

Hele's School

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



Friday, 7 May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Spring has sprung, but the nip in the air at the moment may suggest otherwise! Nevertheless, nature is enveloping us in new life and growth, and this sense of newness and optimism (with a healthy dose of caution and careful risk management, of course) pervades our planning for next term and into the new academic year.

We expect updated government guidance for schools to be released in the coming weeks that could see some easing of some control measures and allow greater flexibility for onsite events, assemblies, residential trips and the like. We are not quite there yet though, and so this is where I need to issue an important reminder for all to heed.

COVID-19: despite the vaccination roll out, relatively low rates of Covid locally and the government's optimism about cautiously lifting restrictions or giving more flexibility at each review of the roadmap, we must all be clear that COVID-19 remains a very real threat and there can be no room for complacency. At least 2 Plymouth Secondary Schools that I know of have bubbles currently isolating for 10 days because of confirmed positive COVID-19 cases in their school over the past week. At Hele's, we continue to implement all control measures in and around the school site, in line with our risk assessment - face coverings, sanitising, extra cleaning, ventilation and purging, maintaining distance wherever possible, hand washing, LFTs twice weekly, etc.

With each cautious step to enable people to socialise more, it is important that everyone stays alert and regularly takes LFTs to prevent a potential spread in COVID-19. A reminder that students continue to receive their allocated LFT test kits from school and should undertake a test twice weekly. For wider family members, LFTs are free and can be collected from a number of locations across Plymouth including pharmacies and testing centres, as well as delivered directly to homes. To find a local test site go [here](#). To order lateral flow test kits for at home please go [here](#). Please do report your test result to the NHS reporting website, even if it is negative. This can be done using the telephone number in the test kit instructions, or online [here](#).

Please note, you no longer need to log negative test results via the Hele's School MS Form link – but *you must continue reporting to the NHS reporting site* - it is **vital** that you inform School immediately should a test result return a positive result from a LFT. **You can do this 24 hours a day through the 'Contact Us' section of the website or by clicking [here](#).** This will send an immediate alert to a senior member of staff, and appropriate follow up action can be taken. Alternatively, you may call the School's absence line for Years 7 to 11 on 01752 231730 or Post 16 on 01752 756715, but please be aware that this operates during school hours only. Let's continue to do all we can to keep each other safe.

Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs): TAGs have replaced examinations this summer for students in Years 11 and 13. There are also some students in other year groups affected where they are taking qualifications this year which would have meant taking exams.

Please be advised that a new section has been added to the school website with the intention of being a 'one stop shop' for all information related to TAGs. This can be found under 'School Information' then 'Teacher Assessed Grades', or by [clicking this link](#).

If you have any specific queries, please contact Mr Stone (stoneka@heles.plymouth.sch.uk) for Year 12 and 13 or Ms Clapham (clapham@heles.plymouth.sch.uk) for any other year groups.

Year 9 Parents' Evening feedback: we were delighted that over 80% of Year 9 families engaged in Parents' Evening on Wednesday. As always, we would welcome any feedback about the experience to ensure we make the process as slick and purposeful as possible, so please do pass any comments to Mr Fonseca, Assistant Principal, at fonseca@heles.plymouth.sch.uk.

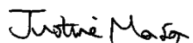
Good news: With national restrictions on track to be relaxed from 21st June as planned, we have an opportunity to cautiously plan evening events to celebrate the end of school for our exam cohorts.

Year 13 students are busy planning their own evening event, as is customary at Hele's, and further details will be shared at an appropriate time.

For Year 11, a provisional date of Thursday 22nd July 2021 at Boringdon Park Golf Club has been proposed and students and their parents/carers have already been sent details to express interest. This event will not be a traditional 'Prom' but instead will be a less formal event where students can simply enjoy some time together and mark the end of their school career; in a year when many families have been significantly impacted by furlough or redundancy, we want to remove any expense or pressure on families to buy suits, dresses, hire luxury vehicles, etc., for the occasion - especially as a late cancellation should the Covid landscape change unexpectedly cannot be ruled out. If Year 11 families haven't done so already, please complete the expression of interest form (sent out earlier this week) by Tuesday 11th May 2021 to support our planning.

So, all in all it's a healthy dose of optimism underpinned by realism this week. Things are changing – and for the better – but we continue to plan pragmatically and cautiously for our next steps. As ever, your ongoing support of the school is much appreciated.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason

Principal

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