



27<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

I do hope this finds you well.

I should like to begin my letter to you this week by thanking the parents of year 10 for joining us at our annual year 10 expectation evening. During the evening, we discussed the rigours of GCSE, the importance of students working hard and keeping up with the content taught in class as well as meeting homework deadlines with their best work. We also shared ideas on how to successfully prepare for the assessments that students will meet along the way and how crucial it is to revise effectively for those all-important mock examinations.

The mocks in year 10 and beyond give students a very clear steer as to what they may achieve in their final examinations. Mocks are also really helpful in providing students with information about how successful they have been in learning and using what they have been taught. Of course, there is always new content and skills to learn between mocks and the real examination, so a strong mock outcome can be a real boost on the way to securing the best possible final outcomes.

As with all years, your child's form tutor is the first point of contact for parents, so please do get in touch if there is something you would like to discuss.

## The 150 Foundation

I am delighted to announce that this year we have launched our 150 Foundation to year 12. The 150 Foundation has been made possible by one of our ex-students who has very generously committed to donating a sum of money every year. All year 12 students are able to apply for the 150 Foundation award. The award is a cash sum that students can use in any way they see fit to support their studies. Selection is via application letter and consideration of a student's particular circumstances. The details of the 150 Foundation and how to apply have been shared with year 12 this week. We look forward to receiving applications. More details in due course.

## What is Atom Home?

We launched Atom Home with the families that joined us for our recent open evening and I thought you would be interested to know more about it. Atom Home is an online learning (and 11+ preparation) platform for ages 7-11, designed to build children's confidence with Key Stage 2 learning objectives (and familiarise them with the style of questions they may see in 11+ entrance tests. )

Built around national curriculum frameworks, with additional material for verbal and non-verbal reasoning, children can practise 11+ questions and explore learning resources, mock tests, video tutorials, and exam preparation materials.

It is open to all students, whether or not they are considering the 11+ as it provides useful support for Key Stage 2 learning.

PHSG has partnered with Atom Learning, the leading 11+ preparation and Key Stage 2 learning website, to provide **free** learning and examination preparation support to primary school children who are eligible for pupil premium.

ATOM is open to all students for a fee, but PP students can gain access for free.

You may find this helpful if you have a child in Key Stage 2 or you may like to share it with friends and family whose child is in Key Stage 2.

To find out more, please visit our [admissions page](#) and scroll down to **Free 11+ familiarisation materials for pupil premium**. Families not in receipt of pupil premium can still access Atom from here, but there is a fee following the free trial. To go straight to the Atom/PHSG partner page click [here](#)

## The Day

You will remember that we subscribe to The Day for our students to use. The Day is a publication that uses verified sources and articles to bring young people news on current affairs. Students and parents can click [here](#) to see what is on offer. I would recommend a look, it is superb.

You will see that The Day is a rich and engaging online educational resource that turns news into lessons across five differentiated reading levels. It provides students with unlimited access to news on big global issues written in-house and includes polls, videos, images, graphics, posters, translations and links for external guided research.

The Day engage all learners and inspire comprehension through challenging, rich texts, experiential learning, project work and the acquisition of core knowledge about the real world. By making connections between current affairs and what they are learning, students become more actively engaged in their studies and more inquisitive, enabling them to develop cultural capital and the skills they need to be ethical and informed citizens.

The Day believe that investigating what is true and exposing misinformation enables people to make good choices and fulfil their potential. The aim here is to work towards a world where young people everywhere learn how to become ambitious, capable learners, ask good questions, debate the issues, listen to others and develop a powerful voice in shaping a better future. Free access to The Day [starts here](#). I hope you and your child(ren) enjoy it.

### **A note to year 11 parents from Mr Law, Head of Year**

As November draws near, I would like to remind you of the importance of the upcoming mock examinations for our Year 11 students. These examinations are crucial in helping students prepare for their final GCSEs, allowing them to identify strengths and areas for improvement. To support your child through this preparation period, I wanted to offer some guidance on how to create a structured, balanced study routine and utilise effective revision strategies.

### **Supporting Your Child Through GCSE Preparation**

#### **Create a Study Schedule:**

- **Balanced Timetable:** Help your child develop a realistic and balanced study timetable that covers all subjects, includes regular breaks, and allows time for relaxation. Encourage short, consistent study sessions, which are generally more effective than last-minute cramming.
- **Set Goals:** Setting specific, achievable goals for each study session can help your child maintain focus and stay motivated.

#### **Effective Revision Techniques:**

- **Active Learning:** Encourage the use of techniques such as summarising notes, creating mind maps, and using flashcards to help reinforce key concepts.

- **Past Papers:** Practising past examination papers under timed conditions is an excellent way to familiarise students with the examination format and improve time management skills.
- **Group Study:** Studying with peers can be beneficial, as long as the group stays focused on their goals.
- **Teach to Learn:** One of the most effective ways to revise is for students to teach a topic to someone else. Encouraging your child to teach you or another family member can deepen their understanding.

### Utilise School Resources:

- **Teachers and Tutors:** If your child is struggling with a particular subject, encourage them to seek help from their teachers or attend extra tutoring sessions. Maintaining open communication with teachers is essential.
- **Revision Sessions:** We offer extra revision sessions at school, especially as we approach the exam period. Please encourage your child to attend these, as they provide valuable support.

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### Maintaining Wellbeing

In addition to academic preparation, it is crucial to prioritise your child's wellbeing:

- **Healthy Lifestyle:** A good balance of sleep, nutrition, and physical activity is essential during this period. Encouraging healthy habits will support their concentration and resilience.
- **Stress Management:** Help your child manage stress by promoting mindfulness, deep breathing exercises, and encouraging them to maintain hobbies or activities they enjoy outside of their studies.

### Mock Examinations and Their Importance

Mock examinations should be approached seriously, as they offer a valuable rehearsal for the real examinations and highlight areas that may need extra focus. Once the results are in, sit down with your child to celebrate their successes and create a clear plan to address any gaps in their understanding in a manageable way.

### Useful Resources for Revision

- **BBC Bitesize:** Free revision resources and guides for all GCSE subjects.
- **Examination Boards:** Websites such as AQA, Edexcel, and OCR provide past exam papers and detailed specifications.

- **School Resources:** Encourage your child to utilise school-provided materials, including revision guides and access to online learning platforms including the resources shared on Teams.
- **Study Guides:** There are many GCSE-specific study guides available that can provide structured revision support.

## In Conclusion

Preparing for GCSEs requires careful planning, consistent effort and support from both school and home. By helping your child implement effective study strategies and maintaining open communication, you can support them in successfully navigating this crucial period. Most importantly, remember that their wellbeing should be prioritised alongside their academic goals.

The countdown to mocks...



Mr Law is grateful to all our year 11 parents and would like to thank you for your continued support. If you have any concerns or queries, then please do not hesitate to contact him directly, your child's tutor or Miss Roughton, Deputy Headteacher.

## Black History Month

October is the month we celebrate Black History at PHSG and across our Trust. As usual, there will be a number of activities and competitions for students to get involved in. The Head Student Team are running the month-long celebration and will be hosting the competitions in the library during the week beginning 7<sup>th</sup> October. Students will be provided with further details and may want to discuss with you their competition entry. Students must submit their entries for the competition to [admin@thinking-creative.com](mailto:admin@thinking-creative.com) by Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October.

## **Half term**

A reminder that half term for students begins on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October (last day, Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October) and the first day back for students after the break is Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November. We hope that students and families get chance to have a good break and recharge their batteries.

Very 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.**