



THINKING  
SCHOOLS  
ACADEMY TRUST

# Plymouth High School for Girls

*"For life, not school, we learn"*

25<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you enjoyed the Easter break and that your child(ren) has enjoyed returning to school after the chocolate fest.

## Summer Examinations

Year 11 and 13 students have been revising for their public examinations, and I know parents and carers have been providing wonderful support and encouragement at home. Thank you for your support as we do our best in school to help our young people succeed. The MS Teams channels for each subject contain a wealth of information and examination practice material for students to use as part of their revision programme. In your conversations at home about revision, you may find it helpful to discuss what is available on MS Teams and how your child plans to use it.

The Mathematics and Science departments have created their own revision websites that all students can access. These sites are very easy to navigate and are crammed full of useful practice questions, knowledge organisers, and information about the examinations. Your child has all the information they need to access these sites, and I would recommend that they make good use of it.

Students in Years 7 to 9 will be thinking about starting their preparation for their end-of-year examinations, which cover all subjects and are set at the end of this half term. Teachers have been explaining to their classes what students will be assessed on and have provided material to help them prepare. Any students unsure of what they need to do should speak with their teacher.

Year 12 are in the middle of their mocks, and I wish them well. Thank you, parents and carers, for the support and encouragement you offer at home; it really does make all the difference.



## Learning Modes: Enhancing Learning with Clear Signals

At PHSG, we use learning modes to clearly signal task transitions and set expectations. These include:

- Respectfully Listening
- Focused Independence
- Considerate Collaboration
- Silent Reading
- Purposeful Practice/Practical

As a grammar school, our students regularly engage in complex thinking to achieve at the highest level. Crystal clear signals help maintain a structured, purposeful learning environment. By instantly recognising the learning mode, students can adjust their mindset and learning behaviour accordingly, reducing wasted time and ensuring they engage effectively in each task.

It is not just about efficiency, though. Learning modes also foster metacognition—students become more aware of how they learn best. By reflecting on which mode has been chosen for a particular task, they develop self-regulation skills, improving their ability to manage focus, collaboration, and independent thinking. Over time, this empowers them to make strategic decisions about their learning, a skill essential for higher education and beyond.

By embedding learning modes into daily routines, we hope to reinforce both academic discipline and cognitive awareness, equipping students with lifelong learning strategies. For life, not school, we learn.

## Reading

Reading for 30 minutes a day is easy enough to fit into anyone's schedule but can produce life-changing effects. There are benefits no matter what we read. Regular reading improves brain power and memory function by giving our brains a workout. It may help to slow the process of natural memory and brain function decline that comes with age. I recommend parents discuss with their child(ren) the reading recommendations below.

Drama [Waiting for Godot - The Day](#)

Sociology [Wisdom of the world's oldest man - The Day](#)

Physics [Everything we know about maths could be wrong - The Day](#)

## Collecting Your View

As part of our ongoing efforts to improve our school and provide the best possible education for our young people, we are conducting a series of surveys over the coming weeks. Your thoughts and feedback are invaluable to us, and we would greatly appreciate your participation. The first survey will be next week.

### Survey Schedule:

- Week 1: School Life
- Week 2: Attendance
- Week 3: Extra-Curricular Clubs
- Week 4: Thinking Tools
- Week 5: Home-School Communication

Each survey will be brief and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will help us identify areas for improvement and celebrate our successes.

Simply click on the link in my letter each week and complete the survey at your convenience. Thank you in advance for your time and valuable feedback. Together, we can make our school an even better place for our young people.

## Arbor replaces SIM's

You will remember that we have moved away from SiMs to Arbor. This means that the SiMs app will no longer work. There will soon be an Arbor app, and we thank you in advance for your patience while this is being prepared.

## Support for 11+

We have partnered with Atom Learning (as have a significant number of other grammar schools in the country) to provide support for 11+ preparation. We are determined to do all we can to support families as they help their child get ready for the entrance assessment. You can find out more about Atom Learning [by clicking here](#).

## Mathematics GCSE Predicted Papers Online

Our PHSG Mathematics revision website (students have the link) has been updated and now includes a wealth of predicted GCSE papers organised by tier and paper. This includes around 20 available printable predicted papers (all answers are in the same folders or linked as a video as a QR code) and 3 online self-marking papers too. This is the best way for students to be revising in the final few weeks, and we are encouraging students to be printing off the predicted papers they want to work on from the selection available ahead of independent revision time, whether that is at home or in school.

## New Furniture and PTFA

I am delighted to report that we have purchased a range of new outdoor furniture for students to use with money collected by our wonderful PTFA. We have bought benches, chairs, and picnic tables, all made from recycled plastic by a Devon company. The furniture has been well used this week, with students sitting outside enjoying each other's company, eating their snacks, and basking in the recent good weather. The PTFA are keen to accept more volunteers. If you would like to get involved in school life, perhaps by helping out at school events, going on school trips, supporting the 11+ examinations, and much more, please contact the PTFA at [pta@plymouthhighschoolforgirls.org.uk](mailto:pta@plymouthhighschoolforgirls.org.uk).

Very best wishes,



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

Please click here for [latest news](#)

## Dates for Your Diary

### All Years

- 5th May: Bank Holiday
- 23rd May: Last day of half term (normal school day)

- 2nd June: First day back (all students) after the May half term holiday

#### Year 10

- 1st May: Parents' evening, online via appointment

#### Year 11

- 7th May: Celebration event

#### Year 13

- 9th May: Celebration event

