



Plymouth High School for Girls

"For life, not school, we learn"

9th October 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are very nearly at the end of the term 1 with students and staff looking forward to a bit of down time over the October holiday. This week, we held our subject and tutor awards ceremony for years 8 and 9 with years 10 and 11 to look forward to next week. As is always the case whenever we have awards to present, all of our students enthusiastically supported the winners, it is one of the things that marks out our school as so special. Choosing award recipients is always tricky given the huge pool of talent at PHSG, so well done to everyone who picked up a certificate this week. If parents would like a copy of the picture of their child on stage collecting their award, please contact Miss Redmond at stephanie.redmond@phsg.tsat.uk

Year 11 and 13 mock 1

Year 11 and 13 have their mock 1 after the October holiday and will want to be fully prepared for it. Teachers have provided revision resources (there's lots of information in our revision hub on the school website [here](#)) and are running revision classes (**revision class timetable** is [here](#) – please note that the date format is mm dd yyyy).

Mock 1 is very important and will help students, teachers, parents and carers get a good indication of the likely final grades. I encourage students to speak with their class teacher if they do not feel ready for mock 1 and parents and carers should feel free to contact their child's teacher if there are concerns over preparedness. My thanks to parents and carers for the support given at home to help our examination year students to be at their best for the upcoming assessments.



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Interim Chief Executive Officer: Mr L Miller MBE BSc (Hons) FCCA PGCE

St Lawrence Road,
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T: 0333 360 2230

E: office@plymouthhighschoolforgirls.org.uk

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Your feedback counts, Trust values

Thank you to all the parents and carers who have completed the TSAT values consultation. There's still time to share your views before the deadline of Monday 12th October. The form to complete can be found here: [TSAT values statements consultation – Share your views!](#)

Student achievement

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

- Students of the Week: **Luna S, 8T** "Despite joining late in year 7 and missing a huge chunk of German teaching, Luna has picked up the German grammar we've looked at this term really confidently and is applying her knowledge to new contexts well. *Fantastisch, Luna!*" – Nominated by Mrs Gilchrist

And also, **Gracie-May T, 10T** for "embracing the core values of being a PHSG student. On the way to school, Gracie-May demonstrated compassion, kindness and a sense of wanting to do the best for a distressed stranger she met. She provided excellent mental health first aid to this person (without realising)" – Nominated by Mr Thackray

- Group of the Week: **11A Art** "The class has been working so well on their significant pieces and are now extremely focused on their prep drawings for their final pieces. Well done for being so focused!" – Nominated by Miss Walsh



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Sixth form physicists

On Wednesday 7th October, sixth form physics students attended an online physics conference organised by Oxford High School. During this conference, students heard from multiple university professors from across the UK, including [Professor Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell](#), the Astrophysicist who discovered pulsars. Students also had the chance to ask these eminent physicists their own questions.

Topics presented included wave-particle duality and quantum physics, and particle physics and chirality – very topical as the Nobel Prize for Chemistry 2026 was awarded that day for work on homochirality. It was a wonderfully enriching experience for our sixth form students and one which they are likely to always remember.

Governor of the Year – Mr Roger Burnett

Congratulations and thanks to Mr Burnett for over 20 years of service as a Plymouth High Governor. In October 2026, Mr Burnett received his Governor of the Year Long Service award in recognition of his unwavering and outstanding support for our school. The final decision on the Trust-wide long service award follows careful consideration by the selection panel of nominations from across our family of 26 Trust schools. We think that Mr Burnett fully deserves the award and we are delighted for him and the school. Mr Burnett is a much loved and respected figure within our school community, and we are all delighted that he has been honoured in this way.

You can read the full article on our website: [Plymouth High School for Girls - PHSG celebrates Governor of the Year](#)



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The Day at Plymouth High School for Girls

At PHSG, reading is at the heart of everything we do. It is a key part of our commitment to helping students develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be their very best selves, reflecting our school motto: "*For life, not school, we learn.*"

As we welcome new students and families to our school community, we would like to introduce *The Day*, an online news and current affairs platform that plays an important role in supporting reading, critical thinking, and wider learning across the curriculum.

What is *The Day*?

Since 2011, *The Day* has been turning news into lessons and is recognised for its integrity, balance, and quality. Used by over 900 schools and reaching around one million students each day, it provides engaging, age-appropriate articles that help young people understand the world around them whilst developing essential literacy and critical thinking skills. You can access *The Day* [HERE](#).

How do we use *The Day* at PHSG?

During the 2025-26 academic year, *The Day* became an integral part of school life and curriculum enrichment. It was used in a variety of ways, including:

- Summer preparation work for Year 11 students joining our sixth form
- Pre-reading activities for both GCSE and A Level lessons
- Tutor-time discussions, helping students explore and debate national and international events



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- Weekly parent newsletters, highlighting articles linked to curriculum areas, world events and national awareness campaigns, such as Black History Month (October)
- Reading and reflection activities across departments, with subjects encouraged to set at least one reading task per half term using a dedicated reflection sheet

Over the course of the year, we shared more than 80 articles with students and families, covering a wide range of curriculum subjects studied at Plymouth High.

Why is this important?

Reading is one of the most powerful tools young people can develop. Whilst we continue to promote reading for pleasure through initiatives such as Roots, Sprouts, '15 by 15', and Read Around the World, we recognise that reading non-fiction is equally important.

Through regular engagement with quality journalism and current affairs, students develop:

- Stronger reading comprehension skills
- Wider vocabulary and subject knowledge
- Critical thinking and analytical skills
- Confidence in discussing and debating issues
- Greater awareness of local, national and global events
- Improved writing and communication skills
- The ability to evaluate different viewpoints and perspectives

These skills support students not only in their academic studies but also in preparing them for life beyond the classroom.



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A successful first year

Since launching *The Day* at the start of the 2025-26 academic year, Plymouth High students and parents have accessed more than 4,000 articles. This fantastic level of engagement demonstrates our community's commitment to learning, curiosity, and reading.

As we move into the new 2026-27 academic year, we look forward to continuing to use *The Day* to enrich learning, spark discussion, and encourage students to become informed, thoughtful and engaged citizens.

We encourage all parents and students to explore the platform and make the most of the wealth of high-quality articles available.

[The Day](#): Helping students make sense of the world, one article at a time.

My Bookshelf – Spotlight on Miss Jones, Subject Lead for PE and Head of Temple

“After a long day at work, I enjoy unwinding with a good book. Like many, I am a huge Harry Potter fan, and the series remains my go-to read whenever I want to relax and escape into a magical world. As a PE teacher, I am also passionate about reading sports autobiographies. I find it fascinating to learn about athletes' journeys, the challenges they have overcome, how they developed their careers, and the impact that sport has had on their lives both on and off the field”.



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Safeguarding update

iOS 27 child safety features

If your child uses an iPhone or iPad, Apple's latest software includes several new parental-control and safety features. These include improved Screen Time controls, limits across categories of apps, website controls and additional Communication Safety protections. The short video below provides a useful overview, while Apple's own guidance explains how parents can set up and manage the controls in more detail.

- [YouTube](#)
- [Apple](#)
- [Apple Support](#)

Switched on to privacy

[Switched on to privacy](#) is a campaign from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to help parents and carers of 4-11-year-olds talk to their children about online privacy. Just as parents would talk with their children about road safety or speaking with strangers, online privacy is another life skill children need as they grow up. Small, regular conversations can help children understand what personal information is, how it's used, and how to make safer choices online. Schools and settings wishing to share information via their official communication channels can access the campaign resources [here](#).

When something goes wrong

Children with additional needs may not always recognise when an online situation has become unsafe, or they may find it difficult to explain what has happened. They may also communicate distress differently, become overwhelmed by questions or worry about losing access to a device or online activity that is particularly important to them. [This short video](#) gives parents practical advice on supporting a child calmly when something has gone wrong online and helping them feel able to share what has happened.



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Flu vaccinations – Reminder

A reminder that Kernow Health CIC's School Age Immunisation Service will be delivering annual nasal flu vaccinations to PHSG students in years 7 – 11 on Thursday 26th November 2026. You can find more information about the flu vaccination programme in this letter [here](#).

How to Consent

To provide consent, please use [this link](#) by 9.00am on 25th November 2026.

Best wishes,



Mr Simon Underdown

Headteacher

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

[Lunch menus for Term 1](#)

Dates for your diary:

Whole school

13 th October	PTFA AGM
16 th October	Non-pupil day
19 th – 30 th October	Autumn half-term
2 nd November	Non-pupil day
3 rd November	All Years back to school



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Year 11

15th October

Year 11 parents' evening



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