

PRESS RELEASE

'St Catherine's Prep School – Celebrating the Work of the Emergency Services'



DATE: Tuesday 20th June 2017



In a month, which has seen the Emergency Services tested by some terrible events, it was wonderful to see our Prep School girls interacting with firefighters, paramedics and doctors and learning about the incredible jobs these people do. It provided an opportunity to bring the sometimes-stark reality of the news into a safe and familiar environment, and to see what the emergency services do on a day-to-day basis, not just at the level of major incidents.

One of our parents, Dr Sarah Thomas, Registrar in Accident and Emergency at the Royal Surrey Hospital, wanted to combine her desire to use her skills at St Catherine's School with her daughter's role as a Charity Prefect. She therefore set the wheels in motion to arrange for the Emergency Services to come into the school and organise a charity CPR event to raise money for Cherry Trees, a local charity that offers respite for children with disabilities. She wanted the girls to have a better understanding of the work of the Emergency Services. As she explained, 'Countries which teach their school children CPR have a much higher cardiac arrest survival rate. It is an essential life skill, which everyone, young or old, can learn. Today is about sharing our skills and I hope the children really get a feel of what we do and how to get help when they need it.' A team from the Royal Surrey Hospital, firefighters from Guildford Fire station and Richard Harlington, a paramedic, from Tongham Ambulance Station spoke to the girls during the day about their different roles and what the girls could do in an emergency. The difference between 999 and the 111 medical advice line was explained and a decontamination tent/major incident tent was set up in the school grounds to educate the girls on how they could contain the spread of dangerous substances.

Dominic Harrison, Consultant in Accident and Emergency at the Royal Surrey Hospital expressed his hope that the girls would, as a result of the day's activities 'gain confidence and understanding about what to do in emergency' and added that it had been a joy being 'part of this special day.' Melissa Boyes, a current parent, commented, 'What a fantastic initiative by the school! – I hope that some of the girls are inspired by what they've seen and heard today to go into any of these incredibly important professions.'

In the words of Joe Reynolds, Crew Commander of White Watch, Guildford Fire Station, 'Even if the girls only remember 10% of what we have said, this could help them save a life. We hope that the girls will realise that we are approachable and are here to help.'

Millie, aged 11 years, said, 'I really enjoyed the Emergency Services Day. It was really interesting and I learnt lots of things I never knew. Learning how to do CPR was amazing and I think it is incredible how people actually do that to save others' lives. It was also fascinating looking in the fire engine. I found it funny how the firemen told us that we were allowed to jump on their feet because they had steel toe caps so couldn't feel it. I am amazed by how many lives are saved by these inspiring professionals'.

Wendy Gibbs, Deputy Head, St Catherine's Prep School, said, 'Staff from a range of Emergency Services were amazing with all age groups today. Many of them gave up their rest days to teach the girls skills that will help keep them safe throughout their lives. What a fabulous day we had!'

For more information, please contact Mrs Sally Manhire, Marketing at St Catherine's Prep School on 01483 899665 or sally.manhire@stcatherines.info