

Hele's School

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



Friday, 14 May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

It is testament to the resilience of our students that they have adjusted well to the requirement of wearing face coverings in classrooms since their return in March. With the Government's review of the roadmap to lift lockdown restrictions earlier this week, however, the guidance document issued by the government regarding 'Face coverings in Education' has been updated to reflect the revised position. You can read the document [here](#). The key points from the guidance are:

- From Monday 17th May, face coverings are no longer recommended for students in classrooms, corridors or communal areas; this means students will not need to wear a face covering within the school from Monday. We understand that some students may feel nervous about the easing of this restriction. If your child wishes to continue to wear their face covering for the remainder of this term, then we will absolutely support them to do so.
- Students aged 11 and over must still wear a face covering on public transport. This does not apply to children and young people who are exempt from wearing face coverings.
- Face coverings will also no longer be recommended for staff in classrooms, though some staff may choose to wear them and that is perfectly acceptable.
- The government continues to recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and visitors in situations outside of classrooms where social distancing is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas).
- The reintroduction of face coverings for students or staff may be advised for a temporary period in response to particular localised outbreaks, including variants of concern. We will continue to monitor cases at school and within the local community, taking advice from Public Health where appropriate, and will inform you if we need to reintroduce face coverings in response to changes to the situation.

In summary then, from Monday, we are no longer expecting students to wear face coverings in and around the school, though if they choose to, they will be supported. All other control measures (hand sanitisation/hand washing, enhanced cleaning of touch surfaces, purging of air in rooms, year group bubbles, allocated egress points, etc.) will remain in place until the next review Government on June 21st.

This represents a positive development for us all as we move to the next stage of the country's emergence from the impact of the pandemic. As is always the case, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. Please can I take this opportunity to thank you and your children for your co-operation in this matter over recent months. I am certainly looking forward to seeing smiling faces around the school once more!

One of the reasons that the relaxation of regulations has been possible is the prevalence of twice-weekly Lateral Flow Tests across many groups in society. Please can I urge families to continue with this testing regime at home for those who are asymptomatic and also to ensure any child displaying symptoms of COVID-19 is kept off school until a PCR test can be accessed and appropriate action taken in response to the test outcome.

Year 11 and Year 13 Leavers' dates and 'next steps' offer: we have been incredibly impressed with the level of commitment and enthusiasm with which Year 11 and Year 13 have approached their in-class assessments this past fortnight. With just one week to go before their final assessment, a reminder of the last day arrangements for our exam groups:

- Year 13's last day in school before flying the Hele's nest is on Thursday 20th May. There will be a Leavers' Assembly at 11.30am followed by refreshments and fond farewells on the grass by the Sixth Form.
- Year 11's last day in school is Friday 21st May. There will be a Leavers' Assembly at 12.30pm followed by the obligatory shirt-signing and celebrations immediately afterwards.

- For both Year 11 and Year 13, there will be an optional remote offer in place from the w/b Monday 24th May, with the intention of supporting meaningful preparation for students' next stages of their education, training or employment. This will incorporate a whole range of support including: careers advice and guidance, next steps, reference and CV writing, wellbeing support, study skills, etc. Further details about the programme and how to access this support will be shared directly with students, parents and carers nearer the time.

Sponsored places available for online Engineering courses: Smallpeice Trust has launched a virtual summer programme, offering 15 engineering-themed courses for students in Years 8 to 12.

These online courses give young people the chance to find out more about different engineering careers, get hands on with interactive projects and learn live from industry experts and academics, and include:

- [Aviation Technology](#) - students learn about a range of aviation topics from aerodynamics and control systems to crew resource management and flight training.
- [Built Environment](#) - where students will understand how the built environment can be the solution to many of the challenges a changing climate presents us with.
- [Girls into Physics](#) - giving students the opportunity to hear from researchers leading the way and learn about the latest discoveries in the field.

Further details for interested families can be found on the Smallpeice, [here](#).

Whilst most courses are free of charge, some do have a cost associated. However, The John Coates Charitable Trust is funding 10 places (usually £200 each) for students to attend. To be eligible for a sponsored place, students need to be living in Devon and attending a non-selective state school. Students who are interested in redeeming a sponsored place should use one of the following claim codes when registering for their chosen course on The John Coates Charitable Trust website: JCCTM2021 for boys / JCCTF2021 for girls. Applications are reviewed and places are allocated on a first come, first served basis. Interested students are advised to apply early to avoid disappointment.

#LookCloser awareness week, 17th – 23rd May 2021: #LookCloser is a partnership campaign between The Children's Society, the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre and the British Transport Police aiming to raise awareness of child exploitation and abuse, with a particular focus on public spaces. The campaign also seeks to challenge stereotypes of victimhood, highlighting that child exploitation can happen anywhere, and any young person can be a victim.

Hele's School is working with The Children's Society around these themes and we are pleased to have secured a **virtual parent session on 10th June from 5.30 - 6.30pm**, led by Jackie Thomas, Prevention Officer for South West. Further details will be sent out nearer the time, but the attached leaflet gives some key advice about how spot the possible signs of a young person being exploited and how you can help.

Good news: I was delighted this week to hear from the National Citizenship Service (NCS) School Coordinator at Groundwork South, that Hele's School has recruited the highest number of young people across our area to take part in the NCS programme this year. This is testament to the fantastic commitment of our students to self-improvement and community endeavour. Hele's has been invited to share our practice to strengthen recruitment across other secondary schools, which is a real privilege. We've been asked what the magic ingredient is to securing such a strong buy-in to the programme – quite simply, it's having amazing young people who want to leave a positive legacy and strive to be the best they can be, both in and out of the classroom...the epitome of 'a great place to learn, a great place to grow'. Very well done and good luck to all those students who are taking part in the NCS programme this year – we are very proud of you!

Wishing you a restful weekend.

Kindest regards,

Justine Mason

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Principal

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