



20th September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this finds you well.

I wanted to start my letter to you this week by feeding back on our September open evening. As usual, we were delighted to welcome lots of families to Plymouth High as they think about the right secondary school for their child. Yet again, our visitors were full of praise for the amazing tour guides and subject ambassadors.

Our students did the school and their families proud with the way they presented themselves, represented the school and interacted with our visiting families sharing with them just what it is like being a student at our school. I am so grateful to our parents who supported this event by changing their plans to accommodate their child staying late at school. The feeling our visiting families get whilst spending time with our wonderful students is often a significant factor in helping them to decide if Plymouth High is the right school for them. Every bit of feedback we had from families last night about the tour guides and subject ambassadors was positive and complimentary. Our students, your children, were fabulous.

The school jumper

As a reminder, the school jumper for years 7 to 11 is an optional item whilst the blazer is compulsory. In the warmer weather, I would recommend that students leave their jumper at home so that they are more comfortable during the day. If students feel they would like an extra layer, but feel the jumper is too much, a white T shirt under their school shirt is a good idea. Of course, if students wish to wear a jumper in addition to their blazer, it must be the branded Plymouth high jumper.

Mobile phones

Thank you for your support in helping us to meet our mobile phone policy expectations in school, it makes such a difference. I thought you might like to know that this term we have not had more than 0.4% of the school population in a mobile phone sanction on any particular day and on most days, it has been 0%. We are seeing the positive benefits of our mobile phone policy and remain grateful to all our parents for having conversations at home about appropriate mobile phone use.

Plymouth High was featured on spotlight news this week following an investigation the BBC have been conducting on mobile phone use. As part of the interview, Verity and Kitty, from the Head Student team, gave their views mobile phone use. As you might expect, they were magnificent in the interview and spoke with confidence and clarity.

An organisation called *Internet matters* have published some handy tips and support for parents helping their child to successfully and safely navigate the virtual world. I would encourage parents to take a look and discuss it with their children. The details can be found [here](#)

Assessment and reporting

You will remember that in my previous letters this term, there have been updates from Miss Roughton (Deputy Headteacher) explaining our revised approach to reporting with more updates promised. Please read on to see her latest update.

Our intention is to keep you up to date with how your child is both progressing with their studies as well as informing you of their effort and behaviour.

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
- Celebrate their progress, whatever their starting points

The reports that you receive throughout the year, after the first report in October, will include attitude to learning but will also include a predicted grade. Each year group will also receive one written report each academic year with targets and/or comments

designed to inform on progress and those areas might need to be improved in order to reach their full potential.

The predicted grade stated on the report is the grade that the teacher feels the student is most likely to reach at the **END** of Year 11 or, for sixth form students, the **END** of Year 13. It is **not** an indication of the grade that student has just achieved in a recent assessment or assessments.

Predicted grades will be based on the teacher's professional judgement and this is informed by a variety of assessments carried out throughout the academic year, these include:

- Questioning in lessons
- Contribution in lessons
- Classwork tasks
- Homework tasks
- Half termly assessments
- End of chapter/unit assessments
- Formal end of year assessments

Formal assessments such as the half termly, unit or end of year tests will be more heavily weighted pieces of evidence that the teachers use to make predictions, as for all but a few subjects, written papers are the way that students will be assessed at the end of their GCSE and A' Level studies.

We would encourage parents/carers to talk to their child after each report in order to help them to reflect on their progress within a subject and how their effort and behaviour are having a positive or negative impact on their progress. It is important that parents discuss any targets set on a report and encourage their child to seek advice and guidance from their teachers if they are unclear about how to improve in an identified area.

Information about the key assessment points throughout the year can be found on the school calendar

[Plymouth High School for Girls - School Calendar \(phsg.org\)](http://phsg.org)

The first report for all students will be sent out in October and this will provide an early indication of how well your child has settled into their studies and give an idea of their effort and behaviour in lessons. The report provides a statement about how well a student is progressing in each of their subjects and a number to indicate their approach to learning in each of their subjects.

PTFA

Our PTFA are a hardworking, yet small group, of wonderfully supportive parents. They have big plans this year to make a substantial and lasting difference to the experience students enjoy at school and they are keen to invite new members. The PTFA annual general meeting is being held at the school 15th October 2024 @ 4pm and all parents are welcome. This would be a great time to find out more and meet the existing dedicated team.

The agenda is yet to be finalised but it will include the election of committee board members.

If anyone would like to nominate themselves or anyone else for committee roles please email pta@plymouthhighschoolforgirls.org.uk

If parents would like to join the PTFA or find out more information about the committee roles do feel free to contact the team on the above email address.

Earth Alliance – student leadership

Earth Alliance, one of our student leadership groups, is dedicated to reducing our impact on the environment and encouraging others to make those small changes that can have a big overall impact. Their latest focus is on reducing litter wherever we can. Whilst Earth Alliance are very grateful to the majority of our young people for always ensuring that their rubbish is put into the bins, they are campaigning for a 100% litter free site so that we can all enjoy a more pleasant environment. Please see below for the message Earth Alliance wanted to pass onto parents and carers. They also have a message for students this week, but they thought you would like to discuss this with your child.

We know that making a significant change can be quite hard on our own but encouraging people to do simple and small acts can help create a positive impact on the environment. That is why we encourage everyone to not litter and think of the negative impact it would have. By

keeping our streets and community clean we can ensure safety and efficiency in and outside of school grounds.

We encourage everyone to be mindful of their rubbish and put it in the bins provided rather than leaving a mess. Littering is a serious problem in our wider society, and we request that everyone be mindful of their duty to never litter. Thank you from the Earth Alliance team for your support and encouragement.

Cello lessons

I am delighted to announce that Mr Simpson is adding cello lessons to the list of instruments available for instrumental tuition. Students can get information directly from him in the music department or there are sign-up sheets available outside the music office on the pin board. If Students are interested in learning the cello or would like any more information, please don't hesitate to contact Mr Simpson.

Year 11 revision, mock preparation and beyond. A message from Mr Law, Head of Year 10 and 11

Success and progress this year will be the result of a strong partnership between home and school. Your support is invaluable in helping your child reach their full potential, and we are committed to providing them with every opportunity to succeed. Here are several ways how we will be supporting your child in the coming months:

- Running extra classes and intervention sessions during lunchtimes and some after-school sessions;
- Encouraging students to use tutor time in the mornings to plan their revision and share techniques with their peers;
- Preparing additional revision materials for students to use at home;
- Providing revision lists, resources, and activities for each subject;
- Offering access to additional revision materials, such as past papers, revision cards, and planning sheets, via TEAMS.

Research has shown that regular testing and revision throughout the year significantly benefits learning. To support your child at home, we recommend helping them create a revision timetable. You can find guidance through these helpful resources:

[How do I make a revision timetable for my exams? - BBC Bitesize](#)

[How To Make A Revision Timetable That Works! | The Exam Coach](#)

Whilst your child is waiting for the revision lists for the November mocks examinations, please encourage them to review the materials they prepared and used for their revision for the end of year 10 examinations. These resources will form an important part of their revision for the November mock examinations and the real GCSEs in the summer. Hopefully, your child will feel they have a good base of revision materials to get them started.

Parents can also offer support by helping to test their child at home using flashcards or subject-specific knowledge banks provided by teachers. Throughout the year, we will work with students to develop effective revision techniques in all subjects.

The countdown to mocks



Thank you for your ongoing support. If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Law, your child's tutor, or Miss Roughton, Deputy Headteacher.

Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

Our Anti-Bullying ambassadors have been awarded the Community badge from The Diana Award Anti-Bullying Campaign. They have now succeeded in obtaining two out of the three badges and work has already begun on the final badge. This is a wonderful achievement and the result of a sustained commitment to tackling bullying wherever it occurs. To obtain this badge they have:

- Set up an anti-bullying page on the school website to keep parents and carers up to date with news and campaigns.
- Run a whole school event where everyone wrote positive affirmations to one another and these were shared with students during morning registrations.

- Worked with a local Artists company and The Youth Justice Programme where PHSG was home to a huge trailer with a clear anti-bullying message painted on it during anti-bullying week.

The anti-bullying trailer was placed out on North Hill as the ambassadors wanted to reach as many people as possible with the message. This was also picked up by the local ITV news who came and interviewed ambassadors about the work the school do to tackle bullying.

The anti-bullying ambassadors ran a whole school fund raising even and were able to donate the money raised to NSPCC to help fund their Childline service. They also attended Student Voice events across the wider TSAT community to inform other schools of their role within PHSG and to promote the importance of anti-bullying ambassadors in school as a way to raise the profile of a strong anti-bullying message.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Underdown', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Simon Underdown.
Headteacher.