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Plymouth High School for Girls

"For life, not school, we learn"

27th March 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this finds you well.

Yesterday we held our whole-school careers fayre at St Matts Church on North Hill. St Matts are long-standing supporters of Plymouth High and frequently offer their wonderful, spacious venue for our events.

We were delighted to welcome a diverse and engaging range of local and national employers, as well as representatives from further and higher education institutions.

Our students found the day both informative and enjoyable, taking the opportunity to speak with visitors and, of course, collect a few freebies. In the spirit of our motto – *for life, not school, we learn* – I encourage parents and carers to talk with their child about what they discovered during the event. This was the first careers fayre for our new careers leader, Mr Doyle, and he did a wonderful job.

End of term on the way

Next week is our last week of the Spring term. Our last day is Thursday 2nd April and is the day we will hold our gym and dance festival, one of the highlights of our calendar. April 2nd will be a mufti day (the rules around jewellery and hair colour remain) with the usual start and finish times. We return to school on Monday 20th April.



Summer term examinations

All students will be sitting examinations or assessments during the Summer term. Year 11 and Year 13 will be taking their public examinations, and we wish them the very best of luck. Years 7 to 10 and Year 12 will sit their internal end-of-year examinations, which will help teachers, students, and parents gauge progress and provide an indication of likely grades in future GCSE and A level examinations.

Year 12 mocks take place straight after Easter, beginning the week of 20th April. Key Stage 3 written examinations will be held during the week beginning 11th May, followed by Key Stage 3 online examinations in the week beginning 18th May. Year 10 mock examinations are scheduled for the week beginning 15th June.

Students are always provided with revision guidance ahead of their examinations, and teachers are on hand to support them in preparing as effectively as possible. I remain extremely grateful to our wonderfully supportive parents and carers for everything you do at home to help our young people feel ready and confident for these important assessments.

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: **Delilah H, Year 8** for taking the time to explain the drama lesson synopsis to a student due to join us in Year 9 who was on a tour. She was approachable, friendly and very welcoming. Nominated by Mrs Gill.

Due to the quantity *and* quality of nominations last week, Miss Roughton couldn't decide so we were fortunate to have multiple Group winners!

- Group of the week: **Class of 10D PE, Year 10** for showing excellent Badminton and climbing skills in practical lessons. They are a super class. Nominated by Miss Pickles.
- Group of the week: **Class of 10D FN1, Year 10** These students were great ambassadors for PHSG when we were visited by some Royal Navy chefs. Not only did they give up part of their lunchtime to attend, the food they produced was brilliant and impressed our visitors so much they said it was the best standard they had seen at any school they have been to. Nominated by Miss Brown.
- Group of the week: **Class of 10h2/Ph, Year 10** for displaying excellent resilience to achieve understanding in the tricky topic of resolving forces. Many of them took reasonable risks by stepping completely outside of their comfort zones and by doing so achieved excellent results. Nominated by Mr Thackray.
- Group of the week: **Year 11** for being perfectly presented for their yearbook photos. All of the groups Miss Redmond photographed this week were a delight to spend time with, but 11A really stood out with their calm organisation and neat uniform presentation. A credit to themselves and their tutors. Well done girls! Nominated by Miss Redmond.

HPV vaccinations

Vaccinations will take place in school on 27th 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 wish for your child(ren) to have the vaccinations in school, please complete the consent form linked in the letter relevant to your child's Year group **no later than 9:00am on 23rd April 2026**.

Youth Parliament election announcement

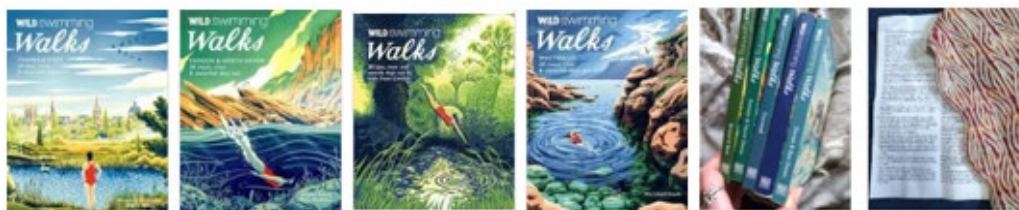
I am delighted to announce that Gwen M in 8L has been elected Member of Youth Parliament for Plymouth. Gwen was one of 11 candidates to be selected to go through to the young public vote. There was a 48% turnout with over 11,000 voters casting a ballot. Two members were elected as part of the national scheme, Gwen being one of them. Gwen's campaign issue – mental health support in schools – was the 'Your Voice' topic winner (i.e. most voted for issue). We are super proud of Gwen and know that she will do her best to make a difference.

My Bookshelf – Spotlight on Mrs Brownbridge, Literacy Lead

“My ‘bookshelf’ has evolved into something more virtual than physical as I have got older. This doesn’t mean that I don’t own books, my Kindle library is extensive, spanning a wide range of genre and this doesn’t include all the ebooks/audiobooks I borrow through Borrowbox (a free app through Plymouth Libraries). My ideal is being able to switch between the audio and kindle versions of the same book.

Reading can serve so many different functions, and while ‘reading for pleasure’ is a key phrase in the media now as part of the ‘National Year of reading’, my favourite reads are often ones that have uncomfortable and challenging elements. I especially like dystopian fiction for its exploration of ‘*what if*’, making me consider contemporary ethical issues anew.

There are times when a physical book is useful though, and I love the ‘*Wild swimming walks*’ series. I’ve a small collection of these and take the relevant book with me when exploring somewhere new. I’ve also got an ever-growing collection of knitting books; my current obsession is *brioche* (the knitting style, although the bread is nice too!).”



Which books should I read?

A good place to start would be the books that have won major literature prizes.

Major annual UK book prizes celebrate excellence across fiction, non-fiction, and debut works. Key prestigious awards include; The Booker Prize (contemporary fiction), the Women's Prize for Fiction, the Baillie Gifford Prize (non-fiction), and the British Book Awards ("Nibbies").

To find out more click the links below:

- [**The Booker Prize**](#): Awards the best sustained work of fiction written in English and published in the UK.
- [**Women's Prize for Fiction**](#): Celebrates excellence, originality, and accessibility in women's writing from around the world.
- [**The British Book Awards \(The Nibbies\)**](#): Showcases the best fiction, non-fiction, and children's literature, focusing on books that reached a wide audience.
- [**Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction**](#): Recognises excellence in history, politics, science, and biography.
- [**James Tait Black Prizes**](#): Administered by the University of Edinburgh, these are the oldest UK literary awards, recognizing fiction and biography.
- [**Nero Book Awards**](#): A new award recognizing the best books of the year from authors based in the UK and Ireland.
- [**British Academy Book Prize for Global Cultural Understanding**](#): Rewards non-fiction that enhances understanding of world cultures.

Book amnesty

The English team are undertaking a mammoth stock take of the cavernous book cupboards. If your child(ren) have any schoolbooks that are lingering on their shelves, under their bed, at the bottom of their bag, we would be thrilled to have them back – total amnesty, no judgement. Please leave them on Mrs Bluden-Currie's desk in M3.

Related to this, we are also removing texts we no longer teach (in some cases we've discovered class texts from the Dark Ages of the 1980s, *stranger things indeed...*). We don't wish to throw these away unless we really have to, and so are holding a clearance on [Tuesday 31st March at 2:00pm](#). It may be that students wish to build their own library or come along to find a gift for someone. Some of the older texts might be useful for crafting projects.

There will be no charge for the books, but we will have a donation jar, should people wish to contribute – any money received will go towards buying new stock for the library. Any questions, students should seek out Mrs Blunden-Currie.

Year 11 external interviews

It has been genuinely uplifting to see so many enthusiastic Year 11 students from other schools coming in for their tours and Sixth Form interviews this week. Their curiosity, confidence, and eagerness to explore what our sixth form offers have brought a real buzz to the school site. There's something energising about watching our visitors imagine their post-16 next steps and seeing how naturally they connect with our staff, our spaces, and each other. It's a reminder of how strong and welcoming our community is, and it's exciting to think about the fresh perspectives and talent they will bring when they join us in September.

A huge thank you to our Year 12 who facilitated the tours and provided insight to our offer. Whilst we are reflecting on the Sixth Form, a huge well done should go to our

Year 13 for their focus in lessons and the independent study they are conducting in the lead up to the final examinations this summer.

Memory Quiz success

Congratulations to **Gabby N, Oyinkansola A and Emma W**, who won this year's Trust-wide Memory Quiz competition. Having first competed in our House Memory Quiz in January, the team qualified for the semi-final in February, where they faced strong competition from 11 other Thinking Schools. Their performance secured them a place in the final against Rochester Grammar School, where they went on to win convincingly by 25 to 18. We also extend our congratulations to Rochester Grammar School for a closely contested final.

The quiz tested a wide range of knowledge and thinking skills, with rounds including African geography, IT and computing, the history of the Olympic Games, and the sciences, including physics, chemistry and biology. Success required not only strong subject knowledge, but also teamwork, recall and the ability to think clearly under pressure.

We are delighted with how our students approached the competition. Events such as this are a powerful reminder of the value of stepping forward, taking part and embracing challenge. They reflect our belief that 'for life, not school, we learn': *non scholae sed vitae discimus*.

Supporting children on social media with app parental controls

We know that keeping children safe online can feel overwhelming, especially as social media platforms continue to evolve. To help, *Internet Matters* has shared a useful parent story highlighting how regularly reviewing app settings, permissions, and safety features can make a real difference to children's online experiences. The article explains how simple steps – like checking privacy settings, reviewing friend lists,

setting time limits, and exploring in-app safety tools – can help parents spot risks early and encourage safer habits on social media.

You can read the full parent story here: [How I use app parental controls to support my children on social media](#)

Calling all Year 5 students

If you have a child in Year 5 who is interested in attending PHSG from September 2027, the registration forms for the Practice 11+ examination at PHSG, and the real 11+ examinations, will be open after the Easter break.

The Practice 11+ registration form will be open from 12 o'clock noon on Monday 20th April on our website here:

<https://www.phsg.org/page/?title=11%2B+Practice+Examination&pid=420>.

The Practice 11+ examination will take place on Saturday 4th July 2026. There is a cost attached to sitting the Practice 11+ examination. Children do not have to take the Practice 11+ examination to apply for a place at PHSG.

The Real 11+ registration form will be open from Monday 27th April on our website here: <https://www.phsg.org/page/?title=Admissions&pid=229>

The Real 11+ examinations will take place on Saturday 12th and Saturday 19th September 2026. There is no cost to sitting the Real 11+ examinations. Children **do** need to take the Real 11+ examinations to apply for a place at PHSG.

The timeline for 2027 admissions can be found here:

<https://www.phsg.org/page/?title=Timeline+for+11%2B+Entry+for+September+2027&pid=425>

I wish our whole community a relaxing and enjoyable holiday over the Easter period.
Next week, we will share our end of term newsletter.

Very best wishes,



Simon Underdown
Headteacher

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

Dates for your diary:

All Years

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2nd April | Gym and Dance Festival and last day of Spring term.
Normal school timings, mufti. |
| 20th April | First day of Summer term |