

SYDENHAM

1

SPARK

NUMBER 1

HIGHLIGHTS

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE...

Teen
Trending
6th Form
Interview
World Book
Day
Sydenham's
Sport Stars

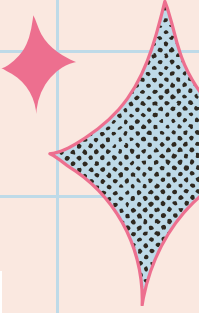
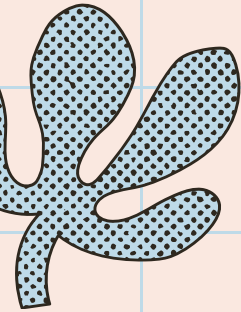
WELCOME TO THE
SYDENHAM SPARK



Thank you for
reading the first
issue of the
Sydenham Spark,
the new and
improved school
newspaper!

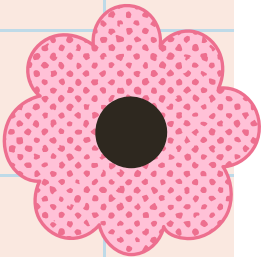
INTERESTED IN JOINING
JOURNALISM CLUB?

TALK TO MISS KNUTT IN
CLASSROOM G118 AT LUNCH
OR BREAK

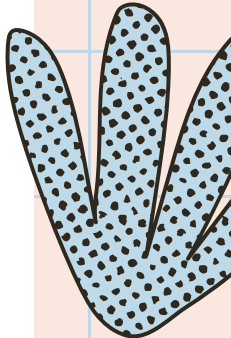


**Hello and welcome to the
Sydenham Spark, the school
newspaper dedicated to sharing
important events that have
happened in our school year.**

**We have multiple journalists and
graphic designers from Years 7, 8, 9
and 10 working on the content you are
reading, but there is room for more!**

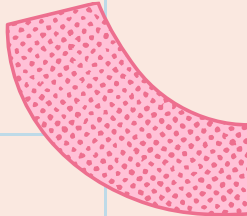
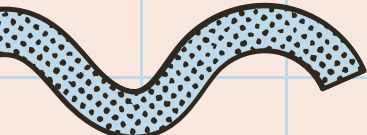


The first edition is brought to you by:
Year 7: Jasmine W, Charlie B, Alice C,
Millie T, Lola ME, Leila J
Year 8: Deborah K, Lila-Violet A,
Dorothy C
Year 9: Alyssa H, Alyssa Y, Alice S
Year 10: Shevoni M



Interested in joining?

**We meet on Wednesdays after school, or talk to
Ms Knutt in room G118 at lunch or break**





Sydenham Spark



Sports News

Cross-country winners, future Olympic swimmer

p 4



School Council

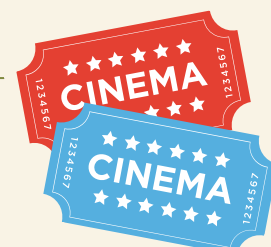
Meet two of our Year 7 reps

p 5

Teen Trending

Recommended movies, books and Netflix series

p 6



What's on your playlist?

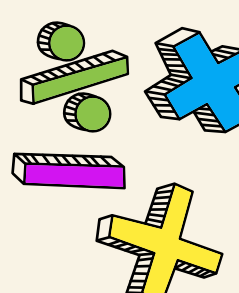
Fresh musical finds; songs we need to talk about

p 7-8

Teacher interview

Ms Haar - Sydenham student to maths teacher

p 8



The Archives

Our selection from Sydenham's past magazines

p 10

World Book Day 2026

Re-live the day when Sydenham went book-mad!

p 17



Sixth Form Interview

The Sydenham Spark meets Jeane and Hazel

p 18



CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONS!

Several students took part in a cross-country race in February against talented athletes from many other schools!



Amaia C-M won first prize due to her astonishing running skills! Esmie W-S also placed in the race with her amazing running techniques Georgia H S in year 7 came in 5th place on account of her fanatastic speed!

Charlie B interviewed Sydenham School's Annie A, a competitive swimmer. This article is about what Annie's weeks looks like , includes some facts about her, and might even convince you to take up swimming lessons!

Finding out about Annie

1) The full facts

Annie is 11 years old and her form class is 7D. Having two sisters, who she describes as "very annoying", she says it is nice to go swimming to get away for them. She doesn't just do swimming but also netball and her favorite colour is green. Bertie is Annie's dog (he's really cute)!

3) How it all began

Annie started swimming when she was only 4 years old and fell in love with it immediately. She loves backstroke, which I think is a bit weird because I think that's the hardest stroke. Annie swims at the Saxon Crown Swimming Club, which meets at different pools in Lewisham.



2) How many medals?

I am going to let you guess how many medals Annie has... Well have you got an answer? I assure you that you're not even close! Annie has 124 medals all together! AMAZING! I could never get that many medals if I did swimming for my whole life.

4) Weekly schedule

Six times in one week is a crazy number of times to go swimming, but that's the amount of swimming practice Annie does. As they do say, practice makes perfect. Annie says that you don't have to go swimming every day to become good at it, but you should focus on having a fun time and to try your best.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

HIGHLIGHTS

The Sydenham School Council representatives meet up every month to discuss ideas about Sydenham's future, looking at events like fundraisers, assemblies and other ideas suggested by students, such as wearing school shorts in summer term.

Betty and Zia (School Council Y7) talked to Headteacher Ms Wijnberg and Assistant Head Ms Morrison to discuss the future of Year 7 and other older years. We had the privilege to interview both Y7 year representatives, and here's what they had to say.

How did it feel going into a room full of older representatives?

It was definitely a bit nerve wracking at first, but after the older students started validating and appreciating our ideas, we got a lot more confident.

BETTY AND ZIA'S INTERVIEW



What can we expect for in the not so distant future?

In the future, all year groups can be expecting a greater variety of lunch options - all for a cheaper price, also an upgrade on the quality of school bags and a price decrease.

What were some of the main issues discussed?

Some of the main things that came were related to the cleanliness of the school, and about the toilets/bathrooms, such as clearing out sanitary bins more often too.



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BE INVOLVED?

Students can talk to their tutor group's representative and suggest ideas. The representatives can record those ideas and share them to the rest of the council.

teen trending

trending now

instant CLASSIC



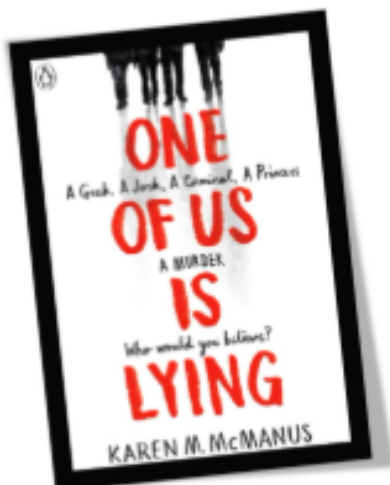
Stranger Things is a really popular TV show set in the 1980's. It stars Millie Bobby Brown and Caleb Matarazzo. It focuses on supernatural events and alternate universes and the adventures of a group of teenagers.



The Summer I Turned Pretty (TSITP) is an Amazon Prime Series with its main plot being a teenager, Isabelle (Belly) fighting her feelings between two brothers in a family feud. It stars actors such as Lola Tung and Gavin Casalegno.



Kenji is a popular Japanese brand which specialises in stationery and accessories. It has its own original characters which have keychains, plushies and more based on the designs, with cheap prices and useful equipment. It is a 10/10 recommendation.



One Of Us Is Lying is a teenagers' book series. Peony H in Y8 said: "This is a very well written series with a captivating plot and unexpected twists." The books are available both in the school library and in stores.

What's on your playlist?

fresh
FINDS

Lush Life - Zara Larson



Fate of Ophelia - Taylor Swift



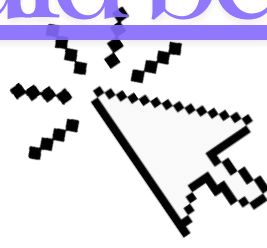
Viva La Vida - Coldplay



Super Shy - NewJeans



Songs we should be talking about!



WE ALL KNOW THE NEW SONG RELEASES THAT ARE OUT NOW, BUT WE DON'T TALK ABOUT THE SONGS THAT WE PERSONALLY THINK ARE UNDERRATED, THE SONGS THAT NO ONE TALKS ABOUT. SO IN THIS ARTICLE I HAVE TALKED TO SOME PEOPLE IN YEAR SEVEN AND EVEN SOME OF MY FAMILY MEMBERS AND ASKED THEM WHAT SONGS THEY FOUND UNDERRATED.

Lola

TWO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM A FAMILY MEMBER AND A STUDENT, APART FROM TWO, RECOMMENDATIONS I ALSO WENT ON THE INTERNET AND RESEARCHED 'TOP FIVE MOST UNDERRATED SONGS' AND CAME UP WITH THESE SUGGESTIONS:

1. I GAVE HER THE MOON BY KENNY WHITMIRE
2. DON'T THAT SOUND LIKE HER BY DUSTY BLACK
3. EASY ON THE EYES BY WILLOW AVALON
4. 1000 LIFETIMES BY GARETH
5. MAN DOWNSTAIRS BY AVERY ANNA

AT HOME OR WHEN YOU HAVE SOME FREE TIME YOU CAN TAKE A LISTEN TO ANY OF THESE SONGS. MAYBE ONE OF THEM CAN BE YOUR NEW FAVOURITE SONG!!!

Lola

I THINK THAT THE TERM 'UNDERRATED SONGS' WAS CREATED BY FAME. I WAS ASKING MY DAD ABOUT WHAT THIS TERM MEANT AND HE GAVE ME AN EXAMPLE WITH THE BAND RED HOT CHILLI PEPPERS AND HOW THEY HAD RELEASED A NEW ALBUM MANY YEARS AGO AND HOW ONLY TWO OF THEIR SONGS BECAME FAMOUS, BUT MANY OF THEIR OTHER SONGS, WHICH ARE AMAZING, BECAME ALMOST FORGOTTEN. I THINK THIS HAPPENS BECAUSE WE GIVE TOO MUCH IMPORTANCE TO THE MOST KNOWN SONGS THAT WE FORGET ABOUT THE OTHER SONGS, WHICH COULD BE YOUR OR ANYONE'S NEW FAVOURITE SONG!

Lola

ONE OF OUR YEAR SEVEN PUPILS (AMIRA) SAID TWO SONGS:

1. 7 YEARS BY LUKAS GRAHAM
2. SOMEWHERE ONLY WE KNOW BY THE BAND KEANE

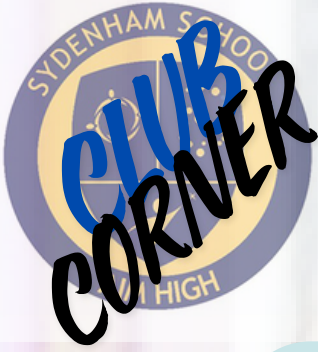
Lola

MY MUM (LUCIA) ALSO SAID TWO SONGS:

1. MY GIRL BY MADNESS
2. UNBELIEVEABLE BY EMF

Lola





SYDENHAM SOUNDS: 🎵 THE KEYBOARD CLUB 🎵

🎵 At Sydenham School, the Keyboard Club is more than just music — **it's a place where confidence grows and creativity comes alive.** Whether you're a beginner or already experienced, everyone is welcome to learn, practise, and improve together. Playing the keyboard isn't just about notes: it's about expressing yourself and finding your passion. In a busy school life, music gives us a moment to focus, relax, and shine. If you've ever wanted to try something new, this is your chance — let your sound be heard at Sydenham. 🎵

Join the Keyboard Club, believe in your talent, and let your music be heard at Sydenham. 9



Teacher Interview



Ms Haar, Maths Teacher

Did you know that maths teacher Ms Haar helped design the school logo when she was a student here?

Alyssa H and Alyssa Y in Year 9 interviewed Ms Haar about her experiences at the school, and the many changes that have occurred.



Q: How has Sydenham School changed since you attended as a student?

A: In many ways. But most notably I would say that the school building has changed. So the Edwardian building was here, but there have been a lot of changes. The library used to be known as the 'lower school hall' and we would have things such as dance lessons in there, as well as assemblies for Years Seven, Eight and Nine. When I arrived as a teacher and saw it was being converted to a library, it was quite a shock and made me feel quite sad to see the space that I used to dance in being changed. Ms. Hempstead was actually my dance teacher!



As well as this, the Year Seven courtyard used to be covered with grass and had trees in there, we also had chickens! So we had a chicken coop, and we would go in there and there would be students who would volunteer to look after them and collect their eggs. When I then started working here and it was all paved over, that also was quite a surprise.

The current new building (the STEM building) didn't exist at all. We used to have a five storey building, called the Basil Spence Building. It took a really long time for them to demolish it, because it was a listed building since Basil Spence was a famous architect. However, that building did have rats and it was falling apart, so it did have to get rebuilt.

**The Basil Spence Building
was opened in 1957**



Teacher Interview

Ms Haar, Maths Teacher



Q: Why did you want to come back and teach at your own school?

I had the best teachers when I was here: my geography teacher, my art teachers, my language teachers, my science teachers, my maths teacher (obviously), I just loved them all. I thought they were brilliant, and I ended up with fantastic GCSE results. And I always wanted to teach, so it was a no brainer, really. I just thought, where can I give back to my community? Well, I'd want to come back here.



Q: Are there any changes to Sydenham that you like or dislike?

A: I have to admit, I do like some of the rules, just because there really weren't as many when I was here! So at least the behaviour is much better now. And I really like the new logo, but that's because I helped design it. The old school logo was a flower called an edelweiss, because our motto is 'Aim High', and edelweiss are flowers that are found high in the mountains, so you have to aim high to get them. So the flower linked to the motto. I did textiles at GCSE, so when we were given the opportunity to design the new uniform and logo, it felt like a huge privilege. I'm not good with change so I didn't like that they were getting rid of the Edelweiss. So I designed the ambition logo, with a person who is reaching for what everyone thinks is a star, but it's not, it's an edelweiss.



Edelweiss is the inspiration for part of the school logo, thanks to Ms Haar's competition-winning design. The old school logo is below

Q: That's really amazing. I feel like I've had an epiphany. Knowing the meaning of the old logo, it makes so much sense.

A: For the logo, we had all made a design, and the students picked the top three, which were put onto the shield. Ambition is a person reaching for the edelweiss. For Determination, it's a DNA symbol, because we were a science specialist school. But it also looks like an S - they kept that because our old logo also used to have SGS: Sydenham Girls School. It also sort of creates an infinity sign.



MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

ANXIETY IS A FEAR, WORRY OR NERVOUSNESS WHICH CAN BE TRIGGERED BY ALMOST ANYTHING. IT IS NORMAL TO EXPERIENCE IT SOMETIMES, SUCH AS BEFORE A TEST OR WHEN SPEAKING TO NEW PEOPLE. BUT IF IT IS A CONSTANT FEELING YOU MAY HAVE TO SPEAK TO A PROFESSIONAL.

anxiety

DEPRESSION IS A COMMON AND SERIOUS CONDITION CHARACTERISED BY PERSISTENT FEELINGS OF SADNESS, LOSS OF INTEREST OR LACK OF ENERGY. IF YOU THINK THAT YOU OR ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS HAVE DEPRESSION, IT IS IMPORTANT TO TALK TO A TRUSTED ADULT.

depression

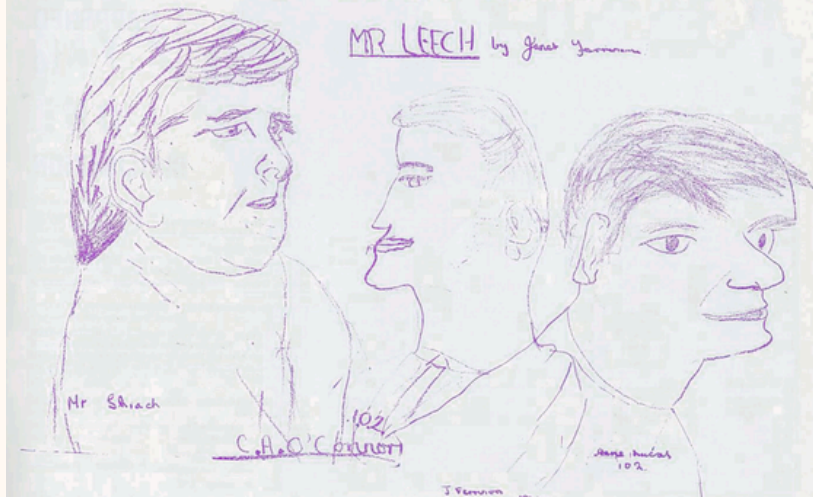
OCD or Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder is a mental health condition which is characterised by unwanted obsessions that can lead to repetitive behaviour. Common symptoms could include persistent fears or intrusive thoughts.

OCD

THE ARCHIVES

HERE ARE SOME INTERESTING THINGS WE FOUND IN THE SYDENHAM SCHOOL
MAGAZINE ARCHIVES. THE OLDEST MAGAZINE IS FROM 1920!

PORTRAITS OF STAFF Series 1



SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE...



DEPICTIONS OF SYDENHAM STUDENTS

ARE YOU FEELING TIRED APATHETIC RUNDOWN ?

THEN TASTE THE FREE OPEN LIFE OF A **GEOGRAPHY FIELD TRIP**

you know that **CAREY CARES FOR YOU** and sister too

WATCH OUT MR. GEORGE!!

HOW MANY LONDON DISTRICTS CAN YOU DISCOVER ?

Example: Dirty Monks—Blackfriars.

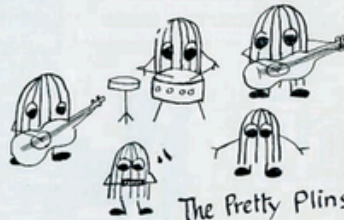
- 1 Rough seas do this to bad sailors.
- 2 If a shopkeeper wishes to succeed he must do this.
- 3 A coloured old lady.
- 4 A nobleman's levy.
- 5 This was very fashionable for girls and P. J. Presby to wear.
- 6 A nobleman crosses the river here.
- 7 A noisy place this.
- 8 A feline crossing place.
- 9 A coming lawn.
- 10 A boring old woman.
- 11 This old woman must have kept sheep.
- 12 A church on the West Bank.
- 13 The hen seems to have the mastery over this pig.
- 14 An angry monarch.
- 15 An oriental pig.

by Miss Baker

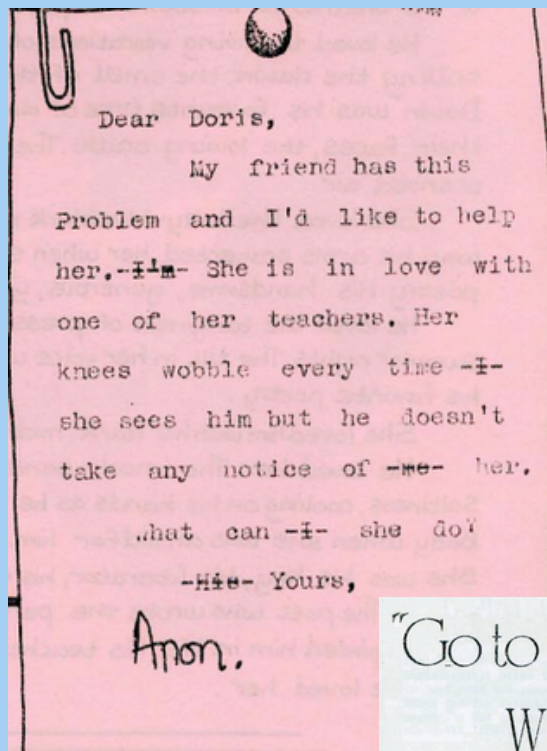
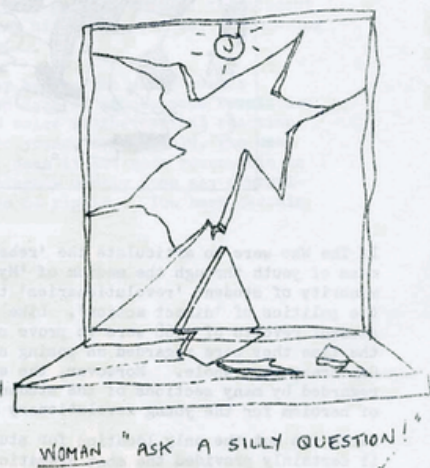
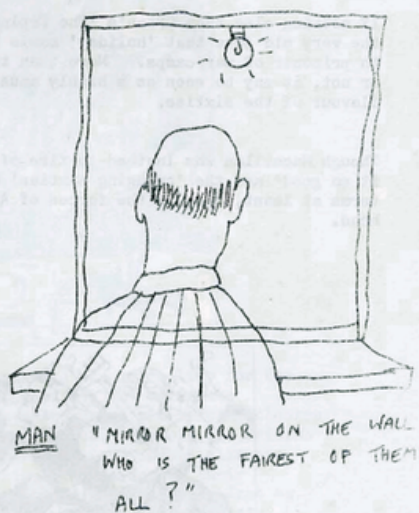
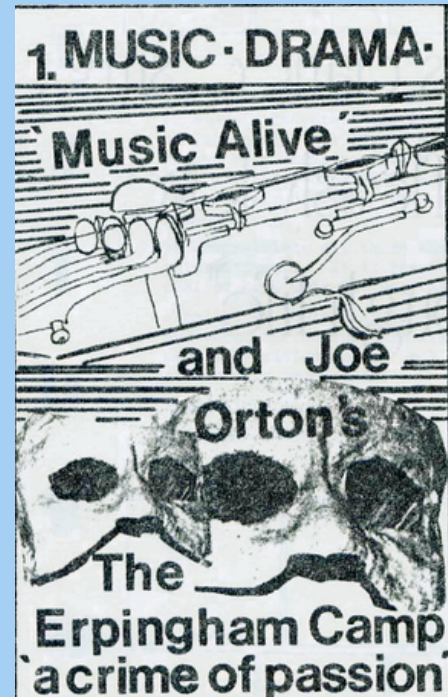


ANSWERS:

- 1 Tottenham
- 2 St. Paul's
- 3 Old Kent
- 4 East Kent
- 5 Bow
- 6 Knightsbridge
- 7 Toxteth
- 8 Cardiff
- 9 River Green
- 10 Dulwich
- 11 Woolwich
- 12 Westminster
- 13 Peckham
- 14 Kings Cross
- 15 East Ham

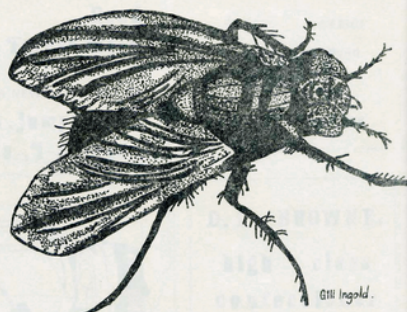
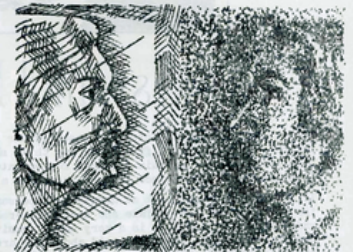


CUTE CHARACTERS FROM THE ARCHIVES: THE PLINS



"Go to the mirror boy" ~ ~ ~ ~
What do YOU see?

Well, what do you see?
Usually only what you
want to see - the hair
you have rather than the
empty spaces, your own
teeth rather than the
dentures!! Read the
newspaper: what do you
see? Usually only
what you want to see -
the page three girl, an
article to your liking,
the fashion page, the
sports page.



SCHOOL RULE - A reminder to parents that no
girl is permitted to take to school cigarettes,
lighters or matches. Four girls recently had
to be suspended for contravening this rule.

I have always admired her flair as a Head
ever since I discovered she had a fridge in
her room to keep her Martini cool during a
long hot summer. Her greatest qualities were

Book day

March 5th 2026

*Your Next Adventure
Is Just a Book Away.*

On World Book Day we had
some amazing outfits...!



The art of not giving up

by a Sydenham Student

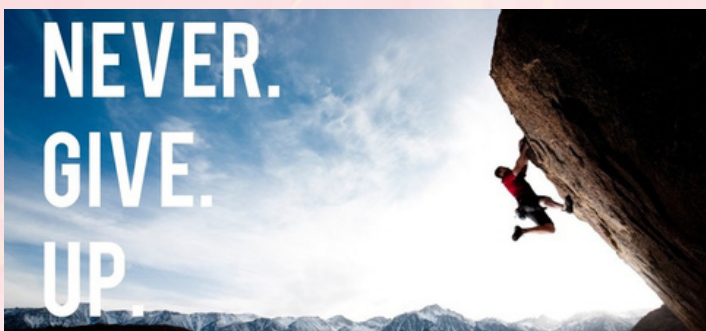
SOMETIMES, life feels like a piece of thin paper burning in a fire — so fast, so fragile, so hard to control. Even if you're a kind, honest, or smart person, one sudden decision or one mistake can make you feel like everything is falling apart. Maybe you've felt that too. I used to think success was easy. I believed that just reading books or having big dreams would be enough to change my life. I once thought becoming a doctor was simple — study, graduate, and live happily ever after. But real life is different. Becoming anything great takes sacrifice. Long nights. Doubt. Pain.

And even after you “make it,” life doesn't stop being hard. You still have responsibilities. You still get tired. You still have to keep showing up. And that's not just my story — it's the story of many people around you. People who wake up early, work hard all day, and come home with heavy hearts, just trying to make ends meet. Most of them don't complain. They've learned to live through it. If you're reading this and feel like you've given up on your dream, I understand.

If you're tired of trying... if it feels like no one sees your effort, or like you're not good enough, please don't give up just yet.

Some people chase status or money and think that's enough. But money is like a flower — it only grows when you take care of the roots: honesty, effort, and love. If you forget those roots, the flower withers, and so does your peace.

Many of us forget how hard our parents work. They leave home early, come back late, sometimes with pain in their hearts — but they try not to show it. Why? Because they want you to smile. They carry their sadness so you can grow up happier than they did. But they can't carry everything forever. One day, they'll be gone — and you'll remember every small thing they did. That's why we must value them now. Not just with words, but by living in a way they'd be proud of.



Just Keep Going, Even Slowly

Life isn't easy for anyone. Not for the rich. Not for the strong. But if you work hard with a clean heart, something beautiful will bloom in your life. Maybe not today, but one day. So please... if you're tired, rest — but don't quit.

You are not alone. And even if the world doesn't see your struggle, someone out there understands you. You matter. Your story still has many chapters left. And if this message made you feel even a little less alone — share it with someone else. Someone might need it more than you know.

This life is what you make it. No matter what, you're going to mess up sometimes, it's a universal truth. But the good part is you get to decide how you're going to mess it up.

Sixth Form: What is it really like?

What's life like on the other side of GCSEs? We met Hazel and Jeane to find out

For the *Sydenham Spark* newspaper, we asked two Sixth Formers who are past Sydenham alumni, Hazel and Jeane, to share their current experience after secondary school and in SFH6, the Sydenham and Forest Hill School Sixth Form.

Education can be stressful, especially if you are unsure what the future will hold. We hope this interview will provide reassurance for students who are not confident about Year 12.

What are the benefits of being in the Sixth Form?

One major benefit is independence. Jeane said that students can leave the school during lunch and free periods. Hazel mentioned that there are lots of food places nearby, such as chicken shops, pizza shops, and cafés.

What tips can you give someone to be prepared for 6th Form?

“The teachers do like a good folder and you having everything organised and it will be more efficient for you anyway.” Jeane said.

Hazel suggested that if you want to be emotionally prepared, go into it with an open mindset. “It’s such a fresh start for everyone and you need to be there to make some friends - like talk to the person next to you. It’s a fresh start.”

How strict is Sixth Form?

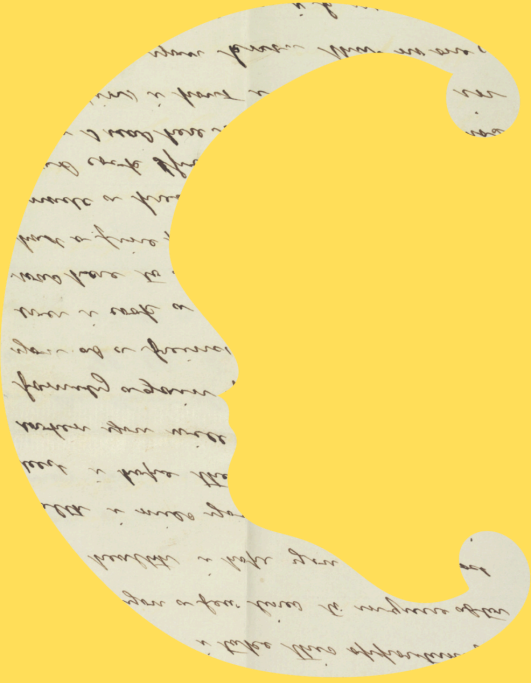
Jeane explained that teachers treat Sixth Form students more like adults and trust them to manage their own work. Hazel added that school rules still exist but as students move through the years most students do not see them as a problem, especially by Year 12.



Is Sixth Form better than secondary school?

Both Hazel and Jeane agreed that Sixth Form feels better than secondary school. Jeane explained that students have more freedom, including free periods for studying and the chance to wear their own clothes. She also said that studying subjects you enjoy makes learning more interesting.

Good Bye



and thank you