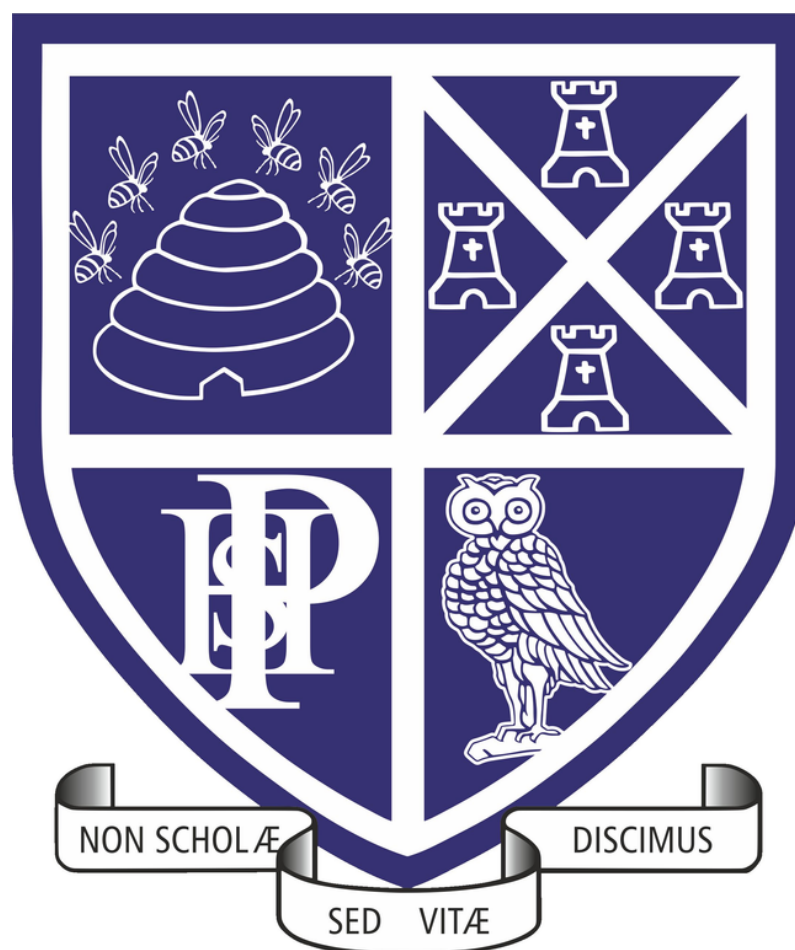


SCHOOL SYSTEM

BOOKLET

PRIMARY	SECONDARY	POST GCSE	POST 18
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INTRODUCTION

Adapting to a new education system can be difficult. This booklet, produced by the Diversity and Inclusivity Group has broken down each academic year to support you in planning your career, increasing your familiarity and confidence with the system, so ensuring you make the best decisions possible

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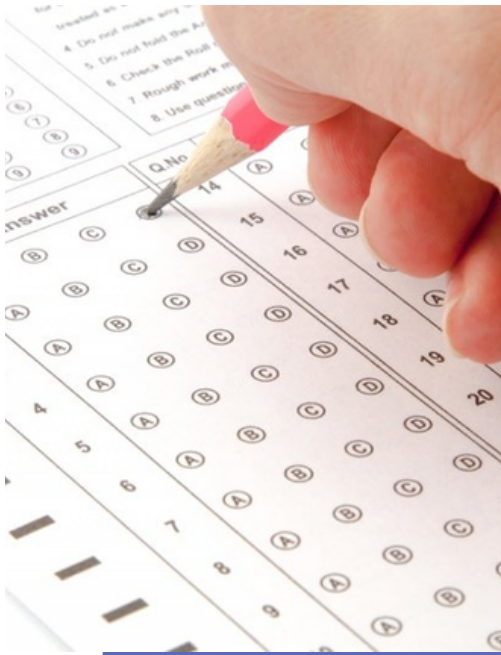
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PRIMARY

KS2

Key Stage 2 covers Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 (children between 7 and 11 years old). These are the primary years of learning, creating the foundation for education which is developed in later Key Stages.

In Year 6, children will take a SATs test. The purpose of SATs are to track the progress that the student has made in their Primary School. The tests include a number of elements, including reading comprehension, maths, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Results are usually returned to schools in July, and many schools send them home with the child's end of term report.



11+

The 11+ is an exam that you can choose take at the start of Year 6 if you want to apply to go to a Grammar school; in Plymouth there are three: Plymouth High School for Girls, Devonport High School for Girls and Devonport High School for Boys. You need to pass this test in Year 6 to be able to go on to these schools, if you don't pass in year 6, then there are more opportunities later on, for example the 12 and 13+, which you can take at the start of year 7 and 8, respectively.

The 11+ exam usually consists of two papers, one Maths and one English, with mainly multiple-choice questions, although the English paper is broken down into comprehension and creative writing.

To help you prepare, there is the opportunity to take a mock test, which is optional for all students. The grade from this test will have no impact on the final grade you will get from the actual exam, and you do not have to take the mock test to be able to take the real exam.

The type of tests, when you take them, and the acceptance rate, will depend on the school, area, and exam board. The information here mainly applies to Plymouth; if you want to find further information, this link goes into more detail about the 11 plus and shows all the grammar schools in the UK:

<https://www.explorelearning.co.uk/11-plus-exams/what-is-the-11-plus/>

KS3

Key Stage 3 includes Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 and refers to the first three years of secondary education. Students studying KS3, a course covering various subjects, will be well prepared to cope with the increased difficulty of GCSE. Essential national curriculum subjects include English, Math, and Science. This is a link to KS3 National Curriculum: <https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/key-stage-3-and-4>.

In KS4, after KS3, 9 or 10 GCSE subjects will be selected, including mandatory subjects. Therefore, in order to prepare for KS4, KS3 will provide students with a broad curriculum based on important knowledge, understanding, and skills.



Year 7-8

Years 7 and 8 are the introductory stages of KS3 and Secondary school. While it may be hard to acclimatise to the environment of your new school, you will soon feel comfortable with your peers and surroundings as you make new friends, and the staff and students alike welcome you to the school's community.



Year 9

Year 9 is the final year of Key Stage 3 and students usually either choose or start their options for their GCSE qualifications in Year 9. In Year 10, most students study 9 to 10 subjects for GCSE. Therefore, Year 9 is a time to think about and choose which GCSE subjects to study. For GCSE subjects, there are compulsory elements and core subjects, and elective subjects. When you choose the subjects, it is important to consider your interests, elective courses that you can choose at school, and future plans. Math, English, and science are mandatory courses that everyone must complete at GCSE. In addition, you might be able to change GCSE subjects, but changes can lead to personal schedule or thematic conflicts. So, it is good to think deeply and be careful about your choice.

In the Year 9, the workload will be higher than in the Year 7 and Year 8. That is why it is good to make a habit of managing your study time well. If you make a habit of taking time to study during the week, you will be less stressed-out during homework or revising for exams in Year 10 and Year 11 and study healthier.



KS4 & GCSE

Key stage 4 (KS4) contains the years that cover your mocks and GCSEs. Here, is where focus is more important, as you will be learning GCSE content and how to revise and retain important information. In year 9, you would have been introduced to GCSEs when you chose what options you would like to take through your KS4, education – most schools offer the option to change your options if you decide that you don't like them or they are not beneficial to you, but keep in mind there is most often than not a time frame in which you have the chance to do so. Towards the end of year 11, you will be thinking about where you would like to go after KS4 whether that is A-Level or an apprenticeship – these are referred to as your “next steps”. Usually, your school will help and guide you if you are having trouble deciding what is best for you.

Year 10

In year 9, you will have started to explore GCSE content, but now in year 10, lessons will become increasingly focused on this. The main aspect of this year is to adapt to the style of the exam and coursework, depending on your subjects. This can be found on the exam board's website via the specification and past papers.

The exam board is the organisation that is responsible for setting and marking your GCSE exams, these are: AQA (https://www.aqa.org.uk/?gclid=EAlalQobChMlkffm1Nmb9gIVuYFQBh3mDQqHEAAYASAAEgJ8ZPD_BwE), Pearson (<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/home.html>), OCR (<https://ocr.org.uk/>) and WJEC Eduqas (<https://www.eduqas.co.uk/>). Make sure to ask your teacher which exam board you are following, as this can help guide you on your revision more accurately.

This year is particularly important, as you will have mocks in exam conditions, helping to prepare you for GCSEs. If you start to develop good revision habits now, this will help you revise more effectively for year 11 mocks and your actual GCSEs – see what works for you and experiment with different revision techniques! Consider starting a revision timetable to help you keep track of all your subjects (because there are a lot at GCSE). Mocks are equally a useful chance to understand exam timings for each paper, helping to make sure that you stay within the time limits during the real exams too. Stay on top of your homework, coursework, revision and year 10 will be a breeze.

As well as this, in year 10, you may have the chance to take part in work experience. This is a great opportunity to better your understanding of the workplace, all while developing your interpersonal skills and self-confidence. To add to this, you are exploring potential career options, which may influence your post-16 decisions, including university courses, apprenticeships and jobs.

KS4 & GCSE

Year 11



This is the final year in Secondary School and the year where you will be sitting your GCSEs.

Towards the start of Year 11, you will take mock GCSE exams, this is where you will get your predicted grades.

These grades will sometimes be used to determine whether you would be accepted to the places you might consider doing after Year 11, however they do not have as much weight compared to your actual GCSE grades. Predicted grades just allow you to know how you are doing and shows your strengths and weaknesses in the subjects you have chosen.

Everyone in the UK sit the GCSEs at the same time; the exam period would usually be from May to June. The papers are spread out during this period, which allows you to spend an adequate amount of time revising each subject and paper. Some schools, such as Plymouth High, allow study leave, where Year 11s can make a choice about revising at home alone or in a classroom, allowing students more flexible time to study for their upcoming exams.

grading for GCSEs

New grading		Old grading
9	=	A*
8		A
7		
6	=	B
5		C
4		
3	=	D
2		E
1		F
		G
U	=	U

ic. Source: Ofqual



Apprenticeships

After GCSE, you might not be sure if you want to continue with the general style of education OR you can see yourself going further in the path you want to take in life with an apprenticeship qualification. An apprenticeship is a job, where you gain experience and get paid for your hours. By the end of your apprenticeship, you would have gained the right skills and knowledge that you need for your chosen career. You are expected to work above 30 hours a week and an extra day of study at either your workplace, university, college or at home (online)



College

College offers a different learning environment compared to sixth form and will usually offer a wider range of courses at different levels. These colleges are usually called 'Further Education' (FE) colleges. Like sixth form, most colleges offer A Levels, but also have a huge number of other qualifications available in different subjects. Not all colleges offer the same range of courses, so be sure to check what is available at the colleges you may be interested in attending.

One of the main differences between college and sixth form are the timetables. There could be several hours between lessons/lectures and you may not even have to attend a full day; there are some days that may start at 8:30am and not finish until 5pm or later.

There is also a possibility that the students will come from a wide range of ages. You may also be assigned to 'personal tutors', who will help you with any issues you have.

It's important to understanding what learning environment you think works best for you, as you are given a lot more responsibility

KS5 & AS/A Level

The jump from KS4 to KS5 can seem daunting, as you will be met with a wave of new content very quickly. These years in KS5 will be more focused on your specific interests, having chosen 3-4 subjects. This time will also be used to prepare for your post-18 options, for which you will have time to explore and discuss with teachers. KS5 is a much more independent year compared to KS4, so be prepared to take more responsibility for managing your time; finding the balance between independent study to broaden your knowledge on the subjects you enjoy and your personal life.



Sixth Form

The learning environment at Sixth Form will probably not be very different from secondary school, especially if it is shared with students from KS3 and KS4. However, you will notice that your classes will become smaller, you will have free periods and that you will need to take more responsibility over your work. Overall, there is more contact between you and the teachers, supporting you on your A-Level journey, answering your specific questions and queries, due to the focused nature of A-Levels.

Other than the academic pathway, sixth form is an essential opportunity to dedicate your time to extra-curricular interests, such as clubs and leaderships opportunities. Equally, opportunities outside of school are useful, such as volunteering, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and work experience. These can be useful, not only in developing your personal skillset, but also for post-18 applications – every second spent learning outside your lessons, shows the university or manager, for example, your genuine passions.

Sixth form at PHSG has a very well-established support base, who will guide you on your journey during A-Levels and post-18. Feel free to speak to Mr Jenkins (Head of Sixth Form), Ms Mills (Assistant to Head of Sixth Form), Mrs Longford (Careers Leader and Advisor), Mrs Payne (EPQ) and Mrs Lewin (EPQ), as well as your subject teachers to help guide you based on your specific aims. You will also see these teachers during tutorial and PSHE lessons, where you will learn about topics from UCAS to personal finances.

Year 12

Year 12 is the first year of Sixth Form; you will be given more control of your work and time, now with free periods added to your timetable. Some schools, including Plymouth High, will allow students to leave the school site as well, which gives you the opportunity to study at home or elsewhere if you so wish. Whether you are moving schools or staying at your current one, the start of Year 12 is a fantastic opportunity to meet new people. There will also be many extracurricular activities that will be available to Year 12s, such as Young Enterprise, Head Student Team, House Captains, Prefects, Subject Captains and so many more. It is a wonderful way to get yourself involved with the school and gain more experience in skills such as leadership, organisation, and time management.

You will begin learning the subjects you have chosen as soon the school year starts. There is a lot more content given in a smaller amount of time at A-Level than compared to GCSE, so make sure to use your free periods and time out side of school wisely to ensure that you keep on top of the workload. If you find that you are not enjoying a particular subject, you are initially able to switch to a subject that you may find more enjoyable. It is advised that if you want to change subjects, that you do so before the start of the spring term (January) as it is difficult to pick up a new subject halfway through the year.

You will do mock exams of your chosen subjects with what you have been taught so far. In Plymouth High, the mocks are often straight after the Easter holidays and will usually last for a few weeks. The mocks can help you get a general idea of your progress in each subject as well as predicted grades. If you have chosen to do EPQ, your project would be due during the June-July period.

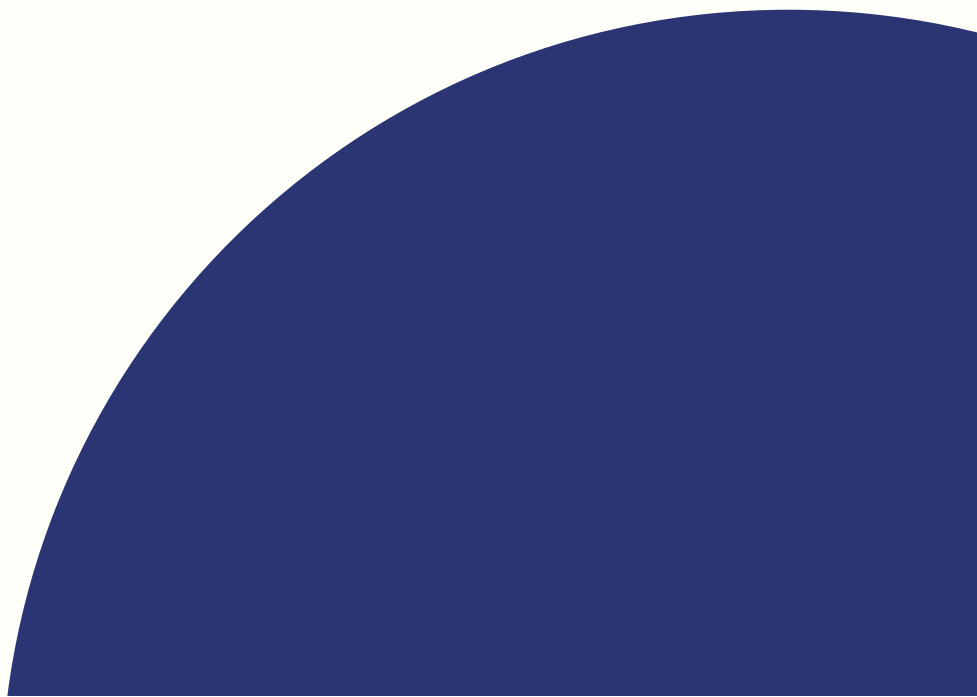
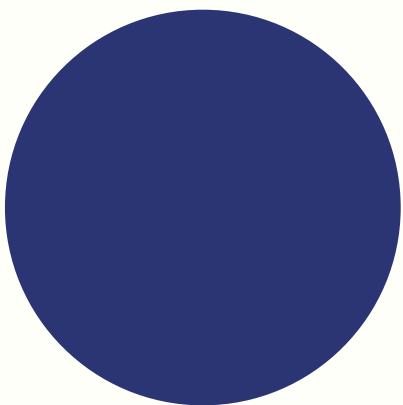
Year 12 Continued

There is also the opportunity to undertake work experience towards the end of the summer term. This would not be too different from work experience in year 10, but there may be a possibility you will be allowed to do tasks that are more labour intensive now that you are older and more experienced.

There will be some talk about what to do after sixth form, however it will not be as heavily focused in Year 12 compared to Year 13. There will be the introduction of UniFrog, which is a platform to help you on your path to university, the courses that you may be interested in taking, MOOCs and other helpful information. Do not stress too much about what you are going to do after sixth form; feel free to talk to your head of sixth form, subject teachers, tutors, and career advisors if you want some advice on what path you should take post 18.

Year 13

Year 13, the final year of school (for some). This proves to be the toughest time for many students, with all the applied pressure of university applications and final exams.



Post 18

Now that you have reached the end of your college, sixth form or apprenticeship, there are more opportunities post 18. There is the opportunity for you to take a gap year, doing a university course, advanced higher or degree apprenticeship, further or higher education at a college, a job with training and/or study, internship, or work experience placement, etc. Unlike previous years, you are given a lot of freedom with what you do with your education and the career path you want to take.

University

A university is a higher education and research institutes that award degrees in various academic fields. Universities generally offer both undergraduate and graduate courses in other schools or undergraduate departments.

Universities provide opportunities to explore their favourite topics in depth, creating a perfect foundation for jobs they are interested in. Vocations such as medicine, nursing, architecture, law, and medicine require more professional degree than other professions, so you can learn these professional contents at university. That is why people gain in-depth knowledge of the subject they choose. In addition to having the opportunity to gain knowledge, you can develop transferable skills such as communication, presentation, and problem-solving skills while also developing the ability to work as a member of the team.

Learning to listen to others, express ideas, and cooperate for a common goal is useful in a variety of working situations, such as cooperating with others in a specific project or contacting customers.

You can learn these things through university group projects. In addition to group projects, you must communicate with a variety of people, such as class presentations and participation in university clubs, and all these experiences will learn how to communicate with various people and express ideas in a way that everyone can clearly understand. These will help a lot later when working with others or talking to colleagues or customers.

Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is another form of training and furthering your education – it is a **nationally recognised qualification**, expanding everyday into more fields of work. The main difference compared to other courses is that apprenticeships are paid jobs, while simultaneously learning. This time is usually split with at least 20% in a classroom learning. During this apprenticeship, you get holiday leave with paid employment and are also officially assessed.

An apprenticeship could be for you if you are starting out in your career pathway and are interested in a more hands-on experience to learning.

There are different levels of apprenticeships, but consider that some may need previous GCSE qualifications or similar qualifications in English and maths.

Level 2/intermediate apprenticeships are the equivalent to GCSEs, Level 3/advanced are the equivalent to A-Levels, Level 4,5,6,7 is the equivalent to a foundation degree and beyond and degree level apprenticeships/ level 6 and 7 are equivalent to a bachelor's or master's. If you are in sixth form, you may be more interested in higher and degree apprenticeships.

Your time “off the job” is an essential part to training. It can consist of teaching theory (e.g., lectures), practical support (e.g., Industry visits) and learning support/assignments. This can happen in the work environment or externally, such as colleges or local universities. This and timings depend on what the provider feels is most appropriate.

As mentioned before, you will receive pay as part of an apprenticeship. If you are between 16 and 18 or in the first year of an apprenticeship, you qualify for an apprentice rate. If you are 19 and over and have completed the first year of an apprenticeship, you qualify for the National Minimum Wage. However, some employers also offer a competitive salary. Apprenticeships do not have student loans or tuitions fees, as they are funded by the employer and the government.

You can find apprenticeships on the government apprenticeships website:

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/apprentices/browse-apprenticeships>

Information from:

Apprenticeships.gov.uk. n.d. What is an apprenticeship?. [online] Available at:

<<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/influencers/what-is-an-apprenticeship>> [Accessed 26 February 2022].

Other

A gap year is a year in between periods of study and is often done at 18 after level 3 qualifications, such as A Levels. You can take time off to explore work experiences, skills, and different areas of work you may be interested in. This can be done through traveling, taking online courses, working at a paid job, internship and many more. You can gain more independence, achieve new skills and hobbies, help save money and decide what is the best path for you to take afterwards.

Another path you can take is internship. An internship is an agreement that an individual will work for a company for a set period, often between one month to a year. Whether you are doing a part-time or full-time job and if you are paid depends on the company you will be working with. It is a wonderful way to gain work experience in the field of work you are interested in and to also help you decide on what career path is best suited for you.

Rather than staying in full education, you may want to start looking for work you can do. It is advised to find work where you can keep learning as you work; you are more likely to develop and use skills that can lead to more pay in the future. This is also a great way to gain new skills, experiences and future career path.

Advice from Heads of Years

Mr Jenkins – Head of Sixth Form

Transition into year 12

You are expected to put at least as many hours into your A level subjects outside lessons as you would in lessons. A levels require a real commitment to knowledge retention due to the sheer volume of it. You will be expected to use study periods to reinforce taught content, as well as develop a deeper understanding of the topics. There is also a real focus on reading and writing skills, therefore you will need to spend time out of lessons practicing these skills relevant to the specific exam boards as they will ultimately determine your exam success.

What is 100% effort:

- Attending lessons even when you may not be feeling 100%.*
- Reinforce taught content using flash cards, circle maps etc. Focus on weak areas.*
- Using the supporting resources and lesson material to prepare for upcoming lessons, therefore being more able to contribute to classroom discussion and debate.*
- Practicing questions from past papers and using subsequent mark schemes to understand indicative content, analysis and evaluation.*
- Completing the summer study task start of the course to a high standard to showcase your thirst and drive for the subject.*
- Reading news articles and keeping a record of them.*
- Meeting homework deadlines.*

The best way to view sixth form is like a full time job, this way you will utilise your free time in the best environment possible where support is on hand. This will leave you time outside of the school day to undertake all of the other commitments like part-time work, sport and catching up with friends.

Year 9 into Year 10

Miss Boyle – Head of Year 10

This is now the time that you have chosen your options and start the GCSE journey. It is important that you are aware of how the next two years are structured in each of your subjects and how they are assessed. Make sure you know the exam board each subject are following so you can start to access the correct revision materials. Being organised is very important so make sure of a system of how to manage deadlines. Whether this is using an app, your phone calendar and any other way, make sure it is kept up to date.

The step up from Key Stage 3 to Key stage 4 can be daunting but make sure you communicate with your teachers and tutor of any worries or concerns and they always have the time to go over these things.

Advice from Heads of Years

Mrs Banks - Head of Year 8

Joining KS3 is an exciting time, whether it is coming from primary school having passed your 11+ and receiving a high quality transition or joining us from a different school. Your focus in year 7 is establishing friendships and managing change. Year 8 is about exploring school experiences and finding your strengths in subjects. Year 9 is about enjoying your final year in KS3 before making the all important options for your GCSE's. Our top tips are putting yourself out there to make meaningful relationships and extending your curriculum by making the most of the extra curriculum opportunities.



Conclusion

This is the information about all school systems. We hope you have obtained the information you want through this booklet and hope it helps you make the best decision for you.