



6th September 2021

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

I do hope that you have enjoyed the summer holidays and that you have managed to have a well-deserved rest following a busy and difficult year.

Firstly, let me congratulate our year 11 and 13. They worked so hard and thoroughly deserved their success. Students were put through a rigorous assessment process and I am confident that the grades awarded accurately reflected student attainment. Well done year 11 and 13, we are so very proud of you. Thank you to our wonderfully supportive and encouraging parents, you made such a difference.

We are looking forward to welcoming our students back into school and feel certain that they will enjoy the many improvements we have made over the summer.

All communal areas in the Annex building have been repainted (walls, ceilings, doors and all woodwork), new energy efficient LED lights have been installed and new flooring has been fitted throughout. The foyer area has also been repainted, as has the hallway in the main building along with the staircase up to the Main Hall. In these sections we have also installed LED lighting and fitted new floor coverings. The decoration scheme is in Plymouth High blue and white and will be used across the school as we start to upgrade the entire site.

We have installed a brand-new £70K boiler to heat the Newman Hall and all Science and Languages classrooms along with associated hallway spaces.

The fire detection system has been completely replaced by the very latest technology and the upgrades to computer and electrical wiring has been extensive.

There are now pedestrian safety markings on the front car park and both entrances have electric vehicle gates.

The dining facilities in Newman Hall have been refreshed and we have installed a brand-new outside catering hut, named Bertha's. We chose the name Bertha because it was the first name of the very first student on the school register in 1874.

We will not use any single use plastic to serve meals with all single use items having been either made from recycled material and/or can be recycled. Our Earth Alliance student leaders and the Head Student Team have made a significant contribution to the strategic direction taken by our catering team in terms of both the food and the packaging. I would encourage students to make full use of the new catering facilities when they return, which remains cashless.

Despite all these improvements, there are many more planned with the refurbishment of the Main Hall and the start of the classroom upgrades all scheduled to start before Christmas. It's an exciting time to be at Plymouth High.

With the easing of restrictions, things can start to feel more normal at school. Lunchtime will return to normal and all clubs can run. Students will not be required to wear face coverings in classrooms, but can do if they wish. This is the same for staff. Public Health England has recommended that in the South West, due to the rising numbers of cases, that face coverings should be worn by all in communal areas. Communal areas include; assemblies, corridors, queuing for lunch etc. There is no need to wear face coverings outside.

The use of face coverings will be reviewed by Public Health England before the end of September, and I will keep you posted.

We will ensure that all classrooms and corridors are well ventilated and that the hand sanitizer stations remain in place. These controls, along with good hand hygiene after using the toilet, are thought to be very effective at reducing the spread of COVID-19. Open windows and doors may mean that as the weather turns, some of our spaces may be a little cooler than normal. I ask that all students consider layers (white vest/T shirt, shirt, jumper, blazer) as students will not be permitted to wear their coats during lessons. Students are always allowed to remove their jumper or blazer in class as they see fit.

As a reminder, Year 7 and 8 must wear the new school skirt (or trouser option) and the school blazer, the jumper is optional. Years 9,10 and 11 may wear the new or previous school skirt (or trouser option) and can wear the blazer if they wish. If the older students choose not to wear the blazer, they must wear the jumper.

All uniform is now available upstairs at the school uniform shop on Billacombe Road, Plymouth for the convenience of our families. All orders and purchases need to go through the shop rather than school.

Year 7 and 12 students will return to school on Tuesday 7th September and all other year groups will return on Wednesday 8th September. All students will come into school via the main entrance on St Lawrence Road. We will no longer have staggered entry and exit arrangements. This means that all lessons will finish at 3.30pm. The library will be open after school for any student who needs to catch a later bus or train.

Students are expected to arrive for the school day properly equipped, wearing their uniform smartly and to be on time. It's part of what makes a Plymouth High student. Being well prepared and punctual is part of being a successful learner and we want all of our students to be able to get the most out of school. I am sure that students will find their lessons stimulating and interesting. At times, they will feel challenged and that's a good thing. Building resilience and determination are corner stones of future success.

As usual, all letters will be posted on our website for your convenience. Indeed, our website is most definitely worth a visit to find out more about what is going on in school and to keep track of what our student leaders are doing.

For now, I wish everyone a happy, fun and successful start to the new school year.

Very best wishes,



Simon Underdown.
Headteacher.