

PURCELL PARENT NEWSLETTER

22nd May 2026

Dear Parents,

I write this looking out at a gloriously sunny morning with the radio weather forecast predicting several very hot and sunny days - not an unwelcome prospect as we head into the half term break. This sudden change in climate (it was freezing just a few days ago!) combined with all the “Silence! Exams in Progress” signs that currently adorn the school’s corridors all point towards the inevitable crescendo towards the end of the academic year. Our students have, once again, managed their busy schedules of concerts, practise and exam preparation admirably, ably assisted and supported by our committed and passionate staff. It is impressive to see how seriously our students take their academic achievements alongside their musical motivations. They will become better musical artists in the long run for being curious and knowledgeable across a wide range of disciplines.

Some of you may be aware that I also Chair the joint MDS School’s group - representing the nine specialist music and dance schools in the UK (including Scotland) who are supported by the MDS scheme (or equivalent Scottish scheme). Over the past 18 months, I have been working with my MDS head colleagues on a political campaign arguing for a much better financial deal from the Government which better reflects today’s costs of delivering the scheme. Over the past decade the MDS scheme has been subjected to annual real term cuts and we now need the Government to step up and support the schools more realistically. Until now, this work has been going on privately and there is no doubt we have made progress, gaining significant support across both Houses of Parliament. However, we are still awaiting a final response from the Government and, despite continued lobbying, the response doesn't seem to be forthcoming. In order to put the Government under more pressure, we may now utilise the media more publicly to raise awareness of the challenges the schools are facing as a result of the underfunding. It is therefore possible that over the coming weeks you may catch sight of some press articles or interviews designed to apply more pressure on the Government. I don’t want any family to be concerned about the language used in any of these interviews - in the “game of politics” it is sometimes necessary to inflate or emotionalise (is this a word?) a situation in order to achieve the result we want. And, as you will know, the

press always have a tendency towards the dramatic, so it may well be that the way they choose to run the story might also have an element of sensationalism about it. But, however the case is presented, there is no need for alarm - we just need to highlight to the Government the very real need to support the scheme at a level appropriate to today's costs.

In more optimistic news, you will see in this newsletter your invitation to our Prizegiving and End of Year Celebration on the last day of term, along with details of how to sign up. This is always a really lovely occasion, so do please put it into your diary now and come celebrate the very many achievements of the school community this academic year.

Wishing you all an enjoyable (and warm) half term.

Best wishes,

Paul

Arthur Felsenstein Competition

Applications to the annual Arthur Felsenstein Award are now open to our **Year 13** students. This competition is generously funded by a donor to the School and awards £5,000 to the winning student. The competition is open to all final year students at Purcell who are proceeding to a music conservatoire, university or equivalent to read music. All instrumentalists and singers are eligible, but unfortunately, not composers.

Students are required to write a maximum of 300 words, addressed to Mr Bambrough and sent to development@purcell-school.org, explaining:

- Why they are applying
- How the award would aid their musical progression
- What impact the funds would have
- How the funds would be used

In addition, students are asked to include details of funding, scholarships or bursaries already offered by their university or conservatoire.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to perform in front of an independent adjudicator on Monday 6th July during the school day.

Full terms and conditions which outline the guidance for applications are being sent to Year 13 students today. Entries must be received by email (to development@purcell-school.org) before **12noon on Friday 19th June** to be considered.

This is a great opportunity to help fund a student's studies next year and I would urge you to encourage your child to apply, if they are eligible. Should students have any questions, they can contact Chris Harbour, Director of Development, on c.harbour@purcell-school.org.

A Reminder of Study Leave Arrangements After Half Term

Please see below for a reminder of study leave arrangements for those in Y11 and Y13. For Y12 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 and 13

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 child 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.

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 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.

Assessment Week W/B 8th June

As our Year 11 and Year 13 students continue their final examinations with calmness and confidence, we are now beginning to look ahead to **Year 10 and Year 12 mock examinations**, which will take place during the week beginning **8th June**. Students will sit their **core subject examinations in the Gym under formal exam conditions**, while **option subjects will take place within normal lessons**. Please find the timetable for core subjects below.

These mock exams are an important opportunity for students to experience sitting examination papers in a more formal setting and to continue developing the routines, organisation and resilience needed for future success. We would encourage students to approach these exams with a positive mindset, focusing on the experience and the learning process rather than aiming for perfection. At this stage, students are only at the halfway point of their two-year GCSE and A-Level courses, and these exams are designed to help identify strengths, areas for development, and build confidence moving forward. Revision materials and guidance will continue to be provided through **Google Classroom** to support students in their preparation.

Monday, 8th	Tuesday, 9th	Wednesday, 10th	Thursday, 11th	Friday, 12th
9:00 Y12 Literature 2hr30		9:00 Y10 Chemistry 1hr15		9:00 Y10 Biology 1hr15
	10:40 Y10 English Language 1hr45	10:40 Y12 Chemistry 2hr	10:40 Y10 Physics 1hr15	
	10:40 Y12 Music 2hr5min			
1:40 Y12 Maths 2hr	1:40 Y10 Maths 1hr30		1:30 Y12 History 2hr30 Y12 Biology 1hr30	

Arrangements for Last Day of Term, Friday 10th July

Parents are warmly invited to join us for our End of Year Celebration and Prizegiving on the last day of term, Friday 10th July, at 11am on the lawn in front of Avison House. This is always a great opportunity for us to reflect on the successes of the past year, to award both musical and academic prizes to students, and to say farewell to those moving on. The assembly will be followed by a buffet reception on the field, to which you are also invited, before the School closes at 3pm.

Further details will be sent out nearer the time.



The Purcell School
for young musicians
Patron: HM The King

Purcell Presents: London 2026

A summer series of concerts across London

Featured Ticketed Events

Pizza Express Chelsea Jazz Concert	23 June 8pm
Milton Court Orchestral Concert	1 July 7.30pm
Last Night of Proms at St Jude's	5 July 7.30pm
Pizza Express Holborn Pop Concert	7 July 8pm

Free Concerts

St James's Church Sussex Gardens	19 June 1pm
St Bride's Church Lunchtime Recital	16 June 1.15pm
St James Piccadilly Lunchtime Recital	26 June 1pm
Proms at St Jude's Lunchtime Recital	29 June 12pm



Discover the next generation of
musicians at purcell-school.org

Scan here for tickets and
further venue information



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THE PURCELL SCHOOL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

WEDNESDAY 1 JULY 2026, 7.30PM
MILTON COURT

PROKOFIEV Symphony No. 1 in D major,
Op. 25 'Classical'

TCHAIKOVSKY Piano Concerto No. 1
Anna Avramidou, piano

SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No. 1 in F minor,
Op. 10

THE PURCELL SCHOOL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PAUL HOSKINS CONDUCTOR

ANNA AVRAMIDOU PIANO

Winner - 2026 Purcell School Concerto Competition,
2025 Cooper International Competition (USA)



BOOK NOW

TICKETS
£22 / £11
(CONC.)

SCAN HERE

