

# THIS IS US

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM UNDERSHAW

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And for our Christmas edition, something a bit different...



'This is US' is still the usual array of Undershaw news but with an added focus on 'top tips for the season'.

We know how overwhelming Christmas can be (even for us adults) with the endless lists of last minute errands, the social engagements and the whirling gift-giving. It can bring joy and anxiety in equal measure, and we would like to help with that if we can.

We hope you enjoy this edition and would like to wish you and your families a very happy and peaceful Christmas, from all of us at Undershaw.



# The Annual Undershaw Christmas Feast!



What a fabulous Christmas lunch we had on Thursday. Super Lin and her kitchen team worked tirelessly all day to produce a turkey dinner with all the trimmings for 74 students that had signed up! Just fabulous! We rounded off the festivities with some singing and a special guest came to visit..... he gifted every student a chocolate selection pack as they left school at the end of the day (and he made a special visit to homework club too!)

What a wonderful whole school event and such a huge effort by the team – every smile is a memory made.



# Our Tree



We are so delighted that we were lucky enough to win a tree in the Great Tree Giveaway run by Hans Christmas Andersen at Santa Fir. Thank you to everyone that nominated us! We are so grateful!

Our tree is really taking shape as every student and member of staff makes a bauble to decorate its branches.

They are all unique and show amazing creativity and effort!

Thank you to Hans Christmas Andersen at Santa Fir for our beautiful tree that has inspired the children so much.

Can you think of another Christmas Fayre run by students? It is entirely student-led at Undershaw and the whole event never fails to delight! The students and staff had worked so hard to plan, budget, make the produce to sell and decorate their stalls. It all looked wonderful. It was so lovely to see so many parents supporting the children and the school in a true community event.

Thank you to all the parents and carers that donated bottles and chocolate for the tombola and to all the bakers that sent in festive bakes for us to enjoy! Thank you to our PTA that ran the stall.

Well done to all the singers that entertained us throughout the afternoon and performed so confidently. You were awesome! Thank you to the Rotary Club of Haslemere for their support.

We must also mention the wonderful Leilah who co-ordinated the whole event and did a fantastic job.

Thank you!



## “ SALE ”

'The Undershaw Christmas Fayre is a fantastic learning experience for our students. This is an opportunity for them to showcase their enterprise skills, supporting progress and building confidence to achieve the next level in their Undershaw Diploma whilst having some fun!'

Leilah Sheridan,  
Head of Employability and Life Skills Faculty



## “ ”

'I was extremely proud of all those who performed so brilliantly at the Christmas Fayre, including the 9.1 band, Harvey, Lewis and the Undershaw Band, Edward, JJ and The Undershaw Choir with Immy, Klara, Leo and Katie who all performed solos. Over the last few weeks of this half-term, we have been recording versions of all the above at Sundial Studio and at school and will be sharing with the parents of performers soon.'

James Lindsay  
Head of Arts and Communication Faculty



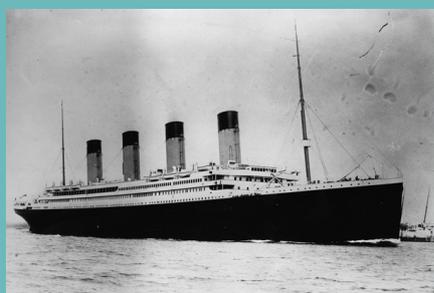
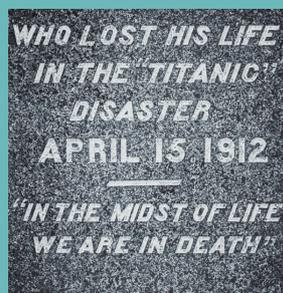
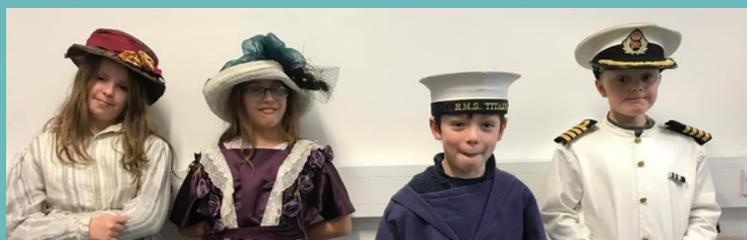
# Our unsinkable KS2s



Key Stage 2 had a fabulous visit to SeaCity Museum in Southampton as part of their thematic learning about the Titanic.

The students impressed with their knowledge of the story of RMS Titanic and enjoyed learning about how the tragedy affected the city and people of Southampton.

The museum features an interactive model of the Titanic, recorded messages of its passengers on the fateful night, original objects from aboard the world-famous ship and more.



We have been contacted by a few parents wishing to make donations to the school in lieu of sending out Christmas cards.

We are always so grateful for donations at any time of the year but particularly in current times when many charities are struggling with rising costs. If you would like to select Undershaw as your chosen charity, you can donate through our direct donations portal. Please click the donate graphic below for a click through to Undershaw's page on 'easyfundraising'.

Thank you to those who have sent enquiries and set up payments. We are always open for donations - even if you think they're small, in our eyes they're always 'perfectly formed'.



## Undershaw and Disability Rights UK Online Parent Forum

Tuesday 24th  
January @ 5pm



Following recent parent feedback we have been working closely with DR:UK to launch an informative free online forum for families of young people with an EHCP preparing to transition. We are prioritising Undershaw families but since this is such an important subject, we are also widening the scope to include external parents and carers. Please do register as soon as possible to take advantage of this of this opportunity. The registration form can be accessed by clicking the 'register now' link. If you have any further questions about the forum, please contact Leilah Sheridan at [employability@undershaw.education](mailto:employability@undershaw.education) and she can answer any queries you may have.



# College Pathways



We are constantly in touch with our local colleges and, as you have read before, we tour the campuses regularly with the students. If your children are starting to discuss options for Further Education with you at home, we thought it would be useful to profile some of the pathways available so you can begin the process of exploring together. We received the following information earlier this month from the Activate Learning Group and thought it could aid your research into their pathways. These pathways are particularly relevant following the Post 16 transition year at Undershaw. Merrist Wood, Farnham, and Guildford Colleges have all been successful placements for Undershaw students after Post 16, alongside the ever-popular HSDC group, which includes Alton and South Downs colleges. Please keep an eye on the colleges' websites too which will carry details for all their upcoming Open Events in the new year. The more literate we all are about the Further Education options available, the more positive and engaging the research and application experience can be for everyone involved. It's such an exciting time for the students and we should all feel part of that.



Our Esports pathway, available at Level 2 and Level 3, can help students to build a career in areas such as journalism, law, events management, marketing, broadcasting and more! Participants of these courses will develop the transferable soft skills valuable to all employers such as strategising, teamwork, and effective communication. Upon graduation, students could apply for higher education or foundation degrees within the Esports, sport, business, or leisure industries.

Unlike many other industries, the recent pandemic was actually beneficial for Esports. It was propelled into the mainstream, with Premier League stars participating in competitive FIFA tournaments and F1 drivers regularly streaming iRacing on Twitch. Esports is also growing rapidly thanks to the increase in mobile gaming and prevalence of 5G networks. Just as in professional sports, many other businesses have now grown around gaming to form a robust, multifaceted industry, worth nearly £6bn to the UK economy in 2022. The UK has the largest video games sector in Europe, and it employs around 47,000 professionals across related industries. There is a huge increase in UK Esports revenues of 65% predicted from 2022 to 2027, with an estimated £57.8m expected within the next five years.



Eliminating the impossible



At Farnham College, we have many media, music, and performance courses available: Media Studies A Level, Creative Digital Media Production BTEC Level 3 Diploma, Creative Digital Media BTEC Level 2 Award, Music Technology (Sound Engineering) BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate, Acting BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Performance. Our performing arts programmes are great preparation for university, stage school or employment.

Together, we'll build students' core skills in acting, performance and stage management. Students also develop teamwork, self-discipline, and confidence on this programme. Not only are these abilities and experiences vital for the creative industries, but they are also transferable to other career paths. Students will get the chance to experience a wide variety of modern, contemporary, and practical skills and techniques in the performing and production arts, as well as earn valuable experiences from directing and leading their classmates. This will help them identify and then specialise in their area of interest.

Our music programmes can develop students' performance and production skills, with opportunities to develop specialist skills in music technology. Music students also benefit from recording studios and performance spaces, with opportunities to gain performance experiences throughout the year. The cultural economy creates 694,700 jobs across England contributing £28 billion each year to the UK economy. Surrey has 5.1% above national average jobs in Performing Arts, 4.6% in Music, and 38% in Media.



Although we have many fantastic land-based courses available at Merrist Wood College, we also pride ourselves in our sports options! Programmes are available in: Foundation Sports, L2 and L3 Sports, 1st4Sport Level 2 Coaching: Activity Leadership, L3 Health and Fitness, and 1st4Sport L3 Coaching: Supporting the Delivery of P.E and School Sports. Our network of employer partnerships means that, whichever programme your students choose, they will get practical experience in the sports, exercise science, fitness, and therapy sectors throughout their time at college.

Popular roles in this sector include sports coaches, instructors, and officials, with one in ten graduates employed as secondary education teaching professionals. Studies combine anatomy, physiology, and psychology with biometrics, exercise, health and lifestyle. In addition, students will develop skills in fitness testing and training, sport and exercise massage, sports injuries, and coaching. We have an onsite gym that is filled with the latest sports and training equipment to help learners keep fit and advance their studies. Sport and physical activity bring an annual contribution of £85.5bn through social and economic benefits. Surrey has 57% above national average number of jobs in the Sports & Fitness industry, so it is a fantastic option for local students with a passion for the sporting world.

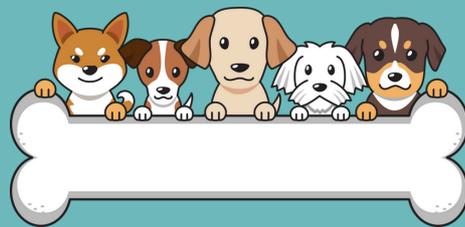


# Inaugural Undershow PTA Christmas Wreath-Making Evening

Thank you to Daisy's Craft Room for a fabulous evening and the PTA for hosting a wonderful festive fundraiser for the school.



## Festive Baking... for our furry friends



As we know, baking is a wonderful sensory activity and one which everyone can enjoy. Why not make some festive treats for our furry friends, whether you have a dog at home or wish to make thoughtful gifts for friends with dogs.

These dog biscuits have been very popular at our Christmas Fayres over the past few years and we're delighted to pass the recipe on to you for you to bake at home.

Merry Christmas Furry Friends!



**60g Oats**  
**60g Plain Flour**  
**60g grated cheese**  
**1 tbsp oil**  
**Mix with**  
**1 tsp marmite dissolved in**  
**50ml hot water**  
**Roll out the dough and cut**  
**with a cookie cutter**  
**Place on a baking tray and**  
**bake at 130degrees for 2**  
**hours or until dried out.**

# The Therapy Hub: Managing the potential of Christmas Sensory Overload



In the blink of an eye, we are back to December which, for some of us, is an exciting time of year; catching up with friends and family, decorating, giving and receiving presents, dressing up, singing songs and going to parties.

Yet for many children, young people and adults, this time of year can be filled with emotional and sensory overwhelm. An increase in noise, crowds, social activities, changes in routine, flashing lights, smells, new things in our environment, loud and busy music, and a high probability of surprise gifts.

What could we do to ensure a more joyful (or tolerable) time for our families?

## Preparing for change in routine

Talk and think about what changes there might be

- Use the senses as guidance if it's helpful.
- What might you see, hear, taste and touch that is different to usual?
- What might help your physical and emotional regulations?
- A soft toy or blanket?
- A scent on a sleeve or tissue?
- An attachment symbol like a heart drawn on the hand by a loved one?
- Crunchy snacks?
- Noise cancelling headphones
- A weighted lap pad or shoulder wrap?

Try to stick to the normal routine as much as you can

Routine doesn't mean 'boring'. It can be filled with nurturing and reliable rituals that make people feel safe and regulated.

## Remember the after!

- Holding it together all day means potentially coming home overloaded. Favourite regulatory activities are essential here!
- Wrap up tightly in a favourite blanket
- A hot drink or maybe a thick drink through a straw
- Listening to music or maybe silence
- Space to oneself
- A walk

This time of year is generally busier with more people going out, shops are busier, lights are flashing and reflecting off decorations, loud music and Christmas songs are played everywhere!

Some practical ideas might be:

- Wearing a hoodie so ears can be subtly covered
- Listening to your own music with headphones
- Using noise-cancelling headphones
- Avoid having multiple devices playing at the same time
- Switching fairy lights to not flash
- Use less decorations on the tree

To help regulation it may be helpful to incorporate some heavy work-based activities into the routine such as:

- Incorporate more walks outside in nature into the daily routine
- Do jobs in the garden or park: carrying logs, raking leaves
- Carrying the Hoover upstairs or downstairs
- Vacuuming, cleaning

Or add some organising activities which help with the body and mind:

- Going for scavenger hunts – can you find something shiny, round, prickly, red?...
- Setting the table, sorting out cutlery, arranging dishes
- Sorting out gifts by size, colour or family members
- Do some mindful colouring, word searches, spot the difference or jigsaws

# Gifting can be a collaborative experience

- Manage the gift givers expectations if you know there are struggles around receiving gifts. Let them know the reason behind a potential response and how best they can accept this
- Provide 'wish lists' to family and friends especially if the child has specific sensory sensitivities around fabrics or tastes
- Practise gift giving with your child and how they might respond if they don't like a present, so they have a 'script' in their head. This scaffolds the experience for them so they are able to cope better with the feeling of disappointment in their body.
- Spread gifts across the festive period rather than just on Christmas Day or only have a couple gifts visible at a time so it is less overwhelming
- Consider if it would be appropriate to tell a child what presents they will get. It may create calmer present opening if there was no anxiety around 'will I/ wont I get something?'
- Think about the sensory experience of gifts. How does the wrapping paper feel? Is it easy or hard to unwrap the present? Is the tape too sticky? Is it noisy paper? Could you use a bag, tissue paper or even fabric as an alternative? How about paper tape or string?



Merry Christmas  
and a happy new year

from Emma and the staff,  
students and Governors at

Undershaw 

# Thank you!

for being such an integral part of our community this year. We wish you and your families a wonderfully happy and restorative Christmas break and are looking forward to sharing 2023 with you all.