

Onehouse Road, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14  
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## Headteacher's Newsletter

### An Introduction from Ms Hernandez

24 January 2025

Work Hard, Be Kind



Dear Families

Welcome back! I have been really impressed with the start to term your children have made and we are all very excited about what is set out to be achieved in the term ahead.

It is a big term particularly for our Year 9 students as they assess their decisions around options for GCSEs and we all look forward to the up-and-coming Options Evening event on 27 February 2025. I'm sure that you will be impressed by the subjects on offer and expertise of our staff to help your child make the right decision. This term will be the final push for our Year 11s as they digest their recent PRE exam results and fully focus by taking up every opportunity to improve and achieve this term. Also, there will be exciting opportunities for students to participate in the many visits staff are presently arranging.

You will have also heard about the school's expansion planning meeting that took place on Monday in the local papers. This provided an opportunity for the local community to come and see the plans and timeline for our new build which will enable us to increase our PAN from 900 to 1200 over the next 5 years, which is very exciting for us. We have also heard that the plans for SHELF are again underway - so watch [this space](#) in the local press for updates and find out how Stowmarket High school students and families will benefit first hand.

Many thanks

**Ms Hernandez – Headteacher**

#### **New Year, Same High Expectations**

As we welcomed our students back for the start of 2025, our key focus was on reflection and direction. We asked them to consider what their opening chapter of the year looked like, the legacy they left in the autumn term, and the kind of person they aspire to be by the end of 2025. Education is



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a catalyst for success in many forms, and we encouraged students to see that school offers everyone something valuable they can take forward in life.

We also spoke about the power of choice. Our behaviour shapes our future, and ultimately, we alone control our responses to any situation. This is central to the 'Stowmarket Way,' which upholds our values of **R**espect, **I**ntegrity, **S**uccess, and **E**mpathy—qualities we believe are every bit as important as academic qualifications.

January is an excellent time for all of us—adults and students alike—to establish good habits. Accordingly, we reminded students of our uniform expectations, clarifying what is and isn't acceptable. To lighten the mood, we used a local football analogy: Ipswich Town players wouldn't run onto the pitch wearing a hoodie or, even worse, Norwich colours! It helped illustrate how our uniform sets a standard similar to what they'll encounter in later life or the workplace.

We also clarified our rules on mobile phones. The Department for Education is clear on the issue of phones in schools, and while we don't enforce a total ban, mobile phones shouldn't be used or visible during the school day. We operate an 'on-site, out-of-sight' policy, which we believe strikes the right balance between practicality and preventing disruptions.

I'd like to make a special plea regarding basic equipment. Last term, I personally handed out over 200 black pens! It's surprising how often pens, pencils, and rulers are forgotten, while mobile phones never seem to be left behind. Whether or not Santa was generous with stationery, I would be very grateful if you could support your child by checking they have what they need each day. Learning to be organised and prepared is a life skill, and your help in establishing that routine is greatly appreciated. Finally, I want to say a heartfelt "well done" to the majority of our students who make excellent choices day after day. They are a credit to themselves, to the school, and to you. For the few who need more support in making positive decisions, we reminded them of how our rewards system works and the consequences for not meeting expectations.

Our ethos at Stowmarket High School is that everyone should behave in a way that allows staff to teach and all students to learn to the best of their ability, within a safe and supportive environment. By arriving on time, wearing the correct uniform, and bringing the right equipment, students can start each day prepared. They should follow the guidance of staff whose goal is to help them succeed. If you have any concerns, your child's Form Tutor is always your first port of call, with support from the relevant Head of Year.

Looking ahead, we continue to value pastoral care and personal development. This term's assemblies and tutor programme will include guidance on next steps, option choices for certain year groups, and reflections on how past experiences can guide future success. We're pleased to welcome guest speakers from Kooth to discuss children's mental health, and near Easter, we'll wrap up with praise assemblies (where plenty of chocolate is sure to appear!).

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. Here's to another successful term for all our students.

**Ms Hubbard – Deputy Headteacher**



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## **New Role in School**

I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Acting SENCo in school. I have taken over the role from Mrs Orton effective from January 2025 and will now be leading our SEN department through lots of positive change.

We want to ensure that our SEN children are supported through change in school, that they can access their learning through progressive and realistic steps. Ensuring they succeed alongside their peers.

Our first job is to introduce ourselves as a team to the parents of all our SEN students and are holding an event for year 7- 10 parents on Wednesday 29 January 2025. This will be a short presentation and a chance to come and ask me and the team any questions you may have or any issues you may need resolving. We look forward to meeting you all there.

We are also holding passport review meetings this half term for years 7 and 11.

If you are unable to make the event and wish to discuss your child's SEN needs, please don't hesitate to email me on [c.broxton@stowhigh.com](mailto:c.broxton@stowhigh.com).

***Claire Broxton – Assistant Headteacher; Acting SENCo***

## **KS4 Options Process**

Year 9 students are at the start of the process of selecting their GCSE and BTEC options for Year 10. This is the most important stage in your child's education so far and we understand it can be an anxious time. Making the right decisions and choices is of vital importance. In Key Stage 4, students will be focused on the subjects/qualifications they are studying and preparing for the examinations in Year 11. Students will be taking courses that will help them to prepare for further study, maybe on an A-Level/Level 3 course at Sixth Form or at college, through an apprenticeship or studying T-Levels.

I would also like to invite you to the GCSE Options Evening on Thursday 27 February 2025 from 4.30pm in the School Hall. The evening is specifically for students in Year 9 and their parents/carers. The aims of the evening are to:

- Find out about the GCSE Year 10 & 11 curriculum. Main talks at 4.40pm and 5.30pm
- Find out what is involved in studying specific subjects in Years 10 & 11
- Be aware of the advice and guidance available from the school and other sources
- Be aware of the timescales for making choices about Key Stage 4 study
- An opportunity to meet subject leaders and staff keen to talk about their curriculum offer
- An opportunity to speak to specialist staff for personalised support from Mrs Mylrea Careers coordinator and/or SENDco Mrs Broxton



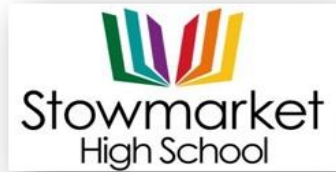
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Following the Options Evening, students will be required to complete and submit a Microsoft Form indicating their final GCSE option choices. **The Form will go live from Monday 3rd March and must be submitted by 6.00pm on Monday 10th March 2025.**

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me [s.smith@stowhigh.com](mailto:s.smith@stowhigh.com)

**Mr Smith - Assistant Headteacher**

## Modern Foreign Languages

### European Bake Off Winners



#### **Joint 1st**

**Bella Reed & Daisy Woodford Y8**

*European Suitcase*

**Coraline Thomas Y10**

*Russian Honey Cake*

#### **2nd**

**Mercedes Beckett Y8**

*Christmas cake*

## Year 11 Speaking Dates

Year 11 have a series of speaking exams scheduled and a letter was sent home with more detail about these:

**Walking Talking Mock Speaking PRE w/c 13 January 2025 – now completed**

**Speaking PRE w/c 10 March 2025**

**Official Speaking Exam w/c 28 April 2025**

## Year 9 German trip, December 2025

We are excited to launch a languages residential trip to Cologne in Germany, 2 – 5 December 2025. We will travel by coach to Cologne and explore the city and experience the Christmas market during our visit. As part of our visit, we will also have a day at a local theme park.



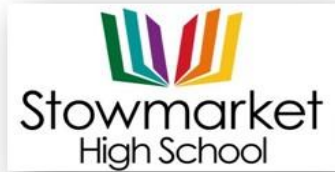
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This is a fantastic opportunity to experience and explore a city in Germany and soak up the atmosphere of the Christmas market. In addition to that, there will obviously be opportunities to practice speaking German.

This trip will be open to all students in year 9 and will be a perfect opportunity for students who are taking German GCSE as an option as it really will bring the language to life!

Please ensure you have registered your interest with Miss Pawsey. We will need 40 students to ensure the trip can go ahead.

**Miss Pawsey - Curriculum Leader of MFL**



### **Anyone for Skiing?**

There are plans afoot to organise a Ski Trip – more details to follow shortly.

**Mrs Harvey - Teacher of PE**

### **Year 11 Group Photos – Thursday 13 February 2025**

AJS Photographic will be visiting our school on Thursday 13 February, to take the Year 11 Group Photos.

This will be taking place in the main hall from 9.15am, we should be grateful if you would encourage your child to attend this. Any questions please contact us at [communications@stowhigh.com](mailto:communications@stowhigh.com)

**School Office**

### **School Production**

The cast of We Will Rock You are invited in for a Saturday rehearsal on 25 January 2025 and 1 March 2025. Where possible, please keep these available in your diaries.

'We Will Rock You' tickets will be on sale soon, keep an eye out on our Facebook page for more information. Cast members will get early access to allow their families to get tickets as a priority and then tickets will go on sale to the general public.

Thank you

**Miss N Rea - Teacher of Drama**

### **FOSH NEWS JAN 2025**

We hope 2025 is treating you well, after a very successful last term which included a disco for year 7, Wreath Making Workshop and hosting our Secret Postcard Sale at the Stowmarket Christmas Fayre at The Mix, big thanks to everyone that donated a postcard or brought one, in total we raised over £1200 last term! We have lots planned for this year already and hope to see you at an event soon.

After consulting with school staff, we have been providing some funding for various items already this year including a teaching skeleton for science, the Language Gym online platform subscription for French and German, sports shirts for school matches and chess sets for lunch club, lots more to come – we'll keep you updated.



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Don't forget you can support FOSH with donations at no cost to you via easy fundraising - when you buy online the company will donate a percentage to us - simple! Signup here:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stowmarkethigh/>

### COMING VERY SOON!

We're excited to be launching a school lottery for parents/friends/family of Stow High! Tickets are just £1, and each week there's a local draw prize plus a chance to win the UK wide £25k draw. Look out for more details on our Facebook page very soon!

### HELPERS NEEDED

We have a great FOSH team but do need some extra hands for certain events - if you could lend a hand at these larger events where extra help really matters, please get in touch.

**WE WILL ROCK YOU:** The schools musical stage production is on the week of the 24 March 2025, we will be running refreshments and games before and during the interval.

**STOWMARKET CARNIVAL FLOAT:** Creating, building and on the day, on July 19th we will once again have a float at the Stowmarket Carnival, in the months leading up to it we will be creating many things - mainly from acres of cardboard! The carnival is a great showcase for our school but does take a lot of organising, if you'd like to get creative or help out on the day please get in touch.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring Living Wreath Workshop - 3rd April 2025

Painting Workshop - 1st May 2025

Quiz Night - June Date TBC

Follow our Facebook page for updates and booking details:

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofStowmarketHigh>

If you have any ideas for fundraising or you'd like to get involved with what we have planned please drop us a message at: [fosh@stowhigh.com](mailto:fosh@stowhigh.com)



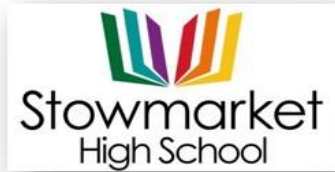
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# Gift Amnesty

Parents, staff and friends!

## Can you help us raise funds for the school this year?

If you received any gifts at Christmas or on a birthday that aren't quite to your taste (or you got two the same) we'd love any donations that can be used as prizes or at future events.

### Where to drop them off

Please bring your donations to the school office or contact us at [fosh@stowhigh.com](mailto:fosh@stowhigh.com) to arrange collection

## Thank you!

From Friends of Stowmarket High (FOSH)

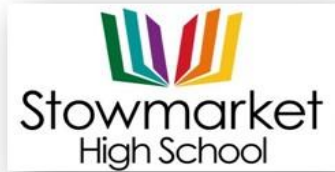


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### Upcoming Events/Examinations

Wednesday 29 January 2025	SEND Tripod Evening 5.30-6.30pm
Thursday 13 February 2025	Year 11 Group Photographs
Monday 17 February 2025	Winter Half Term Week
W/c Monday 24 February 2025	Year 11 PRE's begin
Thursday 27 February 2025	Year 9 Options Evening

### Useful Contact Information:

Head of Year 7	Miss S Durrant	<a href="mailto:s.durrant@stowhigh.com">s.durrant@stowhigh.com</a>
Head of Year 8	Miss R Harrigan	<a href="mailto:r.harrigan@stowhigh.com">r.harrigan@stowhigh.com</a>
Head of Year 9	Miss O Hart	<a href="mailto:o.hart@stowhigh.com">o.hart@stowhigh.com</a>
Head of Year 10	Mrs N Goss	<a href="mailto:n.goss@stowhigh.com">n.goss@stowhigh.com</a>
Head of Year 11	Ms L Baker	<a href="mailto:l.baker@stowhigh.com">l.baker@stowhigh.com</a>
Finance		<a href="mailto:enquiries@stowhigh.com">enquiries@stowhigh.com</a>
General Enquiries		<a href="mailto:enquiries@stowhigh.com">enquiries@stowhigh.com</a>
Attendance/Student Absence		<a href="mailto:attendance@stowhigh.com">attendance@stowhigh.com</a>



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