

# George Abbot Bulletin

21 November 2025



An update on our recent music activities. Parents/carers might recall that we have been appointed as only one of two Surrey Music Hub Lead Schools, a national initiative to share musical excellence.

**SURREY  
MUSIC HUB**

**Lead  
School**

**George Abbot Senior Choir with the choirs of St Catherine's, in concert with Tenebrae:** on Thursday 13 November, 50 students from the George Abbot Senior Choir took part in rehearsals and workshops with members of Tenebrae, at St Catherine's, Bramley. Our George Abbot Male Chorus (GAMC) enjoyed additional workshops with members of Tenebrae, with our soloists gaining tuition from some of the top professionals in the country.

The evening concert saw three items performed by the combined mass choirs of George Abbot and St Catherine's, together with Tenebrae, as well as performances by GAMC, with a stand-out solo from James Chandler in Stand By Me.

It was a superb musical experience, and all of our students conducted themselves impeccably throughout - many thanks to all who took part.

**Visit of the Band of the Scots Guards:** on Tuesday this week, George Abbot hosted the band of the Scots Guards for two concerts, with both attended by over 200 students from local primary and secondary schools, as well as students from George Abbot. The morning concert was specifically aimed at GCSE Music students, with 5 works featured, drawn from across the specifications of the different exam boards. Mr Hartley and Mrs Evans-Dix led students through each piece, explaining how the pieces were constructed and how the composer had developed the various themes in each.

The afternoon concert was specifically aimed at Year 5 and Year 6, and the visiting students were treated to current popular classics, including Pink Pony Club and Shut up and Dance. The afternoon concert also saw members of the George Abbot Concert Band playing alongside the Scots Guards. The logistics of the day were enhanced through the assistance of our Year 12 Performing Arts Leaders.

Many thanks to all students and staff involved in making the day such a success.



As the days grow shorter and it gets darker earlier, we want to ask for your support in reminding your child about the importance of safety after school. Please ensure your child:

- Has a safe and reliable travel plan for getting home.
- Is visible in low light conditions – reflective clothing or accessories can help.
- Avoids walking alone in poorly lit areas whenever possible.
- Knows who to contact if plans change or they feel unsafe.

Thank you for working with us to make sure every child gets home safely.

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**Business Language Challenge:** On Friday 14 November, a group of students visited King Edward's Witley for a Business Languages Challenge. They participated in innovating a brand with their languages of study and learnt how to appeal to global demand. Students were split into separate groups with students from other schools and learnt how to adapt and communicate in a team. This taught them the value of teamwork and good communication. The team created a sweet brand, slogans and posters, filmed an advert, spoke to potential buyers and bought materials all in different languages! They then pitched their ideas to other teams and won the overall best brand idea! A big well done to Leyla, Vanessa, Ocean, Andrew, Anisa and Medhaa who worked really hard and threw themselves into all the tasks - we are really proud of them. Special congratulations to Ocean, whose skills were acknowledged by many of the attending businesspeople and thank you to Mr Wearn and Miss Smith for accompanying them.



**Year 7 Biology Cell model competition:** In our most recent Year 7 Biology topic, students have been taught about cells; the differences between animal and plant cells, and how cells become specialised to perform a particular job in our bodies.

A number of our students took on the challenge to creatively model a cell. Students were given free artistic licence and we are so impressed with their designs. We have had students submit:

- delicious cakes
- colourful hand-stitched designs
- carefully crafted Lego and Hama bead builds
- the use of soap as a resource for the first time (which looks and smells great!)
- models that light up, and
- an array of inventive structural builds, with most students using recyclable materials like cardboard, clay, wool and even sweets in their builds.

Student models were not only imaginatively designed but also demonstrated the students' attention to being scientifically correct. Well done Year 7s!

*Our student's models will be on display in Elmslie reception for the next few weeks to celebrate the wonderful work they have produced. Please pop in and see their fantastic efforts.*



**Assembly focus:** This week's assembly focus has been on International Men's Day, during which, students have explored the different ways we should celebrate and mark this important event, such as: considering historical and current male role models and exploring the societal demands placed upon men within our society today. This included an examination of the social constructs and norms, around perceived masculinity, which create limitations and challenges.

We focused on the work of Joe Marler and Prince William, both of whom strive to represent and support men by encouraging a culture of openness and acceptance of vulnerability. Key to this is that men feel able to ask for help when needed. This is something all people should feel able to do.

We therefore ask, on this International Men's Day, that you please check in on the men in your lives and promote the idea that it is fine to ask for help. We all need it.

## Interfaith Week

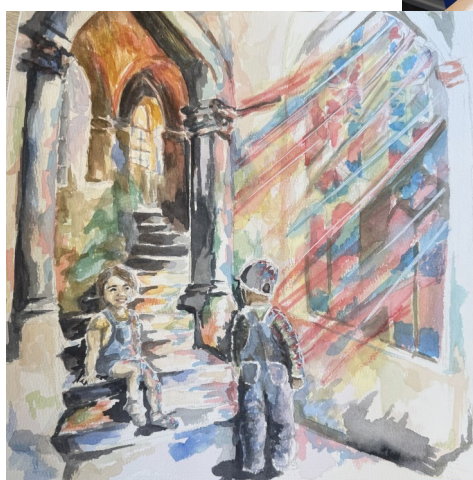
Thank you to all of the students who took part in Interfaith Week; whether by engaging in discussion, taking part in the quiz, coming to the 'sharing lunch' or submitting a piece for the Interfaith Week Art/Poetry competition. We had so many wonderful entries for the competition and were so impressed by the talent our students have! Congratulations to Isabelle G in 7WA who came 1st with her entry "Tree of life, together we grow", to Alyssa JVR in 11GG who came 2nd with her artwork entry, and to Nicole M in 9GG who came 3rd with her poem "What connects us?". We are so proud of you all!

### 'What connects us?'

*It's not the phones or glowing light,  
Nor the borders drawn in black and white  
It's how we laugh, how we forgive,  
How every heart just wants to live.*

*It's the voices raised in different songs,  
But all still know where love belongs.  
It's tears, it's dreams, it's reaching hands  
The way one soul still understands.*

*So, what connects us? Not the place,  
Not colour, language, time or race.  
It's kindness, pure and woven through  
The thread.*



## George Abbot Poetry Slam - Tuesday 4 November

On Tuesday 4 November, George Abbot School hosted its second ever Poetry Slam event at the University of Surrey Students' Union. Inspired by the theme set by National Poetry Day; students from Years 7 to 13 shared inspirational words of rhythm and rhyme based on the theme of "Play." To an audience of over one hundred parents, carers, teachers, governors, and fellow students, they explored what it means to play — reminiscing about games of childhood, performing on stage, playing with emotions, being played, playing the piano, and everything in between.

The evening was expertly hosted by our brand new Year 12 Head Students, who brought warmth and energy to the night. Guests were treated to a hot meal provided by the University, refreshments from the PTA, and a wonderful interval performance from our talented Year 13 jazz quintet, The Binmen Jazz (TBJ), whose lively set added a vibrant note to the celebration.

The competition was judged by two professional performance poets, Woodzy and Articulit, who also treated the audience to their own powerful pieces. Both judges – along with everyone in attendance – were blown away by the talent, maturity, and creativity displayed by our young poets.

Congratulations to all who took part: thirty students were selected from hundreds of initial entrants to perform on the night. Each of them represented our school community with passion and confidence.

It was an unforgettable night celebrating language, creativity, and the spirit of play — a true showcase of the talent and imagination within George Abbot School.



**Christmas Fair 12-3pm Sunday 30 November**

It's just one week to go until the fair! We have so many stalls for you to shop with, selling crafts, Christmas decorations, jewellery, artwork, lip balm, phone cases, biltong, gin, honey, handmade glassware, candles, soaps, beauty products .... You name it we've got it! Try your luck on the tombola, stock up on second-hand uniform, bag a restaurant voucher worth up to £100 ... Come along and support the fair, the biggest fundraiser of the year! Please bring cash, there aren't enough card readers to go around SO MANY STALLS! **Entry on the day is £1 for adults, free for under 18s.**

We really appreciate the support of everyone who has donated to the fair, but in particular we must thank Seymours for their generosity again this year - in addition to the advertising boards they are also providing the £250 raffle prize, AND mulled wine! Thank you Seymours!

**Please donate:**

We are running a Gifts & Goodies stall again this year. If you have any unwanted new items please drop them off in the box in Elmslie reception as soon as possible. On Friday 28 November there will be a non-uniform day in exchange for a donation of a bottle or some chocolates for our ever-popular tombola. Please give generously!



**£250 to be won in the Raffle**

The Christmas raffle this year has almost 60 prizes with a combined value of almost £2000! Tickets can be purchased now by clicking here <https://pta.events/vs651ipi>. The draw will be made at 8pm on Sunday 30 Nov. You could win £250 cash!

**WE NEED HELP!**

We are still short of volunteers. If you are able to help run a stall at the fair on Sunday, please email Kristi on [gachristmasfair@gmail.com](mailto:gachristmasfair@gmail.com), or you can volunteer through the Christmas Fair page of our website <http://www.pta-events.co.uk/gapta>.

**Other events**

If you missed Helen Gowers' excellent evening talk on 12 November (complete with its shocking statistics about teenage food intake!), you may like to see a pre-recorded version at <https://www.embrace-nutrition.co.uk/wellbeing-talks#schools>. Next there is the fair, of course, and (weather permitting) an end-of-term cake sale on 18 December; then we'll be back on 21 January with an [evening talk by Rosie Nixon](#), former editor of Hello! magazine. As always, all details are on our [events website](#) - where you can also find out more about how to help with our general [fundraising](#), including ways such as our [Sainsbury's scheme](#) and [Easyfundraising](#) where it doesn't cost you anything to support us.



**Call Out for 'Prize' Donations...**

**to be brought into school on Friday 28 November 2025**  
in support of the GEORGE ABBOT SCHOOL **CHRISTMAS AND CRAFT FAIR**  
which takes place on Sunday 30 November 2025, 12-3pm

**In exchange for a prize donation, your child:**

- may come to school in non-school uniform on Friday 28 November
- AND will receive 5 Bromcom House Points from their Form Tutor

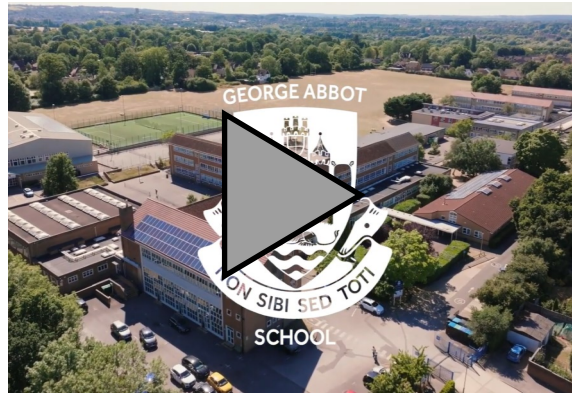
*We are asking as many George Abbot students as possible to:*

1. Find one of these gifts that can be used as a Christmas Fair prize:

- Boxes or bags of chocolates / boxes or bags of sweets
- non-alcoholic bottled drinks (not energy drinks)
- NOTE: Alcoholic drinks may be donated, but...

*... these should be brought into school by parents and left at the Elmslie Reception, where parents will be asked to leave details of their child's name and form, so that they may receive House Points.*

Watch our new film! Day in the life of a George Abbot student. Thank you to Charlotte and Emre for giving us an insight into their day.



**Charity Fundraising** We are collecting for the North Guildford Food Bank and Mulberry House (a local 15 bed hostel for homeless women aged 18-99). If you are able to support, please ask your child to bring any of the following donations, up to the Sixth Form and we will drop to the charities in early December. Any questions please ask Miss Smith in the Sixth Form. Items needed:

- Ketchup
- Long-life milk
- Flour, sugar
- Biscuits and chocolate
- Vegetable oil, stock cubes
- Pillows (only brand-new pillows can be accepted)
- Tea Towels / Bath/ Hand towels
- Deodorant
- Saucepans & Frying pans
- Gift toiletries - for men & women
- Selection boxes of chocolates/sweets, sharing crisps/crackers - festive
- Tinned veg, fish, fruit, pasta
- Pasta sauce



## Careers

**IMAG event: A Life in Crime**—Thursday 27 November at Guildford County School. The event is free to attend and aimed at students interested in the challenges and opportunities in the fields of Criminology, Law, Psychology, Sociology, or Social Work. For more information, [please click here.](#)

Our Careers team have been busy developing a website full of careers information and opportunities. Please click the image below [or here](#) to visit the site. If you have any Careers based questions, please contact [ceg@georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:ceg@georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk). <https://georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk/careers/>

The screenshot shows a website titled "George Abbot School Careers Information and Opportunities" with the URL "ceg@georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk". The page is divided into several columns, each containing different types of content:

- Work Experience Opportunities:** Features the "AON Farnborough Work Insights Programme" and an "Insight to Deloitte Event in Reading - Wednesday 8th October, 5pm - 7:30pm".
- University:** Promotes a "UNIVERSITY FAIR" and includes a "Personal statement week 2025" section.
- Apprenticeship Opportunities:** Lists "Vacancy Listing Gov.uk" and "Accenture" as potential employers.
- Webinars/courses:** Includes "WOMEN IN STEM 4th November" and "Lloyds Banking Group - Tuesday 16th September 5-6pm".
- Volunteering opportunities:** Features the "RSCH student volunteer programme" and "Volunteer Police Cadets".
- Resources:** Contains "The Interview Practice Channel", "National Careers Service", and "Entry to Med School".
- Information for Parents/Carers:** Includes "Unifrog", "The Parent Perspective Podcast", and "Local Skills Dashboard".
- Labour Market Information:** Features "Salary Stats Centre" and "adzuna".

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<p><b>Notices</b></p>	<p>w/c 24 November = Week B w/c 1 December = Week A</p>
<p><b>Year 11</b></p>	<p>⇒ <b>Study Leave—Friday 12 December</b> In recognition of the hard work and perseverance of our Year 11 students, we have facilitated a small gesture of goodwill to aid their preparation during the upcoming mock assessments. On Friday 12 December, all Year 11 students will sit their Chemistry assessment at 08.30am and attend the following period 2 lesson. Thereafter, at 11.50am, they will be permitted to leave school for an afternoon of study leave. There will be no period 3 and 4 lessons. Students who wish to remain in school for the remainder of the day are, of course, welcome to do so and will be able to work independently in USIC. There will be arrangements made for students to register if they choose this option.</p>
<p><b>Year 10</b></p>	<p>⇒ <b>RE GCSE Mock</b> Students in year 10 will sit their RE GCSE mock on 17 December at 8.30am. It will last 1 hour 45 minutes. Students will be examined on the following four units: Christianity: Beliefs and Teachings, Christianity: Practices, Buddhism: Beliefs and Teachings, Buddhism: Practices.</p> <p>A revision calendar as well as revision guides, workbooks, mind-maps and recorded PowerPoints are all available here: <a href="#">Mock resources 2025</a> (link also available to students on Bromcom). In addition, their first assessment week is w/b 20th October. This will be an in-class assessment and their teacher will give them the exact date closer to the time. This assessment will last 25 minutes and they will be examined on Crime and Punishment. Revision resources are available here: <a href="#">Crime and punishment</a> (link also available to students on Bromcom). Please do encourage students to start revising for these assessments early. There is no requirement to purchase a revision guide, but if you wish to do so we would suggest: AQA GCSE Religious Studies A: Christianity and Buddhism Revision Guide Paperback – 1 Jan 2018 by Marianne Fleming (Author).</p>
<p><b>Year 7</b></p>	<p>⇒ <b>Year 7 Parents' Evening—Wednesday 10 December</b> For more information on how to book appointments, <a href="#">please click here</a>. One teacher will be available to speak to for English Literature and English Language and they will provide feedback on both subjects.</p>

## Community Notices



## Extra-curricular Sports Kit

We are delighted to announce we have partnered with a local company called 'Print my Kit' to offer students additional kit for extra-curricular sport.

All products on offer can be purchased here:  
<https://georgeabbot.printmykit.co.uk/shop>

There is a deadline of ordering by Friday 12 December, to ensure delivery before the end of January.

Please note, these products are for extra curricular opportunities only and should NOT be worn to replace current PE tops.

We look forward to seeing students in their new kit, in the new year!



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# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI VIRTUAL FRIENDS

Artificial intelligence has seen significant development over the recent months, with companies releasing new AI-based software or adding an AI element to existing apps (such as Snapchat). One form of AI that has become especially popular has been the 'AI friend' or chatbot. There are now numerous 'virtual friend' apps available, with other successful platforms likely to adopt it soon.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### CONTENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AI chatbots may not always recognise when content is age inappropriate or harmful and should be filtered out. As a result, there's a possibility that children could be exposed to offensive language or explicit material while conversing with their virtual friend. The companies producing such AI solutions are also unlikely to take responsibility for any content that their algorithms generate.

### REDUCED SOCIAL CONTACT

An excessive reliance on chatbots for social interaction could potentially cause a child to begin reducing the amount of face-to-face communication they have, leading to social isolation. If young people become dependent on chatbots to provide companionship, it could possibly hinder the development of their real-life social skills.

### LACK OF SENSITIVITY

Chatbot software isn't always sophisticated enough to pick up on subtle emotional cues or recognise signs of distress in children, as most humans would. It might therefore fail to respond appropriately. AI misinterpreting what it's being told or replying insensitively to a young user who's already struggling could potentially impact a child's emotional wellbeing or exacerbate any existing emotional issues.

### UNINTENTIONAL BIAS

AI companions are only as reliable as the information they've been programmed with. The algorithms they use, therefore, may unintentionally promote bias, stereotypes or discriminatory behaviour. As many chatbots originate from the USA or UK, for instance, they can display a distinctly western-centric worldview. This could lead to children developing skewed attitudes and behaviours if they interact with the AI consistently.

### COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS

Although many are now undeniably advanced, AI-powered chatbots still have limitations in terms of understanding complex concepts, context and nuance. Depending heavily on chatbots to help with learning or solving problems may stunt the development of a child's own powers of critical thinking, their creativity and their ability to engage in open-ended discussions with other people.

### PRIVACY CONCERNS

Chatbots typically collect data about users, including personal information and conversations. This is ostensibly to improve their performance as they gradually learn about our behaviour – but many experts warn that there may be significant risks associated with how this information is stored and used (for instance, the possibility of potential breaches or misuse by third parties).

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### CHAT ABOUT CHATBOTS

If a child is already expressing an interest in AI apps, then a relaxed, natural chat should help you to discover which ones they're aware of and how they're using them (or are planning to). Discuss these options with children and perhaps do your own research to ensure that you think they're suitable. Once you're totally happy, you could sit and explore the range of AI chatbots together.

### CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

If a child is keen to engage with AI chatbots, encourage them to do so in a safe environment: ideally in a shared space, so you can easily keep an eye and ear on their progress. Set up appropriate content filtering measures in advance – and gently remind them that you'll be close by and ready to help with any questions or concerns that may arise.

### FIND A BALANCE

Work alongside children to establish the right balance in terms of how they might use AI-powered chatbots – and when it's appropriate. It's important to make sure that children still get plenty of opportunities to learn to solve problems for themselves, as well as building their interpersonal skills through face-to-face conversations with friends, family members and teachers.

### TAKE CONTROL

As with any form of app or game, when it comes to AI chatbots we'd strongly recommend that you consider employing parental controls (either on the device being used or within the software itself) to manage which apps children can download and interact with. This is particularly important for younger children, who may be more at risk of being upset or frightened by inappropriate content.

### RECOGNISE THE RISKS

It's unlikely that most children will have even considered the potential risks attached to having a virtual companion. So it's probably wise to explain some of the possible hazards and challenges of AI chatbots to them. Emphasise that AI isn't a real person (however much it might sound like one) and may occasionally tell them something inaccurate or skewed by bias.

### Meet Our Expert

A Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at a large boarding school in the UK, having previously taught in schools and colleges in Britain and the Middle East. With a particular interest in digital citizenship and cyber security, he believes it is essential that we become more aware of the risks around technology, as well as the benefits.



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