

# PURCELL PARENT NEWSLETTER

Wednesday 22nd May 2024

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It's been a hectic and exhilarating half-term with almost too many highlights to mention. As was circulated recently, we are delighted that the quality of work and our reputation and status within the UK has been reflected in The King's decision to remain as the School's patron. It is an important and very visual statement of our value to the UK's cultural landscape. As I write, we are looking forward to welcoming a delegation of staff and students from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music Middle School who will be spending two days with us and taking part in classes, concerts and workshops. We have recently become official institutional partners with Shanghai Conservatory of Music, China Conservatory of Music and the Central Conservatory of Music (Beijing) so this visit is part of our new commitments to work more closely together.

In other news, we have been very impressed with the overall commitment of Year 11 and Year 13 students to their preparation for exams. We have seen a great deal of self-motivated and self-directed revision going on with revision groups springing up all over the place. I hope (and am sure) that their hard work will pay off.

On a personal note, I was sorry that unforeseen family circumstances meant that I needed to postpone my performance of JS Bach's monumental Goldberg Variations. This is to be rescheduled into the first full week of the autumn term - more details to follow in due course.

## Term Dates

Please note that the term dates for academic years 24-25 and 25-26 are published on the website. You can find them [here](#). I recently wrote to all international families reminding them that we cannot agree to regular and routine early starts and late finishes - not least because there can be visa implications in some cases. You will read a little further down of new, tighter attendance reporting we will be required to undertake by the Government

and so it seems timely to remind everyone that we do expect all students to attend school for all of the the days that the school is in session unless they are ill or have a legitimate cause to be absent that the school can report as an authorised absence. One of the great benefits (and value) of our school is that we run a wide range of musical activities and instrumental lessons right up until the very last day of the academic year. This is the reason we need Year 11

and 13 to continue to attend school, even after their exams have finished. I therefore ask for your continued support in ensuring that arrangements are in place to ensure students attend until the last day of term. Please note the term dates now and make your travel plans accordingly.

# Attendance

Parents should be aware of an important update regarding school attendance regulations which are effective from August 19, 2024. This new statutory guidance emphasises the pivotal role of regular school attendance in your child's educational journey and overall well-being. While our school already has robust policies in place, it's crucial to align with these updated regulations to ensure the best educational experience for every student.

## Key Points of the New Guidance:

- **Legal Requirement:** Every child of compulsory school age must receive a full-time education suitable for their age, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. Research consistently shows that regular attendance is linked to improved academic outcomes and personal

development.

- **Our Commitment:** We will continue to prioritise student attendance and will conduct a comprehensive review of our attendance policy to ensure compliance with the new guidance. This includes addressing areas such as monitoring and intervention strategies to support students with irregular attendance patterns.

## What We Need from You:

- **Check Holiday Dates:** Please refer to our school's published [term dates](#) when planning vacations to minimise disruptions to your child's education. This is especially important regarding our international students so that we can ensure flights are booked at times that do not impact term time.
- **Adhere to Our Absence**

**Policy:** If your child needs to miss school for any reason, please submit a detailed absence request at least 14 days in advance to [studentabsence@purcell-school.org](mailto:studentabsence@purcell-school.org).

- **Support Attendance:** Encourage your child to attend school regularly and arrive on time each day. Consistent attendance not only benefits your child academically but also helps them develop important life skills such as responsibility and time management.

We are committed to working together to support your child's education. For more detailed information, please refer to the full government guidance [here](#). Should you have any questions or concerns regarding attendance, please don't hesitate to reach out to Tom Burns, Vice-Principal.

# Assessment Week: June 10-14th

The academic mock exams for Year 10 and 12 students will take place during the week beginning 10th June. For Year 10, the core subjects will be conducted in the gym, ensuring that students experience a realistic exam environment. Similarly, Year 12 students will sit most of their subjects in either the gym or the hall, maintaining exam conditions throughout. These mock exams serve multiple purposes. Firstly, they provide students with an opportunity to familiarise

themselves with the exam process, helping them prepare for their upcoming exams next year. By going through this experience, students can gain confidence and develop effective strategies to excel in future exams.

Secondly, the mock exams allow teachers to assess students' progress accurately. By evaluating their performance halfway through the course, teachers can identify areas where students may need additional support

or intervention. This diagnostic information enables teachers to tailor their instruction to meet individual needs effectively.

To ensure students are well-prepared for the mock exams, subject teachers will provide specific information about each paper, including guidance on what topics to revise over the half-term break. This targeted approach enables students to focus their efforts and maximise their learning potential.

# Grand Summer Concert

## Thursday 27th June - hurry to buy tickets!

There is going to be a huge range of events at the end of this term, both at school and in exceptional outside venues. At this stage I'd like to encourage you particularly to buy tickets for the Grand Summer Concert on Thursday 27th June at Southwark Cathedral. This significant evening will mark the last concert that Edward Longstaff will conduct as a member of staff after 31 years of service. For Beethoven's 9th Symphony we have assembled a choir of over 100 alumni to sing with 30 of our singers, alongside our 60-strong orchestra. The global superstar organist Wayne Marshall will also play *Poulenc's Organ Concerto in G minor*, conducted by Paul Hoskins. The whole school will attend

at this magnificent riverside venue on one of the longest days of the year. It should be a truly memorable day.

Performers will leave school in two stages by coach after an early lunch, and we will organise additional transport for the student audience to leave at 4:30pm. Those students will eat a packed tea close by to the Cathedral before watching the concert and travelling back to school at approx. 9:30pm.

We will be taking day students who are performing, but for complex logistical reasons we are unfortunately not able to offer transport to day students to attend as audience. Complimentary tickets will be

available for those students however, and parents can buy tickets to accompany them. We very much hope to see as many of you there as possible.

More information will be available about the Jazz and Funk concert at the Watford Palace Theatre on Wednesday 3rd July soon. Tickets are available from the [Palace Theatre website](#).

## Safeguarding Update

It is important that all adults who come into contact with young people maintain an awareness of the changing world they live in, in order to best safeguard them from harm. There are plenty of places that you can visit to learn more, as well as a number of factsheets that we have created and shared for parents and guardians [on our website](#). Please do have a look and if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us by email: [safeguarding@purcell-school.org](mailto:safeguarding@purcell-school.org).

All schools in the UK have recently been sent information from the National Crime

Agency, raising awareness of the recent rise in reporting of financially motivated sexual extortion (a type of online blackmail often known in the media as 'sextortion'). This type of crime involves an adult offender (often from an organised crime group based overseas) threatening to release nude or semi-nude images and/or videos of a child or young person, unless they pay money, or meet another financial demand, such as purchasing a pre-paid gift card. Victims of any age and gender can be targets, however a large proportion of cases have involved male victims aged 14-18.

A child or young person is never to blame if they have been a victim. Offenders will have tricked, groomed and/or manipulated them into sharing an image. You can find out more about sextortion in our latest factsheet, which also contains links to other agencies who can offer help and support when necessary. We continue to educate our students about how to recognise financially motivated sexual extortion attempts and how to protect themselves online, as well as understanding healthy and unhealthy behaviours within relationships.

# “Let’s All Talk Mental Health”



There have been some excellent sessions over at the “Let’s All Talk Mental Health” hub since Purcell joined. These include:

- **Teenagers & Sleep** - Dr Faith Orchard
- **Tackling Low Self-Esteem in Teens** - Dr Gemma Allison
- **Helping Teens with Exam Stress & Pressure** - Dr Maryhan
- **Helping a Teen Who Self-Harms** - Dr Russell Woodhead
- **Autism in Teens** - Dr Jane Gilmour
- **Is Your Teen Struggling with School Avoidance** - Dr Sarah-Jane Knight

These programmes are all available for you to watch on Catch-Up with your free Purcell

School Access Pass. If you have registered previously, this is the easy access link: [Let’s All Talk Mental Health hub](#).

If you haven’t registered before, please follow this link: [Purcell Access](#). Please email the team at LATMH HELP if you would like help accessing the hub.

## A TASTER OF MONDAY EVENING LIVE SESSIONS IN JUNE

### Why does my teen hate me so much?: Monday 3rd June 8pm

Join the discussion with Clinical Psychologist Dr. Sarah-Jane Knight on managing challenging teenage behaviours, from moodiness, angry outbursts, and rule breaking to effective communication and family support.

### Substance Abuse and Vaping: Keeping Your Teen Safe This Summer: Monday 17th June 8pm

With the help of the incredible Fiona Spargo-Mabbs, Founder of DSM Foundation, you will learn about the substances available to young people today including vapes, their effects, risks, and warning signs, along with practical strategies to keep teens safe this summer and a Q&A session to address your concerns.

We hope that you find these sessions useful.

With all good wishes

Paul Bambrough  
Principal

