



6 October 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this finds you well.

Staff training day

A reminder that we have a staff training day scheduled for **Monday 9th October**. This is a non-pupil day. Key school dates can be found [here](#) and our full calendar is published [here](#)

Hummingbird races again

Very best of luck to our amazing Hummingbird team who are competing in the F24 International Final this Sunday. Our electric racing car will be competing at Goodwood Motor Racing Circuit in The F24 Greenpower 2023 International Final against the top 80 cars built and raced by other schools and youth organisations. The race is scheduled to start at 3.30pm with the grid position race starting at 11am.

If you would like to follow the team by seeing the live timings, just [click here](#)

Hear me out magazine

I am delighted to announce that our very talented student magazine editor, Zara, has published the first 'Hear me out' magazine issue of the new academic year. Please [click here](#) to read the latest edition. Zara was delighted to have received articles and artwork from students across the school years. You will see that she has included a section at the back of the magazine to share what the students at Holcombe are up to. Holcombe is one of the other Grammar schools in our Trust. To find out more about Holcombe, [click here](#).

Reading for pleasure

There is lots of evidence that reading for pleasure has many benefits, both social and academic. Young people and adults alike benefit from reading, so having a reading culture at home and at school can make a big difference. We are keen to have a culture of reading at PHSG and activity encourage our students to read. Students read in form time every Wednesday morning and we have just started our DEAR (drop everything and read) initiative. This means that at a specified time, everyone stops what they are doing, picks up their book and reads. Young people who are encouraged to read both in school and at home will benefit hugely from the experience. Reading fiction has a particular benefit. We hope that our newly introduced Sparx reader for years 7,8 and 9 will contribute significantly to student's reading proficiency and increase their exposure to a wider range of authors. Please do speak with your child about Sparx reader. Thank you for your support in encouraging your child to read.

Student librarian vacancy

We are looking for some new student librarians for this academic year. Students have been sent the advert and encouraged to apply. You may wish to discuss the opportunity with your child. Students should pick up an application form from Miss Harris or Mrs Heard in the library if they are interested in applying for the post.

Sparx maths

Students in years 7 to 11 have their weekly maths homework set on Sparx. Sparx is used internationally and each week we receive a ranking as to where PHSG is placed in comparison to every other school that uses Sparx, of which there are over 2000. A huge well done to our students as at the last ranking, we were 3rd in the World and top for the South West of England and top in the Trust. The expectation is that students achieve 100% in their Sparx homework each week. Sparx is set each Wednesday and students have a week to complete it. There is a Tuesday lunchtime club for students to get help if they are stuck. Students are then asked to attend a catch-up session on Thursday at lunchtime if they have not met the 100% expectation by the Wednesday hand in. Last week, over 98% of year 7 to 11 students met the 100% expectation. Thank you for your support in helping your child maximise their outcomes in maths.

PTFA trip

Our newly formed PTFA would like to kick off their tenure with a cinema trip for students. The idea is that the PTFA block book a large number of seats, perhaps even a whole screen, at one of the local cinemas for PHSG students. They would like to offer the Eras tour screening. The thinking is that it would either be after school on Thursday 19th October, or during the day on Friday 20th October (this is a staff training day). More details to follow soon from the PHSG PTFA. The PTFA estimate that the price would be around £20 per student. I will be gauging potential interest in school, but nothing is confirmed unless you have given your consent and paid for the ticket. The PTFA will be managing the consent and funds collection and will communicate with parents in due course.

Black History Month

A reminder that October is Black History Month. Assemblies this week have been taken by Nshira, the member of the Head Student Team who leads on diversity. Nshira talked to students about some of the black women who have made significant contributions in their field. Nshira also reminded students about the Trust wide art competition and invited students to contact her if they want more information about BHM or want to get involved.

Student road safety at 3.30pm

We have been concerned about student safety at the end of school as students and parents in cars congregate outside the St Lawrence Rd gate increasing the risk of accidents. Over the last few days, we have made the Alton Road gate our single exit point. I would be grateful if parents did not park on the double yellow lines outside of school between 3.30pm and 4pm on either St Lawrence Road or Alton Rd. Some cars have been parked with wheels on the pavement, this is particularly problematic as the pavements are narrow to begin with. Thank you for thinking about the safety of all our young people.

Very best wishes,



Simon Underdown.
Headteacher.