

PURCELL PARENT NEWSLETTER

26th March 2024

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you all, once again, for your continued support, enthusiasm and commitment to all we do here for your young people. Whilst this has been a short term, it has been a really packed term with more highlights than I can begin to list here. So many students have contributed so much to enrich the lives of our community and their versatility, enthusiasm, skill and ambition are a daily inspiration. I am so proud of everything they achieve, whether this is musical, academic or social and I know that you feel the same.

One of the things I have been particularly pleased about this term is a very high level of student satisfaction. Whether we ask for feedback through Student Council, via various student surveys, through Student Leadership engagement, House Meetings or simply through informal conversation, the mood “on the ground” is very positive at the moment.

Mobile Phones

In February, the Government published new guidance on prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the school day (the guidance can be read [here](#)).

The School’s leadership team is currently considering a new school-wide policy on mobile phone use which is likely to be implemented in September 2024. However, irrespective of the new guidance, we have been experiencing an increase in mobile phone related (and enabled) issues amongst the younger years in school and are concerned about the distracting and potentially addictive nature of phones on our younger students when we are trying to enable them to develop good working and social habits. Therefore, in advance of a wider school

policy, we will not be allowing any student in Years 7-9 to use their mobile phone during the working day (including breaks and lunchtimes) from the start of next term. This is already the case for most boarders. All students, including Day Students, will need to hand their phones into House at the start of the school day (or to Reception, if they arrive late) and may collect it from House when the formal school day ends. Boarders will continue to have access at agreed times to enable them to contact parents in the evenings and on weekends. Should you need to contact a student urgently during the school day, please contact the School Office or the House Staff who will ensure that any message is passed on to them. Any student found to be using a mobile phone,

refusing to pass a phone over, retaining a second phone for use during the day, will have the phone confiscated and/or may have a sanction applied. The only exceptions will be where the phone is used for the management of medical conditions and our Medical team will already know of any who fall into this category.

We will then roll out the second phase of restricted use to years 10-13 in September. I hope that all parents will support us in addressing what is becoming an increasingly persistent and pervasive problem amongst young people.

Study Leave Arrangements

Students in Years 11 and 13 will be sitting public exams this year, as will Physicists in Year 12, and in order to give them as much support as possible until the examinations are complete we will be adopting a system of structured study until the May half term. Please be aware that we need to have as much notice of student absence from school as possible in order to arrange instrumental lessons, rehearsals and other activities and **we must have all absence requests in the usual fashion, by emailing studentabsence@purcell-school.org at least two weeks in advance.** Specific details about individual year groups can be found below, but if you have any queries please email the indicated member of staff with any academic queries, or Mrs Mitchell and the houseparent teams for your child's respective boarding houses for any other matters.

Year 11 (m.long@purcell-school.org)

Up until half term:

- Year 11 students will be required to attend all timetabled classroom lessons until half term. Where exams in any given subject have finished, the lesson time will be given over to supervised revision.
- Students who have an afternoon examination on any given day are excused attendance from lessons after break on that day.

After half term:

- After half term, teachers will be on hand in classrooms during timetabled lessons, such that students can access academic support and supervised, quiet revision spaces.

It is the expectation that independent revision during the taught day takes place inside; in classrooms, practice rooms, the ICT room or in bedrooms (after break only) - where academic resources and support are more readily available, and the formal setting promotes better concentration. All students should be out of the boarding house between breakfast and morning break.

After half term, parents of boarding students may seek permission for their children to be absent from school on study leave (with parents or guardians), in longer gaps between examinations and music commitments. Permission should be sought in the usual way, using the studentabsence@purcellschool.org email address **at least two weeks in advance.**

We expect that:

- Students board in house on the night before a morning exam.
- Students continue to fulfil their musical commitments, including attending scheduled instrumental lessons and rehearsals. As always, good communication is crucial in

resolving possible clashes and enabling appropriate absences to be sanctioned.

Year 12 - Physics Only (z.szafranski@purcell-school.org)

Tuesday 30th April, Thursday 16th May and Thursday 6th June:

- Year 12 Physics students are required to attend all timetabled classroom lessons.
- Students will be excused attendance from lessons after break on each day. Tutorials and morning lessons must be attended.

Year 13 (z.szafranski@purcell-school.org)

Up until half term:

- Year 13 students are required to attend all timetabled classroom lessons until half term. Where exams in any given subject have finished the lesson time will be given over to supervised revision.
- Students who have an afternoon examination on any given day are excused attendance from lessons after break on that day.

After half term:

- After half term, teachers will be on hand in classrooms during timetabled lessons, such that students can access academic support and supervised, quiet revision spaces.

It is the expectation that independent revision during the taught day takes place inside; in classrooms, practice rooms, the ICT room, Sixth Form Common Room, or in bedrooms (after break) - where academic resources and support are more readily available, and the formal setting promotes better concentration. All students should be out of the boarding house between breakfast and morning break.

We expect that:

- Students board in house on the night before a morning exam.
- Students continue to fulfil their musical commitments, including attending scheduled instrumental lessons and rehearsals. As always, good communication is crucial in resolving possible clashes and enabling appropriate absences to be sanctioned.

Study leave after half term would thus work as follows:

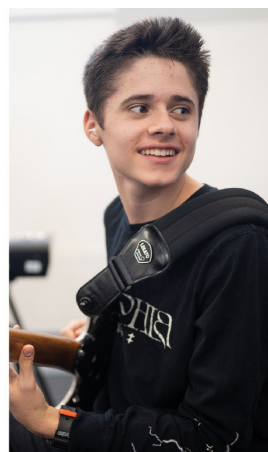
- **Academic Lessons**
Classroom teaching staff will remain available in their timetabled lessons

until all examinations in their subject have been completed. Staff can require specific students to attend classes if necessary, or offer general revision/ drop-in sessions

- **Day Students**
Day Students would remain at home except for specific examinations or timetabled lessons (including instrumental lessons), or to use the specified study spaces within the school. They must sign in and out as usual, but should not be coming and going over the course of a day (once in they should expect to remain in until they have finished their last commitment of the day)
- **Boarders**
Boarders who remain in school are required to adhere to the usual school routine (be up and signed in with house staff at 8am, and be out of house until morning break). Study spaces will be made available to boarders who remain in school. Boarders may not leave the school site other than at the usual times (Monday - Sunday). Boarders who opt to

study at home **must** liaise with their houseparent to ensure the school know when they will be onsite and when they will be at home. Boarders must ensure that they sign in and out on each occasion of authorised home study.

A series of musical activities will be arranged for the period following exams, which will include students from both Year 11 and Year 13. Schedules and list of participants will be discussed with students and advertised in the first half of the summer term.



Wednesday 17th April, 7pm: Goldberg Variations

I hope that some of you will be able to join me at 7pm on Wednesday April 17th in the CP Hall when I give a performance of Bach's monumental Goldberg Variations. Personally, I feel it's important to put my head over the parapet at least once a year and put myself in the students' own shoes to demonstrate

that I do genuinely understand what it means to get up in front of a crowd to perform. So this is my annual offering - for better or worse (possibly the latter)! It might not last 24 hours (like the Organathon did) but it certainly packs in more than 24 hours worth of danger, angst and anxiety into the 80 or so minutes it lasts!!

I can't promise the levels of virtuosity we saw on display at last week's Piano Department concert, but I can at least offer the (sadly) rare opportunity to hear this great work played on the instrument for which it was conceived. As usual, the performance will be followed by a short drinks reception.

With all good wishes



Paul Bambrough
Principal

