



3 November 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this finds you well.

Thank you for your forbearance this week with the school closure. The very high winds increased the chance of some of our trees losing branches and the associated risk to students and staff was considered too high. As it turned out, we did suffer some minor flooding, but we were able to clear it up quickly and easily with the site being empty.

### **Eras tour – launch of the new PTFA**

I should like to publicly thank our wonderful newly formed PTFA for planning and running a hugely successful trip to the cinema to see a screening of the Eras tour before half term. PHSG had a whole screen to themselves, they dressed up, sang and danced their way through the whole thing. At the end, the cinema staff made a point of thanking our students for how well they conducted themselves throughout the event. Well done to everyone involved and good luck to the PTFA for their next event.

### **PSHE in school**

You will know that students benefit from a PSHE programme in school and, in common with all our courses, we provide details of what we teach in a booklet that we post on our website. There are sometimes elements in the PSHE curriculum that are a challenge for some learners, so I thought you would find it helpful if I highlighted where you can find details of our PSHE curriculum. We publish our [PSHE curriculum on our website here](#)

## **October half term 2024**

We have been reflecting on our term structure and have decided to make a change for 2024 / 25. We will still have the 2 week break at Christmas and Easter and half terms as normal in February and May, but the October half term will be 2 weeks long, starting on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October and running until Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024 inclusive. We have taken this decision as September to December is perhaps the most tiring period for our young people and staff. Having a longer break in October will also give our year 7 and 12 students time to rest and recover after the challenges of starting their new school and courses and give year 11 and 13 the opportunity to have a break whilst also having time to do that all important revision ahead of their mocks. The summer break in 2025 will be between 5 and 6 weeks long, and I will write to you again when we have settled on the return date for September 2025.

As a Trust we are looking at whether changes to our current calendar model would better support our students and staff. Any changes to our current model (other than the 2 week October half term) would not come into place until September 2025 at the earliest. Of course, I will keep you updated on developments as they happen, but we are at the early stages of thinking through potential models. I suspect there will be a high chance that a 2 week October half term could feature in the Trust wide calendar model from September 2025 onwards. School term dates are published on our [website here](#)

## **Attendance policy**

As part of our review cycle, we have updated our attendance policy and it [can be found here on our website](#). The corner stone of our policy is that we are focussed on doing all we can to ensure our students have the highest possible attendance. Attendance at Plymouth High is excellent, but we are always looking at ways of improving it still further. Thank you for supporting us in making sure students attend school every day. As a minimum, we aim for students to have at least 96% attendance, although many of our students have better attendance than this.

## **Remembrance**

Remembrance is an important time of the year for us. Many of our young people have close links with the armed forces and all can reflect on what happened in our city during the last World war. Assemblies this week have focused on Remembrance and there will be activities in the library running until Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November to give students the chance to say what remembrance means to them. We will run our 2-minute silence at 11am on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November. Poppies will be available in school.

## Uniform expectations

Congratulations to the majority of our students who arrive in school on time and in the correct uniform every day. We ask that parents continue to support our drive for all students to meet the required uniform standard. [Click here to see](#) helpful pictures of the correct uniform, with a particular focus on the rules regarding jewellery, hair colour, skirt length, blazers and shirts being neatly tucked in. As always, thank you for your continued support.

### A note from the sixth form team on dress code

The sixth form team have been working with our students to ensure they all understand and adopt the dress code we expect in school. We thought you would find it helpful to have a reminder of school expectations. The majority of our sixth form students meet the dress code expectations every day and therefore set a good example to the younger students. The key thing is that students are arriving at school dressed in a manner that is suitable for our setting. As you might expect, if we feel a student is wearing an outfit that a) *looks suitable for a sunny day at Bantham* or is b) *one that wouldn't look out of place in a night club* then it is not meeting our dress code policy.

Students whose state of dress does not meet our expectations will be sent to the Sixth Form office for a discussion. If after this discussion the same student comes to school wearing clothing that is not fit for our setting, we will make contact with their parents/guardians to explain the situation. If for a third time this happens, we have a set of generic jumpers that will be given to the student to wear for the day. We fully appreciate that we are dealing with young adults and as such they will make mistakes and our policy is designed to take this into consideration but also put measures in place to ensure that all students meet our dress code. Students have been re-sent a slide today with helpful pictures about what is and what is not deemed acceptable. Please see below for the pictures. Thank you for your continued support on this matter as it has really helped us during the start of this academic year.



## **Student wellbeing**

Following a successful pilot with last year's year 7, this term we have introduced a whole school wellbeing initiative called Pulse. Pulse requires students to complete a 60 second weekly check-in and will enable students to alert staff if they are not ok. As a school we will also be able to monitor trends and plan for whole school and individual year group needs. For more information, please [click here to see a 4 minute video](#) which explains the process.

## **Carols and Mince Pies, CAMP**

We are delighted to invite you to attend PHSG Carols and Mince Pies Event on Wednesday 6th December after school.

Students and staff are practising hard in order to put on a wonderful show for the community. The concert showcases our students' musical talent ranging from singing, playing instruments to composing original pieces.

Further details about the concert start time and how to purchase a ticket for the event will be in my letter next week, but we thought you would appreciate some advance notice.

Every year, our very generous parent body donate mince pies for CAMP. If you would like to donate a box of mince pies, please ask your child to bring them to reception. Our wonderful PTFA are already onboard with looking to see how they can support this fun event.

Very best wishes,



**Simon Underdown.**  
**Headteacher.**