

PURCELL PARENT NEWSLETTER

26th March 2026

Dear Parents,

I know that the position of Easter has made this term a week shorter than usual, but it really does seem to have flown by. I think this is mostly because of the monumental number of inspiring projects and the significant number of exceptional achievements that have characterised the term. A read through the “Weekly Highlights” publication can often leave me feeling rather overwhelmed at the scale and level of our students’ achievements - all enabled by their exceptional teachers and the large network of support around them (yourselves included). The School continues to move forwards in every regard and I am delighted to report that the vast majority of students (and their families) report being happy and productive the vast majority of the time - and this, it seems to me, is about as good as one can realistically hope to achieve in any organisation!

As I reflect back upon another term’s outstanding work, I once again find myself in awe and admiration of the ambition, drive, enthusiasm and creativity of both students and staff. It’s often exhausting - but it’s also so invigorating and exciting.

Wishing you all a lovely Easter break and I look forward to seeing you next term.

Paul

Appointment of new Director of Boarding

As you may know, Jane Mitchell is retiring from full time teaching at the end of this academic year after a distinguished career as a pastoral leader. There will be time later in the year to reflect on Jane’s many accomplishments during her time at the school, but for now it gives me great pleasure to introduce her successor. Kirsten McLintock joins us in September and brings with her a wealth of boarding and pastoral experience.

For almost twenty years, Kirsten has lived and worked in boarding communities. She joins The Purcell School as Director of Boarding having previously held the role of Deputy Head (Pastoral & Wellbeing) at Harrow International School Hong Kong and Deputy Head (Student Affairs) at Reigate Grammar School Riyadh. She was Director of Pupil Welfare and Designated Safeguarding Lead at Stowe School and Head of Wellbeing at Bedales School, and began her boarding career as Housemistress at Harrow School Bangkok.

As an educator, Kirsten seeks to challenge, nurture and empower students to discover their authenticity and develop confidence in who they are, enabling them to grow into kind, confident and grounded adults. She believes that when each student feels seen and valued as an individual, they are able to flourish academically, personally and creatively. She is excited to be joining a community where music forms such a central part of identity and expression, and looks forward to working with each student as both a person and a musician within a caring boarding community.

Kirsten enjoys outdoor adventures including hiking, sailing and surfing. She works alongside her certified Pets as Therapy dog, Rosie, who absolutely loves being part of boarding life and is rarely far from where students are gathered.



Appointment of Head of Maths

After many years of successful service to the school, Alex Stone is moving on to pastures new. Following an intensive and rigorous search and process, I am delighted to announce the appointment of Aarti Shah as our new Head of Maths. Aarti is well known to many of you as she has taught here for the last two years and has made a tremendously positive impact on students' experience of maths. I have no doubt that her energy, enthusiasm and vision for the future of the department will result in many exciting projects, dynamic experiences and excellent results.

Academics and Easter Revision

As the Easter break approaches, we want to ensure that our Year 11 and Year 13 students are well prepared for their upcoming summer exams. During this period, our teachers will be providing tailored revision materials for all academic subjects. These materials will include key topics, practice questions and model answers and will be accessible through Google Classroom or as physical copies.

We encourage you to support your child in making the most of these resources by helping them create a balanced study timetable for the Easter holidays. This will ensure they cover all necessary subjects while also allowing time for regular breaks to maintain their wellbeing. It's important that students take time to relax and recharge, as a healthy balance between study and rest is crucial for effective learning and mental health.

Please remind your child of the importance of using the Easter break wisely to revise and consolidate their learning. Encourage them to reach out to their teachers if they have any questions or need further clarification on any topics. We also suggest setting specific goals for each study session and celebrating their achievements along the way to keep them motivated.

We appreciate your continued support and partnership in helping your child succeed. By working together, we can ensure they are well prepared and confident as they approach their exams.

Medical Update Form

Rosie McManus, School Nurse, will be sending out a medical questionnaire shortly so that we can make sure we have up to date medical information for your child(ren). Please make sure you complete this promptly as it is vital that we know about any conditions and allergies.

Study Leave Arrangements

The Purcell School believes that exam-year students are best supported by maintaining attendance at academic lessons until the Summer half term. This year, we are going to follow the same system for study leave as in previous years. For Year 12 Physics students sitting AS Level exams, they will be excused from lessons on the morning of their examinations (from break onwards) for revision purposes but should be in school at all other times.

Year 11

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 13

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 CR, 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 school they should expect to remain here 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 knows 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.

Throughout the summer term, musical activities will continue as usual. Students should expect to attend music block activities, orchestras, session bands and choir as scheduled and

instrumental lessons will continue throughout the exam period. 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. Students are expected to participate fully in all musical activities after the public exam period and parents must send in any requests for absence **at least 2 weeks in advance**. Please note that it may not be possible to give permission for 'time off' if it compromises musical education or other students (and the school) in groups, bands and orchestras. Late requests will be turned down, as we can't accommodate the necessary re-writing of instrumental lesson timetables and rehearsal schedules.

Wellbeing

As the Easter holidays approach, we hope you find some time to rest and recharge together. We are pleased that more parents are engaging with the informative and practical help from leading experts on the Let's All Talk Mental Health hub.

There have been some really helpful sessions on the hub this term. Below is a short summary of some of the key takeaways. If you are already registered, you can access the full sessions via the hub. If not, details on how to register at no cost are included below.

[Overwhelmed Teens \(Anxiety & Avoidance\)](#) – Dr Sarah Jane Knight

Stay steady, go small and focus on what's underneath the behaviour. Calm, consistent parenting builds emotional safety over time.

[Autism & ADHD](#) – Dr Sarah Jane Knight

Look beyond the labels, understanding your child's unique profile and building practical, supportive strategies can make a big difference.

[Screens & Teens](#) – Dr Fin Williams

Stay curious about how your teen is using screens, keep the door open, and stay present. That steady, non-judgemental connection helps them build a healthier relationship with their online world.

[Sleep](#) – Dr Faith Orchard

Support sleep with steady routines and realistic expectations. Where devices take over, sleep is displaced so small, practical changes make the biggest difference.

[Support Teens Affected by Trauma](#): Dr Russell Woodhead

Recovery is possible; consistent safety, understanding and steady relationships help rebuild a young person's sense of trust and safety.

If you click on any of the programme links above and see the message “it looks like you don’t have a ticket”, it may be that your previous access has expired. Please follow the details below to register for your 2025/26 free pass.

Coming up LIVE After Easter

Tuesday 21st April, 8pm - School Anxiety and Refusal: How can parents help?

Monday 27th April, 8pm - Gaming and Internet Issues: When Teens Get Stuck Online.

Each live programme contains 30 minutes of audience Q&A giving you the opportunity to put your questions to the experts.

How to Access

If you are new to the Let’s All Talk Mental Health hub for 2025/26, please register [here](#):

After a few minutes, you will receive an email from Contrast with your hub access. If it does not appear in your inbox, please check your junk folder. You can then visit the hub directly.

For any assistance with access, contact the team at **hello@letsalltalkmentalhealth.co.uk**.

We hope the Let’s All Talk resources continue to support you and your family.