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Plymouth High School for Girls

"For life, not school, we learn"

19th June 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this finds you well.

This week, I'll begin my letter to you with our spotlight on recent student success, it's one of the things that we enjoy most at PHSG:

- Student of the Week: **Flora W, Year 10** – "For being an enthused, dedicated and inspiring English student". Nominated by Miss Taylor
- Group of the week: **Year 10 Geography Field Trip** – "Fantastically well behaved – so much so a member of the public walked over to find me to tell me how impressed they were with our students". Nominated by Mr Graves.

Weather adaptations

Next week is going to be very hot and humid. I have informed students that they will not need to wear their blazer for week beginning 22nd June.

Jumpers are not part of the compulsory uniform, and I strongly recommend that students do not wear jumpers next week because of the heat that has been forecast. A white t-shirt under the school shirt is a much better option than the jumper if a student is worried about being chilly.



Despite the weather, standards of uniform at school remain high and I have reminded students that their shirts must be tucked in when on site.

I think it prudent that for next week, students bring in a hat to wear when they are outside at break and lunch and should bring a water bottle. Conversations at home about taking care in full sun would be very helpful, thank you.

BBC Spotlight news

You may have seen that the BBC were in school this week to talk to our students about their views on the recently announced social media ban for under 16s that is due to come into effect from next Spring. A group of Year 9 and Year 12 students chatted with the BBC, eloquently sharing balanced points of view. They were a credit to themselves and the school.

You can read more about it in our Latest News section by clicking on the link below:

[Plymouth High School for Girls - BBC visit puts the 'spotlight' on student voices](#)

National 'Thank a Teacher' Day

We are blessed with a wonderfully supportive and kind parent/carer body and are always grateful for the correspondence we receive praising staff for what they do each day. As it was 'Thank a Teacher' day earlier this week, I thought I would share with you all a 'thank you' we have recently received. It's always such a boost for colleagues when this happens: [Plymouth High School for Girls - Thank you, teachers!](#)

Year 10 Sixth Form event

On Thursday, our Year 10 students were warmly welcomed into the Sixth Form Study Centre by the Head of Sixth Form and the Sixth Form team. This valuable opportunity allowed them to prepare for their Biology mock examination in a calm, focused environment while also gaining a real insight into life as a Plymouth High Sixth Form student. The visit also gave them a taste of the independence, support and academic atmosphere that awaits them as they look ahead to their post-16 journey. There will be more opportunities for Year 10 to sample life as a Sixth Former as they move through Year 11.



Mathematics and PE success

Our staff very much enjoy celebrating student success and this week, the Mathematics and PE teams were over the moon with some specific achievements. Well done to all.

[Plymouth High School for Girls - From sprint finishes to problem-solving](#)

DHSB bus service for 2026/27

On Monday, all Parents and Carers were contacted regarding the DHSB bus service for September 2026 based on information received from Ride Tandem, the transport provider.

Since passes went live, demand has been high and any families who have not yet purchased a pass are strongly encouraged to do so as soon as possible as remaining spaces may fill quickly. Ride Tandem have advised us that they will review capacity next week and consider options to accommodate any students who may not initially have secured a seat.

If you would like further information or are yet to purchase a pass, please follow this link: [Devonport High School bus timetables](#)

Any queries should please be directed to Ride Tandem direct: ewan@ridetandem.co

Arbor Pay update

Arbor are making it easier to pay by card. Whether students, parents or staff are topping up an account, purchasing an item from the school shop, or paying for a trip, you'll now be able to enter and save your card details, and pay by Apple or Google Pay from your desktop. To learn more, head to the [Arbor Help Centre](#).

Later this month, Arbor will be making similar improvements to paying by card in the Arbor Parent App. We will let you know when we have more details.

Togetherness Adolescence – Parent Workshop

Plymouth Family Hubs are offering a free Togetherness Adolescence workshop for parents and carers of young people aged 11–16. The session focuses on strengthening parent-teen relationships, building positive family connections, and understanding the changes taking place in the teenage brain during adolescence. The workshop is free to attend and will take place at NOMONY Family Hub on **12th January 2027**, from 6.30pm–8.30pm. Please see the attached flyer for booking details.

National Year of Reading

As the National Year of Reading continues, let's look at the favourite and recommended books of well-known personalities:

- **Barack Obama:** The former US President is known for his annual book lists, but he has specifically called out the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel [*The Overstory*](#) by Richard Powers for shifting his perspective on the Earth.
- **Ariana Grande:** The pop star is famously obsessed with the *Harry Potter* series. Her love for J.K. Rowling's wizarding world runs so deep that she named one of her dogs 'Sirius Black'.
- **Nicole Kidman:** The acclaimed actress has frequently highlighted Leo Tolstoy's classic [*War & Peace*](#) as a major inspiration.
- **Bill Gates:** The tech billionaire and philanthropist is a voracious reader, frequently recommending non-fiction on his blog. A long-time favourite of his is [*The Better Angels of Our Nature*](#) by Steven Pinker, which details the decline of violence in human history.

Please see below for our latest reading lists ideas. The information is on our website, just click on the links:

Pride Month



Refugee Week



My Bookshelf – Spotlight on Mrs Freeman-Alford, Curriculum Lead for Mathematics

“I will start with a confession. My ‘bookshelf’ pre-2026 was not particularly sophisticated and mostly featured classics such as *The Smeds and the Smoos* and *Oi Frog*. Whilst I will always treasure sweet memories of reading with my children, it is clear that I had not made space for reading in some time.

The '26 in 26' challenge has overhauled my reading habits. I cannot turn down a challenge, and I am proud to say it has rebooted my interest in reading and my ability to fit it into everyday life. I am already ahead of target and was more than halfway through the challenge by April.

I began by reading some books that have been turned into movies before watching them, including *The Housemaid* by Freida McFadden. I also read Colleen Hoover's *November 9*, which isn't on the big screen, and what started as a teenage love story developed into something much more interesting, with some great surprises along the way.

After a few more Freida McFadden books (I also ranked *The Perfect Son* highly), I realised they all feature a late plot twist. When I correctly worked one out early (of course it was the husband!), I knew that despite being proud of my unpaid detective work, my Freida McFadden days were probably over.

More recently, I have been reading a mix of authors, and these are the books I would most recommend:

- *The Names* by Florence Knapp – A fantastic book that follows one boy through three versions of his life depending on which of three names his mother chooses for him at birth. 5/5 from me.
- *Breaking the Silence* by Diane Chamberlain – A book that surprised me by how much more there was to it than the synopsis suggested. The story of a traumatised young girl who has stopped speaking is intertwined with the history of brain control experimentation. It should not work, but somehow it does, with some unexpected twists along the way.

- *You Are Here* by David Nicholls – A slow burner and a slightly cheesy romance, but light-hearted, funny and enjoyable. It follows two stubborn single adults who gradually break their own moulds during a walking trip.

I am looking forward to seeing what my Kindle suggests next, and I WILL complete my '26 in 26'. Reading so many books has been relaxing and very enjoyable, although it has also proved expensive after I lost my Kindle in February and had to replace it!"



Breakfast club ending soon

Next week is the final chance to enjoy breakfast club this term, available daily between 8:00am-8:30am until Friday 26th. Still on offer are fluffy pancakes, crispy waffles, delicious bacon or sausage baguettes (items priced from £1.55). It's a great way to start the day – and don't forget, there is also *free* porridge!

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

Very best wishes,

Simon Underdown
Headteacher

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)