

# PURCELL PARENT NEWSLETTER

Monday 7th July 2025

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Another academic year draws to a close and what a year it has been! Almost every year without exception is a year of extraordinary achievements and the same is true of this year. The level of activity is quite astounding. During the course of this academic year we have given 226 concerts, in venues small and large; we have hosted 34 masterclasses; we have regularly coached 35 chamber ensembles and 10 session bands and Jazz ensembles. Then there are numerous large ensembles meeting weekly and every student in Years 7-11 have had weekly performance classes. On top of all this we have delivered a staggering 850,000 minutes of one-to-one instrumental teaching! Running parallel to all this “official” activity, there are all the student-led bands, ensembles, jam sessions and other creative initiatives which just spring up as a consequence of being together in such a creative environment. Year 13 students have had another year of fantastic success in conservatoire auditions and we also have a “bumper” year for Oxbridge entrance with five students winning places at either Oxford or Cambridge.

Academically, I’ve been so impressed with the way in which our Year 11 and 13 students have been prepared for their public examinations. This has been one of the smoothest exam seasons I can ever remember and I was so very impressed with the work ethic of students in the lead up to the exams.

Boarders have also had one of their busiest years with the very significant expansion of co-curricular provision including a wide range of sporting/active recreation alongside a significantly increased number of activities and socials.

As always, I’d like to thank each and every one of you for your continued and unstinting support of the school which is so appreciated. Especially for those of you who are coming to the end of your time as a Purcell parent, I hope that you have enjoyed the journey that you have been on with us and that you feel as proud of what your child has achieved as we are. We wish you all success and happiness in the coming years.

It would be lovely to see those of you who can join us for our end of year celebration and Prize giving on Wednesday at 11am (weather permitting).

# Comings and Goings

At this time of year we always say goodbye to a number of colleagues. I would like to thank the following for all they have given to the school in their time and to wish them well in the future:

- Arta Nika (French, Maternity Cover)
- Anisha Kochhar (Maths)
- Karla Hawkins (Houseparent, Avison)
- Naomi Sullivan (Saxophone, Maternity Cover)
- Lara Agar (Junior Composer)
- Izaak Wong (Resident Graduate Assistant)

There are also two members of staff whose long service and dedication to the School need a special word.

Charles Sewart has been an outstanding Head of Strings for the past 18 years. During this time he has not only shaped, guided and inspired

the lives of countless young string players (many of whom have now taken their rightful places in the musical world), but he has also nurtured and developed a department of the most gifted and distinguished string teachers in the UK. His educational philosophy - most notably his commitment to Chamber Music as the central spine of a musician's training - underpins the musical philosophy of the whole school and his legacy and influence will continue to resonate (quite literally!) for many years to come. Whilst stepping down from the Head of Strings role, I am delighted that Charles will continue teaching at the school.

After 20 years in the critical position of School Nurse, it is almost impossible to think of The Purcell School without Hilary Austin! Hilary has supported, healed, tended, guided, propped up, cajoled

and encouraged thousands of students and staff in her time here. During her time at the School she has overseen the development of the Health Centre from a single room with a filing cabinet, to an outstanding clinically professional unit which has become a valued refuge for many over the years. Hilary has also developed a superb network of relationships with other community health care services to which, owing to the high esteem in which she is held by them, the School has unrivalled access in a highly privileged way. Her expertise, compassion, and incredible ability to remain calm in any crisis has made her an invaluable member of the school and parent community. Having taken the decision to retire, we wish Hilary all the very best and wish her all happiness in the adventures to come.

## Avison House: New Houseparent

We are sad that Karla Hawkins is moving on from the school at the end of the year and are grateful for all the work she has undertaken in Avison House.

We are delighted to welcome Phillip Scriven as the new Houseparent who will join us in September. He will continue to be supported in House by Christian Caliendo and Olena Bilash. A career teacher, Phillip brings with him 25 years of pastoral understanding of this

age group, having previously worked as Head of Years 7 & 8 in two prep schools, in addition to identical boarding Houseparent roles in three others. He has spent 15 years as a boarding inspector with the ISI and holds the highest accreditation from the Boarding Schools' Association. Returning to his roots, Phillip went to school locally in Moor Park and, before teaching, worked as an ambulance paramedic in North London. He is looking forward

to the pastoral challenges of working in a highly specialised environment and establishing a palpable home-from-home experience for our students, encouraging them to be the best version of themselves. He is aided and abetted by his wife Michele, who works as Head of Boarding at a nearby prep school, together with Jacques, their 14 year old Jack Russell terrier.

## Last Day of Term, Wednesday 9th July

A reminder to please access the site via the rear gate on Bushey Mill Lane. The whole

school assembly is at 11am on the lawn in front of Avison House and the BBQ is at

midday. The School closes at 3pm.

## New Year Recital

Principal Paul Bambrough will be giving his annual “New Year Organ Recital” on Wednesday 10th September at 7pm in the CP Hall. The evening will be hosted by the Chair of Governors, Dr Bernard

Trafford and introduced by The Purcell School Ambassador HSH Dr Donatus, Prince of Hohenzollern. The recital will be followed by a drinks reception for all guests. This is very much a “family affair”

open to all students, staff, families and friends and will hopefully be a nice way to celebrate the start of a new academic year.

## Academic Focus and Summer Preparation

Our students have shown exceptional dedication to their academic studies this year, balancing their academic work with the many musical commitments that make our school so unique. Their ability to maintain focus and achieve such high standards - particularly at exam levels - has been truly impressive and a credit to their determination and resilience.

For those students wishing to continue their progress over the summer break, and we do encourage this, academic teachers will be uploading revision resources and homework tasks to Google Classrooms. These materials are designed to consolidate this year’s learning and give students a strong start to the new academic year.

Please do take advantage of this support - and in the meantime, we wish all our students and families a restful, enjoyable, and well-deserved summer break!

## Director of Boarding Update

We have had an incredible year in boarding and have now created the Boarding Newsletter to highlight boarding life at The Purcell School. The second edition will arrive in your inbox at the end of term so please do have a look at all the events and activities that we are enjoying outside of the school day. We were so proud of our Year 13 at their Prom (there

are lots of photos in the Boarding Newsletter) as it was such a wonderful event with lots of dancing, heartfelt conversations, retelling of favourite memories and highlighting how lucky we are to have such incredible young people in our school. We will miss all of them and in boarding we do need to say a huge thank you to our Year 13 boarders for leading the

boarding houses and setting just the right tone, embodying our house values and school ethos in their everyday interactions.

## International Student Exeat/Travel Details

The School publishes its term dates almost two years in advance to enable all families, especially international families, to plan their travel arrangements appropriately. As a school we have a duty to ensure that all students who are enrolled with us maintain acceptable levels of attendance. To be consistent with the School's Attendance Policy, and in line with the School's Terms and Conditions, we do not routinely grant extended periods of absence except in the most extenuating circumstances. **Absence will not be authorised for early departure at the end of term (or half term/exeat) or**

**late return after the start of term (or half term/exeat) to accommodate travel or travel costs.**

We are required under our visa regulations to collect information regarding student travel in a timely manner in order for us to address any concerns that we may have. Information from parents is often not forthcoming and arrangements are made at very late notice. Parents and guardians are expected to communicate all details of travel arrangements and accommodation during the school holidays including flight details, travel to and from school and the contact details

of adults supporting with travel where required. A reminder that students in Year 10 and below must be accompanied by an adult to and from transport hubs (including airports) and the school site. Although we request information for the next exeat or school holiday only, given that term dates are available in advance we would suggest that you provide as much information as possible for the whole term at the start of each session. Forms will be sent out a week in advance of each deadline to parents and guardians by the International Student Coordinator.

## Dates for the Academic Year 2025/26

Autumn Term 2025			
<b>Term Begins</b>	Saturday 6th September <i>between 17:00 and 18:00</i> <i>(Sunday 7th September for returning students)</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 18th August <i>Monday 11th August</i>
<b>Exeat</b>	Thursday 25th September <i>between 16:00 and 18:00</i> <b>Return</b> Sunday 28th September <i>between 18:00 and 20:00</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 8th September <i>Monday 1st September</i>
<b>Half Term</b>	Friday 17th October <i>between 16:00 and 18:00</i> <b>Return</b> Sunday 2nd November <i>between 18:00 and 20:00</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 6th October <i>Monday 29th September</i>
<b>Exeat</b>	Friday 21st November <i>between 16:00 and 18:00</i> <b>Return</b> Sunday 23rd November <i>between 18:00 and 20:00</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 10th November <i>Monday 3rd November</i>
<b>End of Term</b>	Friday 12th December <i>between 13:00 and 15:00</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 1st December <i>Monday 24th November</i>

Spring Term 2026			
<b>Term Begins</b>	Sunday 4th January <i>between 18:00 and 20:00</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 22nd December <i>Monday 15th December</i>
<b>Exeat</b>	Thursday 22nd January <i>between 16:00 and 18:00</i> <b>Return</b> Sunday 25th January <i>between 18:00 and 20:00</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 12th January <i>Monday 5th January</i>
<b>Half Term</b>	Friday 13th February <i>between 16:00 and 18:00</i> <b>Return</b> Sunday 22nd February <i>between 18:00 and 20:00</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 2nd February <i>Monday 26th January</i>
<b>Exeat</b>	Friday 13th March <i>between 16:00 and 18:00</i> <b>Return</b> Sunday 15th March <i>between 18:00 and 20:00</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 2nd March <i>Monday 23rd February</i>
<b>End of Term</b>	Thursday 26th March <i>between 13:00 and 15:00</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 16th March <i>Monday 9th March</i>

Summer Term 2026			
<b>Term Begins</b>	Sunday 19th April <i>between 18:00 and 20:00</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 6th April <i>Monday 30th March</i>
<b>Exeat</b>	Friday 1st May <i>between 16:00 and 18:00</i> <b>Return</b> Monday 4th May <i>between 18:00 and 20:00</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 20th April <i>Monday 13th April</i>
<b>Half Term</b>	Friday 22nd May <i>between 16:00 and 18:00</i> <b>Return</b> Sunday 31st May <i>between 18:00 and 20:00</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 11th May <i>Monday 4th May</i>
<b>Exeat</b>	Friday 19th June <i>between 16:00 and 18:00</i> <b>Return</b> Sunday 21st June <i>between 18:00 and 20:00</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 8th June <i>Monday 1st June</i>
<b>End of Term</b>	Friday 10th July <i>between 13:00 and 15:00</i>	<b>Information Deadline</b> <i>Forms sent out</i>	Monday 29th June <i>Monday 22nd June</i>

# Safeguarding

As we approach the summer holiday, we want to ensure that our students remain safe and supported during the break. Here are some key points and resources to help you keep your children safe:

## Online Safety

- **Monitor Online Activity:** Keep an eye on the websites and social media platforms your children are using. Ensure privacy settings are activated and discuss the importance of not sharing personal information online.
- **Useful Resources:** Websites like [Thinkuknow](#) and [Internet Matters](#) offer great advice on keeping children safe online. Remember we also have a range of factsheets on the parent area of the [school website](#).

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

- **Stay Connected:** Encourage open communication with your children. Ask them about their feelings and listen to

their concerns.

- **Support Services:** Organisations like [YoungMinds](#) and [Childline](#) provide excellent mental health support for children and young people. We also maintain a section on mental health and wellbeing on the [school website](#) with links to organisations and support networks, as well as details on how to access Let's All Talk Mental Health - an online hub for parents, caregivers and family members to support young people through mental health struggles, to understand the issues and to find out more about routes for help.

## Physical Safety

- **Outdoor Activities:** While outdoor activities are great for physical and mental health, ensure your children are aware of road safety, water safety, and the importance of staying within known areas.
- **Emergency Contacts:** Make sure your children

know how to contact you or another trusted adult in case of an emergency.

## Reporting Concerns

- **School Contacts:** Although the school is closed, you can still reach out to our safeguarding team via email at [safeguarding@purcell-school.org](mailto:safeguarding@purcell-school.org) for any urgent concerns.
- **External Help:** For immediate safeguarding concerns, contact your local authorities or the NSPCC Helpline at 0808 800 5000.

We hope you and your children have a safe and enjoyable summer holiday. Remember, safeguarding is a collective responsibility, and together we can ensure the wellbeing of all our students.

Wishing you all a wonderful summer,



Paul Bambrough  
Principal

