

Dear Parents

In my first assembly of the year to the Sixth Form, I referenced the New Zealand ultrarunner Sophie Wood and her mantra of “**One Step Forward**” as she tackled the 2,000km Via Alpina this summer. The Via Alpina is one of the world's toughest endurance challenges, following the entire length of the Alps and involving elevation equivalent to climbing Mount Everest 12 times. She completed the route in just 29 days, beating the previous record of 35 days set by British runner Jake Catterall in 2024. Faced with a challenge that could easily have seemed overwhelming, Wood focused not on the finish line but on the next step, the next hour and the next day.

**2,000km, eight countries, 29 days -
the fastest runner to cross the Alps**



For our pupils, this approach has many practical applications at the start of a new academic year. However, this message has felt particularly relevant this week as the College responds to the IT security incident. We have focused on the task immediately in front of us, on making steady progress, hour by hour and day by day: one step forward at a time. It has required considerable patience from staff, pupils and parents as we work to restore our systems and services.

Thank you for your patience, understanding and support throughout this period. Your encouragement has been greatly appreciated, and I am grateful for the positive spirit with which the College community has responded. By continuing to take one step forward at a time, we will overcome this challenge together.

With best wishes



Jon Shaw

Head of Ellesmere College

Highlights of the week (and holidays)

PSG Ellesmere: The PSG Academy had their first game of the season, a cup match ending in a 4-4 draw, before losing agonisingly on penalties. Despite the outcome it certainly was not dull. More importantly over 50 pupils are involved in the football academy and it has created a real buzz throughout the school. Even more importantly girls football has taken its first steps with their first training session on Thursday.

Hockey: The 1st XIs second match of the season under the lights of the Astro on Wednesday against Whitchurch Ladies was played in great spirit, resulting in a comfortable win for Ellesmere. Another big crowd was there to support – thank you to parents and pupils on the sidelines.

Lessons: An unusual highlight to pick, but I have enjoyed visiting classrooms throughout this week to see active teachers and engaged pupils working hard and making good progress, despite the IT challenges.

Wellbeing Hub: The Wellbeing Hub is a resource we provide for pupils, parents and staff. It provides a wealth of resources to help navigate the teenage years in particular. If as parent, you want some guidance I would recommend without hesitation using the Wellbeing Hub: [Login - The Wellbeing Hub](#).