



14th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I do hope you are all well.

We have had a very positive start to term in many ways. Particular mention should go to year 13 who have been working hard on their mocks since the first day of term. Year 11 have been learning the last few elements of their GCSE courses prior to the final assessments, as well as attending A level taster sessions. Preparation for the summer examinations is well underway.

Year 11 will be getting their mock grades on 20th January and will be able to reflect on the effectiveness of their revision strategies. Year 9 are thinking about their GCSE options and staff have been able to support students in school to help with those deliberations. It has been a real pleasure to visit classes and see to students engaged in their lessons and I encourage all our young people to continue to give of their best and to make use of the support available.

Attendance

We enjoy very high attendance figures at Plymouth High and I thank you for your ongoing support. It is unsurprising to report that studies into success at school conclude that regular attendance may be the **greatest factor** influencing a child's academic success.

As a reminder, our school attendance policy requests that parents/carers provide medical evidence if a student has been absent for more than 3 days. We have this in place to be sure that we meet our statutory responsibilities around student attendance. As always, thank you for your support as we work hard to ensure that our attendance figures remain very high.

For your convenience, here's a line from our policy that may be helpful. Since we are no longer a Plymouth City maintained school, the word Academy is often used in policy documents rather than the word school.

If a child is absent for longer than 3 days due to ill health, medical evidence will need to be provided in order that the Academy can authorise the absence.

To assist parents & carers who have been asked to provide medical evidence, the NHS app may be helpful.



NHS App

Owned and run by the NHS, the NHS App is a simple and secure way to access a range of NHS services on your smartphone or tablet.

Use the NHS App to:

- **book appointments** - search for, book appointments at your GP surgery, and see details of your upcoming and past appointments
- **view your health record** - securely access your GP health record, to see information like your allergies and your current and past medicines. If your GP has given you access to your detailed medical record, you can also see information like test results and details of your consultations
- **get advice about coronavirus** – get information about coronavirus and find out what to do if you think you have it

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/>

Mathematics online learning – Mathswatch

We are enormously proud of the time that students in years 7-11 invest in their online mathematics learning through the mathswatch platform. Thank you for your support with this. Mathswatch is an unbeatable online resource for students to learn from step-by-step videos and to rehearse their skills. Mathswatch provides your child with instant feedback and the opportunity to discuss problems with their teacher online. Rehearsing, revising, or pre-learning skills at home is a big part of long-term memory building and assessment preparation.

Students in year 7-11 are regularly set tasks and the deadlines are clearly visible when they login as well as on their exercise book covers. We would encourage all parents and carers to look at this wealth of support at home and contact their child's Maths teacher if they would like further guidance about navigating or expectations.

Students are expected to complete each task to the best of their ability, getting help using the videos or any other way that they choose. They can even pop in to Top Up Tuesday which is our drop-in Maths support club at 1.55pm in Lab 11. Students can just turn up if they would like help from Maths teachers or student Maths captains.

The mathswatch activities relate to learning that students have already done in class and we expect all students to get 80% or higher in their set mathswatch homework. A high mathswatch score ensures that students are well equipped to move forward with our maths curriculum.



We are looking forward to introducing our new maths class of the week for year 7-9 very soon to reward a whole class for great mathswatch scores.

Students also have clip numbers on their book covers linked to what we are currently thinking about in lessons, and they are encouraged to type this clip number into mathswatch and watch videos or practice the skills any time that they want to consolidate, revise, or get ahead.

Covid control measures

As is usual, our students have reacted with maturity and sensitivity to the latest Covid restrictions and should be congratulated on their collective effort. Indeed, parents are now in the position of being able to book the second Covid vaccination for their child if they wish. Whilst waiting for confirmation of an on-site visit from Virgin Care, parents can book out-of-school vaccinations for their child, if aged 12 or over, through the [NHS booking system](#).

The Government is clear about the benefits of the vaccine:

- It is estimated that a 60% vaccine uptake among healthy 12 to 15 year olds will reduce confirmed cases of COVID-19 in this group in the period up to 31 March 2022 by 33%. This equates to a reduction of 110,000 school days absent in this age group due to confirmed COVID-19 cases.
- Research shows that those who do become infected 3 weeks after receiving one dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or AstraZeneca vaccine are between 38% and 49% less likely to pass the virus on to their household contacts than those who are unvaccinated.

Thank you for your ongoing support and encouragement.

Very best wishes,

Simon Underdown.
Headteacher.