

# THIS IS US

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM UNDERSHAW

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**The start of a new academic year is always an exciting time, we return with our new stationery, new school bags and excitement for the year ahead. It has been great to see the students back at School, and wonderful to welcome our new members of the Undershaw Family, the most new starters we have had in a long time! I have been so impressed with the way in which the existing students have adapted to having new faces and new friends to share their day.**

Adaptability and our school value of resilience are being developed in abundance by our students. Resilience is the ability to bounce back when things don't go as planned and can be a huge challenge for many of our students. Resilience isn't a trait that you either have or don't have. Like any skill, resilience can be developed, it just takes some practice. This is why it's so important that we structure opportunities for our students to experience change in a planned and supported way. We talk to the students about having a 'growth mindset.' Having a growth mindset can have real benefits. It helps our students reframe their approach to challenges and stay motivated to work to improve their skills. Instead of thinking, "I can't do this," they think, "I can't do this yet!" We continue to support our students to develop a growth mindset and you can help at home too. The language we use with the children can have an impact on which mindset we help to fuel. Whilst we may feel we're being supportive saying things like "you're so smart" or "you're brilliant at this", the research would suggest this actually feeds a fixed mindset and doesn't encourage children to reach further than what they can already achieve. When you praise effort by saying things like "you're working really hard at this" or "you're really sticking at this, even though it's tough" you're helping them to persevere and keep learning. Not all our students consistently demonstrate a growth mindset, YET! So let's work together to help them develop this important skill.



It promises to be a great year at Undershaw putting our students at the heart of everything that we do. We have lots of plans for continuing to develop the school and the student experience and we look forward to sharing it with you.

# Teacher Feature: Meet Gemma



As Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) I am responsible for ensuring that all students at Undershaw feel safe, happy and are able to be fully involved in the school community. This includes monitoring attendance and supporting students with their Personal Behaviour Support Plans. I am also the designated Teacher for Looked after Children and have the opportunity to teach some of our wonderful students in their Personal Growth and Wellbeing lessons.

I joined Undershaw in September 2022 but have been a teacher for 19 years. I have worked in Primary schools in South London and Surrey for most of my career. I have always had an interest in inclusion and became a Special Needs Coordinator after 5 years of being a Class Teacher. I have the National Award for Special Needs Coordinators and am I feel incredibly grateful to be working with a team whose shared passion is inclusion.

Before teaching I worked in sales and marketing and I have a marketing degree. I also coached sports at the weekend and during holidays before I became a full-time teacher. I love being outdoors and enjoy all sports that don't require hand eye coordination! In the holidays I often travel to interesting and beautiful places where I can explore and learn about different cultures. My favourite activity is ski touring and my dream is to ski the volcanoes in Chile.



## Pastoral Power: The House Cup!

Now you've been introduced to Gemma you'll know, at Undershaw we place equal weight on both the academic and pastoral aspects of our school. 'Pastoral' means everything personal that relates to the students, so it covers elements of school life such as behaviour, our PSHE programme, family support, and attendance, among others. We have various initiatives in place to ensure that the students are happy, feel involved and positive about their time at school and therefore become fully engaged members of our community.

We all have a desire and a basic human need to belong. Initiatives such as our House system give every member of the school (staff and students) a sense of inclusivity and it's obviously through this structure that we can let loose with some friendly competition and break down the barriers of year groups. It's wonderful to watch students making friends outside their year group. Our golden moments at the start of each staff briefing are always awash with tales of students helping and supporting each other. The sense of pride in the Undershaw community is unmistakable.

So without further ado, the competition is well and truly underway for the 22-23 academic year! We've kicked off with our first House Assembly where Sarah talked about why being part of a team is important and all the different teams we are members of in school.....classes, year groups and our Houses! As you know, all our Houses are named after families within the Conan Doyle family tree; Butler, Colclough, Percy and Scott. Our Heads of House, Tim, Sam, and Clare were then introduced to the new students and our brand new Head of Percy House.....Paula! It was great looking back on all the House Competitions from last year and how we can all contribute to earning housepoints for our team. We are really looking forward to the year ahead....which house will win the cup this term?



# Roaring Results!

- 70% of GCSE grades awarded are grade 4 or above with 50% of grades meeting the grade 5 gold standard.
- Students excelled in GCSE science, maths and computing, achieving the top grades of 7 to 9.
- Unprecedented BTEC results were achieved with the school's first ever Distinction\* grades in both Music and Animal Care. Equally impressive is that 100% of students entered into Level 2 BTEC qualifications achieved at least a Pass grade.
- 100% pass rate for Year 10 and Year 11 students who completed the Functional Skills L1 in English and maths, which is a fantastic achievement.

"We are so very proud of the results achieved by our students this year, which are testament to their hard work, resilience, and perseverance.

The way that the students approached the examinations, having had their previous learning and opportunities to practise with mocks disrupted by the pandemic, is remarkable. Our students move on with a great set of qualifications and achieved the school's first ever Distinction\* grades, but just as important, they have developed their social and communication skills, built their confidence, and have become the most delightful group of young people."

We look forward to hearing all about their next steps and their future successes."

Emma West – Headteacher

## Transition and Alumni Relations

Sharon Setterfield is our very talented Transition Coach. It is her prime endeavour to ensure that every student leaving our school has the support they need, from Undershaw and also from the further education institution, apprenticeship scheme, supported internships scheme, or workplaces they enter. Sharon keeps in touch directly with each student in the months and years following their departure from school and we are awash with tales of great achievements and gratitude from students, some long after the student has left us.

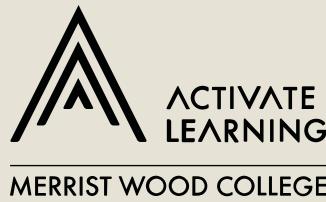
We are in the process of developing a formalised Alumni Association to build on the pride that students feel about belonging to Undershaw's vibrant school community – there's no reason why that pride shouldn't continue beyond the school days.

If you are in contact with any alumni who you think may not be in direct contact with us then please direct them towards Sharon. She can be reached on [alumni@undershaw.education](mailto:alumni@undershaw.education). And watch this space for news about the Undershaw Alumni Hub coming soon!



# Now they've grown and flown...

## 'Thanks for the confidence in me.'



'It's been good so far, obviously I'm extremely anxious because it's a huge change. ...We did a scavenger hunt yesterday and the staff are really friendly and funny. But the best news I got is that [a previous student] is there now! He's doing level 3 Media and a Physics course I think. So at least I've got someone I know at the college!'

'I'm doing really well here and absolutely love it already!'

'It is early days but college is going unbelievably well!'

'I've also gone to the quick enrolment at Alton College to say hello to some staff & choose some subjects, for example, Sport, Science, Catering and Media. All the visits I've done to Alton have been fun, so I'm currently not too nervous. Thanks for the confidence in me.'

Joe Johnson, an amateur filmmaker and an Alumnus of the school, is currently filming an Alumni series. He is profiling his classmates, discussing school life and views on (dis)abilities and understanding their lives since leaving school.

Joe posts his films regularly and the Undershaw Education Trust and COINS Foundation facebook pages both carry these updates.

Click the link to view the films and to read a bit about our Alumni and where they are today.

## Freebird Films

Undershaw  
Facebook

COINS  
Facebook

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Preparing for Adulthood

in partnership with Family Voice Surrey

Thinking about your future

Brooklands College  
Saturday 15 October 2022



Brooklands College



### Who is the event for?

This free event is for young people (aged between 14 to 25 years old) with additional needs and disabilities, and their parents or carers.

### What can attendees expect?

The Preparing for Adulthood event will help young people and their parents/carers explore the various ways that young people achieve their goals and aspirations for the future.

Attendees will be able to speak directly to a wide range of providers to learn about options and services available to young people in Surrey, including:

Local service providers and charities

Skills for adulthood

Pathways to employment opportunities

Transition to adult social care

Many great organisations have signed up to attend, such as Active Prospects, the National Autistic Society, The Grange Centre, and Bloomin Arts, to name just a few.

A wide range of teams from Surrey County Council will also be at the event, who can provide advice and guidance, and signpost to helpful resources.

Free refreshments will be available for all guests.

Surrey Education Services wants to make sure that as many young people as possible have the opportunity to explore how they can prepare for the next stage of their lives.

Preparing for Adulthood Event,  
Saturday 15 October,  
10am-1pm:  
Helping young people with additional needs or disabilities prepare for the future



Anyone interested can sign up to attend via Eventbrite today.

## Friday Futures Forum

Following the success of last year's event, we are hosting a Futures Forum for Yr 10 – Post 16 students and parents again this year on Friday, 14 October, from 1.30-2.40pm. This event will be held at the Arts and Media Centre and we are delighted to welcome guest speakers from Surrey Choices Supported Internship Programmes, Amazing Apprenticeships and The Activate Learning Group (representing Farnham, Merriest Wood & Guildford Colleges) which are all great pathways after our Post 16 transition year. Please email [employability@undershaw.education](mailto:employability@undershaw.education) confirming how many adults will be attending.

## Post 16 Open Evening



We will be holding a Post 16 Open Evening on Tuesday, 8 November from 6-7pm, again at the Arts and Media Centre. This is to share with you the purpose and successes of our Post 16 year at Undershaw for preparing our students to move onto their future pathway with confidence.

## The Petersfield School Careers Fair

Our Yr 9 – Post 16 students and families have been invited to The Petersfield School Careers Fair, taking place on Thursday, 20 October, from 6-8pm. This will be a great opportunity to explore potential future colleges, apprenticeships and careers. We are waiting for further information from TPS but, in the meantime, please do save the date.



(by Hetty, aged 14)

'Diversity is having a seat  
at the table.  
Inclusion is having a voice.  
Belonging is having that  
voice be heard.'  
Liz Fosslien

You will remember from the June issue of This is Us, we mentioned a wonderful poem read out to the whole school on 'Rainbow Thursday' by one of our students. We are delighted that we now have permission to share it with you.

Each and every member of our Undershaw community has an equal voice. It is shaped by us and reflects the sum of all of us. Every soul matters. Undershaw will always stand for inclusion. We will always challenge archaic views for the simple reason that inclusion is not tolerance but rather unquestioned acceptance.

*It was this year I discovered my gender, as a young a non-binary person.*

*I'm so happy to finally be finding me.*

*Being Queer doesn't define me,  
but it's a huge part of my identity.*

*If I face hate,  
it's the person spreading it that's got the problem, not me.  
The people justifying oppression? The people spreading hate?  
They're the one with issues, and they've got plenty to scrape clean from their plate.*

*There's nothing wrong about being LGBTQ+  
I no longer tread this path alone, and I've got so many people who I know stand by us.*

*As a community we are bright, beautiful, strong and kind.  
We'll fight for our rights, the bravest we can.  
In societies built against us, we'll break down those walls.  
We deserve to stand tall, and hold our heads high.  
What's so wrong with a guy who likes another guy?*

*Some of us were lost, some kicked out by their families for being gay.  
Mistreated, made ashamed, mocked and maimed.  
That's unfair, that's cruel. That's a person you're breaking,  
a life crushed.  
Laws are still being passed to get our very existence hushed.  
It's hard to utter that things will be okay.  
But it will.*

*We are united under a bright rainbow flag, and we are fighting for our lives,  
and we'll do what we can.  
Kill them with kindness,  
fighting for love.  
Our voices will be heard,  
down below and up above.*



*We've been here just as long as our non-queer peers,  
and we'll be here for years and years.  
And every day, we'll know that we make the world brighter  
by just existing,  
sharing our experiences, views and ideas,  
because we're proud born fighters and we shall stay here,  
queer, kind, creative, strong, loving and bright.*



*Our world has many problems,  
the LGBTQ+ community is not and will not ever be one of them.  
So have pride if you're part of this community,  
you'll never walk alone.*



*We stand together,  
beautiful, natural, whatever the weather.  
Sometimes the world feels so hateful and scary,  
and sometimes, it is.  
But let it be known it can be better than this.*

*And you and I?  
We'll make it better.  
Hating someone else because of something they can't change?*

*That shouldn't go on in this day and age.  
Let's try to make that a thing no one has to experience ever.  
It's a big goal, and it will take time to reach,  
but if we shout loud enough for justice we will be seen.*

*We only get a finite amount of time in this place.  
So let's fill it with passion, joy, acceptance and trust.  
Love, beauty and freedom, for all people.  
Doesn't matter your race, age, gender or orientation,  
let love be spread over all nations.  
Be kind, respectful and creative,  
and above all, be you.*



Find us on  
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# Undershaw News from the web

Learning outdoors is such an important part of the curriculum at Undershaw. We are developing our universally popular Forest School provision this year and developing our NOAH faculty. (Nature, Outdoors, Animals and Health) As part of these developments Tim, our fabulous Forest School lead, will be supporting other areas of the curriculum to take their lessons into the outdoors. James and Tim worked together to create the perfect environment for a music lesson around the camp fire this week.

## A new facility for Outdoor Learning\*

(\*it'll be dirty in no time!)

*'Our son loved the drumming outside! He said the crackles from the fire and the beat of the drums worked well. Thank you for always making their learning opportunities fun and engaging.'*



## KS2 keep smiling, whatever the weather!



**Holmes Class (KS2-2)** researched the climate in different rainforest areas as part of their thematic learning today. They produced a 'weather forecast' that could feature on The News and to share with the other KS2 class.



## Bloomin' Rainforests!



The Thematic Learning topic for KS2 this half term is tropical rainforests. In Science, they have been identifying species of plants and animals in the Rainforest habitat and learning how to identify, organise and group animals based on different classifications.

What a pleasure it was today to see some of the fabulous home learning that the students have been doing. This fantastic rainforest biome in a box was just brilliant! Well done!

# Emotional Therapy Support



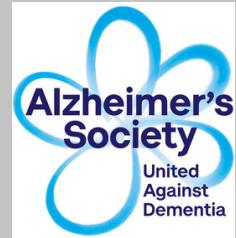
Tiffany and Kate, our 2 on-site psychotherapists, are running a clinic for parents on Thursday 13th October. The clinic is an opportunity for parents or carers whose children are either on the Emotional Therapies waiting list or not being seen, to book in to discuss any concerns they may have regarding their child's mental health and general wellbeing.

It will run from 1.00 – 2.30 on Thursday 13th October. If you would like to book a slot, please email Tiff: [tiffany.sanders@undershaw.education](mailto:tiffany.sanders@undershaw.education)

Our recent fundraising success was the new NOAH shelter! What a great addition to our idyllic Undershaw campus! The shelter comes with such a multitude of benefits for the students and staff (Tim's very pleased he gets to stay dry in the micro-climate of the Surrey Hills!) and the potential for cross-curricular learning is huge! We all know the students are happier when they are able to embrace the outdoors and experience new ways of learning. This is such a fabulous addition to our NOAH faculty so a massive thank you to those who supported our fundraising – every little helps!



please



Our very own drama guru Steph is taking part in the Alzheimer's Society Memory Walk in memory of her grandfather. Every 3 minutes someone is diagnosed with dementia and currently there is no cure. Please give what you can by clicking the image above.

There's play equipment and then there's Undershaw play equipment and it does things a little differently. All children need free play. Our students need free play too but they also need opportunities to regulate their emotions and reintegrate with their sensory environment.

Break times in the teaching timetable are vital for nurturing the social aspects of our school community... Friendships are formed and strengthened, peer groups established, and informal student mentor relationships developed. These societal networking opportunities, in whatever form they come, are all rich experiences that stand our students in good stead for their independent lives beyond Undershaw.

Play apparatus particularly that which encourages gross motor skill development is a priority in our environment where sensory regulation is a daily challenge for the majority of our students.

This equipment is vital for our students as they strive to place themselves in the very best mental and emotional frame of mind for learning, be that academic or therapeutic.

Please scan the QR code for a direct link to our fundraising platform.

If you would like to continue to support Undershaw with future fundraising campaigns please contact [fundraising@undershaw.education](mailto:fundraising@undershaw.education) for details.

Please donate now and support our Outdoor Play Equipment fundraising campaign

4 pieces of outdoor gym equipment = cost ranging from £1,160 - £2,030 each

Project total = £6,918 (including supply, delivery, installation and VAT)

The project is to fund a Regulation Room. The space is for students who struggle to regulate their emotions and sensory needs which, in turn, can cause more intense sensory seeking behaviours. In this vital environment students will be provided with the space, privacy, equipment, and therapeutic support to meet their sensory thresholds.

When students are in a deregulated emotional state it can be distressing for their peers around them. Having a dedicated space for our students to retreat to during this turbulent time would not only be beneficial for the dynamics of the wider school community. Every student would benefit either directly (by using the space) or indirectly (minimising their exposure to the dysregulated behaviour of others). It is a known fact that students who have SEND can find these episodes extremely stressful and it can trigger their own dysregulation.

At Undershaw, we are constantly seeking out the latest research and practical applications to support our students, ensuring they are in the best frame of mind to learn, academically, socially, and emotionally. This funding will help hugely with the daily therapeutic support we provide.

For more information on Undershaw's leading applications of the Zones of Regulation theory please click here.

Please scan the QR code for a direct link to our fundraising platform.

If you would like to continue to support Undershaw with future fundraising campaigns please contact [fundraising@undershaw.education](mailto:fundraising@undershaw.education) for details.

Please donate now and support our Indoor Regulation Room fundraising campaign

Equipment ranging in cost from £80 - £500  
Decoration / furnishing / electrical refurbishment work  
Project total = £5,000

## And finally... we need you!



As we enter a new academic year, we find ourselves turning our attention to the therapeutic needs of our students. Whilst we have a comprehensive therapy offering, we need space on our campus for our students to seek solace, space and support at times to suit them. We have 2 projects running this year and are hoping you can help.

Please click the links in the images to the left for the background information and email [fundraising@undershaw.education](mailto:fundraising@undershaw.education) for any further details. We are so grateful for any donations, whether they are personal or through the businesses to which you are connected. We have a small but committed cohort of donors and Friends of Undershaw and are always delighted to add to the fundraising gang! The students benefit so much and if you can help in any way we would be so grateful.