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Plymouth High School for Girls

"For life, not school, we learn"

16th January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this finds you well and that the New Year has started positively for you.

We were delighted to host a successful Year 9 Options Evening last night, where students and parents had the chance to explore the Year 10 and 11 programme with teachers. It was a pleasure to see so many of you there, and we appreciate you taking the time to be part of such an important stage in each young person's educational journey.

Our Year 9 online Parents' Evenings will take place next week and the week after, offering an opportunity to talk about progress and readiness for GCSE study. As a reminder, parents and carers have been sent a booking link, along with a letter explaining how to secure an appointment if the initial slots have already been filled.

My letter to you this week includes the first of what will become standing items. There will be a 'bookshelf' piece showcasing what staff in school have been reading for pleasure. [Reading for pleasure](#) is such an important part of every young person's development and we hope that you and your child(ren) will enjoy reviewing what we are reading. Perhaps it will provoke conversations at home and lead to people widening their own choice of book?

There will also be a regular section celebrating the student or class of the week. Whilst we always share the names of the winners on our website, I thought you would enjoy reading about them in my letter.



My Bookshelf – Miss Roughton, Deputy Headteacher

“My two favourite authors couldn’t be more different in style: Stephen King and Maya Angelou.

Stephen King is a master of suspense and storytelling. His ability to create tension and develop complex characters keeps me turning pages late into the night. His books remind me how powerful imagination can be.

On the other hand, Maya Angelou’s writing is full of wisdom, beauty, and resilience. Her poetry and autobiographical works speak to the strength of the human spirit and the importance of empathy. Both authors, in their own way, explore what it means to be human, one through gripping fiction, the other through lyrical truth.”



Spotlight on student excellence

Congratulations to the following students who have recently been celebrated for demonstrating commitment to our school values and ethos:

- ◇ Student of the week: **Ellie A, Year 9** for being mature and making sensible decisions that helped another student. Nominated by Mrs Hatfield.

- ◇ Group of the week: **Class 10C/Food and Nutrition** for showing great teamwork, helping each other to make fresh pasta and sauce and cleaning up to a high standard and on time. Nominated by Mrs Brown.

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

Please see the letters [here](#) regarding vaccines available in school (and the opportunity to give consent) 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.

Year 11 prom

Year 11 are gearing up for their examinations and, of course, their prom. The prom is always eagerly anticipated and something that our students very much enjoy. This year the prom will be on **Tuesday 30th June 2026**, we will confirm further details shortly. Year 11 parents and carers are very welcome to join us at the start of the prom to take pictures of their children should they wish.

Online safety: Understanding AI chatbots

AI chatbots are becoming more commonplace with many people wondering what they mean for young people's online experience. Parent Zone has created a helpful guide to explain what AI chatbots are, how they work, and what parents need to know to help keep their children safe.

The article covers:

- What AI chatbots do and why they're becoming popular

- Potential benefits and risks for young people
- Practical tips for supporting safe and responsible use

You can read the full guide here: [AI chatbots | Parent Zone](#)

Exciting Creative Opportunity for PHSG Students

PHSG is home to four upright pianos located around the school, and this year they will be receiving a stunning artistic makeover – designed by our students.

Each House will have one piano transformed using the winning student design. This is a fantastic opportunity for students to showcase their creativity, brighten our school spaces, and leave a lasting artistic legacy.

Details have been shared with students so please encourage your child to get involved. The deadline for entries is the end of the Spring term.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is our top priority and is everyone's responsibility in school. All TSAT schools receive a regular safeguarding bulletin to help colleagues stay up to date with best practice. Our most recent bulletin included lots of information for parents, with a focus on; how neurodivergent children can be particularly vulnerable to scams in online games, how to help protect young people from the dangers of oversharing online, and information for parents on the new checks they can commission when employing adults to work with their children. Please see the bulletin [here](#).

'Dr Frost Maths' in Year 11 and 12

We are thrilled to have been able to further improve our mathematics provision for homework and revision for students in Years 11 and 12. The mathematics team have onboarded all Year 11 students and those in Year 12 taking A level mathematics to 'Dr Frost Maths'. Dr Frost Maths is an online platform providing a wealth of opportunities including independent topic revision, set tasks, videos and past papers.

- **Year 11** This replaces Sparx homework for Year 11 for the rest of the year. Students will have tasks set by their teacher each Week B Wednesday, due for the next Week B Wednesday at 2:00pm.

Dr Frost gives teachers the opportunity to plan a selection of revision opportunities rather than the whole class on the same topics. This gives students autonomy as they approach their GCSEs and means that they can choose a suitable level of challenge based on what they achieved in their mocks and what to work towards next.

Teachers are carefully choosing a range of options each week so that students can close gaps seen in the mocks and can work at just the right level. Students should ensure that they are not completing work on skills that they are already secure with. Instead, they should spend '*60 minutes plus*' each fortnight on the task or tasks that best suits their needs from the set options. Our reflections from the Year 11 results in Summer 2025 showed that those students who used Dr Frost the most, improved more between the mocks and summer exams. We hope that students see the instant benefit of this additional resource and are also reassured that they continue to have access to Sparx all year for independent revision in the style that they are used to.

Year 11 also have a written Maths homework which is set and due every Week A Wednesday.

- **Year 12 mathematicians** Our A level Mathematicians now have online Dr Frost accounts. This will increase the amount of practice available and provide helpful feedback as they study each chapter or revise for mid-terms or examinations.

Teachers will be setting compulsory tasks labelled as HOMEWORK and extension or consolidation/enrichment opportunities which will be labelled as OPTIONAL.

The platform has support videos and features problems that are written by our Edexcel (our examination board) as well as offering a catalogue of Edexcel past papers.

Students will hopefully be pleased with the instant feedback and easy to navigate nature of the platform, as well as receiving their usual detailed written feedback from their teacher with the topic assessment that follows every chapter.

Consultation on the PSHE curriculum

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing a high-quality, relevant, and age-appropriate Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, we are currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the curriculum alongside the new curriculum outlined by the DFE. This review includes evaluating the placement of existing topics and incorporating new statutory content that will become mandatory from September.

To support transparency and collaboration, we have prepared detailed information outlining the proposed curriculum structure, including the topics scheduled for each Year group. Where a topic appears across multiple Year groups, this reflects our intention to revisit and deepen understanding as students' progress through their education.

You can access this information via [this link](#). Please take the time to review the proposed content and sequencing. Next week, we will share a feedback form inviting your views on the suitability and appropriateness of these topics for different age groups. Your input, alongside feedback from students and staff, will play a vital role in shaping the final version of our PSHE curriculum for implementation in September 2026. Thank you for your continued engagement and support in ensuring our curriculum meets the needs of all learners.

Very best wishes,



Simon Underdown
Headteacher

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

Dates for your diary:

Year 9

22nd January Year 9 online parents' evening

29th January Year 9 online parents' evening

All Years

16th – 20th February Half term holiday