

Hele's School

A great place to learn. A great place to grow.



Friday, 23 April 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome back, I hope you had a restful Easter and managed to enjoy the Spring sunshine.

Control measures and risk assessment: the Prime Minister announced the lifting of some restrictions in society from April as part of the roadmap to reopening, but the messages for schools were clear with no change to existing guidance for schools and a clear announcement that face coverings would remain in classrooms/communal areas in secondary schools until at least 17th May.

Whilst there is cause for cautious optimism, the key message as we start the summer term is for staff and students to not get complacent or careless; social distancing, ventilation, face coverings and hygiene remain as important as the previous few months – the pandemic is not over, and a third wave is a very real risk if we take our eyes off the ball.

Our Term 4 risk assessment and control measures remain in place into Term 5 then, although there are some important and exciting moves forward to share with you:

- Extra-curricular provision and the Learn and Grow programme has restarted and will continue to expand throughout this term. Tutors will keep students updated about clubs and activities.
- Practical learning has restarted in a Covid-secure way - the smell of lasagne wafted around the Food Technology department corridors and beyond on Monday and students delighted in cooking after restrictions being lifted, and the corridors will shortly fill with the smell of sulphur (not so pleasant) as our Science experiments restart.
- Educational visits - in line with the roadmap, schools can now resume educational day visits and I know the Art department has been quick off the mark to try to make something happen later in the term. Of course, a tight system of controls must be in place, such as keeping children within their consistent groups and the COVID-secure measures in place at the destination, but it is pleasing that the default answer has moved from a resounding 'no' and there is more flexibility afforded.
- Inter-school competitions and fixtures are now allowed, and we will carefully consider appropriate opportunities and appropriate control measures as they arise throughout the term.
- The Fitness Suite will be reopened for supervised use in lesson time only with tight control measures in place. If this model works safely, we will endeavour to open it for extra-curricular use for students in Term 6 (note: community use of the Fitness Suite and other facilities will not reopen until September).
- The changing rooms will reopen at the start of Term 6. This means that from Monday 6th June, students will no longer be allowed to wear PE kit to and from school. Full and correct school uniform will be expected from all children, every day from June. Further reminders will be issued nearer the time.

Our next review of our school risk assessment will be in May when the government announce the next phase of the reopening roadmap and school guidance is likely to be updated as part of this announcement.

Lateral Flow Tests (LFT): the Department for Education is asking us to continue communicating to staff, parents and students the importance of continued coronavirus testing into the summer term. Twice-weekly coronavirus testing should continue at home this term, with results reported as either positive, negative or void.

At the end of March, NHS Test and Trace stated that all staff and students who get a positive LFD test, whether at home or supervised at school, should also get a confirmatory PCR. The PCR test should be booked immediately either

online or by calling 119 and should be undertaken within 2 days of the positive LFD result. Staff and students who had a positive LFD test result, and their close contacts and other members of their household, should self-isolate immediately in line with [NHS Test and Trace guidance](#) and while awaiting the PCR result. If the PCR test is negative, it overrides the LFD test and the staff or student can return to school, and their close contacts can also end their self-isolation.

We will be distributing the next set of LFTs to students as follows:

- Years 10 and 11 and Post 16 - Monday 26th April
- Years 7 and 8 - Tuesday 27th April
- Year 9 - Wednesday 28th April.

Parent Pay: advance notice that the temporary overdraft facility of £2.50 on Parent Pay is ceasing *in September*. We recognise that money may be tight this year with many people furloughed from their jobs, so we will keep this flexibility in place until the new academic year to support families where needed. Please be assured that no child will ever be denied food or drink if they have no credit in their account but – unless we are informed in advance of any extenuating circumstances – if there is no credit on an account then it is the pastoral team who will sign off the meal and then contact parents/carers to alert them and arrange payment. I stress again, the system we currently have in place will remain for the rest of this academic year.

In the meantime, a reminder that parents and carers can manage their account by setting up email alerts via Parent Pay to know when the account is running low and needs topping up and daily spend limits can be set up simply by contacting our Finance team in school - putt@heles.plymouth.sch.uk

We are mindful and considerate that individual circumstances may have changed or been impacted by lockdown. If there are any concerns about financial hardship, please contact your child's respective Head of Year for further support – there is always help available and discretion is assured.

Lost property: the deep clean during Easter discovered several items of unnamed clothing and coats across the school site. If your child has lost any piece of uniform or kit, please contact Reception as soon as possible and we may be able to retrieve it for you. If items remain unclaimed by the end of term, then we will wash all pieces and offer them free of charge to families who would benefit. Please do ensure that all clothing, coats and equipment are named wherever possible so we can reacquaint lost property with their rightful owners easily and save families stress and money!

Summer 2021 assessments for exam groups: Year 11 and Year 13 have had assemblies this morning to keep them fully informed of the timeline and demands of this term with regards to revision, in-class assessment, and evidence used to generate a Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) for each individual in each subject. Detailed information from Ms Clapham (KS4) and Mr Stone (KS5) will be shared with parents and carers by the end of next week, so do please look out for this important communication and do speak with your child about today's assembly.

Travelling to school safely: You have undoubtedly noticed this week that the roads and public transport system have been far busier than when students returned in March, given other businesses have reopened. Certainly, punctuality in the morning has not been as tight as it usually is and I'm keen to get this back on track. Can I therefore ask that more time is allowed for the morning journey if arriving by car or public transport? Students should be on site for 8.30pm and in Tutor rooms ready for lessons to start at 8.40pm.

Good news: Jadore Lawson has been selected to represent Plymouth on behalf of Plymouth Schools FA. This is an excellent achievement as we know the talent pool in Plymouth and the surrounds is deep! Jadore follows in the footsteps of previous Hele's students that have also proudly represented our school within the Plymouth Schoolboys set up. We wish Jadore the very best of luck for the season ahead and have no doubt he will be a roaring success!

Another proud moment this Easter was seeing two of our students on the big screen. McCain are helping Family Fund support 150 000 families with disabled or seriously ill children so they can enjoy the little moments that really matter, and a national advert has been devised to publicise the partnership, featuring brother and sister duo from Year 7 and Year 8, Sam and Beth Horton. Now, I enjoy a chip as much as the next person, but I never thought I'd get emotional about one until I watched the advert! Sam and Beth, with Mum Maria, have done a wonderful job in their TV debut - see for yourself by following the link to YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=Od2a2L3leSs>



Finally, a lovely photo (with permission to share, of course) has been forwarded to me of Hele's alumni Rhys Elford (left) and Brandon Newcombe (right) at their Passing Out Parade at HMS Raleigh recently. It is wonderful to see the boys doing so well after flying the Hele's nest, with both now off to HMS Collingwood – Rhys to do weapons engineering and Brandon to train as a warfare specialist – in readiness to be on ship next year once they complete their phase 2 training. It only seems like yesterday that both boys could be seen wearing their CCF RN uniforms with pride in and around the corridors of Hele's School! Calm seas and fair wind, boys!

Please do continue to let me know of any good news to share with the wider school community, no matter how big or small; it's always a joy to celebrate and acknowledge excellent achievement and endeavour from our students, families and staff - and more so now than ever before - rather than to write solely about logistics around government guidance and control measures. Keep the positivity flowing and let's find plenty to smile about!

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justine Mason".

Justine Mason
Principal

Principal: Justine Mason

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