

# SOUTHEND HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS

## ACADEMY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Robin M Bevan MA MEd PhD FRSA



18<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

### Christmas Concerts – thank you!

During last week we were delighted to be able to host full audiences for both nights of the school's Christmas Concert. Thank you to every parent who attended or supported the event in any way: the quality of the music was exceptional and the dedication of pupils and staff, in rehearsal and performance, genuinely remarkable.

It is a remarkable feat that every year, for more than twenty-five consecutive years, at least one of the SHSB **cross country teams has qualified for the national finals**. No school can claim a similar track record in the highly competitive boys' competition. Indeed, many schools will celebrate extensively on the rare occasions that one team might "make it through" to that level. This year, the finals took place in Suffolk.

Our intermediate boys raced over 4.2km and with an inspired performance from our first runner home who finished a brilliant 8th against competitors from across England, the team finished in **2nd place in the country**. The senior boys on a longer course of 5.7km ran a strong race in a tough field to finish 16th out of the nation's 3500 secondary schools.

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**Term ends on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December**, and pupils will be released at 12.30 pm after our final assembly.

**Please note that the school site will be closed from 1.00 pm on the last day of term.** Your child will not be able to remain on the premises after 1.00 pm so please ensure that you have made suitable arrangements for their journey home.

School re-commences after the New Year on **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January**. Parents are reminded that the **Year 12 Parents Evening** takes place online from 4.30pm on **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January**.

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We are aware that for some families there have been recent challenges securing journeys to and from school: intermittent industrial action has had an impact. We would like to express our thanks to all those who made alternative arrangements, working together, showing determination, in order to be present in school. We know that this is not always possible, but the value of time in school warrants the additional inconvenience of delayed or alternative routes.



	<p>Watch this space! In the early weeks of 2024, SHSB will be launching a new <b>‘digital tin’ fund-raising venture</b> to cover the cost of an essential new minibus purchase. £15000 has already been pledged by the Parents Association. Online, one-off and regular, automated gift-aided donations will be invited!</p>
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Many thanks to all our Parent Association volunteers, those who assisted with the pupil discos, parents who donated to the Xmas raffle: your support is invaluable.

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*The approach of the Christmas holiday signals for many that one third of the academic year is completed and, measured by school terms, there is some sense in this. Given the length of the Autumn Term and the fact that external exams begin in May, it would be far more salient to note that we are around the halfway mark already for any student sitting GCSE, AS or A2 papers this coming Summer. For very many of our students, the challenge is to remain attentive to study until the end of term, enjoy a restful break, prepare with revision before returning in January, and recommence with energy and diligence.*

*For a few students, there needs to be a reminder that the approach of the holiday is a signal to ensure that everything has been completed as thoroughly as possible, and not an opportunity to “slowly fade the effort control to zero”. The support of parents is fundamental to helping those who, even in the Sixth Form, still need a nudge from an adult to secure their best. Success is a choice.*

*For any student with exams in the months ahead, a scheduled plan outlining periods of revision is worth preparing soon. (Detailed revision plans can follow.) The Year 11 mocks are only of real benefit to those who approach them with the same dedication as the final exam. Only then are the real gaps in understanding exposed, rather than those readily closed with revision. Likewise, for Year 12, the outcomes at AS are pivotal to University applications and grade predictions. It is our challenge, as a school, to create the circumstances in which all thrive!*

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## Valedictories

The end of the Autumn Term brings a few staff departures and the need to say ‘goodbye’ to valued colleagues.


Our school finance team fulfil an essential role as they contend with the incessant inflow of bills, invoices and payments all of which need to be formally accounted for: from school trips to music lessons, electricity bills to textbook purchases and so much more. Mrs Jones can count amongst her successes a completely ‘clean’ audit report this November – no errors, corrections or recommendations – as she moves on.

As the school extends its active inclusion of pupils with additional needs, the role of colleagues within our SEND team becomes ever more central to our work. We have an impressive team of learning support assistants (LSAs) who work alongside individual pupils. Mrs Utsaghan has been a key figure in that team for just over a year; whilst Mrs Gill has been influential in providing and developing our provision, not least as ARB manager, since 2017.

We also have three teachers who are 'moving on' from regular classroom teaching. Mr Palmer is relocating overseas, having contributed extensively and with real impact in the PE department. Mrs Williams joined the English department in 2019 and has been a positive animated contributor to the work of that department and in providing opportunities for pupils beyond the school – there will be many pupils who have legitimately fond memories of her lessons and the literature and language learned. Mr Crow has led that same department since 2002 – his legacy is very significant. He has guided a team of teachers across almost three decades to inspire and educate their pupils. He has served as a staff governor for an extended period since early this century. His contribution to the character and shaping of our middle leadership team should not be under-estimated; but, he will – I'm sure – be most satisfied by the extent to which he has inspired his students to love his subject and pursue it onwards into later life.

Finally, I would wish to express profound thanks to another long-serving colleague – on the staff since 1996. Mr Beare will, possibly, be less well-known to our pupils and parents. He arrives every morning for 02:45 and leads the team responsible for cleaning and early-morning caretaking. He has been an unfailing servant of the school; genuinely someone for whom 'creating the conditions in which others can thrive' is a mantra. When preparing to thank him personally, I took the time to calculate that the school buildings cover the equivalent of 588 average UK living rooms: these are cleaned and prepared every morning, come rain or shine, snow, leaking roofs, burst pipes, or other challenges! It is characteristic that whilst stepping back from his lead role, he will continue on our books as a temporary cleaner for some time to come!

Thank you to these and all the staff of the school!

On behalf of all the staff and pupils of SHSB, many thanks – in anticipation – for the 'Christmas wishes' sent in by so many parents; and to all associated with the school – Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year!	
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Kind regards,



Robin M. Bevan  
Headteacher