



# The Priory School, Hitchin

**Excellence in education, for every young person, every day**

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Headteacher: Mr M. Blayney MEd (Cantab)

26<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we approach the end of the Spring Term, I am writing to provide you with some whole-school updates. It is hard to believe that there is only one term left of this academic year and I know that for many of our students, particularly Year 11 and Year 13, this period of time will be crucial in terms of their GCSEs and A-Level examinations. Lots is continuing to happen across the school, and I hope that you find these updates useful and informative.

- Media, Business, and Communications Department:** As many of you will know, schools nationally are facing significant budgetary pressures. Whilst at TPSH we work hard to effectively manage our budget, we are not immune from these pressures and the need to make efficiencies where we can in order to preserve the breadth and rigour of our curriculum offer. One such efficiency that we have made is to merge our teaching of Business Studies into a new department called 'Media, Business, and Communications'. This department will be headed by Dr Sala Diaz and any enquiries relating to this department after Easter should be directed to him.
- Parent survey results:** Thank you to all of you who completed our parent survey last half-term. We had 97 responses and received some incredibly positive feedback. As always, there are things that many of you wanted us to look into and focus on moving forwards and, in a spirit of openness and transparency, I have outlined some of the key themes below:

#### **Areas for leadership focus:**

- Some parents are unclear on our support for students with SEND and our processes for supporting children with additional needs in class.
- Some parents want us to consider greater levels of clarity in Progress Checks to ensure that the information coming home is accurate and supports productive parent-child conversations.
- Some parents were concerned about the number of different systems that the school uses and requested that this might be streamlined.
- The policy of asking students to wear uniform instead of PE kits has presented some parents/students with logistical challenges in terms of carrying or storing PE kit.

#### **Areas of strength:**

- Some parents praised our Music and Careers (Raising Aspirations) provision as being a particular strength.
- Some parents highlighted the visibility and accessibility of some colleagues within the Senior Leadership Team as a positive.
- Some parents were incredibly impressed with the range of extra-curricular activities on offer at TPSH.
- The vast majority of parents said that their child felt happy and safe at TPSH and would recommend it to others.

I would like to reiterate my thanks for all of the feedback offered and I would like to reassure you that we are listening. The senior team will continue to discuss this feedback and hopefully further changes

in the near future will indicate that we are listening and making the changes that many of you wish to see at TPSH.

3. **Breaktime after Easter:** After the Easter break, we will be reverting to a single breaktime instead of the current staggered system. The current system meant that year group breaktimes were staggered across Period 2, making it very difficult for practical subjects like PE, Technology, Drama, Art, and Music to maintain a consistent flow to lessons. Moving to a single breaktime will represent a return to pre-covid school day timings. We have worked hard to ensure that our operational systems can cope with this change and we will be operating an extra canteen outlet to support students. After Easter, breaktime for all students will be between 11:10am and 11:30am.
4. **Coats inside the building:** By way of a reminder, after Easter we will be asking students not to wear coats inside the school building. Some students thought that we were banning coats on school site entirely and I want to reiterate that this is not the case. Coats can still be worn in all outdoor areas of the school. Once inside the school buildings, coats should be removed. This is for safeguarding reasons and to continue to build a sense of community cohesion within the school. We have installed over 500 coat hooks around the school to support students with this change.
5. **Spring Concert:** Thank you to all of you who supported our wonderful Spring Concert on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026. As always, the standard of musical ability on display from our students was outstanding. The wide array of bands, ensembles, orchestras, and choirs was something wonderful to behold and if you missed it, then please do look out for tickets to our Summer Concert.
6. **Apprenticeship Fair:** Thank you to those of you who attended our Apprenticeship Fair. We had over 500 attendees from over five different schools viewing a huge array of different apprenticeship opportunities.
7. **Parents of Year 11s and/or Year 13s:** I would like to extend my very best wishes to all parents of Year 11s and Year 13s as they embark upon their GCSEs and A-Levels next term. We recognise that these exams not only cause stress to students, but also to parents who will be working hard to support revision timetables and efforts over the coming weeks. If you need any support or guidance during this time, please do contact your child's Head of Year.

By way of a reminder, school will close at 12.30pm on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March for the Easter holiday. The usual public bus services that come to school will not be picking up from the school car park.

May I finish by wishing you and the family a restful Easter and we look forward to welcoming your child back to school for the Summer Term.

Yours sincerely,



Matt Blayney