



THINKING
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SCHOOL

Plymouth High School for Girls

"For life, not school, we learn"

9th January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy new year. I hope the start of 2026 finds you well and that you enjoyed a relaxing break with friends and family.

We begin the new year with Kendall House retaining the House Shield, having secured the most House points across 2025, well done to all Kendallers. The Drama Festival in the final week of term was a particular highlight, with students delivering truly memorable performances, and our carol service provided a wonderful conclusion to the term.

This term has begun positively, with students returning to school with great energy and focus. Our Year 11 sixth form taster days have been a huge success, giving students a real insight into life as an A level student at PHSG. I am pleased to say that we have picked up in 2026 exactly where we left off in 2025.

We could not achieve all that we do without your continued support. As we embark on a new year, I would like to thank you in advance for standing with us as we work to provide our young people with the best possible school experience.

Year 9 options evening and parents' evening

We have our Year 9 options evening in school on Thursday 15th January. Year 9 parents will have had a letter or two about this already. I wanted to remind parents and carers that the options evening is designed to help students and parents make informed choices about the subjects students will choose for their options in Year 10.



The parents' evenings (online on 22nd and 29th January) will afford the chance for parents and carers to discuss the progress an individual child is making or whether staff consider them particularly well suited to their subject.

Term dates for the next academic year (2026-2027)

Please see [here](#) for our term dates for 2026-2027. These are the finalised dates and are well worth a quick check. Please be kind enough to make a note of students' first and last day of each term to assist with your own planning.

Certificate collection summer 2025

Students who have not yet collected their 2025 public examination certificates should do so at their earliest convenience. Original public examination certificates cannot be reissued, and young people will need to produce their certificates when applying for further training, education or employment.

Collection Details:

- School Reception, Monday to Friday between 8:30am–4:00pm

Students must bring valid photo ID for verification. If someone is collecting on behalf of a young person, they must have written permission from the young person and must bring their own ID.

Years 9, 10 and 11 – Tetanus/Diphtheria/Polio and Meningitis ACWY vaccines

Please see the letters [here](#) regarding vaccines available in school and remember that our visiting health care team can only administer the vaccines if permission has been given. Online consent will need to be completed before 9:00am on 12th February 2026. Vaccines will be given at school on 23rd February 2026.

Week of Thinking

In the week beginning 26th January, we will be running our annual **Week of Thinking**, offering students opportunities to explore how metacognition can support their learning. This year, we will focus on how students plan, monitor, and evaluate their work, helping them set goals, track progress and reflect on what strategies work best, a skill that will serve them for the rest of their lives. There will be competitions, achievement points, and prizes for the most thoughtful responses. By practising this cycle of 'thinking about thinking', students strengthen their ability to tackle challenges independently, retain knowledge more effectively and approach learning with confidence, putting into action our school motto: *for life, not school, we learn*.

National Year of Reading

We are excited to introduce the **National Year of Reading 2026**, led by the Department for Education and delivered by the National Literacy Trust – a campaign dedicated to reigniting a love of reading across the UK. This vital initiative addresses the worrying trend that only one in three children and young people currently enjoy reading in their free time.

Reading for pleasure has been shown to boost literacy skills, enhance well-being, and increase future opportunities, with those proficient in reading and writing earning significantly more over their lifetime. We'd like to invite you to [Go All In](#) with us encouraging daily reading habits, sharing books that match your child's interests (whether sport, music, or gaming), and exploring a variety of formats.

At school, we will be running termly events, providing resources, and embedding reading into classroom life. We warmly encourage your participation; read together, celebrate books, and discuss your child's favourites.

Together, let's make 2026 a year of reading transformation – for skills, confidence, and lifelong pleasure.

Welcome to our monthly literacy spotlight

Here we celebrate the birthdays of beloved authors and share their most famous works to inspire a love of reading at home. Let's start with some classic authors and their most famous works:

Author	Birthdate	Year	Birthplace	Famous Works
J.R.R. Tolkien	3 rd January	1892	Bloemfontein, South Africa	The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings
Edgar Allan Poe	19 th January	1809	Boston, Massachusetts	The Raven, The Tell-Tale Heart
Lord Byron	22 nd January	1788	London, England	Don Juan, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage
Virginia Woolf	25 th January	1882	London, England	Mrs Dalloway, To the Lighthouse

Charity at PHSG in 2026

We are proud of the generosity and compassion our students show in supporting charitable causes. Each year, our school participates in a range of events such as **Children in Need**, **Comic Relief**, **Sport Relief**, and the **Poppy Appeal**, as well as fundraising for our designated school charity which for 2026 will be **Action Aid**.

To make this process easier and ensure that every student can take part, we are inviting families to make a **voluntary contribution of £5 or more via Arbor**. This single contribution will cover all major charity events for the academic year, including:

- A poppy for each student during our Remembrance activities in November
- Support for national charity events (e.g., Children in Need in November)

- Contributions to our school's designated charity
- All mufti events

This approach means families will not need to make separate donations for each event (except for optional activities such as bake sales). The funds collected will be distributed evenly between the charities at the appropriate times throughout the year.

We kindly ask that the voluntary contribution is made by **end of February**. If you wish to donate more, then you can do so in multiples of £5. Please see Arbor for more details.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us make a positive difference.

Pre-loved uniform shop is open

Following the fantastic success of our previous pre-loved uniform shop, we're excited to announce three more dates for you to grab great deals and update your school wardrobe:

- Friday 16th January 2026
- Friday 13th March 2026
- Friday 3rd July 2026

Location: Old drama studio

Time: 1:30pm

We'll have a wide range of school uniform items available at unbeatable prices:

- £5 per item of uniform
- £3 per PE kit item

Come along, try things on, and make sure you're ready for the term ahead. Whether you need a spare jumper, a fresh skirt, or an extra PE top, this is the perfect opportunity to stock up without breaking the bank. Don't miss out, see you there!

Survey feedback

Thank you to all our parents and carers who responded to our recent survey requests. Having looked through your responses, a few themes emerged.

4 positives:

1. Weekly emails work well

Almost all parents read the Headteacher's weekly email. This seems to be our most effective communication channel.

2. Parents feel informed about behaviour and progress

Most parents are confident that we contact them when needed.

3. Strong interest in clubs

Many students enjoy existing clubs, and parents appreciate the variety offered.

4. Great ideas for new activities

Parents suggested new clubs such as tennis, dance and reading

What we will do next

We will continue to work hard to make our communication as clear as possible and celebrate success as often as we can by updating the website with as many good news stories we can find. We will continue to share positive stories through email and social

media. We are looking at introducing a Student Spotlight feature in our termly newsletter, and we will also look to broaden our clubs offer still further.

Have your say

Please do get involved in the next parent surveys when they come out, we really value your feedback and ideas.

PSHE curriculum consultation

We are preparing a parent/carer consultation regarding our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum. This includes both the existing content and the new statutory content that will come into effect for first teaching in September 2026. PSHE plays a vital role in supporting students' personal development, wellbeing, and preparation for life beyond school. It helps young people build resilience, develop healthy relationships, understand the world around them, and make informed decisions about their health and safety. By teaching these skills in an age-appropriate way, we aim to equip students with the knowledge and confidence they need to thrive in modern society.

Next week we will share detailed information about what we currently teach and our proposed placement of topics to ensure they are age appropriate. Following this, you will receive a form to provide your feedback on the suitability of these topics for different age groups. Your views, alongside those of students and staff, will help us shape our updated PSHE curriculum, which will be introduced in September 2026. Please look out for this information, and the feedback form following, and take a few minutes to share your views.

In addition, we will invite parents to participate in a face-to-face forum to review and discuss the resources we use to deliver this content. Your input is essential in helping us create a PSHE curriculum that reflects the needs of our students and community. Details on how to sign up will be coming soon.

Key dates

- **January 2026:** Information sent to parents about current and proposed PSHE content
- **February 2026:** Parent feedback form distributed
- **March 2026:** Parent forum to review resources and discuss age appropriateness
- **April–June 2026:** Review of feedback from parents, students, and staff and development of the Schemes of Learning and resources
- **September 2026:** Launch of updated PSHE curriculum

Very best wishes,



Simon Underdown
Headteacher

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

Dates for your diary:

Year 9

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| 15th January | Year 9 options evening |
| 22nd January | Year 9 online parents' evening |
| 29th January | Year 9 online parents' evening |

All Years

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| 16th–20th February | Half term holiday |
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