



5 October 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

Headteacher Update – Week 5A

I hope this update finds you well. It continues to be a very busy period within the school community. There is a great deal of fantastic learning happening within our classrooms, but also lots of different opportunities for all our students to access and engage with beyond the classroom. I would like to take a moment to thank all our members of staff who continue to provide such enriching activities.

My first important message within my update is regarding the school toilets. Thank you to those parent/carers who have contacted me at the school to share feedback with me; I would like to provide clarity for everyone on this matter.

Toilet facilities within our school community remain open throughout the school day. No student is ever denied access to the toilet at any point throughout the school day. We have taken the approach to increase staff presence around the areas where the toilets are located; this is a supportive measure to ensure all students can safely access the facilities, including at the start and end of the day, during breaks and lesson transition.

We continue to encourage all students to access the toilet facilities **during breaks or during the lesson transition**. Whilst I acknowledge that not all children will require the toilet during these periods, we are asking them to organise themselves to avoid having to come out of lessons. Ultimately, if we are going to fulfil our ambitions for our children, then we need them to be in lessons, accessing their learning. Visiting the toilet during lessons should be the **exception**, rather than the norm.

However, we have a clear system in place to support any child that requests to use the toilet facilities during a lesson. Staff members will issue the student with a toilet visit lanyard prior to them leaving the classroom, and will record this on ClassCharts. Students are expected to return to lesson within 5 minutes. We are therefore able to monitor the number of times children are visiting the toilet during lessons, and this is followed up by having private conversations with the parent/carers of children who are repeatedly visiting the toilet during lesson times. This is important as we have to recognise that every time a student leaves and re-enters the room, this causes an element of disruption to the learning of everyone. I have made it clear in previous correspondence that we expect lessons to be free from disruption.

At Plymstock School we place a great emphasis on supporting all our students to develop into competent and skilled readers at the same time as developing a passion and love of reading. It has been wonderful seeing so many of our Year 7's enjoying the library and also engaging in all our reading opportunities, including the Forensic Reading programme that is delivered during tutor time. Finally, we have been very impressed with the manner in which the Year 7 students have approached their NGRT (*New Group Reading Test*). This is a bi-annual test; the second test will be in March to assess the Year 7s progress with reading. You will receive the results of the reading test via the Y7 Progress Check.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all for your support in ensuring your child continues to consistently meet our CORE expectations regarding our uniform, behaviour, punctuality, and conduct standards. We have seen a noticeable difference within our school community as our students have committed to greater effort in organising themselves; this is especially true with

punctuality to lessons, which has resulted in students have more learning time - which can only be a positive thing!

However, I would also like to share that, disappointingly, we have seen an increase in the number of students who are conducting themselves with a lack of respect towards other students and towards members of staff. I expect students to respond politely and respectfully to any member of staff who makes a reasonable request to them. I do not expect nor will tolerate any student who conducts themselves in a way that is defiant and rude. I must make clear that this type behaviour will not be condoned or tolerated, and leaders will follow this up with appropriate outcomes, including, if required, issuing a fixed term suspension.

I continue to kindly ask for your commitment in working with us to maintain the high standards that we expect from all of our students and that they conduct themselves within our school and wide community with respect.

Celebration

Congratulations to Year 11 student Ava, who recently took part in the British Gymnastics National competition in Birmingham and was crowned champion, receiving a Gold medal in the tumbling event.

Our football teams have also started the academic year with some very impressive results against some strong opposition in the early stages of the English Schools FA National Cup competitions. The under 14 girls team overcame Stoke Damerell Community College 5-0 to progress into the next round, but the most impressive victory has been from our Under 13's, who overcome Eggbuckland Community College with a 3-0 victory. Eggbuckland have a rich history in the competition, having been crowned national champions in the past. Our students will now progress to play St Cuthbert Mayne School in the next round.

Moving away from the sports field, we would like to recognise the wonderful achievement of one of our Year 12 students, Mehrshad, who was awarded first place in The Inette Austin-Smith Work Experience Competition 2023.

Looking ahead...

Thursday 5 October 2023 – Year 7 Tutor Information Evening

Thursday 5 October 2023 – Duke of Edinburgh Gold Qualifier

Friday 13 October 2023 – Year 11 Progress Check 1

Friday 20 October 2023 – Year 12 Progress Check 1

Friday 20 October 2023 – End of Autumn Term 1

I would like to thank everyone who continues to contact us to share positive feedback and also ideas about how we could improve further.

Thank you for your continued support of Plymstock School.

Yours faithfully



Alan Yendell
Headteacher

