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Plymouth High School for Girls

"For life, not school, we learn"

12th June 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this finds you well. In my letter to you this week there are our usual celebrations of student achievement and activities, along with our focus on reading for pleasure. There is also some information about planned road closures around our site and some important information about the dangers of social media to young people.

You may have seen in the news that our government is reflecting on whether a ban for under 16s on social media is the right direction for the UK. An announcement is expected soon. Parents and carers will know that Australia have already introduced social media ban for under-16s. Many parents and carers have regular and open conversations with their children about safe internet and social media use. With the potential of a ban around the corner, parents and carers may wish to discuss with their children why there is such concern about social media use and why the government are thinking of imposing restrictions.

Of course, mobile phones are not permitted around school for any students (except for Sixth Form students in the Sixth Form Study Centre only) and this includes a ban on using phones to pay for food. Arbor or a contactless card are options for purchasing food in school.

I received communication from the Children's Commissioner this week thanking us for the high numbers of students who have participated in her most recent survey.



However, she is keen that more students take part so that she has the fullest possible picture of student perspective from across the country. Please do read on for a reminder of what the survey is about and how your child can take part. You will remember that students in Years 7 to 9 have completed the survey in class, but that older years would need to do it in their own time. I know the Children's Commissioner would be very grateful if parents and carers would support the completion of the survey for Years 10 and above. I will include details of the survey in my letter to students this week.

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: **Zara U, Year 12** Zara wrote and delivered an inspiring assembly on LGBTQ+ to all year groups. She covered the history of the LGBTQ+ community striving for the right to live their lives in peace and free from intolerance. Zara spoke knowledgeably and with confidence and gave students much to reflect on. Well done Zara. Nominated by Mr Underdown and Miss Redmond.
- Student of the week: **Kira C, Year 11** For returning to school with a fantastic attitude for learning. For writing and delivering a great speech for her English Reading and being a huge support to the Year 7 students. Also, for performing an outstanding speech – really well done. Nominated by Miss Shattock and Miss Taylor
- Class of the week: **9K** Well done class. You topped the attendance leaderboard with 97.06% attendance for the week. Nominated by Mrs Moody.

Social media – Being safe

We would like to make parents aware of recent concerns in the press regarding Snapchat and similar social media platforms. While many young people use these apps to stay connected with friends, we have been made aware of a few incidents in which students have been contacted by individuals they do not know and accepted them. In some cases, students have also been exposed to inappropriate content/language.

We encourage parents and carers to speak with their children about safe online behaviour, including only communicating with people they know in real life, reporting anything that makes them uncomfortable, and using the privacy and safety settings available within the app. Working together, we can help ensure that students stay safe and supported online.

Virgin Media and Internet Matters have released a wonderful new resource for parents and carers called [Find the Right Words](#). The video and resources help with some of those difficult conversations about how to keep children safe online.

Head Student Team charity fundraiser – Friday 26th June

Zara U, Deputy Head Student (Inclusivity and Diversity), will be running fundraising activities on Friday 26th June in school for the charity **Proud2be**. Proud2be is a queer-let charity that supports the LGBTQIA+ community in Devon.

On the day at breaktime, there will be a bake sale with items ranging from 20p-£1 (near Bertha's or in Newman Hall, depending on the weather), and at lunchtime, Zara and team will be selling Pride inspired bracelet making kits for 50p on the Courts. There will also be a free pebble painting activity.

Please remember that cash will be the only accepted payment method. You can read more about what Zara has been doing for Pride Month [here](#) on our website, and see below the poster sent to students this week.



National Biology Challenge

Some of our own Year 9 and 10 students, along with around 42,000 other students, recently took part in the National Biology Challenge. It was a super way for our students to stretch and challenge their biology knowledge and understanding and showcase their thinking beyond the textbook. We are really proud of their achievements and delighted that they were so keen to take part. You can read more about the event on the link here: [Plymouth High School for Girls - Young scientists awarded in nationwide challenge](#)

Neva's prize-winning day out!

You will remember that Neva, Year 10, recently won the Trust-wide food influencer competition with her adventurous and super high-quality meal she devised and prepared. Her prize was to go with a group of friends on a foraging and cooking experience. The students had great day out and learnt much about the foods available to us all. Click the link to find out more: [Plymouth High School for Girls - From prize to plate!](#)

My Bookshelf – Spotlight on Beatrice, Deputy Head Student (Editor of 'Hear Me Out')

"I have always been a fan of stories that hide big, important messages behind simple, engaging plots. I think some of the most powerful books are the ones written for younger readers but have themes that stay with you forever.

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas by John Boyne is told through the eyes of a child, yet the story is incredibly heavy and full of tension. I loved the way the author creates a sense of innocence meeting a very dark reality; it's one of those books where you know something is wrong long before the characters do. It really made me think about the impact of boundaries and the importance of empathy. On the other side of the shelf, I have a real soft spot for *Holes* by Louis Sachar. It is such a clever book because of how the different timelines and stories – from the 'no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather' to Stanley's time at Camp Green Lake – all eventually fit together. There is something so satisfying about the moment you realize how every tiny detail is a clue to a much bigger mystery. It's funny, weird, and fast-paced all at once."



Breakfast club

A reminder that our catering team are running a breakfast club during the examination period. Breakfast is available daily between 8:00am-8:30am until Friday 26th June and with fluffy pancakes, crispy waffles, and delicious bacon or sausage baguettes on offer (items priced from £1.55), it's a great way to start the day – don't forget there is also *free* porridge!



Newman Hall
5th May - 29th June



Breakfast Club

Choice of:

Cereals with milk, bacon or sausage baps, vegan sausage baps, egg muffin, toast & jam, or a free porridge



Served daily
08:00 until 08:30



Planned road works – North Road West area

Wales and West Utilities are planning some upcoming gas reinforcement/replacement works in North Road East area of Plymouth. They are working closely with Plymouth City Council.

To keep the local community, road users, and site workers safe, the following traffic management will be in place while they work:

Parking suspension and one-way directional closure

15th June to 28th August

- North Road East between junctions with Plymouth Station to Evelyn Place

Road closures

19th June to 10th July

- Winston Avenue from the junction with North Road East
- James Street from the junction with North Road East to the rear of 81 North Road East
- Welbeck Avenue, with parking suspension, between junctions with North Road East and Derry Avenue Lane

10th July to 31st July

- Road closure and parking suspension to both sides of carriageway on Derry Avenue, between the junctions of North Road East and Glen Park Avenue
- Give and take system and parking suspension to both sides of carriageway in place on Glen Park Avenue, from the junction with Restormel Road to No. 28 Glen Park Avenue

31st July to 28th August

- Sutherland Place from junction of Sutherland Road to Sutherland Road Lane West
- Sutherland Road from junction of Sutherland Place to Houndiscombe Lane

- Houndiscombe Road from junction of St Lawrence Road to North Road East
- Elizabeth Place from junction of Endsleigh Place to No. 3 Elizabeth Place
- Endsleigh Place from junction of North Road East to Sherwell Lane

If people need additional support during the time their gas supply is interrupted or any other assistance such as specific access requirements, they ask that you please contact them as soon as possible.

Children's Commissioner survey request

The Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel De Souza, is eager to collect the thoughts of young people from across the country in her 'The Big Future' survey. You'll remember that I shared the details of her previous surveys with you and your child(ren). Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 have been doing this latest survey in school and I am hopeful that students in Years 10 to 13 will complete the survey in their own time.

Under the Children Act 2004, it is the Commissioner's role to promote the views and interests of children in England, and she has done this so far by conducting the two largest ever children's surveys: *The Big Ask* and *The Big Ambition*.

Now, for the first time, hundreds of thousands of children will be eligible to vote in the next general election, the biggest change to the franchise in half a century. Yet just one in five children say politicians listen to them. That's why the Commissioner is launching her final survey, *The Big Future*. The link to the survey is here:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/TheBigFuture/>

The survey focuses on the changes young people want to see in their communities, their biggest concerns, and their hopes for the future. More than anything, the Commissioner wants to know what they think a good childhood should look like today.

I will share the survey link in my letter to students today so that Years 9 to 13 can complete it. The deadline is 31st October 2026. Thank you for your support with this, I know the Commissioner will be grateful.

Very best wishes and thank you for your support as we work together to help our young people to be their best selves.

Very best wishes,



Simon Underdown
Headteacher

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

Dates for your diary:

Year 11

30th June Year 11 Prom

Year 13

19th June Year 13 Prom

All Years

6th – 10th July Curriculum enrichment week

14th July Sports Day (reserve date: 16th July)

17th July Music Festival

Last day of term (students finish at 1.30pm, the DHSB buses will run their pick up at this time rather than 3.30pm)