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# Plymouth High School for Girls

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

5 December 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this finds you well. In school, we are all gearing up for the end of term festivities and looking forward the end of term festival, CAMP, GCSE and A Level awards evening and our carol service. I hope your holiday season preparations are coming along as you would like.

## CAMP Countdown – 1 week to go!

Join us for Carols and Mince Pies on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December, 5.00 - 6.30pm. Last chance to donate mince pies – thank you for helping us make this event special. We're looking for donations for our upcoming raffle – if you have any of the following, we'd be very grateful:

- Bottled refreshment
- Boxes of chocolates
- New or unused/unwanted gifts

All contributions will help make the event a great success and can be left at reception. Thank you so much for your support.

**Tickets:** Book [here](#)

Miss Roughton's limerick of the Week:

*The evening has finally come,*

*With mince pies for everyone.*

*We'll sing and we'll cheer,*

*As Christmas draws near.*



## Arbor app

I thought it might be helpful to remind our parents and carers that the Arbor app is a great way to update personal details. The Arbor app can be used to make sure things like contact details and student information are up to date. It is also where parents and carers can see the achievement points awarded and any behaviour points that have been added.

## Technology

We know how quickly technology changes and how challenging it can be to keep up. Parent Zone has created an excellent podcast called **Tech Shock**, which explores the impact of digital technology on family life and offers practical advice for parents. It's a great resource to help you stay informed and support your child in navigating the online world.

In this podcast, you'll learn:

- How technology is shaping children's education and wellbeing.
- Practical tips for managing screen time and online safety at home.
- Insights into the latest digital trends and what they mean for families.

Listen here: [Listen | Parent Zone](#)

## UKMT Senior Success

We are extremely proud of all the Sixth Form students that participated in this year's Senior UKMT Mathematics Challenge. An impressive 15 students across Years 12 and 13 achieved a bronze, silver or gold certificate. A special mention should go to Eva in Year 12 and Philip in Year 13 who respectively came "Best in Year". They went on to compete in the next round and were successful again, with Eva scoring a bronze award and Philip a silver. The problem-solving skills needed to succeed in these competitions are very impressive and we know that students enjoyed the challenge.

## A festive Sparx Maths celebration treat

Students in Years 7 - 10 with a 100% completion record for on time Sparx Maths homework from the start of the year have a treat in store over the next few days. The Mathematics team are hosting a series of bingo events during lunch times between Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December and Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December with lots of festive chocolates for the winners. We hope that lots of students are looking forward to attending and enjoy the reward for a perfect two half terms of Sparx. Students should look out for more information next week about days, timings, and rooms.

## RSE Updates

As part of our commitment to providing a high-quality education, we follow the statutory guidance for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). This ensures that our pupils receive age-appropriate, accurate, and inclusive information to help them develop healthy relationships and make informed choices. You can find full details of our RSE policy and guidance on our school website [here](#).

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any aspect of the RSE curriculum, please do not hesitate to contact the curriculum leader for RSE, Mrs Lee.

## Christmas Jumper Day, Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December

Next Thursday, we will be marking Christmas Jumper Day. Students are invited to wear a Christmas or winter-themed jumper over their school shirt for the day. Blazers are not required, although students may choose to bring them for extra warmth. All other uniform, jewellery and personal presentation rules will continue to apply.

If parents or students would like to support a charitable cause, donations can be made to Save the Children via their website [here](#).

We look forward to a cheerful and festive day.

## Making Learning Stick with Interleaving

Pupils remember and understand more when they practise different topics or skills in a mixed order, rather than focusing on one thing at a time. This approach, called interleaving, helps students see connections between ideas and improves their ability to apply knowledge in new situations.

At Plymouth High, we encourage pupils to revisit a range of topics during revision, rather than completing all questions on one subject before moving on. Even short, varied practice sessions can make a big difference, helping learning become stronger and more flexible, supporting our motto: *for life, not school, we learn.*

## The National Year of Reading 2026

As we look ahead to 2026, designated as the National Year of Reading, we have a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and strengthen one of the most important skills for life: reading.

### Why reading matters

Reading is more than a school subject it is the foundation for learning, communication, and personal growth. Strong literacy skills open doors to academic success, career opportunities, and lifelong learning. Beyond academics, reading enriches imagination, builds empathy, and supports mental wellbeing by offering relaxation and escape from everyday stresses.

### How we can all support our young people

Developing a love of reading and a rich vocabulary requires partnership between school, home, and the wider community. Here are some ways we can work together:

- Create a reading-friendly environment at home: Encourage regular reading time, share books, and model reading habits
- Access to books for all: We will continue to provide diverse and inclusive reading materials in school and explore community initiatives to ensure equality of opportunities

- Celebrate reading: Look out for events, challenges, and book clubs throughout the year to make reading social and enjoyable

### **Teenage reading – what we know**

Research shows that teenagers often read less for pleasure as they grow older, partly due to competing demands and digital distractions. However, when they find books that reflect their interests and identities, their engagement increases significantly.

We aim to:

- Offer student-led book choices and recommendations
- Integrate reading into digital platforms they already use
- Connect reading to real-world topics and creative projects

### **Reading and mental wellbeing**

Reading will help to reduce stress, improve focus, and boost emotional resilience. Whether it's fiction for escapism or non-fiction for curiosity, reading can be a powerful tool for mental health.

Together we can make 2026 a year where every student discovers the joy and benefits of reading. Thank you for your continued support in making literacy a shared priority and look out for updates about our plans in the coming weeks.

### **The PTFA Christmas Cinema Trip: "Elf"**

Our fabulous PTFA are pleased to announce a PHSG exclusive cinema screening of the Christmas movie, 'Elf' (poster attached). We hope this will be an exciting opportunity for pupils to celebrate the start of the Christmas holiday with their friends.

There are 96 seats for the screening and the event is open to all Years; tickets will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. The event will be run by PTFA volunteers. Parents and guardians are asked to ensure their children are dropped off and picked up in-line with the meeting point details.

If you would like to secure tickets for your PHSG child(ren) please complete the linked e-form found below.

### Event Details:

**Date:** Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December, screening starting at 14.30. Meeting at 14.00

**Venue:** Plymouth Arts Cinema, Plymouth, PL4 8AT

**Meeting Point:** Plymouth Arts Cinema Foyer, Plymouth, PL4 8AT

**Cost:** Tickets are £6 per pupil

**Age Restrictions:** Elf is a PG screening

Please click [HERE](#) for the booking link.

*\*Ticket sales will close on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December\**

Please note no food or drink will be provided by the PTFA at this event but students are welcome to bring their own. Should parents and carers have any questions, they should contact the PTFA at [phs-pta@tsatmail.org.uk](mailto:phs-pta@tsatmail.org.uk)

Our amazing and hard working PTFA look forward to celebrating the Christmas season with you.

### AI in school

We are very excited to be leading the way with a trial of an AI assessment platform. Currently being trialled in English, we are hoping to roll out and extend the trial across other subjects in due course. At present this relates to GCSE and A Level only. Please be assured that the marks and feedback are being checked by experienced colleagues before being "signed off".

Initial results indicate an exceptional accuracy correlation. In addition, the specific feedback generated is far in excess of that our hard-working colleagues are able to produce. Feedback is extensive and specific to the mark schemes. We are confident this potential development in our working practices will further contribute to the ongoing success of each student.

### Details of the platform are as follows:

Top Marks AI is an advanced assessment platform designed to transform marking in the humanities and social sciences. It enables educators to batch mark handwritten student scripts with unparalleled accuracy and efficiency.

### Key capabilities include:

- Bulk Marking: Automatically transcribe and mark entire classes or cohorts
- Accuracy & Reliability: Calibrated to exceed 90% correlation with chief examiner scores, outperforming typical human marker accuracy
- Extensive Subject Coverage: Over 400 calibrated tools across 50+ humanities and social science subjects
- Detailed Personalised Feedback: Every student receives formative feedback tailored to their specific work
- Cohort-Level Insights: Generate whole-class feedback to identify trends, strengths, and areas for development

### Free Youth Sessions with Mutley Greenbank Trust

PHSG has been approached by Alice Stephens, a youth worker for the Mutley Greenbank Trust (MGT). The MGT offer free, fun and supportive youth clubs for young people in the community. You can find out more about the Trust [here](#) and on the attached poster. The MGT welcomes parents and carers getting in touch with them.

Very best wishes,



**Simon Underdown**  
**Headteacher**

Keep up to date with our latest news by clicking [here](#)

## Dates for your diary

### All Years

10<sup>th</sup> December. CAMP after school on site

18<sup>th</sup> December. Drama Festival. Non-uniform day, no contribution necessary. Normal school day timings.

19<sup>th</sup> December. Carol service and final assembly. Students finish at 12.30pm. The DHSB buses have been informed of our early finish, but we are unable to influence CityBus or train timetables.

