

PURCELL PARENT NEWSLETTER

7th July 2026

Dear Parents,

It seems almost impossible that I am sitting down to write the final Parent Newsletter of this academic year - where has the time gone?

The answer, of course, is that the year has been filled with the remarkable achievements of our students. Whether musically, academically or personally, they continue to inspire us with their commitment, resilience and talent. What an extraordinary year it has been!

There have been countless highlights, both individual and collective. These final few weeks have been especially busy with an extraordinary number of concerts, events, projects and masterclasses taking place each day. The energy, enthusiasm and dedication shown by our students and staff have been nothing short of remarkable.

I was particularly impressed by the way our Year 11 and Year 13 students approached their summer examinations and it was a pleasure to see them celebrating together once the exams had finished. To those students who are now leaving us to begin the next chapter of their education, we send our warmest congratulations and every good wish for the opportunities that lie ahead.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your continued support for which I am deeply grateful. We look forward to continuing that partnership as we support your child(ren) to thrive and to make the very most of their time at the School.

Wishing you and your families a restful, happy and well-deserved summer break.

Paul

Arrangements for Last Day of Term, Friday 10th July

As mentioned in the last Parent Newsletter parents and guardians are invited to join us for the 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. As we are in the middle of another heatwave and there is

no shade on the field please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately, wears a sun hat if necessary and has applied plenty of sun cream.

When you arrive please enter via the rear gate on Bushey Mill Lane unless you require disabled parking in which case please enter via the front entrance. The assembly will be followed by a buffet lunch before the school closes at 3pm.

Changes to Staffing in Avison and Ellington

Alongside some new additions to the boarding team who will be joining us next year (and I will introduce you to them in September), I am pleased to inform you that Ms Paige Corcoran, currently Assistant Houseparent in Sunley, will be moving to become the permanent, residential Assistant Houseparent in Avison, and Mr Christian Calliendo will move across the field to become Assistant Houseparent in Ellington House. Both are looking forward to their new houses.

Fond Farewells

As always at this time of year we say a sad goodbye to a number of valued colleagues.

Jane Mitchell arrived at the school in 2023 as Director of Boarding bringing with her a wealth of experience in education. Under Jane's leadership the school was awarded the illustrious and highly coveted Carnegie Gold Award for Boarding Mental Health - a reflection of the significance of her work strengthening provision in student wellbeing across the school. After 30 years of working in schools, Jane is retiring from full time teaching but will no doubt remain very active across a whole portfolio of interests relating to education and supporting others to grow.

Alex Stone has been Head of Maths here since 2016 and it would be no exaggeration to say that she has transformed maths (and students' enjoyment of maths) beyond all recognition during that time. Alongside her Head of Department role, Alex has been an equally devoted Year 7 tutor. There's no doubt that many students' first experience of the school has been made all the more positive for having Alex as their tutor. Alex heads off to a much sunnier climate - she will be much missed.

Rob Matthews arrived a year after me (in 2019) and was one of my very first academic appointments. Like many of us, Rob is a great music lover and has been a tremendous supporter of the school's music-making. This has been greatly appreciated by students and

colleagues alike who have valued the personal and individual interest he has shown in many of the school community. Rob is relocating and will be teaching in Bristol from September.

Nisha Thakur and **Pippa Forbes**, both of whom have provided such valuable and essential support in Boarding as Resident Graduate Assistants, are moving on to postgraduate studies and we wish them well for their respective studies and future careers.

Joe Shiner (Academic Music) joined the school in 2024 and has brought his wide ranging musical experience as both a performer and an academic to the benefit of all those he has taught. Joe heads off to a new life in Helsinki and he takes with us our very best wishes.

Jianing Kong and **Patsy Toh** have been a vital part of the Keyboard Department since 2010 and 2009 respectively. Both have brought their considerable gifts as both performers and teachers to the school and their students have benefitted hugely from their wisdom, expertise and support. Whilst Patsy is retiring from the school, Jianing is (reluctantly, I believe) leaving owing to the pressure of his many international commitments.

In a land before time, when dinosaurs ruled the world, a young and enthusiastic teacher of music called **Alison Cox** joined the staff of The Purcell School! Well, it may not have been quite that long ago but over a record-breaking tenure, it has become impossible to think of The Purcell School without thinking about Alison Cox. An immensely passionate musician, absolutely and completely devoted to facilitating, enabling and de-mystifying composition for all (and by “all” I really do mean “all”), Alison has not only shaped how composition is thought about and taught here at Purcell, but has done so for both the music industry itself and the nation.

Alison is rightly and justly held in deep, deep affection across the music world and her legacy exists in the continuing work of many hundreds of successful composers and creative practitioners in the music world today. Although Alison is retiring from the school she will continue working with young people across many projects. She will be missed!

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 for any urgent concerns. This email address will be monitored periodically but please be aware that responses may be delayed.
- **External Help:** For immediate safeguarding concerns, contact your local authorities or the NSPCC Helpline at 0800 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.