



## Letter from the Head 18/10/24

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### In this issue; Sixth form, STEM events, Sports tours and lots more....

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to apologise for not sending out a letter last weekend, but I had the pleasure of accompanying the Year 10 and 11 boys on their rugby tour to Gloucester. I will discuss the trip later but it was an action packed weekend which left little time for opening the laptop!

It has been another exciting couple of weeks at PHS, filled with creativity, sporting achievements, and career exploration. I will summarise what has been going on below...

- We have launched our online platform 'Carousel' for daily retrieval homework which has so far proved a huge hit and alongside Sparx is proving to be a much more meaningful style of homework. Completion rates on both platforms are incredibly encouraging with students already hitting the top 5% in the country!
- Student leadership meetings have started in earnest with an initial focus on the charities and good causes each house would like to support this year and ideas around means of fundraising. Tutor representatives have met as a year group, and year group representatives have met with the Senior Student Leadership team (Details can be found [here](#)). I had the opportunity to meet with this group of students on Thursday for a 'working lunch' where we discussed their initial ideas, plans, and aims for this coming year.
- There have been a number of Sixth form events over the last two weeks with parents of Year 13 students attending a meeting with our Head of Sixth form Mrs Lennon to discuss how best to support students through the final few months of A Level study. Year 12 parents attended a welcome meeting this week to outline the plans for the next two years and how to support students making the significant leap from GCSE study to A Levels. All students in the sixth form attended a careers fair at Newbury College to explore potential destinations, courses and apprenticeships that are on offer post sixth form. On Monday, we had a visit from a representative from 'Unifrog' - the platform we use for careers support as well as personal statements and UCAS applications. This session was focussed on guidance for these statements and ensuring students give themselves the best chance of securing their destination of choice.
- For our Year 7 parents just starting their secondary school journey, they had the opportunity to meet with tutors, the SENDCO and Head of Year last week. Mrs Porter also gave a presentation focussed on the Year 7 curriculum, homework platforms, and the varying opportunities on offer at PHS.
- We held a STEM day on Wednesday, where the Year 8s came off timetable for the day and working alongside their tutors, spent time designing and building 'sustainable cities'. The students' application was first class and it was a great opportunity to demonstrate their creativity and ability to work collaboratively on a project.
- Our GCSE and A Level textile students attended the 'Knitting and stitching show' at Alexandra Palace which is always an excellent source of inspiration to students for coursework ideas.
- Fourty rugby playing boys from Year 10 and 11 made the trip to Gloucestershire last Friday for a weekend of rugby and other sports activities. The boys were an absolute credit both on and off the pitch and returned home exhausted on Sunday evening with 3 wins from the 4 games played. Touring is an excellent way in which to develop both 'personally and sportingly' through the varied experiences they provide. This is the first of a number of trips that we have planned. Next up, our netball playing senior girls head to Liddington Hall in Wiltshire in November and we hope they have as enjoyable an experience.



- The last fortnight has seen the 'Spelling Bee' as the focal point of the House Competition. Time was spent last week establishing the strongest speller in each tutor group before Semi finals this week and a grand finale on Thursday. To see students so enthralled with spelling has been delightful and a real testament to the delivery of the competition from Mr Marshall and Mr Gook who were first class presenters!

Sports fixtures have continued in earnest;

- The basketball teams have seen lots of action with festivals for both of our Year 7-9 and 10&11 mixed gender teams. Students have shown up incredibly well in these competitions and managed to win almost every game so far. The U14 boys team also won away at Holne Grange 18-11 and our U16 boys beat Denefield 50-26. Basketball has been a huge success since developing our link with 'Reading Rockets'. With lots of girls and boys fixtures over the coming weeks, more players are more than welcome to attend the various basketball sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Last week Our Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 netball teams made the short journey down to St Barts for a block fixture. Playing in great spirit and with lots of smiles, the girls turned in some superb performances and returned with three wins with just the Year 10s missing out on a 'clean sweep' but playing their part in an enthralling 19-19 draw.
- The Year 7 boys football team continue to show incredible promise with a convincing 11-1 win over Trinity School in the National cup.
- Our Year 7 girls football team took part in a district league evening at St Barts and showed up very well with a win, a loss and three draws!
- Both the Year 7 and 8 rugby teams enjoyed successful evenings in their district fixtures with wins over St Barts and Kennet school.
- The Year 9 girls football hosted a range of local schools in the district league and enjoyed a win, two draws and one loss.
- The Year 9 boys rugby team continue to make excellent progress and played their part in a thrilling 29-29 draw in the county cup with last year's district champions The Downs School - coming down to the last kick of the game, the boys progressed on account of the 'away team' rule. Sadly... this rule is not in place in the National cup, and our Year 10 boys team had a heartbreaking exit from this year's competition after a breathtaking comeback saw the team enjoy a 22-22 draw with rugby giants Marlborough College. The team can be very proud of this achievement, but sadly the 'most tries' rule saw the boys exit on a technicality. Frustrations were taken out on Kennet School on Thursday in a one way encounter in the County Cup.
- Our Senior boys rugby team took on a sixth form team from Reading Grammar School and raced into a 28-7 lead before succumbing to a resounding comeback 33-28. A further great experience for the team.

There is always lots going on at the school, the best way to keep up to date with latest events is via our social media platforms - instagram: @phsnewbury and X (Twitter): @phsnewbury

Wishing you all a lovely weekend,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Marshall', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Headteacher