

Hele's School

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



Friday, 28 January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

It has been a challenging week managing staff and student Covid-related absence, but the fantastic support and flexibility of colleagues has enabled us to keep all year groups on site and engaged in their learning. Given the Plymouth picture with high infection rates, it is worth me sharing our outbreak management plan headlines again so you are clear about the steps we take to ensure we can continue our core business function of teaching and learning in school in these uncertain times.

Specialist Supply Teachers will be brokered wherever possible to ensure continuity of education and experience of students. If no specialist cover is available, general Supply Teachers will be used. Given high demand for Supply where there is a local outbreak and a limited (even diminishing) availability of Supply via agencies, it may be necessary to adopt one of the following actions (in priority order):

1. In the case of teacher absence impacting Year 12 and /or Year 13 lessons: students should be given work to complete without direct teacher supervision. Students in the affected class(es) will be expected to remain in school and complete their work in the usual classroom. Science lessons will need to be moved out of labs. The Pastoral Support Manager for Post-16 will oversee that work has been set and is being completed.
2. Use of the Library for up to 3 classes: supervised by a teacher with support from a Senior Leader.
3. In the case of significant teacher absence across the school that cannot be covered through Supply cover: students should be given work to complete independently for all their subjects and teachers of Year 12 and/or Year 13 will be deployed as emergency cover of other year groups/subjects across the school. All Year 12 and/or Year 13 students will be expected to remain in school and complete their work in the usual classroom. Science lessons will need to be moved out of labs. The Pastoral Support Manager for Post-16 will oversee that work has been set and is being completed.
4. In the case of significant teacher absence across the school where classes cannot be covered in spite of points 1 to 3 above: Some teaching groups will be reconfigured and larger groups (possibly half-year groups or whole year groups) will be taught in bigger spaces, such as the Main Hall or Sports Hall (subject to a risk assessment). WeST schools will be approached for any extra staffing capacity that could be directed to Hele's as a short-term measure. Alternatively, some groups with low attendance may be combined to maximise teaching staff and support staff resource available to cover.
5. If a risk assessment shows that it is not safe to keep students on site with reduced staffing capacity: a further conversation with WeST and the local Health Protection Team will be pursued and the need for some classes/year groups to access remote learning at home for a short period of time discussed as a last resort.

It is worth noting that we have had to enact stages 1 and 2 of our contingency plan this week. Our priority remains to keep School functioning as close to normal as possible and to ensure high-quality learning and pastoral care continues safely, whatever challenges we are faced with. Your ongoing support to ensure regular lateral flow testing and actively encouraging other control measures is appreciated.

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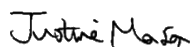
Post-16 Evening: Thank you to all those families who attended our Sixth Form presentation last night - it really was a great evening. I am hugely appreciative to the many staff and students who worked hard to plan and deliver the event - a great Team Hele's effort! We are aware that a number of families were unable to attend due to illness or isolation, but please do not worry about missing out. We will ensure the presentation slides are on the School website by early next week and we are currently exploring opportunities to run tours during the school day next week for those that couldn't make it - further details will be emailed to absent students early next week.

Virtual Careers Fair: Thanks to Mrs Yeomans, Careers Support Manager, for her excellent organisation and creativity around running this online event. There were over 1000 views of the fair, which was fantastic to see! The event can still be accessed should any families have missed out first time round. Please email Mrs Yeomans directly at yeomans@heles.plymouth.sch.uk if you require the log in details.

Upcoming events:

- Chinese New Year, Tuesday 1st February. A special Chinese menu is on offer to mark the start of the Year of the Water Tiger, the Chinese zodiac sign associated with bravery, confidence and strength.
- Year 8 Geography and Art trip to the Eden Project, Wednesday 2nd February (8x) or Thursday 3rd February (8y).
- Year 11 Parents' Evening via MS Teams, Thursday 3rd February 4 - 7pm.
- Flu clinic, Friday 4th February. VirginCare, the Schools Immunisation Service, is planning to have a team of nurses on site next Friday to run a Flu clinic for those consenting students who have not yet received their immunisation. This is a provisional date, but we anticipate receiving final details and arrangements for collecting consent early next week and details will be emailed to families as soon as we receive this. There is no date yet confirmed for either COVID-19 immunisations or HPV, but we will keep parents and carers updated accordingly.
- Train to Teach online events to find out what your next steps into teaching could look like, Monday 7th February 5 - 6pm and Monday 28th March. Please go to the [Westcountry Schools Trust](https://www.westcountry-schools-trust.co.uk/) website for more information about these events.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason
Principal