

Plymouth High School for Girls

"For life, not school, we learn"

17th November 2020

Dear parents, carers and students,

I am delighted to launch our Sixth Form application process and attach to this letter the A Level Subject Choices Booklet, together with an Application Form to join our Plymouth High Sixth Form. Year 11 students are currently very focussed on their Mock exams so this is a timely moment for them to consider their next steps and select their options for A Level studies, or perhaps consider apprenticeships. All students are now expected to continue their education or training until they are 18.

We offer a wide range of A Level subjects, and have added some exciting new courses for next year. Students at Plymouth High will be emailed, and given, a Subject Choices Booklet and Application Form today while fuller details of A Level courses will be shared with them at the end of this term, and in the first two weeks of next term in lessons. Special sessions for subjects which are only offered at A Level will be laid on during registration. As is the case in all schools, the running of courses is dependent on the numbers opting for them.

External applicants as well as Plymouth High students can also watch short videos of each Head of Department explaining their A Level course. These videos will be on our website from early December, as will be a video introduction to the Sixth Form by myself, and interviews with a variety of current Sixth Form students. The deadline for applications is on January 15th 2021. The final application needs to be entered online by Plymouth High students; this will be explained in early January while the paper form also needs to be returned to the Sixth Form office also by January 15th 2021.

During February and March, we will be conducting 1:1 interviews with students to review their application and give more specific guidance as to the suitability of their choices with regard to their future goals, or in relation to their academic record. There is a minimum average grade to guarantee entry to Plymouth High Sixth Form, as well as to individual subjects as indicated in the Subject Choices Booklet. These discussions may lead to them altering some of their subject choices. After our interviews we will review the applications and then write confirming the offers we have decided to make to students.

We would very much appreciate your support over the Christmas holidays by discussing the subject choices the students are considering. Students should also check what A Levels are required for particular university courses or careers. It is also important that while students consider what their university or career goals are, if they know them, they also remain open minded. Flexibility is key - as they discover more about themselves and the world around them, students often change their mind as to what they want to do.

Our Sixth Form is special because we aim not only for academic success but also so much more. Our aim is for the students to become successful as well qualified, well prepared and happy young adults, eager to be active citizens in our rapidly changing world.

The three key qualities we emphasise to students in the Sixth Form are Responsibility, Independence and Ambition. Responsibility for their own learning; independence in using their initiative to pursue their studies, and organising their own time while ambition is key to finding the drive to succeed; to having the determination to get through the difficult times as well as the good. It doesn't have to be an ambition to pursue a career, it can be the ambition to fulfil your potential, to do the very best you can – this is what we expect our Sixth Formers to aim for, and to work hard to achieve this.

Our students' successes range from a number attaining places at Oxford or Cambridge each year, as well as Medicine, law, veterinary sciences to those who start on Higher level apprenticeships for example joining prestigious companies like KPMG as fast track trainees. We have an expert Careers Advisor in school, and specialist mentors for Oxbridge and medical related careers, as well as experienced Sixth Form tutors to guide students through their applications. There is a dedicated Sixth Form Common room and study centre, while the library provides a calm, academic study area throughout the day, and Year 12 will be having their own laptops to support their learning.

Our school motto "For life, not school, we learn" lies at the heart of everything we do at Plymouth High. Life in the Sixth Form is primarily focussed on academic success in order to open up as many opportunities as possible for their next steps in life but there is so much more to success than exam grades. The two years in Sixth Form, particularly Year 12 is a time when students can develop their confidence and leadership skills, encouraging resilience in themselves and younger students as they organise House events, School Council, clubs, or public occasions. Leadership and communication skills are developed alongside excellent academic outcomes. The Sixth Form play a key role in leading House events as well as the many sporting competitions throughout the year. New students are warmly welcomed into their House and several have taken up leadership roles even though they are new to the school. Students may also become Subject Captains, promoting and leading specialist clubs or events. They can even set up their own clubs, something which also helps on their CV or university application.

Enrichment of the learning also makes our Sixth Form stand out. All students are expected to do an Extended Project Qualification which, if they do well, can very often lead to university entry grades being lowered. Staff are eager to organise many extra-curricular opportunities. From our nationally successful Bar Mock team demonstrating their legal skills, to Model United Nations teams putting the world to rights, public speaking competitions, Maths Challenges, the school magazine coordinated by Sixth Form, Duke of Edinburgh, Young Enterprise, or even organising a school campaign (a group of Sixth Formers led a climate change protest day last year) to opportunities to witness an animal dissection, take part in external science research such as the Nuffield scheme, visit the Houses of Parliament, plays at Stratford, art trips to famous galleries, field trips or trips abroad such as Berlin, Tuscany, or to CERN, and exchanges to Germany or France.

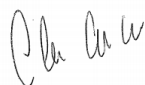
The wellbeing of our Sixth Form students is a very high priority. We recognise that these two years are a particularly demanding time as they contemplate life beyond school. Their wellbeing is supported by a team of experienced Sixth Form tutors as well as class teachers who know them well and who care very much that each student fulfils their potential and attains their goals. We provide dedicated personal social and health education sessions and if necessary, have links to counselling and support services. We will take time to listen and support students.

The combination of academic rigour and ambition, superb extra-curricular opportunities and a popular and successful House system together with our caring approach mean that our Sixth Formers have a rewarding time, in a happy, positive atmosphere, and leave aiming high, well prepared and well qualified to be successful in their next steps in life.

I hope you enjoy reading through the Subject Choices Booklet and discussing this next phase of your child's education and all the possibilities it opens up, so that they become successful academically, and well rounded, happy young adults.

If you have any queries please contact myself or Ms Karen Mills, Sixth Form Administrator, kmills@phsg.org

Yours faithfully



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