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Plymouth High School for Girls

"For life, not school, we learn"

13th June 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this finds you well. There are quite a few updates this week that reference changes and improvements, so thank you in advance for taking a look.

Open evening, Thursday 26th June

We have the second of our annual Open Evenings on 26th June. It is a chance for families thinking of choosing Plymouth High to have a look around the school and to meet staff. Every year, we have a wonderful group of student volunteers who act as ambassadors and tour guides. If students would like to be part of this, they should collect a letter from reception which explains what's involved and return the signed consent section. The deadline for consents to be returned is Friday 20th June.

National reading statistics

We place a priority on reading at Plymouth High and promote it whenever we can as we believe it forms an essential part of a young person's development. However, national reading statistics show that across the country fewer young people seem to be enjoying reading.

National statistics in reading (2024 findings) from the National Literacy Trust

- Nationally, just **1 in 3** children and young people aged 8 to 18 said they enjoyed reading in 2024. This is the lowest level since the question was first asked in 2005.
- **Only 1 in 5** children and young people aged 8 to 18 said that they read daily, again, the lowest levels since 2005.



Unsurprisingly, over this period, the children and young people who enjoyed reading had higher average standardised reading scores than children and young people who didn't enjoy reading. A higher standardised reading score helps young people to better access all forms of written information and provides much better access to the school curriculum and provides an edge in public examinations.

Parents who encourage their children to read and talk about books are most definitely giving them an advantage. We have a wonderful library in school, so all our students can select books that might interest them. Thank you for your support in helping all of our young people to enjoy reading.

The following links have been sent to all students this week. Please do encourage your child to read the articles and talk with you about what they have learned.

Biology [Warming sea lures great white sharks to UK - The Day](#)

Geography <https://theday.co.uk/the-warrior-battling-to-save-earth/>

Hear Me Out, summer edition is out!

The student written magazine, Hear Me Out summer edition is now ready for everyone to read. Tegan, our deputy head student, has put together an amazing publication and I thoroughly recommend everyone take a look. You can see the magazine by clicking [here](#)

Do you know what Emojis mean?

Young people often use emojis to communicate with each other online, so it can be helpful for parents and carers to know what these mean. Please click [here](#) to see an explanation of how young people interpret common emojis.

Student Voice, what our students are telling us

Each year, we ask our students to take part in the MALS survey (Myself As A Learner). This tool is designed to capture how our students see themselves as learners. The questions ask students to reflect on things like their self-belief, their willingness to tackle challenges, and whether they think learning is something they can get better at.

These deceptively simple questions give us real insight into the learning culture we are building together. For the third year in a row, we have seen an improving picture: more students feel that learning is something they can shape, more feel confident in tackling difficult tasks, and more are willing to reflect rather than give up.

This tells us something powerful: our students are developing **metacognitive strength** - the ability to think about *how* they learn and to adjust their approach when needed. After all, thinking and learning are life skills, not just for school.

We will continue to use this feedback to guide how we teach, how we support and how we challenge. As always, we are grateful to our students for being honest, reflective, and ambitious.

Review of our Positive Behaviour system

I am pleased to share some updates to our positive behaviour system, which will take effect from September 2025. Our aim is to provide students with more opportunities to correct minor infractions without immediate sanctions, while ensuring that the consequences remain effective deterrents. Of course, the majority of our students consistently follow the code of conduct and school expectations wonderfully.

Key Changes:

- **Reflective Approach:** Instead of immediate lunchtime detentions for minor infractions, students will now have the chance to reflect on their actions. These infractions will be recorded and contribute to a 'totting up' system. After three recorded infractions, an after-school detention will be issued. There will no longer be any lunchtime detentions.
- **After-School Detentions:** Parents will be informed of any after-school detentions in advance. This ensures families have time to make necessary arrangements. Whilst we do not require parental permission for after-school detentions, we very much value working in partnership with our families to uphold behavioural expectations.
- **Serious Infractions:** For more serious behaviour issues, our response will be broadly aligned to our current system.
- **Escalation Principle:** Our positive behaviour system will continue to escalate sanctions if a student's behaviour does not improve. However, this is rare at Plymouth High, as our students usually recognise their mistakes and make positive changes with the support of our staff.

We are finalising the amended policy and will share it with parents and carers in due course, as well as post it on our website once completed. Thank you for your continued support.

Arbor

As previously advised, Plymouth High School for Girls has recently moved to a new Management Information System called Arbor.

We will be starting to release more functions to parents/carers during this term and at the start of the next academic year.

To fully benefit from these features, we kindly request that parents create an account on the Arbor Parent Portal and download the Arbor Parent App for use on mobile devices if they have not already done so.

Once you create an account on the Arbor Parent Portal and download the Parent App, you will be able to:

- Receive messages and communicate with the school
- Make payments for trips or activities
- Top up your child's catering balance
- View your child's school reports
- Access behaviour information
- Plus many other features

Not all of these features will be available immediately, but by creating your account and downloading the App now, you will be ready to use them straight away once they are released.

To set up your account, simply set a password. You can do this by visiting login.arbor.sc, clicking 'Forgotten Password?' and following the instructions on screen. When first confirming your child's profile in Arbor, always use the browser first—this is especially important if you are already using Arbor for another child or school. Your username is the email address we have registered on the school system.

If you have trouble setting up your password or have general questions about the Parent Portal, visit this Help Centre article. You can download the App from the 'Apple App Store' or 'Google Play Store' by searching for 'Arbor Parent App.'

We also recommend enabling notifications; if this is not set up, please ensure you check the app for notifications regularly.

Payments will continue via Parentpay for the time being. However, payments for trips/events will migrate to the new Arbor app in September 2025, and further communication will be shared once additional features become available.

Transition to Arbor for Payments

Starting in September 2025, all payments for school trips, events, and meals will be processed through Arbor. We will no longer be using ParentPay.

As part of this transition, please note that from **1st July 2025**, students will not be permitted to accumulate debt. To ensure uninterrupted meal service, your child's account will need to have sufficient credit for all food purchases.

Additionally, any remaining credit in the Meals section of ParentPay will be refunded at the end of the term during the summer holiday so that all accounts can be closed with ParentPay with a zero balance.

From September 2025, all payments will be made via the Arbor App, more detail will follow in the coming weeks. As always, thank you for your understanding and support.

Sports Day news

Sports Day will take place at Brickfields on the 15th July 2025. However, this year we aim to register and greet as many students as possible directly at the venue, rather than having them report to the school site first. At the end of the day, it will be possible for students to be dismissed from Brickfields to travel home independently, eliminating the need to return to school. For students to be able to turn up at Brickfields rather than school and be dismissed from Brickfields, requires parental/carers consent.

Of course, for students requiring transport through contract buses and train services, or for those students who would rather come into school first, school-arranged travel to and from Brickfields will remain available.

To assist us in coordinating transport arrangements, please complete the form to indicate your child's need. The deadline for the form to be completed is 20th June 2025.

<https://forms.office.com/e/gVDLqCT9S7>

PTFA meeting 1st July

All parents and carers are welcome to join us for the upcoming PTFA meeting. It will be held on Teams from 6pm on Tuesday 1st July. Please contact the PTFA at pta@plymouthhighschoolforgirls.org.uk if you would like to receive the Teams link for the meeting.

DHSB bus provision summer term notification

Please be advised that Devonport Boys and Girls School will break up for their summer holidays on Friday, 18th July at 12:30pm. As a result, the contract bus service will not operate as usual on that day, nor on Monday 21st to Wednesday 23rd July.

We are sharing this information early to give families time to make alternative transport arrangements for the dates affected. We understand this may cause some inconvenience, but the contract bus service is aligned with Devonport's term dates, and the payments made by parents cover only those dates.

Looking ahead to the next academic year, please also note that our two-week October holiday will not align with the Devonport's half-term break. We'll provide more details closer to the time, but wanted to give parents early notification so that alternative arrangements can be planned.

Best Wishes



Simon Underdown
Headteacher

School website latest news page.

This is where we celebrate student achievements and promote school related news. Please click [here](#) for our latest news

Key dates

All years

18th June – Staff training afternoon. Students finish school at 12.30pm. We cannot change bus and train times for this afternoon. If parents would like their child to be supervised until 3.30pm on the 18th June, they should contact their child's HOY.

26th June – Open evening.

1st July – PTFA meeting via Teams.

7th July – start of our curriculum enrichment week

15th July – Sports day