



ST GEORGE'S SCHOOL

Miss Helen Barton MA
Headmistress

13th September 2021

Dear Parents,

Extra-Curricular Sport Voluntary Contribution

It has been great over this week to see a restart in after school sport: I am looking forward this evening to seeing Year 7 start their after school rugby and lacrosse, and I am looking forward even more to the programme of Saturday morning practices and fixtures that commence this weekend. The school calendar on the website now shows all the main practices, and is syncable to your devices.

It is at this point in the year where we ask parents whose children are involved in the school rugby and lacrosse extra-curricular programmes to register on the programme and to consider making a voluntary contribution of £50.00 per child to support the opportunities their children experience at St. George's.

This scheme was introduced in 2016 due to the imbalance between the sheer volume of students who want to enjoy sport outside lesson time at St. George's, and the number of PE teaching staff we can afford from the school budget. The staffing complement is based around the amount of actual *PE lesson teaching* the school needs, and all schools currently have to make big cost savings due to real-terms reductions in funding.

We have tried to mitigate the situation through a variety of means. By using PE staff to teach second subjects for part of their week we have maximised how many PE teachers we can have on the staff. Non PE teachers have developed new skills and are taking teams; we have been using senior students to help the staff to coach juniors; and we are delighted that we have recruited some willing parent lacrosse coaches to add to the parent rugby coaches we have had for some years. However, all such support needs management and direction, and there are some roles that only a qualified adult can do.

At this time, we have secured and are deploying Mr Moores, a rugby coach and Miss Ella Brown, an Old Georgian, to be our Lacrosse coach. Both are contracted to undertake 30 hours per week broken down into assisting in lessons and taking practices for 4 days in the week along with coaching during Saturday mornings. This will allow us to ensure all players of all ages and abilities get support, as well as to enhance our programme with one-off clinics, strength and conditioning coaching, and so on. Our goal is to be able to run practices as per the schedule through the year; provide opportunities for all abilities to play and develop; and produce confident players and resilient teammates. **Both of these staff salaries are planned to be paid by the voluntary contribution scheme, and we have appointed them on the expectation that we will raise the sum of money needed over the year.**

I have attached to this letter a copy of the review of our extracurricular sport in 2020-2021.

Please consider carefully the following:



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If your son or daughter signs up to continue or start extra-curricular rugby/lacrosse, we are asking parents to consider making a contribution of £50 for the year per individual. More is welcome and would be gratefully received, and some parents were very generous in their donations last year, helping to balance out others for whom the sum was not affordable. If you are unable to contribute or choose not to, that is understandable. **However, if we find material numbers of parents cannot or will not contribute, we will be unable to continue hiring extra help in 2022-23 and the programme we offer will have to shrink.** This would have consequences for all abilities of players; it would mean that we could no longer run B and C matches and fewer A-team games against prestigious opponents, as the strong schools tend to want to play all ages and levels. It would mean fewer practices, and more likelihood of practices not happening at short notice as there would be no reserve capacity in the system to cover illness or other demands on staff.

No one on the actual teaching staff will be taking any payment from the voluntary contribution pot. Teaching staff will continue to do their best and throw themselves into running practices and teams on the same free basis they always have done.

We think the philosophy of the department tries hard to balance the need to turn out appropriate strength teams for matches, with the need to encourage and provide opportunities for weaker or emerging players or late starters. The team coach is the only person who can fairly consider and determine selection. The teachers who head rugby and lacrosse monitor them. *Joining the squads already comes with no guarantee of selection for a particular opportunity or team; voluntary payment can make no difference to this.*

Despite contributing, an individual player may not be exposed to the extra staff we have hired. However, their opportunities will benefit because as other staff are then released, we are able to sustain more practices and matches in other years, or to improve player coach ratios. This year we are also able to improve our provision of Strength and Conditioning sessions for the rugby and lacrosse programs at middle and upper school levels because of the staffing available. The voluntary contribution goes into the programme *overall*, to oil the wheels of our extra-curricular provision and we will report transparently at the end of each season on how funds have been used. Should there be funds available after meeting extra coaching costs for other resources or training or equipment or team transport costs, which we could not otherwise afford, that is generally, how we will operate.

Additional staffing does not solve some of the constraints we have to work under, and the weather will remain a particular factor. Wet pitches rapidly become unsafe and unplayable; and if you try to be ambitious and play on them to their absolute limit, they cannot recover from the next downpour and you lose the entire following week's practices and matches. The School Foundation has provided monies to improve the drainage of the fields and the school has just gone through a year's cycle of maintenance to improve the playing surfaces.

Whilst we have your attention, we think it is worth highlighting our new extra-curricular software. We used the surplus donations from last year's extracurricular programme to invest in SOCS. Please find the link here: <https://sport.stgeorges.herts.sch.uk/> SOCS allows us to promote and provide information regarding our fixtures and events. Team lists, results and news can all be published and are visible to the students on the large TV screen in the Sports Hall Foyer. Please save the link and stay up to date with our sporting successes!

Thank you so much for supporting us.

Best wishes

L Howard
Assistant Headteacher

D Rees
Director of Sport

J Foster
Deputy Director of Sport

N Harris
i/c Rugby

What you need to do now:

1. Discuss with your child/children if they wish to continue the rugby / lacrosse programme.
2. If so log on the ParentPay and go to “Extra-curricular sport”

Either “Register and make voluntary annual contribution”. The guideline amount is £50 per child. Click the consent box.

Alternatively, select “**Register only**”. This costs £1.00. Insert £1.00 in the box, and click the consent box. This is to indicate you are happy for your child to take part, and to be transported by parent transport should the need arise.

Please do this by Monday 4th October.

Please note that no one will lose out by taking one option over the other, but we need all participants as a minimum, to select the £1.00 register only route.