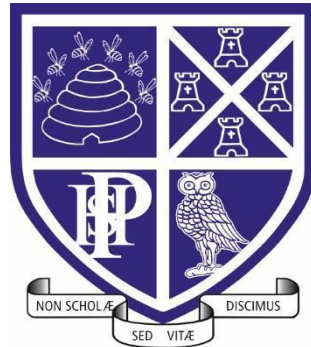


Plymouth High School for Girls

"For life, not school, we learn"



Year 8

Information Booklet A Guide for Parents and Students

September 2023

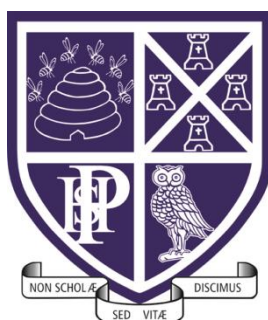


Headteacher: Mr S Underdown

Year 8 Tutors

8A/DVS	Mr M Davies
8K/PIC	Mrs A Pickles
8L/RIC	Mr P Richards
8T/RFD	Mr D Rutherford

Head of Year 8: Mrs F Banks



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A Guide to Year 8

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Welcome to Year 8 at Plymouth High School

This guide aims to give parents and carers an oversight of Year 8 at Plymouth High School.

Year 8 is a year for growth in confidence and resilience and for the students to become more focussed in the Plymouth High School Community. They will be able to try new clubs and extra-curricular activities and step out of the comfort zone of Year 7. There are ample opportunities to become involved and perhaps discover an interest or talent which will be with them for life. There are also opportunities to take on responsibilities and to act as role models for younger pupils. Taking part in activities such as Student Voice and House events can make a major contribution to the life of the school. Leisure time and interests outside school are important and in order to organise successfully what they do; time management skills are vital. Parental encouragement can really help with this and we welcome your support. We firmly believe in the benefits of a strong partnership between home and school to support our students' learning.

Year 7 is focussed on settling into a new school, new lessons and new friends. Year 8 is the year when they become teenagers. Friendships can change and girls are exposed to increased commercial and social pressures. Students may need extra encouragement and support to maintain their confidence and sense of purpose.

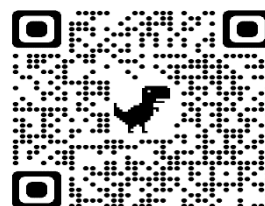
We encourage the students to take more responsibility for their own progress in their school work. Their attitude to learning and their understanding of how to learn are important factors in determining their success, this year and in the future. It is important that they understand what helps them to learn, what is expected and how their work is assessed. Managing to get homework done and leaving time for leisure are also very important.

Students, parents and teachers all have the same goal in view. We would all like our Year 8 students to be happy, interested and confident learners, who can look back at a year of real achievement and personal growth. If they know that they have done the best they could do and enjoyed their learning, we can all be really proud of what they have achieved.

I hope this guide will prove helpful. If you have any questions, please contact your child's form tutor.

Mrs F Banks
Head of Year 8

Key dates for Year 8 Students. School calendar 2023-2024



Contact Details

Parents and students are encouraged to communicate with the school if they have any concerns or questions about courses. The school switchboard can be contacted on 0333 360 2230 where a message can be left for a particular member of staff to phone you when they are not teaching. As there may be some inevitable delay in receiving a response through this route it is often more efficient to contact staff via email.

To help with this I have listed the email addresses of subject leaders and key staff below with an indication of their role:

Role	Name	Email Address
Head of Year 8	Mrs F Banks	Fiona.Banks@phsg.tsat.uk
Assistant to Heads of Year	Miss J Barker	Jackie.Barker@phsg.tsat.uk
Year 8 Tutors	Mr M Davies 8A Mrs A Pickles 8K Mr P Richards 8L Mr D Rutherford 8T	Matt.Davies@phsg.tsat.uk Alison.Pickles@phsg.tsat.uk Pete.Richards@phsg.tsat.uk David.Rutherford@phsg.tsat.uk
Head of English	Mrs S Blunden-Currie	Siobhan.Blundencurrie@phsg.tsat.uk
Head of Mathematics	Miss G Freeman	Georgina.Freemanalford@phsg.tsat.uk
Head of Science	Mr A Waite	Adrian.Waite@phsg.tsat.uk
Deputy Headteacher and maternity cover Head of Technology	Miss D Roughton	Donna.Roughton@phsg.tsat.uk
Head of MFL	Mrs H Walsh	Heidi.Walsh@phsg.tsat.uk
Head of History/Law/Politics	Mr R Mallard	Richard.Mallard@phsg.tsat.uk
Head of Geography	Mr L Graves	Leon.Graves@phsg.tsat.uk
Head of Religious Education	Miss T McAuliffe	Tanya.Mcauliffe@phsg.tsat.uk
Head of Art	Mr T Varrall	Tom.Varrall@phsg.tsat.uk
Subject Leader for Music	Ms K Mercer	Kristy.Marcerc@phsg.tsat.uk
Head of Drama	Miss C Crouch	Claire.Crouch@phsg.tsat.uk
Head of PE	Ms A Pickles	Alison.Pickles@phsg.tsat.uk
Head of PSHE	Mrs C Lewin	Catherine.Lewin@phsg.tsat.uk
Subject Leader for Computing	Mr P Richards	Peter.Richards@phsg.tsat.uk
Learning Support Manager	Mrs P Simister	Patricia.Simister@phsg.tsat.uk

Communications - Accessibility of Staff and Response Times

At Plymouth High School, we believe that good communication between school and the home is essential. Children and young people achieve more when school and parents/carers work together. Parents/carers can help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve, and how they can help.

In recent years communications between home and school have shifted quite dramatically from pen and paper to email; with email becoming the preferred and predominant mode of communication. Email provides us with a quick, cheap and easy means of communication. The ease of communication via email has many advantages but with it comes problems as the expectation for almost instantaneous reply, in a well-informed, considered and timely manner, appears to be on the increase with complaints following when this has not been the case.

As a school our first priority is to deliver high quality teaching and learning and we must make sure that email as a means of communication doesn't distract teachers from their primary focus, teaching. On any one day a teacher will have a plethora of demands on their time including up to five lessons teaching (and tutor time, lunch duties, clubs and other activities, and after school practices). Teachers cannot and are not expected to monitor and manage their inbox during lessons or at other times in the day, when they should be planning and preparing for lessons, assessing student work or carrying out school duties. The school (and you) expect teachers to be fully prepared, focused and engaged with students and supporting their learning.

We would never wish to discourage parents from communicating with staff, establishing a relationship and working together. Parental communication is essential; we do not always get it right and we need your feedback to help us to continue to improve.

However, the school has a duty of care to staff, as it does to students. This includes a responsibility to ensure that the staff's workload is manageable and does not unreasonably intrude into their private life. We have an incredibly dedicated team of staff at Plymouth High and we want to make them feel valued. It is therefore essential that we respect them and help them to maintain a sustainable workload.

The following outlines those I regard to be important considerations when using e-mail communication between home and school.

All communication must respect the dignity of the recipient.

1. *Within 48 hours - receipt of an email will be acknowledged (during term time only but not after 5pm nor over a weekend)*
2. *Within 5 working days - provide a response to the email by telephone or in writing (including an email). This may include informing the sender that more time is required to provide a full response. If this is the case staff should indicate a time frame in which a response should be expected*
3. *If a member of staff is not able to deal with the email directly then they will pass it on to the most appropriate person and inform the sender that they have done so*

4. *Staff will not be expected to monitor or respond to emails out of their normal working hours (including weekends and published school holidays). Whilst parents may compose emails at hours to suits their own needs, we would ask that emails are not normally sent outside of a member of staff's normal working hours. Mobile phones and other electronic devices that enable staff to access their school emails when away from school can make it difficult to 'ignore' a message from a parent, leading to unnecessary worry and anxiety on the part of the member of staff*
5. *Whilst this is extremely rare, if a member of staff receives an email which is of an aggressive tone, sets unreasonable demands or could otherwise be interpreted as harassing, they will refer this to a senior line manager in the school, who will decide if consideration needs to be given to dealing with further communication under our Complaints Policy.*

We will be reviewing all aspects of our Communications Policy and will be updating it in the near future. If you have any thoughts as to how we can improve communication between school and home, please do let me know.



Charging

As our students embark on their new courses, we would like to highlight a few points around costs and charging beyond what is already provided by the school.

All students receive a photocopy allowance which enables them to print and copy work up to a set limit. Once they exceed that limit, they will need to purchase more credits in school.

Textbooks are provided in all subjects where they are required, but in order to keep costs down these are often provided as a class set which are kept in school and used by more than one student. Where students wish to take a book home, make notes and annotations in it, and generally have ownership of the text, we are able to sell the book at cost price to the student. As we often get large reductions on sets of books this may be cheaper than buying the book oneself. The department will advise by letter when these are available and the price.

In addition to these common themes across Departments, some subjects have very specific items and costs which parents should be aware of when students embark on these courses.

Design Technology

An annual voluntary contribution of £5 is asked to go towards the materials purchased and used by the student. Non-payment does not mean the student cannot participate in the project, but without the continued support of donations we would not be able to produce such quality products or run such exciting projects.

English

Resources will be issued by the English Department.

Geography

All students require a clipboard for their fieldwork. These can be purchased at most superstores for around £2.

We endeavour to try and take every year group out on a fieldtrip each year. To make this financially viable for the school we may ask for a small donation in the region of about £3 per student. Non-payment does not mean the student cannot go on the trip, but without the continued support of donations further trips would be cancelled in the long run.

Mathematics

A scientific calculator is required and will be used in almost all lessons for year 8. We would recommend the Casio FX-85GT. We write in pencil in mathematics lessons. A mathematics set is also required containing a pair of compasses and a protractor as a minimum. Students should also have a purple pen for self-assessing and editing.

MFL

A small French/German dictionary is recommended.

Sciences

A natural display calculator is required. We would recommend the same calculator as recommended by the Mathematics Department.

As your child will be studying some of these courses, please could you pay the required amount(s) through ParentPay or as directed by the Head of Department as soon as possible.

Organisation of Year 8

The Year 8 tutor groups are:

8A/DVS	Mr Davies
8K/PIC	Mrs Pickles
8L/RIC	Mr Richards
8T/RFD	Mr Rutherford

Each student also belongs to a House – Anthony, Kendall, Latimer and Temple – giving ample opportunity to be involved in House activities with girls from different Years within the House. In Year 8, students will remain in the same tutor group as in Year 7.

The Head of Year 8 is Mrs Banks. She will support the students across the year, along with the tutor. They will track her academic progress and keep in touch with you with regard to particular successes and any issues that may need discussing. They will contact you either by email, phone or letter periodically during the year to discuss how things are going and whether there is any need for you to come in for a more detailed discussion. This contact is most likely to be around the times of the reports sent home but could be at any time as appropriate. Please do not hesitate to contact them should you wish to come into school or if there is anything you wish to raise. The home/school partnership is a two-way process and we would hope that you will not wait for us to contact you if you feel there is something to raise.

Teaching Groups in Year 8

Year 8 are largely taught in their four house/tutor groups. Groupings will be revised in Year 10, taking into account GCSE choices. Some students will be studying a second language as part of their original language lessons.

Important Dates for Year 8: 2023-2024

Parents' Evening: 21st or 27th March 2024 3.45pm-6.30pm. Parents and students can discuss progress with individual subject teachers. Parents will be able to make appointments to see any of their child's subject teachers. These will be virtual and appointment details will be sent to parents in advance.

KS3 Examinations Week: 20th – 24th May 2024

Curriculum Enrichment Week: 8th – 12th July 2024

Reports will be issued in the autumn, spring and summer terms.

Holiday and key term dates are at the beginning of this booklet and are on the school website. The half-termly newsletter contains a more concise set of dates. This is also available on the school's website, as well as other letters to parents and information.

Homework

We do not operate a 'one size fits all' homework schedule, instead homework is set when it most effectively supports learning, ensuring it is purposeful. Each subject area will set homework either weekly or fortnightly. The specific approach taken by different subject areas is outlined in the homework timetable for each tutor group (this can be found on our website).

Homework may take a variety of forms. Usually, it will build on what has been covered in the lesson. If research on the internet is a required part of the homework, it can be done in school at lunchtime or after school, in the Library. The Library/Learning Resources centre is open from 8:30 -16:45 Monday to Thursday and 8:30 -16:15 on Friday.

Please encourage your child to develop good homework routines at home, some possible examples are:

- To spend a set or agreed amount of time working independently each weekday evening in a quiet room.
- No electronic games/TV/social media before their homework is completed or until they have worked for the agreed amount of time.
- Ensure that they do regular work at home. Sometimes students may say that they don't have homework, and whilst this may be the case now and then, it is more likely that there are some tasks that need completing. If students have finished their set tasks, they could revisit their learning, perhaps by – reading and/or revising to re-enforce learning and to develop good habits and routines. A small amount of work regularly is often better than a large amount at the 'last minute'.
- Avoid doing homework late at night.

"I haven't got any homework" will rarely be true! Homework might not always be a written task, and there is an expectation that students will use their time to consolidate what they have done in their lessons. Often there will be a specific task set. There will usually be two or three subjects set each day and the time for each is explained. Sometimes students will be set work to do over a period of time, and careful planning will be needed to avoid last minute panic. Managing time is a very worthwhile skill, which will stand students in good stead throughout their school career and beyond. Parents can help with homework, not by doing it (!) but by asking their children about homework and by letting the school know if their child appears to have too little or too much homework or appears to be taking too little or too much trouble over it.

Research shows that children who complete their homework to re-enforce their learning often perform much better in school than those who do not complete all of their homework. We are very keen to work together with you to help our students develop good routines.

As you may know, students who choose to not complete a piece of homework will receive a lunchtime detention.

Assessment and Reporting

Students will be assessed regularly in all their subjects. Some information on assessment is on the following pages, but the most important thing is that the students should understand what is expected of them and how their work is assessed. If your daughter is not sure about this, please encourage her to ask her teachers. Students should be becoming increasingly confident that they know how to make progress in their subjects. Self-assessment is encouraged in many subject areas. Getting something wrong can actually be a positive way to learn, so when students look at marked work, the actual mark is usually less important than understanding what was good about the work and what can be improved.

We want ALL students to:

- Make progress and excel
- Know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve
- Know that they can achieve. We will not set targets in KS3 – we want to raise their aspirations
- Celebrate their progress, whatever their starting points

How do we assess and report student progress?

School reports will be issued in the autumn, spring and summer terms.

For the first report in year 8, your child will receive a split grade, just as she did at the end of year 7.

This grade will give an early indication of the most likely outcome for your daughter in a given subject at the end of year 11. For example

Subject	ATL	Predicted grade
Maths	1	5/6
Art	2	6/7
History	3	6/7
Science	4	8/9
Subject	ATL	Predicted grade
Maths	1	6
Art	2	7-
History	3	7+
Science	4	8-

- 6+ means a grade 6 is the most likely grade, but they could achieve a higher grade
- 6- means a grade 6 is the most likely grade, but they could slip to a lower grade
- Grade range 5- to 8+

For the remaining reports in year 8, we will issue a *whole* grade for the prediction

REPORTING ATTITUDE TO LEARNING:

1: Outstanding: a student who is consistently highly motivated, with an excellent work ethic.

- Is highly motivated and ambitious; they take full responsibility for their learning, use their initiative, and are proactive in their learning. They embrace challenge.
- Always arrives at lessons promptly, with the correct books, equipment, planner and homework.
- Respects the learning community around them.
- Is enthusiastic, always keen to learn in and out of lessons, often proactive and independent in taking learning further.
- Is resilient in their approach to work and is determined to improve e.g. acts promptly and effectively on advice about how to improve their work.
- Completes classwork and homework above the expected standard on many occasions.
- Always meets deadlines and is very organised.

2: Good: a student who is motivated, and has a good work ethic

- Is motivated and ambitious; they usually take responsibility for their learning and can at times use their initiative to go further.
- Arrives promptly at lessons with the correct equipment, books, planner and homework.
- Respects the learning community around them.
- Keen to work and to learn, and is usually enthusiastic, participating actively in most lessons. They make use of opportunities to reinforce learning and can be independent.
- Is often keen to improve their work and shows some resilience when challenged; they usually act on the advice they are given but may need to develop more resilience.
- Completes classwork and homework in line with the expected standard.
- Meets deadlines on all occasions and is usually organised.

3: Requires improvement: a student whose motivation, and work ethic, is inconsistent.

- At times lacks motivation and ambition.
- Can arrive promptly but not always and may lack the correct equipment, books, planner or homework.
- Does not always respect the learning community around them.

- Is not always actively engaged with the lesson and may need prompting to keep focussed on a task.
- Does not make the most of opportunities to reinforce learning beyond lessons.
- Tendency to coast in their work, so that not all work is at an acceptable standard.
- Gives up easily, especially if work is challenging, or if low marks are received; shows little resilience and rarely has the confidence to take advice, or requests to improve the work.
- Occasionally fails to meet deadlines or meets them but the work is not done to an acceptable standard.

4: Cause for Concern: a student who is rarely motivated and has a poor work ethic.

- Is poorly motivated with little ambition; taking little or no responsibility for their learning.
- Rarely arrives promptly, without the correct equipment, books, planner or homework.
- Does not respect the learning community around them, often causing distraction.
- Shows little enthusiasm for learning, needing constant supervision, and prompting.
- Gives up easily, especially if work is challenging or if low marks are received; shows little resilience; may refuse, or take steps to avoid, advice or requests to improve the work.
- Rarely completes classwork or homework and based on current patterns of behaviour, gives few indications that they genuinely wish to learn and succeed. Deadlines are frequently missed.
- Work which is “completed” is often at a poor standard, considerably lower than their potential and what is expected of the cohort of students.

How can parents help?

(Some observations from the school's perspective)

Your child will value your interest in her work and progress (even though it might not be obvious that she does!). Talking with her about her work will help her clarify her thoughts and learn efficiently. This will also make any meetings with the Tutor more fruitful. It is so important that students understand what is expected of them, how their work is assessed and how they can set targets to make progress. If your child cannot explain this to you, please encourage her to talk to her subject teacher. Please give praise where it's due, for achievement of all kinds, not just academic. Help with time management and sometimes some enforced relaxation is needed. Whereas some students will not be doing enough study at home, there will be others who are spending too much time on their homework. Year 8 students may also need parents to insist on a healthy lifestyle in terms of eating, exercising and sleeping!

Please contact the school if you have any queries or concerns. Your child is becoming more independent and able to make her own choices, but the partnership of home and school is a very strong support system for her.



Supporting Year 8 Students with Careers Research

Starting to think about what you want to do in the future shouldn't be hard work! Consider what you would do if you had to get somewhere, and you did not know where it was..... You may ask for help and advice and you would probably look on the internet or plan a route using a map as there may be lots of different ways to get to the same place. Ultimately it would be you who had to decide which route would be the best to take! Exploring your options and career ideas is just the same...

There is an expectation that Year 8 students will begin to explore career possibilities. By using the websites below to research careers, you will discover a wide range of opportunities.

Unifrog

In keeping with our commitment to provide students with outstanding careers guidance and tailored support when choosing their next step after school, we will now be using Unifrog; an award-winning, online careers platform. All students in Year 8 now have access to this website.

Unifrog brings into one place every undergraduate university course, apprenticeship, and college course in the UK, as well as other opportunities, such as School Leaver Programmes, MOOCs and every college at Oxford and Cambridge. This makes it easy for students to compare and choose the best university courses, apprenticeships or further education courses for them. They can also explore exciting opportunities further afield by looking at English-taught undergraduate programmes available in Europe and the USA.

Additionally, the platform helps students successfully apply for these opportunities by using Unifrog to write their personal statement, applications and CVs and guiding them through the process, allowing teachers to give live feedback.

Students access the platform by clicking a link in their welcome email, where they create a password and can begin using the platform. They login to Unifrog using their email address and password and they can do so from any computer, tablet or smartphone. We would encourage you to use the platform with your child so you can support them through the process of deciding their next step.

We have also set up a parent login so that you can use Unifrog as if you were a student yourself, allowing you to truly support your child. The form code you need is: PYMTparents and you can sign up here: www.unifrog.org/code

National Careers Service –offers detailed careers information and access to a careers advisor
Google: National Careers Service Job Profiles for careers information
Go to contact us to get in touch with a careers advisor.

Careerpilot - is a free website helping 13 - 19 year olds in the South of England plan their future study and work, it has a lot of useful information for young people and parents. Access the parent zone from the Careerpilot homepage; <https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/parent-zone>

Every Year 8 student will have an opportunity to explore these websites during their Careers PSHE lessons.

Any Questions

Parents can contact Heather Longford, the Careers Leader & Advisor by email; Heather.Longford@phsg.tsat.uk or by telephone 03333 602 230.

Plymouth High School for Girls Anti-Bullying Policy

Principles

At *Plymouth High School for Girls*, we believe that we are a close and supportive community in which every individual is valued. Each person is encouraged to look out for one another and play their part in maintaining the positive relationships the school prides itself on.

Plymouth High School for Girls believes that no person should feel themselves to be the victim of bullying or harassment and that any person who has such concerns has the right to be heard and for all of their concerns to be taken seriously and to have any necessary action taken.

We feel the definition of bullying *is the intentional, repetitive, or persistent hurting of one person by another, either mentally or physically*. Any person who feels that they are being abused in this way has the right to seek support, guidance or intervention. Any person who witnesses bullying has the responsibility to report the incident as we all have a role to play in maintaining the close relationships in the school.

Introduction

- i. This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989 and in line with the government publications: **Every Child Matters; Don't Suffer in Silence; Working Together to Safeguard Children; and the Human Rights Act 1998** whose principle is that '*all children have a right to an education free from harassment or degradation*'.
- ii. The Governing Body takes seriously its responsibility to ensure no person is the victim of bullying or harassment within these premises.
- iii. We recognise that all staff, governors, parents and students have a full and active part to play in protecting all persons from bullying.
- iv. All staff, governors, parents and students believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of each person.
- v. We recognise that bullying can be both short term and long-term, and we will, therefore, undertake to provide continuing support to a person for whom persistent bullying is perceived to be a problem.

Aims

The Aims of this policy are:

- To encourage tolerance and understanding within our community
- To promote respect across the whole community
- To clarify the role and responsibilities of the Designated Person

- To explain how to proceed if any bullying issues arise
- To explain how these issues will be dealt with

Procedures

- i. If you feel you are being bullied (or someone you know is being bullied), you must TELL SOMEONE
- ii. As requested by Student Voice we have a Designated Person (known as the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator) who is responsible for and will co-ordinate all matters relating to bullying, including incidents that occur off site, and that can affect a student's learning.

- iii. The name of the Co-ordinator is publicised in Assemblies, Newsletters and Pupil Bulletins; students can contact the Co-ordinator through the following methods:
 - Email – Claire.Crouch@phsg.tsat.uk
 - Contacting the Co-ordinator directly in the Staffroom or Drama office every **Tuesday or Thursday between 1.00 and 1.30pm**
- iv. The Co-ordinator will guarantee privacy for the individual raising the concern and ensure issues raised are handled sensitively and discreetly.
- v. The Co-ordinator will undertake to investigate all incidents of bullying thoroughly and report back to the person raising the concern, and if necessary, refer the matter to another agency.
- vi. In the absence of the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator, the school's Child Protection Officer or Head of Year will fulfil the role.
- vii. Posters will be placed around the school, with details of how to contact the Co-ordinator.
- viii. An attempt will be made to help the bully(ies) change their behaviour.
- ix. The bully(ies) will be encouraged to apologise but the Co-ordinator, in consultation with The Headteacher and senior staff, will decide what other consequences will follow in any given situation. In serious cases the Headteacher will consider isolation, suspension or even exclusion for the bully(ies).

Responsibilities

- i. The Co-ordinator will act as a focal point for students, staff, parents and governors, on the subject of bullying within these premises.
- ii. The Co-ordinator will keep a written record of all such concerns and investigations and will ensure all records are kept confidential and secure.
- iii. The Co-ordinator will report formally to the Assistant Headteacher and Governors on the matter of bullying in the school.
- iv. The Co-ordinator will undertake relevant training on a regular basis and will be required to develop the understanding of all staff on the signs and indicators of bullying.

Safety Online

Your daughter's activity online is probably a major part of her life and is just as important for you to monitor and parent as her 'real life' activities.

The progression and development of the internet and the digital world is rapid and it is hard to keep up with what the latest trends or possibilities may be. It is therefore important to build a relationship of openness and trust with your daughter in terms of her digital presence online so that it is not taboo for you to ask her questions about what she has been doing and so that she will speak to you if she gets into difficulties.

Each Year the whole staff (teaching and non-teaching) at PHSG received training and awareness raising of safeguarding and child protection issues surrounding the internet. As a result of this we will be further developing our curriculum in this area this year so that the girls are well informed about current issues. We will also be forming a parents' group and looking at how we can help parents with these issues. In the meantime, there is a considerable amount of advice and guidance available to you as parents and I have listed some of the best suggestions below. If you would like more advice and guidance in this area, then please do contact us and we will see what we can do.

Tips for parenting a 'digital child':

- Get informed! Emails and PCs are already out of date. Don't forget your daughter may be online on her phone, games console or handheld device as well as when on the family computer
- Subscribe to <http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents.html> this digital parenting magazine is free, available in hard copy or online and even gives you some useful phone apps
- Check her Facebook settings. Do you know who can see what about your child? Does she know who her 'friends' are? How does her profile appear? Remember once a photo or information is posted it may not be possible to retrieve it
- Have a look at the advice on the Facebook safety centre – www.facebook.com/safety
- Ask to see what 'apps' she has on her phone – do you know what they all do? Any apps downloaded on an iPhone will remain on your i-tunes account indefinitely, even if they were free.
- Does she have an Instagram account? If so, who does she 'follow' and who 'follows' her?
- If you get problems, go for advice to the UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk and enquiries@saferinternet.org.uk they can also provide you with lots of free leaflets on specific issues
- Have that conversation with her! Ask her if she would be happy if you sat and went through her Facebook account with her – if not then why? Ask what other sites she is using and what for?
- Try to make talking about your digital lives as open as other things – if she is not willing to talk about what she has seen or done online then there may be an issue
- If bullying or abuse occurs by mobile phone, then don't delete things. Keep a record. Contact your phone company and if you feel it necessary the police. If it involves other students at PHSG then please let us know through your daughter's tutor
- Keep a record of the useful sites and addresses below:

Beat bullying www.beatbullying.org

Report abuse or grooming <http://ceop.police.uk>

How-to tutorial videos www.getnetwise.org

Facebook safety www.facebook.co/safety

General internet help www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Learner Support Centre (A01)

The AO1 Learner Support team is overseen by Mrs S Payne, Assistant Headteacher. Staff working in AO1 include Mrs Simister, Learner Support Lead; Mrs Sophie Lee, SEN admin support and Academic Mentor. The centre has expanded to support young people with a whole range of issues within the school, including providing social and emotional assistance for individuals, EAL support and advice and guidance for students who are looking to gain top GCSE grades, Training for Peer Mentors is offered at the end of Year 9 for them to start at the beginning of Year 10 to support the New Year 7s in the transition from primary school.

Complementing the centre's work is a Counsellor from The Excellence Cluster for two days a week and a Counsellor from Young Devon for 1 day a week.

What is a Learning Mentor? A Learning Mentor aims to build a one-to-one relationship with a young person and offers, as a professional friend, support, advice and guidance to help overcome barriers to learning and ensure all children achieve their greatest potential.

What is Counselling? A counsellor is specially trained to help young people understand themselves better and find ways to facilitate problem solving. They can help with difficulties in school, at home or with friends.

While many students will find the help and support provided by specialist subject teachers and tutors enough, others may require greater support during periods of time at Plymouth High. The quiet environment provided in the Learner Support Centre, combined with the opportunity for one-to-one assistance helps many students build greater confidence, understanding, and improved organisation, to ensure that each young person fulfils her/his potential.

The centre has an open-door policy; time is available at break and lunchtimes for the students to complete homework, come and eat and socialise with other people from different year groups and tutor groups. Any student experiencing any difficulties may seek advice and guidance from the team at any time in their school career.

Thinking, Teaching and Learning

At Plymouth High School for Girls, we integrate cognitive science and metacognition into our teaching and learning approach. Collaborating with the University of Exeter, we are currently working towards becoming an accredited 'Thinking School'.

Cognitive science is about understanding how the brain learns and retains information. Making this the focus of our classroom practice allows us to tailor our learning activities to maximise your child's potential. Metacognition empowers your child to think about their thinking and developing essential habits like self-awareness, goal-setting and regular reflection.

We use a variety of thinking, teaching and learning strategies which benefit from proven cognitive science and metacognitive research, including:

- **Edward De Bono's Thinking Hats** encourage students to approach problems from different perspectives, enhancing creativity, decision-making, and fostering a well-rounded approach to learning.
- **Tony Ryan's Thinkers Keys** unlock creative thinking by encouraging students to generate alternative ideas, explore different possibilities, and think outside the box, leading to innovative problem-solving and the development of a flexible mindset.
- **David Hyerle's Thinking Maps** are helpful tools that help students visually organise their thoughts, make connections between ideas, and think more clearly
- **Art Costa's Habits of Mind** introduce important skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and effective communication, helping students become confident and adaptable learners who are ready to succeed in school and in life.

Aligning perfectly with our motto "for life, not school, we learn", these approaches equip your child with lifelong learning skills that extend far beyond their time in school. We are dedicated to ensuring that your child receives the best possible education, one that prepares them to thrive in an ever-changing world.

David Britz-Colwill
Assistant Headteacher

Year 8 Curriculum

Plymouth High School for Girls aims to be an outstanding grammar school for the 21st century remaining true to the philosophy of the school's motto 'for life, not school, we learn'.

Included here is our Year 8 curriculum which:

- Promotes a culture of high aspiration enabling personal and academic success
- Prepares students to think confidently and independently
- Provides an outstanding education for all, the key to this being high quality teaching
- Provides enjoyment, excitement and challenge for all, stimulating an enthusiasm for lifelong learning
- Prepares students to become active citizens, equipped to succeed in a world of rapid change

Art & Design

The Year 8 Course

Year 8 Art combines learning to draw objects with an investigation into how we use, need and attach meanings to the objects in our lives in a project titled Material World.

In order to make artwork about/inspired by our objects, students will initially learn to draw basic shapes - cubes, spheres and cylinders, whilst exploring composition and symbolism through Vanitas paintings.



Year 8 students will learn to use tone, using a range of marks and shading techniques, to create powerful images that create the illusion of form and depth. Students will be introduced to a wide range of media and techniques in Year 8, inspired by the work of contemporary designer Georgina Luck, Wayne Thiebaud and Paul Cezanne, learning to build up tone in colour using watercolour paint, oil pastels, colouring pencils

Having developed a strong selection of skills, students unpick the hidden meanings within Audrey Flack's artworks, considering what objects can symbolise and represent, before they develop their own idea and Concept Statement. This piece is based on their own photography and students experiment with learned skills and develop their final piece.

Students are taught to observe and record through drawing and photography. They are taught to construct a composition and present a high-quality final piece that demonstrates their ability to make decisions and refine a visual idea.

Beyond Year 8

Year 9 in PHSG is a GCSE Preparatory Year where students explore three very different mini-projects linked to the title Human: Nature. Students work in lino, sculpture, graphic design to produce brilliant Artworks in both 2D and 3D.

Good Learning in Art

A good learner in Year 8 immerses themselves in their learning – appreciates and enjoys the different experiences with media and artists each project offers.

- Reflects on their work as it progresses and when complete, regularly making quick personal notes – reflections – in their sketchbook. Uses the success criteria to progress.

- Puts in the time – practise makes perfect.
- Challenges themselves. Both projects allow students the opportunity to take work and skills further. A good learner will choose to work at a level that is just out of their comfort zone.
- Works well at all four Art Assessment Objectives.
- Organises themselves effectively – shows good attitude to learning – turns up on time, with equipment and homework, ready to learn.
- Looks for opportunities to experience and create more Art in class and at home, in separate individual projects and through Art Club.

Assessment

The project is designed to provide students to use and refine skills in the four Art Assessment Objectives (A.O.'s). These have been developed at PHSG from the AQA exam board specifications at GCSE and A level. The exam boards have developed them from feedback from the creative industries and further education and aim to develop curiosity, independence and technical accomplishment.

AO1	Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.
AO2	Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes.
AO3	Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.
AO4	Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.

Students will, with their teacher's support, monitor how they develop their different skills under the four Assessment Objectives.

Homework

Weekly homework of approximately 30 minutes is set throughout Year 8 when necessary. They are a vital part of the course, either building on skills learned in previous lessons or as preparation for forthcoming ones. They can take many forms, from research to specific exercises, from reflecting to collecting equipment, and are expected to be completed to the student's full potential. If a student has any difficulties with completing homework the Art Department is more than happy to help, providing the issue is brought to them prior to the day the work is to be submitted.

Mr T Varrall, Head of Art

Computing

Students in Year 8 have one Computing lesson per week. The National Curriculum in Computing identifies three main strands. Computer science is the scientific and practical study of computation: what can be computed, how to compute it, and how computation may be applied to the solution of problems.

Digital literacy is the ability to effectively, responsibly, safely and critically navigate, evaluate and create digital artefacts using a range of digital technologies. The creation of digital artefacts will be integral to much of the learning of computing. Digital artefacts can take many forms, including digital images, computer programs, spreadsheets and 3D animations.

Information technology is concerned with how computers and telecommunications equipment work, and how they may be applied to the storage, retrieval, transmission and manipulation of data.

Topics covered in Year 8 include:

- Design, program and use apps
- Higher level text-based programming skills
- Webpage design with a look at HTML
- A look inside the computer to see how it works
- Office skills

In all aspects of the course in Computing, students are encouraged to review, modify and evaluate their work. As a result, students become reflective and responsible creators, developers and users of information technology, with an awareness of its impact on daily life and society.

Due to the changing nature of aspects of Computing and the introduction of the new curriculum the schemes of work are developing.

Beyond Year 8:

Work in Year 9 continues to follow the National Curriculum. Students will be encouraged to develop and evaluate solutions to more complex situations.

Good Learning in ICT in Year 8:

Good learning in ICT is more than developing competence in computational thinking, programming the use of software packages. Higher levels are characterised by students acquiring the skills of independent learning and efficiency; ability to reflect on their practice and transfer their skills as appropriate to other tasks and projects.

Assessment:

Student Self-Assessment and Teacher Assessment take place on a regular basis.

Homework:

At times, students may be asked to do short planning or research activities.

How you can support your daughter:

While girls may understand computer programs, surfing the internet, chat rooms and gaming better than many adults, they still need guidance from you. Encourage them to discuss their use of technologies with you – not just computers.

The following website has links to support students and parents:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/0/>.

Many of the tool used in lessons are available as free downloads e.g., Python, Scratch etc.

Mr P Richards, Subject Teacher for Computing

Design & Technology

The Year 8 Course

During Year 8 the pupils visit three areas of Design and Technology and undertake the following projects:

Resistant Materials:

How can products be designed to promote visitor attractions?

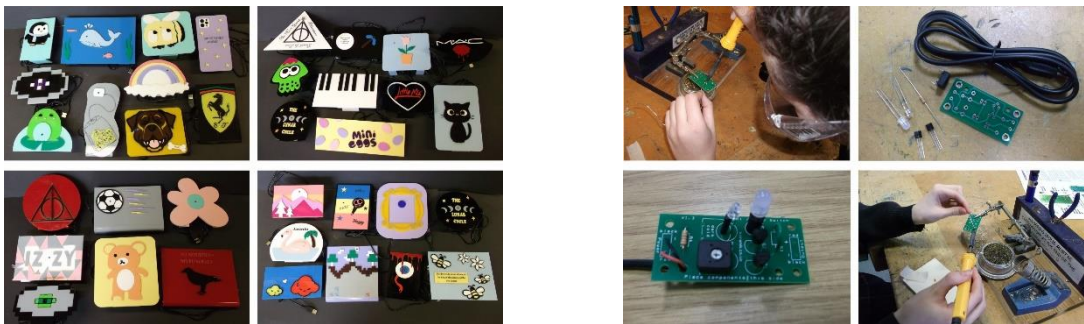
What is my Problem?

Plymouth has been granted £9.5 million to develop the UK's first National Marine Park. The National Marine Aquarium (NMA) will be heavily involved in this project and have requested a quality range of decorative lighting products to be sold in their aquarium gift shop. The lighting products could reflect the diverse marine life of the area or famous coastal landmarks and buildings of Plymouth and the surrounding area.

What is my Solution?

Students will tackle a design and make assignment on the theme of promoting Plymouth's National Marine Park in which they design a USB powered multi-coloured lamp. To help them develop their design ideas they will analyse existing products and previous pupil work.

They will develop their understanding of electronics and systems and control together with 2D CAD CAM software and machinery.



Students will gain the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to carry out the design and make assignment successfully through product evaluation activities and focused practical tasks. They will:

- Use existing prototypes to evaluate design ideas
- Use specified hand & power tools to assemble a printed circuit board (PCB) *e.g., soldering iron, side cutting pliers.*
- *Use 2D CAD CAM (CorelDraw, Laser cutting) to develop high quality components suitable for batch production.*
- Learn about polymers and their environmental impact.
- Develop greater independence through totally individual design & making.

There are also opportunities for students to:

- Use and understand a batch production technique (pre-made components of the PCB enclosure).
- Use testing and modelling to evaluate their work as it progresses.
- Work within parameters of size and colour of material.
- Learn that analysis is an important part of designing and making a product.

Textiles:

Climate Emergency: how can you raise awareness of the negative impact of fast fashion through clothing you design?



What is my problem?

Fashion's impact on the planet is increasingly becoming a problem in the world today. We are purchasing clothes at an alarming rate, with much of this being wasted and ending up in landfill.

What is my solution?

To design and make a pair of shorts that increase awareness of the impact of fast fashion through a printed design, whilst promoting sustainable living.

- What are the problems surrounding fast fashion?
- Where are these problems happening?
- Who needs to know about them?
- How do you know about them?
- What might need researching/ What do you not know about?

The main aim of this unit is to develop students' knowledge and understanding of how Fashion impacts the environment whilst building on pupils' manufacture skills. It also aims to develop their knowledge and understanding of the role of recycling within D&T.

In this unit, pupils tackle a design and make assignment on the theme of recycling and the wider world. They will focus on Vivienne Westwood's Climate revolution collection and use this as inspiration to design their own sublimation print using mark making and Adobe Photoshop.

Pupils gain the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to carry out the design and make assignment successfully through product evaluation activities and focused practical tasks, whilst building on their social, moral and ethical values.

Pupils build on the skills learned in year 7 whilst learning:

- The relationship between fabrics, fibres and sustainability. Consideration of the impact of the textile industry on the environment as well as a focus on the social and moral considerations to be made.
- Core knowledge of Natural and Synthetic fibres is made along with a focus on the properties and manufacture of Cotton.
- Building on a basic knowledge of pattern cutting, students will utilise their mathematical skill to build lay plans that will ensure they minimise waste when producing their garment.
- Understand and develop skills to produce graphical images in Adobe Photoshop.
- Producing sublimation prints using recycled synthetic fibres.
- They will finish the construction of their shorts, building on their sewing machine knowledge to include a patch pocket.

Food and Nutrition - 'Multicultural Meals'

There are a wide variety of ingredients and recipes that come from all over the world. We are going to explore a selection of them and learn more about where these food traditions have come from.

What is my problem?

Consumers are looking to expand the horizons of their evening meals. Recipe box companies are becoming more popular and including meals inspired by cultures and cuisines across the globe. However, the market is becoming saturated and needs constant innovation.

What is my solution?

You have been tasked with developing a new dish that is inspired by foods from other cultures. You will have to plan, make and evaluate a prototype recipe.

The pupils will build on the skills learned in Year 7 as well as:

- Develop and understanding of the factors that affect food choice
- Investigate the influence marketing has on food choices
- Learn about packaging and understanding food labelling
- Explore ways of reducing food waste
- Prepare dishes including:
 - Tiramisu
 - Risotto
 - Spring rolls
 - Banoffee Pie
 - Enchiladas
 - Their own choice of multicultural meal

Good Learning in Design and Technology

Thinking maps are used to support students exploring initial ideas and further to help them formulate processes in manufacture. Thinking hats support student's ability to evaluate products that they make as well as those made by others.

From KS3 onwards, we want our students to experience success that is not just measured by their examination grades. We strive to support them in developing the confidence to take risks, ask questions and explore alternative solutions without fear of being wrong.

Pupils' work is marked in line with the marking criteria around specific skills:

- research and design
- manufacture
- evaluation
- knowledge and theory

However, the Design and Technology Department also measure students' success by referencing a much wider range of criteria.

These include the following:

- Enthusiasm for the subject
- Aptitude for the subject
- Resilience to overcome problems independently but recognising how to work well within a team
- Ability to work under pressure
- Ability to continuously evaluate own performance and be analytical of their work
- Ability to manage their own time

Students' work will be assessed on a flight path approach that runs alongside the schools marking policy. Commendations will be provided to students who produce outstanding work. Both assessment forms will run with comments that include a WWW (What Went Well) and EBI (Even Better If) that will enable students to identify how they can improve.

Homework will be set on a fortnightly basis and will generally cover the theoretical aspects of Design and Technology that support the practical sessions undertaken during lessons. All work is expected to be fully thought through and well presented.

Key Stage 3 Design and Technology aims to give a broad experience of all areas of the subject in order that the pupils can progress and be successful at GCSE level.

At the end of Year 9 pupils can opt to study Design and Technology; Resistant materials, Graphics, Textiles or Food and Nutrition at GCSE level.

Mrs G Young, Head of DT

Drama

The Year 8 Course

During years 7-9 each pupil will have three drama lessons a fortnight. These lessons are designed to build confidence and encourage girls to work together in group situations. It allows them to be imaginative and creative whilst exploring various ideas and issues. In each year throughout Key Stage 3, girls are taught various skills and techniques needed in Drama. In Year 7 these included:

An introduction to drama vocabulary; group identity; voice and movement; skills in how to address an audience; improvisation; Mime and characterisation

Such skills will continue to be reinforced during Year 8, with greater focus on specific Drama strategies such as:

Devising from Stimuli. To introduce the approaches needed to create original theatre-begins to introduce skills required for Component 1 of the GCSE examination.

An introduction the Theatre Practitioner, Stanislavski. This introduces students to the idea of performance being a craft to be learned and studied.

Storytelling-creating believable atmospheres. This encourages students to explore communication with an audience and how to achieve this with the greatest impact.

Working with a whole script-Charlie and The Chocolate Factory.

Development of understanding of Physical Theatre and the practitioners, Frantic Assembly-using Frantic Assembly's techniques and approaches to widen their understanding of more creative approaches to performance.

These allow girls to produce work with greater depth and meaning. This is essential for Year 9, which sees the introduction of more script work and advanced skills, as a way of preparing students for years 10 and 11, enabling those who plan to take GCSE Drama to make the transition to GCSE with more ease. Such skills include:

Forum theatre; Use of space and levels; Use of climax; Use of contrast; Pace/rhythm/tempo and interpreting text and characters.

Assessment

Throughout years 7-9 assessment is undertaken through continuous feedback and evaluation from staff and peers. Pupils are also required to develop skills in self-evaluation to aid improvement and development. Three formal assessments are made each term which are graded or reports, to enable parents as well as pupils to monitor progression within Drama.

Homework

Homework in Drama tends to evolve from practical work done in lessons, but occasionally girls may be required to undertake some research or complete a small written assignment.

Good Learning in Drama

To make good progress in Drama, pupils should approach practical work with commitment and enthusiasm, developing an ability to both contribute ideas and listen to those of others. They should become familiar with and use the thinking processes and thinking tools to reflect upon their progress and understand how to improve. They must also become familiar with and use the vocabulary of Drama and incorporate the various techniques learnt

independently. Pupils should also listen and respond to any feedback provided, whether this be written or verbal and apply it to their subsequent work.

Other information

Girls may also become involved in extra-curricular activities such as the Drama Club, the school production, the Plymouth Arts Festival, the London Theatre trips for Year 7 pupils and the Performing Arts Tour which takes place during Curriculum Enrichment Week for girls in Years 8 and 9.

Miss C Crouch, Head of Drama

English

The Year 8 Course

The Year 8 English curriculum is structured similarly to that of Year 7: the same Literary genres studied at GCSE are considered throughout the year, culminating in a play by Shakespeare. Language skills and activities are taught through these texts and students will be taught the requisite approaches to writing both fiction and non-fiction. There are also opportunities to develop oracy skills.

Beyond Year 8

The Year 9 course is both varied and challenging and follows the same structure with students encountering increasingly more challenging texts. There is also a focus on Rhetoric which prepares pupils for the challenge of the GCSE Language papers.

Good Learning in English

Progress is made in English through reading both in class and at home and attempting more challenging books. As work is completed in class and at home, students will be able to assess their progress and discuss their work with their teacher. Assessments take place midway through the set texts and at their conclusion. Taking part in discussions and asking questions is crucial to ensuring learning takes place and often these discussions are framed by use of Thinking Tools.

Assessment

The work of Year 8 students will be assessed using mark schemes pertinent to the task. Full details are available from Mrs Blunden-Currie, if required.

Homework

Core homework is Sparx Reader. Set and due on Wednesdays, this is an online provision which secures the fluency and comprehension of readers. There may be additional homework set in advance of an assignment (such as learning quotations), or in line with class work (such as learning new vocabulary)

What Else?

Encouraging your daughter to read challenging fiction and a serious newspaper will support the work your child does in school. Listening to age-appropriate podcasts and suitable programmes on BBC Radio 4 will also enhance both communication skills and general understanding of language arts. Recommended Reading Lists are available in every classroom. Posted online, and available from Mrs Blunden-Currie upon request.

Mrs Siobhan Blunden-Currie, Head of English

Geography

The Year 8 Course



The Year 8 course in Geography develops students' enquiry skills from Y7 and prepares them for Y9 and beyond. They move on to put the UK in its international context.

Autumn Term	Europe – A study of the physical and human aspects of Europe. China – An in-depth study into China's development and economic activity Russia - Another detailed study of an old superpower, its physical landscape, its level of development and culture.
Spring Term	The Middle East – Comparing Europe, China and Russia with the Middle East – how do they all compare? Glaciers and Landforms – Learning about Geological timescale, what happened to our planet in the past and how it shaped the landscape as part of our world was covered in ice. Rocks and Soils – a short introduction to geology and the landscape
Summer Term	Rivers and flooding – To include learning about the world's major rivers as well as rivers of the South West. Students learn how to test a hypothesis, collect data and process it. They also consider the consequences of river flooding in this country and in others. There is always the opportunity to study contemporary events and for students to carry out their own research.

Good Learning in Geography in Year 8

Through studying Geography, we expect students to be active researchers who have a sense of responsibility and are capable of independent thought - enabling them to be adaptable citizens in the 21st century. We want students to have a lively interest in their surroundings and in the variety of human and physical processes which influence the development of areas. Students are supported in developing their use of Geographical vocabulary and in their use of evidence to describe and explain complex processes. To this end, please encourage your daughter to take an interest in current affairs, locating places in the news or that they visit.

Assessment in Geography

Assessment in Geography is usually through integrated tasks and end of unit tests. We work within the school's Assessment for Learning Policy. Where appropriate, assessment criteria are shared with the students before the task is begun.

Homework

Homework is integral to the Geography course. The nature of homework varies depending on the work being studied. Some extended work requires girls to take responsibility for planning their use of time in class and at home.

Mr L Graves, Head of Geography

History

Throughout the course, students develop their knowledge of the past but they also develop certain skills, such as the ability to explain why things happen, why not all evidence is reliable and how and why different people have different opinions about people or events in the past. Their ability to communicate these ideas in an organised manner is vital, as is the use of accurate and specialised vocabulary.

The Year 8 Course

In Year 8 students will continue to build upon the knowledge and key skills developed in Year 7 and will look make further progress so students feel more confident in what they need to do to improve. The topics students will study in Year 8 are a continuation on the themes and ideas that originally started in Year 7. The topics that will be studied are:

Changing Ideas and Attitudes – Students will explore the changing ideas and attitudes that evolved throughout the 18th and 19th century. Beginning with the growth and abolition of the Slave Trade, students will examine how life was transformed by the Industrial Revolution and how this led to new ideas of how the country should be run with the growth of democracy culminating in the Suffragette campaign.

Revolution and War – The second half of Year 8 will look at broader global events and how attitudes and new ideas were reshaping the world. Starting with the revolutions of the 18th Century, students will look at how new ideas of nationalism, imperialism and patriotism culminated with the First World War. Students will conclude the year with a depth study of life in the First World War and its legacy.

Beyond Year 8

In Year 9 students will continue building on the knowledge and skills that will allow them to flourish at GCSE. It will act as a continuation from the end of Year 8 as students will delve into the Post war world with the rise of dictators, economic disaster and failed international cooperation. Students will examine the reasons for why Hitler rose to power and how he would transform Germany before exploring the global impact of this with a study of the Holocaust and World War Two. Students will conclude Year 9 with a studying the continued fight for freedom with the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement.

Learning Outcomes

Throughout Year 8, the following skills will be developed:

Knowledge & Understanding

- Show increasing depth of factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of the history of Britain and the wider world
- Describe the characteristic features of a period in reasonable factual detail and begin to make links and comparisons between different periods

Analysis

- Give reasons for or results of events and begin to analyse which are more important than others – which are long term, short term or trigger reasons

- Begin to explain what changes have occurred and begin to analyse why they have occurred and which are more important than others

Using historical evidence

- Use a range of sources and identify which are the most useful for the particular task
- Begin to explain why one should not believe everything one reads - evaluating and being critical of the evidence
- Use quotations to support answers and conclusions

Understanding different historical perspectives

- Describe how some events, people, and changes have been seen in different ways and can suggest possible reasons for this

Communication

- Select and organise information to produce structured work, making appropriate use of dates and terms

Good Learning in History

Good learning occurs when pupils listen attentively, concentrate on their work and persevere even when it appears to be too challenging. Asking questions is vital in order to consolidate their understanding and develop their confidence. Students should be critical of the evidence they are shown not simply accept the information at face value. Various techniques such as highlighting key words, learning to select information rather than copying; visual ways of representing information e.g. diagrams may be used.

Assessment in History

Students will complete a piece of assessed work each half term under timed conditions in class. Students will be expected to prepare for these assessments and they will be given feedback and appropriate tasks to help them take the next steps to progress. Each assessment will focus on one of the key skills that runs throughout History from KS3 to GCSE. Towards the end of the year students will take an end of year assessment that will look back at key topics from Year 8.

Homework

A homework task is set once a fortnight and the guidance given is a minimum of 20 minutes a week (40 a fortnight) in Year 7, rising to 30 minutes (60 minutes a fortnight) in Years 8 & 9 but some longer pieces of work will be set for completion across a half term

How you can support your daughter

Visits to museums or sites of local interest help put the history the students are studying in context. Similarly films or plays which focus on historical periods or incidents help students empathise with the characters involved in past events. Encourage your daughter to question, and take an interest in the world around her and why things are as they are, particularly in the news. Ensure she questions news reports, rather than accepting information at face value. Reading around the work helps improve communication skills and general awareness of the topics; but above all help her become discriminating in the information she uses and records - learning to recognise what is not necessary as well what is essential.

Mr R Mallard, Head of History

Mathematics

The Year 8 Course

The aim of mathematics in Year 7 is to build on and develop the key concepts taught at primary and year 7 cycling through all of the 6 big ideas with greater depth and breadth, and a persistent focus on development of problem-solving skills and depth of thought. We expect students to build and retain knowledge; learning FACTS and FORMULAE. We model and expect students to be able to rehearse learned skills with confidence; showing FLUENCY. We think, discuss, plan and reason with unique problems connected to our learned concepts; showing FLEXIBILITY.

Lesson time is spent thinking, collaborating, and applying skills and techniques, carefully developing written Mathematical accuracy, language, crafted workings, and notation on the page.

Mathematics is based on 6 big ideas:

Number	Ratio and Proportion	Algebra
Geometry	Data Analysis	Probability

Our curriculum is an ambitious seven year programme, gradually leading to the mastery of these 6 big ideas and supporting all students to a number of A level pathways and giving them all opportunities to GO FURTHER with their Mathematics learning, into the real world and into their professions.

Good Learning in Mathematics in Year 8

Quite often anxiety is associated with mathematics and, when present, we work hard to dispel this feeling. Good learners are those students who accept that they will make mistakes and use them as opportunities to move forwards. There is nothing wrong with making a mistake – it is what you do about the mistake that matters. We use thinking hats, thinking maps and opportunities to share and discuss and reflect on common errors together. There are opportunities to extend thinking even further by attending our UKMT club each week!

You can encourage your child to speak to their teacher for support outside of lessons and we have a classroom-based support club on Tuesday lunch times if students would like some help with a specific task or skill.

Homework – SPARX online

We are proud to work with sparx learning to ensure that our students have effective and appropriate practice work to complete independently each week.

Students and families value the sparx homework package for its intelligent ability matching software and for the instant feedback that it gives our students as they work through their problems each week.

Students are challenged to complete 100% of their task each week, reaching 100% correct by using the fantastic shadow videos that support each skill as and when they find a problem more difficult.

We match the topics to our schemes of learning and include 40% retrieval and consolidation each week so that students are practising new and old Mathematics content each week, embedding skills in their long-term memory.

Students enjoy building XP points to earn prizes and certificates. The platform also offers an independent learning section for students to work on topics of their own choosing which is great for consolidation or revision.

Students have a compulsory task each week which is designed to take around 40 minutes to complete successfully. Students can also complete an additional task at the same level of difficulty (XP BOOST) or try a challenging task on the same topic! (XP TARGET).

We offer a TOP UP TUESDAY club each Tuesday lunch time in LRC1 for students to drop in as and when they need help completing their sparx homework which is very popular and helps students if they reach a dead end by themselves.

Equipment and resources

Your child is expected to bring their exercise book and equipment to every lesson – including a calculator, protractor pencil and purple pen! Your child has their own passwords and usernames to access the resources on sparx and quizlet (which students use to revise facts and formulae). Your child's exercise book is full of information about what is being taught when, which sparx codes link to primary learning to consolidate and which codes link to new learning.

The exercise books will also show you the knowledge banks for each half term; what are the year 8 students expected to commit to memory. We hope that families can get involved with the learning at home and can find out everything they need from our exercise books.

Assessment

Your child will sit an assessment every half term connected to that half term exclusively and then a larger end of year exam in half term 5. The result of this assessment will be an opportunity for you to also reflect on your child's progress. Students will have supported and guided opportunities to and expectations for revision at each half term check point and further opportunities to reflect and improve on each performance.

Students enjoy the challenges, organisation and structure of our year 7 curriculum as well as the informal and ad hoc support that our team prides itself on.

Mrs G Freeman-Alford, Head of Mathematics

Music

The Year 8 Course

Music is an important part of all our lives, and at PHSG there is plenty of opportunity for students to enjoy active participation in the subject, regardless of ability or musical experience. The aim of the Year 8 course in Music is to reinforce the skills and knowledge developed in Year 7, and to introduce new aspects of the different elements that underpin all genres of music.

Students receive three lessons across the two-week timetable, and work is structured around the three strands of the National Curriculum, i.e. Performing, Composing and Listening/Appraising. Units of work take up roughly one-half term each. In Year 8, we begin with re-visiting the basic elements of music, as learned in Year 7, and use them in creating a 'variations' composition, which is performed in groups and assessed. Other units of the course will include simple songwriting, using chords in accompaniments, music from India (with the possibility of doing some outreach work with a local primary school), work on variations using the famous Pachelbel Canon, Music for Theatre and 6/8 time. During the year, all pupils will have the opportunity to learn about and use the music writing program "Sibelius".

A collaborative, creative ethos is integral to the music department's ethos and pupils will regularly engage in the sharing of creative ideas through peer performance. In this safe, supportive atmosphere, pupils can discuss and evaluate work; set their own targets for development and improvement and have a hand in the assessment process. Homework might include research, listening to a style of music, or learning technical vocabulary.

By the end of Year 8, we will expect most pupils to be 'secure' which means they will be able to perform and create simple music using some form of notation, and will be able to use musical vocabulary in the correct context; however, some pupils, especially those who receive instrumental lessons in or out of school, may reach the 'mastery' level.

Beyond Year 8

As pupils move into the senior end of Key Stage 3, there will be more opportunity to adapt their own personal tastes into classroom work, with focus on popular music styles, more advanced songwriting or projects on artists they specially enjoy. The Year 9s will also explore African Drumming and have the opportunity to create their own piece of Musical Theatre. Outside the classroom, Year 9 is often a time when those who learn instruments start to aim for the more challenging Grade exams, in preparation for GCSE studies.

A good learner ...

...in music is imaginative, creative and collaborative; prepared to try new and more difficult things (for example, playing a melody rather than a rhythm part, or chords rather than just a bass); willing to try and use notation some of the time and prepared to accept that creativity, though hugely satisfying and rewarding, is sometimes hard work! Above all, good learners in music enjoy themselves!

Ms K Marcer, Music Department

Modern Foreign Languages

The Year 8 Course

Students are able to understand quite a wide range of sentence patterns and have covered a variety of topics. They have some understanding of how to use and manipulate verbs so that they can communicate clearly and are able to express opinions with some force! In year 8, they are now building on this knowledge, and are able to work on longer texts, sustain longer conversations and to maintain their good pronunciation. They will now be expected to be able to work more independently, use dictionaries, begin to use verb tables and express themselves more freely.

Beyond Year 8

In Year 9, girls will continue to develop their language skills in French and German and their knowledge of other ways of life. By the end of Year 9 they should have a good basis for a GCSE course. All girls will have the option of continuing to the GCSE course in both languages or just one.

Good learning in MFL in Year 8

To make good progress, girls need to use the foreign language as much as possible in lessons, aiming to communicate as much as possible. Making mistakes when speaking is part of the learning process. It is important to learn new vocabulary regularly and to look again at grammar notes after lessons.

Assessment

Girls' progress is assessed to guide their further learning. They are assessed in four skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. This is done informally in class, by peer assessment and by formal assessment tasks. By the end of the year, we would expect that most girls to have successfully understood the basics of the past and future tenses as well as improved their understanding of the present tense and how to communicate information about themselves as well as the world around them.

Homework

Homework will be set once a week in each language. It will always include some learning, to consolidate work done in class. It may also involve reading, preparing for spoken assignments, research or writing. Girls are encouraged to produce some work using ICT, which improves presentation, and allows for redrafting. Girls are encouraged to spend some time every week on these recommended web sites for French and German: www.linguascope.com www.atantot.com www.languagenut.com and www.naklar.co.uk. The girls have been given the username and password for each site.

Mrs H Walsh, Head of Languages

Physical Education

The Year 8 Course

The Physical Education curriculum in Year 8 is structured to enable students to build on skills and techniques from Year 7 and to continue to develop their physical competence and performance levels. Six activities are taught throughout the year and students are assessed in each; Tag Rugby and Netball, Trampolining, Health-related Fitness, Badminton and Athletics.

Students are expected to arrive in lessons with the correct equipment, motivated and ready to learn. They are expected to regularly assess their own and others performance and to identify ways to improve, implementing these improvements within lessons.

Physical education helps students develop personally and socially. They work as individuals, in groups and in teams, developing concepts of fairness and of personal and social responsibility. They take on different roles and responsibilities, including leadership, coaching and officiating. Through the range of experiences that physical education offers, they learn how to be effective in competitive, creative and challenging situations.

Beyond Year 8

The PE curriculum during Year 9 is extended to include activities such as exercise to music and orienteering and several activities are revisited to consolidate learning and improve performance. In KS4 core PE, an options system is in place to allow students to follow a stream of activity of their choice to encourage healthy active lifestyles. Students also have the opportunity to undertake GCSE Physical Education and the nationally recognised Sports Leaders Awards.

Good learning in Physical Education

PE requires students to understand the relationship between skill and the readiness of the body and mind to cope with the activity. It requires an understanding of how these combine to produce effective performances in different activities and contexts. Students need to focus on improving their whole-body and fine manipulation skills: These enable the body to move and be agile, for example in throwing, balancing, rolling, bending or twisting.

Tactics, strategies and compositional ideas need to be considered with students being prepared to try a broad range of approaches to tackling a task or challenge.

Students need to be aware of the need to develop their body and mind, improving their stamina, strength and suppleness along with their confidence, determination to succeed and mental alertness.

A good student will have a desire to achieve and improve and will be willing to take part in a range of competitive, creative and challenge-type activities, both as individuals and as part of a team or group.

Non-doer policy

Students are still expected to bring their kit even if they have a note to be excused. They will remain with their teaching group and help in the lesson with other tasks such as umpiring, scoring and coaching.

Ms A Pickles, Head of Physical Education

Religious Studies



The Year 8 Course

Students begin the year by studying the role of Women in Religion. We will look at a range of religious traditions and consider the status and role of women in those traditions. There will be opportunity to consider stereotyping and the pressures on young women in 21st century Britain and ample opportunity for independent learning.

In the spring term students will study Buddhist concepts, beliefs and practices which leads, in the summer term, into more a more personal reflection on the meaning and relevance of 'spiritual intelligence' in the modern world.

Beyond Year 8

This year's study will build on previous encounters and develop the tools needed to approach the topics in year 9. All learning provides a foundation for GCSE work in years 10 and 11.

Good Learning in RS in Year 8

Thinking and reflecting are keys to progressing in RS. Thinking tools are embedded into our curriculum to support this. It is important to listen well and ask questions. Written work should not be hurried, and care should be taken to produce work that is balanced and well informed. Technical vocabulary should be used where appropriate. When a student is absent it is expected that they make the effort to catch up on missed work. The department's use of Teams often facilitates this, as lesson resources and homework tasks can be found there. Students are encouraged to develop independent learning habits by bringing ideas from their wider experiences and from current affairs into our discussions in lessons.

Assessment

Students will complete a number of assessed tasks across the year. These are designed to build the foundations for success further up the school in GCSE examinations.

Homework

Some homework tasks will be written exercises; others will require students to spend time thinking and reflecting others will be used to prepare their assessed tasks.

Miss T McAuliffe, Head of Religious Studies

Sciences: biology, chemistry and physics

The Year 8 Course

We will continue to focus on the **ten big scientific ideas** in Year 8 that were introduced in Year 7.

Science has been improving the lives of humans for thousands of years. Biologists have cured plagues with the development of vaccines and have discovered common ancestry for all life through our genes. Physicists have developed ideas that ensure planes fly and that space probes can travel to distant planets. Chemists have developed synthetic materials with incredible properties through complex chemical reactions. Scientific discoveries are inspired by curiosity and imagination and are then confirmed, improved or rejected by an evidence-based method. This 'scientific method' rejects ideas that lack evidence, such as alchemy, homeopathy or the idea that the Earth is flat. This same method also embraces changes to existing theories when reliable new evidence is discovered.

Science has also increased the complexity of our lives and has presented moral and ethical questions. Just because something is scientifically possible, should we do it? We also live in a world full of information via the internet, but much of it is inaccurate and unscientific. We hope that mastering these ten big ideas will equip you with the knowledge, understanding and skills such that you can spot fact from fiction and live healthy and prosperous lives.

The ten big scientific ideas are listed below, along with how they are focussed upon in Year 8:

Big idea	Topics explored in Year 8
Forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact forces• Pressure
Electromagnetism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electromagnets• Magnetism
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work• Heating and cooling
Waves	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wave effects• Wave properties
Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Periodic table• Elements
Reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chemical energy• Types of reaction
Earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The climate emergency• Earth's resources
Organisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breathing• Digestion
Ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respiration• Photosynthesis
Genes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evolution• Inheritance

Mastering an idea means that you have:

1. **Knowledge** of the theories, facts and figures about an idea
2. An **understanding** of the idea so that you can recognise it in unfamiliar situations
3. The ability to use **skills** to help you solve problems or communicate the idea well

The skills we will develop alongside these ideas are:

- Scientific thinking
- Scientific enquiry
- Scientific analysis
- Scientific communication
- Practical competency
- Mathematics

Beyond Year 8

The ten big scientific ideas are returned to each year, but with a slightly different focus, allowing you to master the ideas over time.

In Year 11, you will sit six examinations in the sciences which will assess your knowledge, understanding and skills associated with these big ideas. These are known as GCSE exams.

After Year 11, you have the option to study the sciences for a further two years, completing more advanced courses called A levels. Successfully completing these exams allows you to attend university when you leave school at 18 years of age.

Assessment

Your progress will be continually assessed with verbal feedback from your teacher. You will also complete six key assessments throughout the year, where you will receive detailed advice on what went well, as well as on how to improve. Exercise books are checked once per half-term for completeness and effectiveness. Teacher assessments are made to assess your progress and summaries are sent home periodically in reports which inform your parents of your progress too.

Homework

You will be set homework regularly, once per fortnight as described on the homework timetable.

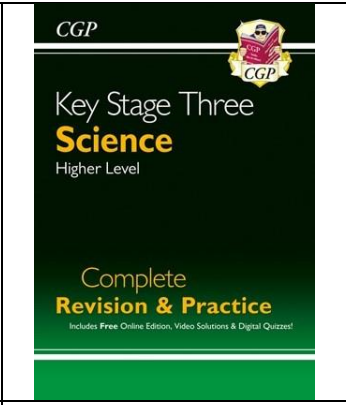
Supporting Learning

Most of you, at some point, will find a concept challenging and require additional support to help you understand. At other times, an idea will be of such interest, that you will want to find out more and become an expert in it.

Below are some resources that are available to support your learning to help you reach your potential, or purely for interest:

- Sometimes, a simple chat with your teacher after class can be enough to help you with a difficult idea. We are here to help you.

- You may wish to purchase a copy of our recommended Year 8 textbook: *AQA Activate for KS3 Student Book 2* (ISBN 9780198408253). Students often find their own personal copy valuable for homework and for revision. Used copies can often be found online for around £10. This is entirely optional.

	
<i>AQA Activate for KS3 Student Book 2</i>	<i>KS3 Science Complete Revision & Practice – Higher</i>
<i>ISBN: 9780198408253</i>	<i>ISBN: 9781841463858</i>

- If you did not purchase it last year, you may wish to purchase a copy of our recommended Year 7 to 9 workbook: *KS3 Science Complete Revision & Practice – Higher* (ISBN: 9781841463858). Brand new copies can be purchased online for £11.99. Students often find this valuable if they need support or further practice.
- The internet offers many free resources. Educake, Kerboodle, BBC Bitesize, s-cool.co.uk, the Khan Academy, Oak National Academy and YouTube have relevant resources to help you with further understanding.
- There are also many excellent TV programmes offered on-demand with direct connections with your studies. Free content can be found on the BBC iPlayer, and other streaming services.

Mr A Waite, Head of Science

Personal, Social and Health Education in Year 8

At Plymouth High School for girls, the philosophy driving PHSE is to provide our young people with balanced factual information on a range of issues which may, either now or in the future, directly affect them. Throughout our planning we have tried to emphasise that PHSE can and does make a unique contribution towards our students' education and the development of their personal and social skills. It is also important to stress that our programme is to be complementary to the role of parents.

Aim

Our primary aim:

- To develop well rounded, thoughtful, responsible young adults who are able to play a full and active role in our modern technology society.

Working alongside this are:

- To develop confidence, self-esteem and personal responsibility
- To allow students to make the most of their abilities and realise their full potential
- To develop a healthier and safer lifestyle
- To develop worthwhile and fulfilling relationships and respect differences and show tolerance towards others
- To develop life skills
- To develop knowledge and skills required to make the most of changing opportunities in learning and work
- To explore what it is to be enterprising and to respond to change
- To learn to manage their personal finances
- To help students towards intellectual, emotional and social maturity
- To provide students with the skills to deal with new situations and overcome problems
- To widen students' horizons and encourage them to be positively involved in society

The Year 8 Course

The themes of Healthy Lifestyle, Life Skills and Personal Skills run in each year and are strongly linked to "Every Child Matters". The main teaching points and experiences delivered are listed below:

1. Citizenship and Human Rights
2. Relationships
3. Money Sense and Careers
4. Drug Education

Wellbeing

Year 8 students will continue their Wellbeing education into year 8.

They will cover topics such as.

- Mental Health and Awareness
- Stress and coping strategies
- Body Image
- Positive Relationships
- The students will build on their sleep, diet and exercise work from year 7.

Good Learning in PSHE in Year 8

Pupils provide information, explain key words and apply simple concepts to demonstrate a broad understanding of the issues and events explored. They research and evaluate sources, explain if the source is trustworthy and relate information from one source to another. They explain how and why changes take place, identify questions to support enquiry, consider and discuss issues and justify personal opinions. They contribute to group and exploratory class discussions. They demonstrate basic debating skills and articulate their own point of view. They demonstrate personal and group responsibility in their attitudes to themselves and others when participating and accept the value of others.

Beyond Year 8

In Year 9 pupils look at Government and Democracy.

Mrs C. Lewin, Head of PSHE & Citizenship