025! *Helen Smith, Lettings Officer*

The Jungle Body: Join Michelle, once or twice a week for 50 minutes of pure escapism. Get fit. Feel strong. Be you. Weekly classes in the **Concert Hall** on **Mondays** and a NEW BURN class in the **Dance Studio** on **Thursdays 7.30-8.20pm**.

Hannah Hayward Fitness: If you're looking to change your workout routine or even just get a bit fitter, come and try Gym based circuit classes. Weekly classes in the **Fitness Suite** on **Tuesdays 6.30pm and 7.30pm**.

Anna Coates Yoga: This is a great way to stretch out all that relaxing, eating and merriment! Offering accessible, alignment-based yoga classes for all abilities. Weekly classes in the **Mayhew Theatre** on **Wednesdays 6.00-7.15pm**

Guildford County School is a fantastic place to get fit and thrive. We are a friendly community. Michelle, Hannah and Anna are the absolute best at what they do, and we are very fortunate that they have chosen to run their classes here. Classes are fun, relaxed and welcoming and you get a great workout. So come along and give a class a go! **For more information on What's On Here visit: Facebook @GuildfordCountyLettings**

For Venue Hire contact: lettings@guildfordcounty.co.uk or www.guildfordcounty.co.uk/venue-hire

GET FITTER IN 2025

GYM CIRCUITS

- SMALL GROUP CIRCUIT TRAINING IN A GYM
- BECOME CONFIDENT USING GYM EQUIPMENT
- FOR ALL FITNESS LEVELS
- GET FITTER AND STRONGER
- TOTAL BODY WORKOUT

STARTS TUESDAY 7TH JANUARY
EVERY TUESDAY EVENING
@ GUILDFORD COUNTY SCHOOL GYM
6.30PM & 7.30PM
£10 / CLASS

CONTACT HANNAH: hnpersonaltraining.co.uk
hannahhayward84@gmail.com / 07800 606099

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