

Hele's School

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



Friday, 8 October 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

At Hele's, we are passionate about enriching the curriculum in and out of the classroom and just this week our students have engaged in experiences including Geography GCSE fieldtrips to Torcross in Devon, a visit to The Box in Plymouth for the ASDAN group, and our Royal Navy CCF Cadets continuing to learn and refine sailing skills as part of the L1/L2 RYA Sailing programme at Mount Batten. Of course, we also have a [wide range of clubs and activities on offer to all year groups](#), and I have been pleased to see so many taking part in activities beyond the traditional school day.

Looking ahead to Wednesday next week, we will be welcoming a range of employers and educational providers into school to work with Year 9 for our annual Careers Day, with the focus being on developing employability skills, as well as local labour market information and progression routes through to a range of employment sectors - the day promises to be interesting, for sure!

Year 7 tours: We have enjoyed showing people around our school this week and have been overwhelmed with the level of interest. We've offered four hours' worth of tours to Year 7 parents and carers this week as a special addition to our usual tour programme because Covid prevented us from opening to the public last year. I appreciate that there are some who may not have been able to make the time and day of the slots offered, but we just don't have the capacity to offer bespoke tours or evening tours, I'm afraid - we'd love to offer more tours, but it would take us away from our core business of teaching students! We look forward to meeting you at the onsite Tutor evening in November, and other evening events that are part of the school calendar.

School laptop returns: We are in the process of upgrading our stock of curriculum laptops. If you are still in possession of a school laptop, we'd be grateful if you could please return it to Reception at the earliest opportunity. This will allow our IT technicians to service and update the devices for student use.

CityBus: I wrote last week about the 21/21A bus service being unreliable after school on the route heading to the City Centre, and a number of parents have since contacted me to ask if there is anything they/school can do about buses not turning up or driving past bus stops without stopping. The advice we continue to give is for individuals to contact the bus company directly to report the lack of reliable service and the safeguarding issues this may pose for children, particularly as the darker evenings draw in - it is important that CityBus are made aware so they can keep their routes and services under review. Whilst I recognise the challenges for businesses caused by the pandemic, I have this week shared my concerns with the bus company on behalf of our families - I would urge parents to do the same if your child is being regularly affected. The [enquiry form can be found here](#).

Lanyards: One of the measures implemented last academic year to help manage year group 'bubbles' was the introduction of coloured ID lanyards for all students. This helped significantly in terms of our operational procedures at the time. Since our return to school and the changed government guidance negating the requirement for 'bubbles' in schools, this control method has since served its purpose. With that in mind, Tutors will collect in all lanyards from students on Monday morning and we will store them in case we need to reinstate their use if Covid levels rise beyond the 'acceptable threshold' in school. Thank you for your support in encouraging your child to wear their lanyard daily. Please remind them to hand in their lanyard to their Tutor on Monday.

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Mental Health: World Mental Health day is on Sunday 10th October, and today in school we have seen bake sales, staff vs students netball, and other events to raise awareness and money for YoungMinds. The theme of mental health will be the focus of Tutor time activities next week, with a reminder to all students of that whatever they may be going through they are not alone, and we have a range of people and support at school and beyond to work with them.

We are planning a 'mufti' day (non-uniform day) on Thursday 21st October, which is the final day of this term for students, and we encourage all students and staff to wear something yellow if they can. Donations of £1 will be requested, with all proceeds going to YoungMinds. Further reminders will be given nearer the time.

Hate Crime awareness: Equality, diversity and human rights are sacrosanct, and we work hard to endorse and reinforce these vital strands through our curriculum at every opportunity.

Next week, in support of National Hate Crime Awareness, we are running a week of assemblies and follow-up activities so that every child in the school has a spotlight on this important issue. We are also planning more bespoke work with the Police Diversity Team throughout the year, particularly around challenging and tackling discrimination wherever it may occur. I look forward to working with our young people to ensure every aspect of our practice and provision at Hele's is welcoming, respectful and inclusive.

Coronavirus update: The Plymouth rate of COVID-19 infection has fallen over recent weeks to be in line with national and South West averages; Plymouth is no longer classed as an Enhanced Response Area. That said, you will see from alerts sent when we become aware of positive cases that Coronavirus is very much present in our community and is likely to be for some time - in the past 48 hours we have had notification of 5 confirmed cases (3 in Year 7, 1 in Year 9 and 1 in Year 11).

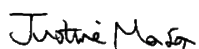
It is important that we do not become complacent and we continue to adhere to control measures to help prevent the spread of Coronavirus. Up to one in three people who have COVID-19 can spread the virus without knowing because they have no symptoms, so thank you for your ongoing encouragement for twice weekly lateral flow testing for your child. Please do keep this going for the remainder of this term.

Nasal Flu vaccinations: Details from the School Immunisation Team regarding Flu vaccinations for all consenting Year 7 – Year 11 students at Hele's School on Tuesday 19th October were sent to families at the start of this week. Please remember to complete the online consent form (even if you are withholding consent) ahead of VirginCare's deadline of midnight on Tuesday 12th October.

Covid vaccinations for **consenting 12-15-year olds** will be administered on the same day, but the consent for the Covid vaccination will be sent separately at a date nearer to the time – I am informed from the School Immunisation Team that this will happen for Hele's families around 15th October.

Staffing update: Today, we said a fond farewell to Mrs Lamerton, Learning Support Assistant and SEND Administrator, as she left Hele's for a new challenge beyond the classroom. I'm sure you'll join me in passing on our very best wishes from all at team Hele's.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason
Principal