



The Priory School, Hitchin

Excellence in education, for every young person, every day

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Headteacher: Mr M. Blayney MEd (Cantab)

12th January 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

Ref: Term Dates for 2026/27

I am writing to provide you with our term dates for the next academic year (2026/27) and explain some minor changes compared with previous years.

Firstly, I want to draw your attention to our new format that I hope you will find helpful. The previous way of publishing our dates did not always make it easy for parents to track the layout of the term, including the positioning of INSET days, the different school weeks i.e. Week 1 or Week 2, and the position of bank holidays. I hope that our new 'calendar style' format makes it easier for you to track these key moments within the school year and make plans accordingly. We appreciate that family lives during term time are very busy and it is our hope that having a single page that you can photograph or put on the fridge at home might alleviate some of the pressure.

In addition to this change, we have spread out our allocation of In-Service Education and Training (INSET) days more evenly throughout the academic year. Previously, our five allocated days for INSET were condensed into the Autumn Term. This placed pressure on families to arrange larger amounts of childcare during the Autumn term and also meant that school was unable to offer sustained training to staff during the Spring and Summer terms. You will note from our new term dates that these days have been spread out more evenly to address these concerns.

Finally, we have decided to introduce some new Curriculum days (indicated in pink on the new calendar). Curriculum days are counted as INSET days and are taken from our existing allocation i.e. we have not introduced any additional days of school closure. Unlike INSET days where the school is closed to all students, we will be using Curriculum days to support staff in marking and moderating Year 11 and Year 13 mock exams, supporting children with their coursework, and NEAs on school site.

Whilst the vast majority of students will not be in school on these days, some exceptions will apply where departments need specific students on site to complete work as directed. In some cases, Curriculum days may also be used to undertake trips or visits, which might ordinarily incur large cover requirements and costs. If your child is required in school on a Curriculum day we will inform you beforehand. We have also worked hard to ensure that the specific days when the school is closed are varied to avoid repeated loss of curriculum time in the same subject areas.

By using some of our INSET days to undertake crucial marking and moderation, we will ensure that students get the most accurate, timely, and helpful feedback possible.

Please see the dates of our new Curriculum days for 2026/27 below:

- **26th November 2026** – Year 11 mock marking and moderation. Invited students attending school to complete coursework or NEAs.
- **20th January 2027** – Year 13 mock marking and moderation. Invited students attending school to complete coursework or NEAs.
- **28th April 2027** – BTEC assignment marking and moderation. Year 11 and Year 13 attending school, in normal lessons.

I hope that these changes provide you with the clarity required during busy term times and offer you the rationale that sits behind our decision-making.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Blayney', with a stylized, cursive script.

Matt Blayney
Headteacher