

Hele's School

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



Friday, 17 September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

As the first full week of having the whole school back on site ends, it is great to see the manner in which our staff and students have settled into new routines and the rhythm of the school day. I have had the pleasure of personally welcoming back every child in the school through morning assembly and have reinforced key messages and expectations that make Team Hele's so special. I also shared a few photographs of my summer antics to show how a Headteacher gets a healthy blend of work, rest and play - much to the amusement of many! From a quad bike safari, to gorge walking and being thrown down a waterfall slide, to jet skiing and learning how to knit, and quite a bit in between; the key message was not to be afraid to try new things or push yourself out of your comfort zone.

Covid vaccinations for 12 – 15-year-olds: As I am sure you will have heard, the Health and Social Care Secretary has confirmed that young people aged 12 to 15 in England will be offered one dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, following advice from the four UK Chief Medical Officers (CMOs). *The provisional date received from the School Immunisation Advisory Service is that vaccination for COVID-19 and the nasal vaccine for flu at Hele's School will be Tuesday 19th October 2021.*

The main purpose of the COVID-19 childhood vaccination programme is to provide protection to the children who receive the vaccine and help to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in the wider population. Like all school-based vaccination programmes, the vaccine will be administered by healthcare staff with appropriate qualifications who are trained in the vaccination of children and young people.

I am aware of the concerns nationally regarding self-consent for young people, and I would like to reassure families that VirginCare (the health body that coordinates and delivers all vaccinations of school-age children) have confirmed that they will not be vaccinating children without a positive consent form being completed by a parent/carer. If there are any discrepancies between a child and parental view, VirginCare health professionals will call parents away from the vaccination session and arrange for vaccination to be caught up if required.

Consent will be gained via e-consent in the usual way as for all national vaccination programmes, however for Covid vaccinations, consent can only be gained 4 working days prior to the vaccination session. Schools have been asked to send information and the link to the consent form to families when requested to ensure parents have the opportunity to consent or decline the vaccination, and to provide a facility for vaccination as we do in all other programmes.

More information on the COVID-19 vaccine, the vaccination programme and how it will work, as well as answers to some frequently asked questions, can be found in the [guidance for parents](#) and the [guidance for children and young people](#) published by Public Health England yesterday.

Catering: We have been keeping our food serving stations under close surveillance since the return of the whole school. Our Catering team, led by Mrs Arries, is working hard to ensure an efficient and pleasant lunchtime for our young people, whilst experiencing unprecedented demand. We have tweaked provision this week through redeployment of staff to particular serving areas (the pasta bar appears to be particularly popular with Year 7) and

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changed locations of some tills and dining tables; all of this has helped to speed up some of the queues. Our Year 7 students are doing remarkably well at dealing with new routines and the biometric payment system just 10 days in, but we have given the year group an extended lunch each day this week as an interim measure to take a little pressure off them during this busy time of the day. Our experience is that queuing time reduces significantly when new students become familiar and confident with the lunchtime system, but patience is required for the first couple of weeks. Please reassure your child that they will have ample time to finish purchased food, even if the bell for period 5 goes; they should not leave their meal in a bid to get to their next lesson and they should not worry unduly - staff know that some flex is needed until new routines become embedded.

School Reception access: Our Reception staff have been overwhelmed since the return to school by parents and carers dropping off non-essential items, such as forgotten PE kits, books and other school-related items. This in turn is congesting the small Reception area as students – often accompanied by friends – come to collect at break or lunchtime and is distracting from the key duties of our staff. I've no doubt that being contacted by your child to drop things off last minute is a source of stress and inconvenience for parents too, so a joint effort to resolve this and support each other would be most welcome! I do recognise that students may need time to get used to their new timetables at the start of an academic year, especially Year 7 for whom such routines are new, but I'd appreciate your support in getting your child into a good routine of checking timetables the night before and unpacking/packing bags accordingly to make sure they are prepared for learning. Likewise, please reinforce with your child that they are not to use their mobile phone to contact you to drop forgotten, non-essential equipment off. Any forgotten *non-essential* kit dropped off to Reception by parents will be recorded as a Super 6 or kit fault and sanctioned in line with our policy. Of course, dropping off forgotten items such as packed lunches, medication or money for bus fares is essential - we encourage you drop off in such instances, and forgetting such items that are unrelated to learning is not sanctionable. Your support in developing good organisational skills to ensure readiness for learning is appreciated. May I also remind any visitors to the site to enter the building wearing a face covering and to sanitise hands using the wall dispenser on arrival.

The Rees Centre Wellbeing Hub: I have written before to outline the wide range of help, support and advice that The Rees Centre offers to people of all ages across our wider community. The Wellbeing Hub has published an overview and extensive programme of opportunities, which can be found on the [Hele's School website in the Wellbeing Section](#). Well worth dipping into!

Finally: a highlight of my week was to meet Will Stone from 7D, a compassionate and determined young man who recently completed a charity run to raise over £2,300 for the Primrose Foundation. Will is an example of the many extraordinary students we have at Hele's School, doing some extraordinary things but all too often, we don't get to hear about them as the students don't like to blow their own trumpet! However, if you have anything you think would be good for us to celebrate with your child, do get in touch with their tutor and let them know; it's great to be able to recognise the fantastic efforts of our young people, both inside and outside school.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason
Principal