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# Plymouth High School for Girls

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

6<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are well.

Many of you will have enjoyed our production of Legally Blonde Jnr. this week, it has been the highlight of the term so far. The students have been tremendous, performing magnificently to a sellout audience each night. Using the Barbican Theatre added a little extra sheen to the show giving the cast and crew the chance to work a professional theatre setting. I thoroughly enjoyed the show and hope you all did too.

## Spotlight on student excellence

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

- ◇ Student of the week: **Freya H, Year 8** - "Freya is a student librarian whose allocated day is Thursday lunchtime however, she comes to the library most days and asks if there are any tasks that need completing. She is consistently helpful and dependable. Recently, she independently organised a lunchtime activity for LGBT History Month. She designed her own promotional posters for the event and successfully planned and led the session. I'd like to thank Freya for her dedication!". Nominated by Mrs Heard.
  
- ◇ Group of the week: **Year 8D English Class, Year 8** for tackling an unseen poem amazingly well – they were insightful and thoughtful in their answers and worked so well as a class in Mrs Ilott's absence. Nominated by Miss Barnett.



## Diversity and Inclusivity Update

Zara, Deputy Head Student and student lead for Diversity & Inclusivity, has been working on creating a book list for our students and wider community. As part of our Year of Reading at PHSG, Zara and her team are excited to share our new Diversity & Inclusivity book list, featuring a range of powerful books that celebrate different voices, experiences, and perspectives. These books have been carefully selected by Zara and the team to reflect our school community and the wider world, and we encourage everyone to give some of these books a read. You can find the book list [here](#).

We would also like to wish Ramadan Mubarak to all members of our community who are observing Ramadan. On 23<sup>rd</sup> March, Zara and Mrs Hofmann planning an event to celebrate Eid, and everyone will be welcome to take part. More information will be shared with students soon.

## Earth Alliance update

Our Earth Alliance student leadership group are delighted to announce the upcoming eco #WeAreOne Event that will be taking place on 25<sup>th</sup> March. As a part of this event, students will be taking part in an eco-hour with fun activities aimed at how they can positively impact environmental change. Students will be given more information soon and Earth Alliance encourage us all to recognise the importance of making environmentally conscious decisions.

## Department for Education GCSE results day app

Please be aware that the Department for Education has launched a GCSE results day app designed to support students in accessing advice and guidance on results day. We have sent further details separately to parents and carers of Year 11 students in an email. We would be grateful if Year 11 parents and carers would look out for this message and let the school office know if you have not received it.

## Legally Blonde Jnr. – School production success

Our whole school community has been treated to a fantastic production of *Legally Blonde Jnr.* this week. With over 70 students involved both on stage and behind the scenes it has been a vibrant and energetic celebration of their hard work, creativity, and teamwork. This year's show has been expertly led by Mrs Marcer-Griffiths, with outstanding support from Miss Joynes, Miss Jagger-Rowden, and Miss Tills. Their dedication has enabled students to shine in every aspect of the performance, from acting and singing, to lighting, costume, set design, and backstage management.

*Legally Blonde Jnr.* tells the story of Elle Woods, a determined and big-hearted young woman who sets out to prove that you should never be underestimated. Her journey, full of humour, music, and important messages about resilience and self-belief has been brought to life brilliantly by our students. A huge well done to everyone involved. It has been an exceptional event and a real highlight of the school year.

## DHSB buses information

A letter was sent to all parents and carers with details of the RideTandem bus offer. Parent and carers are invited to register their interest for a seat on one of the buses. For reference, you parents and carers can view full details of the current 2025 service (including routes and timetables) [here](#).

To secure a seat on the bus service, you must complete the registration form by **31<sup>st</sup> March 2026**: <https://forms.gle/pmniwOkvgm5tw1dAA>

After this date, parents and carers who have completed the form will be contacted and invited to purchase their September 2026 pass.

Please visit the [RideTandem website](#) for more information. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact [ewan@ridetandem.co](mailto:ewan@ridetandem.co) directly.

## Iceland Trip 2027

The Iceland 2027 trip is now open for all Year 7s – information can be found on Teams, so if parents and carers of year 7 are interested, please do take a look. The trip leader is Mrs Nicol-Boyle.

## Year 11 prom

Parents and carers of Year 11 students might like to know that our Prom Committee are busy putting together the final touches to this prestigious event in the Year 11 calendar taking place on 30<sup>th</sup> June. More details on our [website](#).

## 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.

“March into reading!” – Spring is here, and so are stories that make us smile. Two of this month’s authors in the spotlight will brighten your bookshelf at home – and never grow old... (*Dr Seuss* and *Kenneth Grahame*):

Author	Birthdate	Year	Birthplace	Famous Works
Theodor Seuss Geisel aka “Dr Seuss”	Mar-01	1904	Springfield, Massachusetts, USA	The Grinch that stole Christmas, The Cat in the Hat
Khaled Hosseini	Mar-04	1965	Kabul, Afghanistan	Kite Runner
Kenneth Grahame	Mar-08	1859	Edinburgh, Uk	The Wind in the Willows

## My Bookshelf – Spotlight on Miss Hoffman, Teacher of Modern Foreign Languages

“I have many, many, many books. In fact, I have a whole wall in my house covered by a giant bookcase from floor to ceiling. There are all kinds of books – big books, small books, new books, and old books. For me, books are so much more than just paper. They are the beginning of mini adventures or experiences. I could be looking at the cookery books and thinking about the family dinners, dinners with friends or Village dinners that I’ll cook for. I could be looking at the craft books finding inspiration for Christmas, birthday, or “just because” gifts. I could be looking at the novels where tiny worlds wait to be explored. I could be re-reading the familiar favourites – those books that I have returned to again and again, which comfort in their familiar characters and stories. I could be looking at the French, German, Italian or Spanish books – an adventure into language itself. Anything is possible. All I have to do is choose one and open its pages.

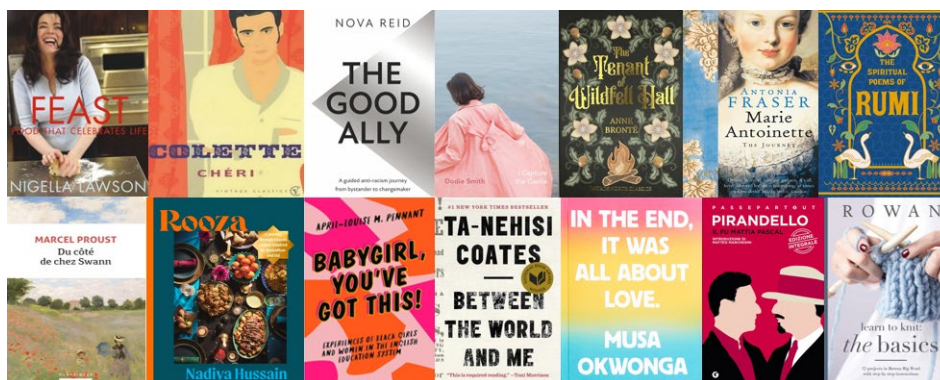
When thinking about my favourite books on the shelves, I would have to pick a cookery book which is very precious to me. It doesn’t look like much – a plain cardboard cover which has been patched over and over again with Sellotape by many different hands. Faded pencil marks on the front simply says “*Recipes*”, but this modest cover does not do justice to its contents. As you open the cover you find handwritten recipes from various generations of cooks from my family: some completely handwritten by someone, edited in a different colour by another; some have titles, “*Birthday Cake for Tom*”, “*Dinner 23<sup>rd</sup> March*”, “*Marjorie’s coffee cake*”, and some speak of different times with ingredients like “powdered egg” or “a lb of lard”. Each one reflecting a history of cooking, time spent around a table, celebrations, community, and everything in between.

You’ll find abandoned shopping lists as well, splattered notebook pages, or coupons from cereal packets, pages taken from magazines and other books – occasionally marked with a double tick and “very good” which is the highest praise.

As you leaf through, the writing becomes more familiar – my granny’s looping handwriting, my grandad’s country school scrawl, my *nonna*’s Italian script, my *opa*’s recipe for Sauerkraut, and my mum’s writing. Now, I take pride in adding my own –

sometimes ones that I have written or that people have given me, sometimes in different languages. My niece, who has recently learnt how to write, has added her own recipe for her favourite dish - "tomahtow pasta".

A book yes, but also a universe and a history contained in its simple covers. It is, and always will be, the best book on my bookshelf."



## World Book Day

We all really enjoyed World Book Day on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March. So many of our students dressed up as their favourite character, with a special mention going to 7L where every student came dressed as a character – great job 7L. Find out more about what went on in school [here](#) and check out our photo gallery [here](#).

Congratulations to our worthy winners; **Bee P (8L)** as *Enola Holmes* ('The Enola Holmes Mysteries'), **Tabitha R (8T)** as *Sophie Foster* ('Keeper of the Lost Cities'), and **Lissy B (8T)** as *Bilbo Baggins* ('The Hobbit').

## Another Chance to Refresh Your School Wardrobe

Following the fantastic success of our previous uniform shop, we are excited to announce more dates for you to grab great deals and update your school wardrobe:

- Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2026

Location: Old drama studio

Time: 1:30pm

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

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

Make sure students are ready for the term ahead. Whether in need of a spare blazer, a fresh skirt, or an extra PE top, this is the perfect opportunity to stock up without breaking the bank.

### Charitable donation

Earlier this year, we took part in GWR's Stakeholder Survey, conducted by Savanta because some of our students catch a train to and from school. As a thank you for participating, all contributors were entered into a prize draw. GWR selected a random group of participating organisations and donated £250 to a charity of their choice on their behalf.

We are thrilled to announce that our school was selected in the prize draw and we can confirm that we will be donating the £250 to ActionAid, the PHSG designated charity for 2026.

ActionAid is a global charity dedicated to supporting women and children living in poverty. Their work includes improving access to education, ending violence against women and girls, and providing emergency support during crises.

Choosing ActionAid reflects our school's belief in supporting global citizenship, fairness, and improving life chances for the most vulnerable.

## Student Support: Understanding Young Carers

At PHSG, we are committed to ensuring every student receives the support they need to thrive. One important group within all schools is young carers – children and young people who help look after someone at home.

According to statutory definitions used in Department for Education–related guidance, a young carer is *a person under 18 who provides, or intends to provide, care for another person*. This care might be required because a family member has an illness, disability, mental health condition, or challenges such as alcohol or substance misuse. Their responsibilities can include practical tasks, such as helping with household routines or medication, as well as emotional support.

Research published through the Department for Education highlights how these caring responsibilities can affect a young person's school life, wellbeing, attendance, and social opportunities. Young carers often juggle significant home responsibilities alongside schoolwork, and this can understandably impact their day-to-day experience.

At PHSG, we want to ensure that all students who have caring roles are recognised and supported. Sometimes young carers do not realise that what they are doing *is* considered a caring role, and families may not be aware of the support available in school.

If you think your child may be a young carer – or if you are unsure and would like more information – we encourage you to get in touch. By identifying young carers early, we can work with families to provide tailored support, ensuring students feel understood and able to thrive both academically and personally.

For any queries or to share information, please contact: [philippa.hatfield@phsg.tsat.uk](mailto:philippa.hatfield@phsg.tsat.uk)

Together, we can ensure that our young carers are supported, valued, and given every opportunity to succeed.

## UKBC Biology Competitions

This week we are proud to celebrate our students' success in the UKBC British Biology Olympiad, a national competition involving 18,800 students across the United Kingdom.

Although the Olympiad is aimed at Year 13 students, ten of our Year 12 biologists chose to take part in this demanding challenge. Nationally, only the top 5 per cent achieve Gold, the top 15 per cent Silver and the top 30 per cent Bronze. We are delighted that Eva T achieved a Silver Award, placing her in the top 15 per cent nationally, alongside several Bronze and Commended awards for other students.

Their willingness to embrace such academic stretch truly reflects our motto: *for life not school we learn*. We congratulate all who took part for their ambition and scholarly commitment.

Looking ahead, students in Years 9 and 10 may wish to enter the UKBC Biology Challenge, which runs in April and May, and Year 12 students can register for the UKBC Intermediate Biology Olympiad in June. Students interested in taking part should contact Mr Britz-Colwill to register their interest.

## Parkstone Challenge success

Six students recently represented the school at the Parkstone Challenge, hosted by our partner school Parkstone Grammar School and a fellow member of the South West Academic Trust, an alliance of 12 grammar schools across the south west of England.

The day required creativity, collaboration and independent thinking. Students took part in a range of activities, including problem solving tasks, designing and producing an animation, developing an escape room challenge, and preparing and delivering a presentation. Each element demanded teamwork, clear communication and resilience under time pressure.

Students also benefited from an inspiring talk by mountaineer, Jo Bradshaw. She spoke about her personal journey from being, in her words, a “no-saying, height-hating, comfort-lover” to climbing Mount Everest in 2016, completing the Seven Summits, and summiting Kilimanjaro 38 times. She reflected on how patience, perseverance, purpose and perspective have guided her achievements and shared how she was inspired by the pioneering climber, Junko Tabei.

Our students represented the school with maturity and enthusiasm throughout the event. Opportunities such as this develop confidence, teamwork and intellectual curiosity, while also encouraging students to think beyond their immediate experience and apply their skills in new contexts.

We are proud of their participation and grateful to our partners within the South West Academic Trust for providing such a valuable experience.

Many thanks indeed for your ongoing and generous support.

## HPV vaccinations

Vaccinations will take place in school on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026 for students in Years 8, 9, 10 and 11. You can find more information about this for Year 8 [here](#), and information for Years 9, 10 and 11 [here](#). If you would like your child to have the vaccine in school, please complete the consent form linked in the letter relevant to your child’s year group **no later than 9:00am on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026**.

Very best wishes,



**Simon Underdown**  
**Headteacher**

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

### Dates for your diary:

#### Year 8

**19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> March**                      Year 8 online parents' evening (by appointment only)

#### Year 12

**12<sup>th</sup> March**                                      Year 12 online parents' evening (by appointment only)

#### All Years

**2<sup>nd</sup> April**    Gym & Dance Festival  
Last day of Spring term

**3<sup>rd</sup> April – 19<sup>th</sup> April**                      Easter break

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April**                          First day of Summer term