

Hele's School

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



Friday, 10 September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have delighted in welcoming back to school all staff and students this week, and we have been particularly impressed with the manner in which our 240 incoming Year 7 students have embraced their new school routines and expectations with such enthusiasm, supported brilliantly by our wonderful Year 10 Mentors.

Likewise, we have been pleased to welcome our largest cohort ever of external students into our Sixth Form, demonstrating the strong reputation that Post-16 study at Hele's School has across the City and beyond.

Welcome to students and their families, old and new!

New staff: I am pleased to confirm that we start the new academic year fully staffed with specialist subject teachers and have added to our teaching and support team over the summer term. I extend a warm welcome to our new staff and I hope it isn't too long until you can meet them in person:

Lauren Douglas	Maths	Connor Tremain	Learning Support Assistant
Joe Douglas	Maths	Christine Edwards	Learning Support Assistant
Daniel Stares	ICT/Maths	Lynsey Lloyd	Accountant
Laura Finnie	Social Science		
Emma Locke	Drama		
Lucy Shelley	Head of RS		

Lateral Flow Testing: Thank you for your support with onsite Lateral Flow Testing of students throughout this week; all consenting students have now been tested at least once and will have had their second test by the end of Monday. A small number of asymptomatic Covid cases were identified through this screening and students directed to take a PCR test and self-isolate if confirmed positive in line with Government guidance.

Please continue with twice weekly testing at home, it is an important pre-emptive control measure to keep our school community safe. Home testing LFT kits are being distributed all next week and will be given to students during their last lesson of the day - Year 7, Monday; Year 10, Tuesday; Year 11, Wednesday; Year 8, Thursday; Year 9, Friday.

Testing should continue until the end of September in the first instance, after which there will be a national review by the Government and Public Health England to consider whether testing will continue.

Reporting Covid results: A reminder that:

- If your child has **symptoms of COVID-19**, they should self-isolate and arrange to take a PCR test. If the result is negative, they can return to school. If the result is positive, they should continue to self-isolate in line with NHS guidance;
- If your child returns a **positive Lateral Flow Device** test result, they should self-isolate and arrange to take a PCR test. If the PCR test is taken within 2 days of the positive Lateral Flow Device test, and is negative, it overrides the self-test and your child can return to school. This is as long as they do not have symptoms of COVID-19;
- Students are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 or are identified as a close contact. Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and advised to take a PCR test. During this period of time, students are expected to continue to attend school.

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It is important that news of a positive LFT or PCR test result is shared with the school to enable monitoring of attendance and transmission patterns in the community, as well as access to appropriate work to do, if well enough. Please continue to use the online [COVID-19 reporting](#) form in the 'Contact Us' section of the website to enable efficient follow-up to a confirmed case.

Uniform and equipment: Thank you for working in partnership with the school to ensure students wear the correct shoes and uniform appropriately in line with our policy, and for making sure young people are properly equipped for learning. Piercings, beyond a stud in each ear, are not permitted and must not be worn to school. Please support school policy in not allowing your child to wear nose, eye or lip piercings to school. Tutors will have a keen eye on tutees over the coming weeks and will pick up on any uniform that is not regulation, alerting parents/carers so that action can be taken to rectify anything necessary.

Rewards and sanctions: This year, we continue to focus intently on recognising the excellent conduct and work of our students through a range of rewards and events. With a return to some normality, we are very excited to extend our rewards events to as many students as possible this year and encourage them to start collecting achievement points from the outset. To keep track of your child's achievement points and rewards, please continue to monitor their ClassCharts account. This will also provide notification of any behaviour points your child has received, along with any detentions set.

We continue to run two forms of detention this year: Catch Up detentions which are 30-minute same day detentions for lateness to school (without good reason), missing equipment or homework issues and Behaviour Detentions which run for one hour 3-4pm on a Tuesday and Thursday. Behaviour detentions are used as a sanction where a child has not been able to correct their behavior following two opportunities using our Warn-Move-Park system and has ultimately been parked in another lesson. Missed detentions or other serious breaches of the Behaviour Policy will result in staged sanctions moving up through a ladder which can be found within the policy on the school website.

This year, we are replacing one stage of this ladder, previously known as 'Isolation', with our new Reset Room. This provision will be used for students who require a day out of main circulation in order to reset their behaviour. Within the Reset Room, there will be a strong focus on developing high standards of behaviour and work, as well as on restorative practice to enable students to return to circulation and be successful. Mrs Lloyd is our Reset Manager and will contact parents/carers directly where a student has been referred to the Reset Room to provide further details of the provision. We are very pleased to be able to offer the Reset provision this year and feel it will further enhance the already excellent teaching and learning taking place in classrooms.

Learn and Grow: Last year, we launched a new after-school provision called Learn & Grow for students in Years 7-10. This provision grew from the need we identified in a number of our students following the first lockdown to receive targeted support and intervention to help them get back on track with their learning. Learn & Grow is staffed by a team of fantastic Post-16 tutors and was well-attended last year, with up to 20% of students in each year group taking advantage of the opportunity. The staff at Learn & Grow, who are some of our finest Hele's students, offer a peer-tutoring model and have been fully trained in providing high quality tuition and safeguarding. They also work closely with our Key Stage 3 and 4 subject coordinators to ensure that the content of tuition sessions is carefully mapped against key subject priorities.

From Monday 13th September, Learn & Grow sessions will run daily Monday to Thursday from 3 - 4pm. Students can attend as many nights as they wish, subject to demand. All those attending will have the opportunity to work individually or in a small group with a tutor focusing on areas identified as being priorities. There will also be the opportunity to work privately on any homework to ensure work is kept up to date. For our new Year 7 students, this can be a fantastic way to get into good routines and work alongside older students who will act as an excellent role model and provide support across all subjects. For those students in years 8 and above, the provision offers invaluable support for your child from peers they can identify with, who have been in their shoes and can share their experience and successes. Feedback from students attending last year was overwhelmingly positive and we are thrilled to be able to offer this provision again this year.

In order to register your child for Learn & Grow, ***even if they have attended previously***, please register your child by completing the following short form: [Learn & Grow Booking Form](#). Where we feel your child would significantly benefit from attending this provision, you will receive a personalised letter over the coming weeks from your child's Head of Year. If you have any queries about Learn & Grow, please contact Emma Clapham, Assistant Principal, via clapham@heles.plymouth.sch.uk.

Study Café: Study Café is open to Year 11 students only and provides a dedicated space for students completing GCSEs this year to receive support with homework, coursework and most notably, revision. Again, staffed by some of our best-performing Post-16 students, Study Café offers a wealth of resources around revision, as well as personalised guidance around different techniques to try in order to maximise time and efficiency. Study Café runs daily from 3-4pm and all Year 11 students can attend. Further information will be going out to Year 11 students and parents this term about the intervention opportunities available this year. Many of these will take place after school and Year 11 students should become familiar with an extended day to 4pm most days of the week. Where this is not directed, Study Café is an excellent place in which to complete work in a calm, purposeful environment with excellent support available. No prior booking is required, students simply turn up to the Year 11 zone and they will be allocated a room.

Clubs and activities: We are excited to be able to offer a full extra-curricular programme this year and we will release a comprehensive overview of the offer shortly. Year 7 will have a University -style 'Fresher's Fair' later next week to encourage students to sign up to clubs and activities and to meet new friends. In the meantime, the Creative and Performing Arts Department has released the rehearsal schedule for February's School Show, 'Legally Blonde', with young people in all year groups being encouraged to audition from Monday. Further details can be found on the Hele's School Drama Twitter account or on the door of the Drama office.

The Fitness Suite and Community Sports Centre has also reopened, and this is available for wider use in the evenings. Should you want to find out about the offer, access the gym and fitness equipment, or indeed book any facilities for community use, please contact Mr Giles on 231739 or communitysports@heles.plymouth.sch.uk.

Our next Holiday Club will be taking place from Monday 25th October to Friday 29th October 2021. For more information or to book, please contact holidayclub@heles.plymouth.sch.uk

Upcoming events: The Year 6 Open Evening is planned to run as a face-to-face event on Wednesday 22nd September from 5pm - 8pm. Details of this event, and also the Open Morning tours being planned for the week beginning 27th September, can be found on our website and the Hele's School Facebook page. Please note that whilst we anticipate these events being for prospective families seeking a place at Hele's in September 2022, we are keen to arrange an opportunity for parents and carers of our current Year 7s to visit school, as we know these families have never seen the school in action having missed out on the planned events last year due to Covid. Further details will be shared with Year 7 parents and carers over the coming week - your patience is appreciated while we look to find the most effective means of welcoming you in school.

Citybus timetable changes: Citybus has today released information pertaining to timetable changes to some of their Plymouth services. I include the link below from the Plymouth Live report for your information, as I am aware that the 21/21A is a service used by a number of Hele's students and times of travel to and from school may need to be reconsidered - <https://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/news/plymouth-news/plymouth-citybus-axes-more-100-5896339>. Please note that schools have no input to planning the frequency or routes of buses and have no involvement or prior alert to timetable changes, so I am afraid I can offer no further information to affected families. I direct you to the Citybus website should you have any enquiries - <https://www.plymouthbus.co.uk/>.

Finally: Regular, positive communication and inviting constructive feedback to ensure we deliver the very best experiences for our young people, families and staff are key features that underpin the Team Hele's ethos and make our school such a special place to be. I've no doubt you'll share my desire for a 'normal' and disruption-free year. Whatever lies ahead, I'm confident you will continue to support our staff in working to maintain high standards and ensuring routines and expectations are adhered to, even with the uncertainty that COVID-19 continues to present. Here's to a fantastic year ahead for all - let's make this academic year the best one yet!

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason
Principal