

# Hele's School

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



Friday, 18 February 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

The roof has been raised at Hele's School this week and it has had nothing to do with Storm Eunice! Rather, it was the rapturous applause night after night as the wonderful cast, crew and band took to the stage to perform Legally Blonde – and what a magnificent job they have done too! The musical has been the perfect tonic with a great musical score, wonderful casting and some classic one liners! I've found myself saying 'Oh My Gaaaaad' more than once this week but thus far resisted the urge to 'bend and snap'! Huge congratulations to all involved in this epic production and thank you so much for bringing so much laughter and fun to all. I join many others in looking forward to the grand finale this evening, another sell-out show.

Staying on the musical theatre note, it has been great to hear about the successes of two of our talented Year 11 students who wish to pursue their love of the arts next year. Harry Alston who played Emmett at the beginning of the week, and Wednesday night's Elle, Lucie Goord have both secured a place at Drama School next year. Harry is off to study a 2 year Triple Threat Musical Theatre Extended Diploma at the Emil Dale Academy in Hertfordshire and Luci is off to the Laine Arts Schools in London to study Musical Theatre. It's a first for Hele's to see two students in the same year head to Drama School at just 16 years old but after this week's performances, I can absolutely see why they have been snapped up and wish them the very best of luck!

**Standards and expectations reset next term:** We are very aware that over the course of the last year in particular, the focus for many families has been simply getting their children back to school safely and through working together, we have been able to do this. It has not gone unnoticed though that the general standard of presentation from students has dropped over recent months and we are keen to re-establish the clear standards we expect all students to achieve in terms of their personal presentation to ensure that the strong reputation Hele's has across the city and beyond is upheld.

Our uniform allows students to feel part of the school and have a sense of belonging. Wearing the uniform correctly and with pride is also a part of our wider education of students in preparing them for the working world where they will be expected to conform to standards of dress, be it a uniform or otherwise. Next term, we will be actively checking that students are wearing the correct uniform and wearing it appropriately. In short, uniform and general appearance should be appropriate for school, our place of work, and conform with health and safety standards. A reminder of our expectations that:

- All students are wearing polishable black shoes with no obvious logos – not trainers or canvas shoes. If you are unsure as to whether a pair of shoes is acceptable for school then please do not hesitate to get in touch to check before spending your hard-earned cash – I am aware that many retailers market their wares as 'school shoes' which can be very misleading for parents since it doesn't always match a school's own uniform expectations.
- For students in Year 7 and Year 8, the regulation school skirt is the **only** skirt that will be accepted and will remain so as students move through the school. For all other year groups (Years 9 - 11), students choosing to wear a skirt are strongly encouraged to purchase the school skirt. Where they opt not to, they should wear a skirt of no more than one inch above the knee and made of durable material, not Lycra, canvas or denim. **A reminder that the**

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- ***regulation school skirt will be introduced as the only accepted skirt for all year groups from September 2022.***
- School trousers follow the acceptable style laid out on the website - no jeans, jeggings, or three-quarter length trousers.
- Make up is unobtrusive and natural – no obvious nail polish.
- Extreme hairstyles and colours are not acceptable. If hair is long, it should be tied back for practical lessons.
- False/acrylic nails and false eyelashes are not to be worn in school.
- Ear piercings are a plain ear stud – no nose studs, lip, tongue or eyebrow piercings, or ear stretchers permitted. An unobtrusive plastic retainer may be worn to stop piercings from closing over.
- Coats are advised for inclement weather and should be suitable for the conditions. They should not be worn in classrooms.
- AirPods and earphones should not be worn around school.

Where a student is found to be infringing the uniform policy, a warning will be given, and parents will be contacted by Tutors to seek a speedy resolution. A time will be agreed to resolve the issue and follow up contact will be made. Where the issue cannot be resolved at Tutor level, the Head of Year and Senior Leadership Team Link will become involved and where your child displays repeated defiance, they may well be removed from circulation until a resolution is found.

I must stress that we do not wish for any student to miss out on valuable learning time and do not wish for any student to feel uncomfortable in addressing their uniform, however, we also need to ensure that all students meet the expectations that come with being a Hele's School student. Our rules and expectations about uniform are clearly laid out on our website. Fuller details of uniform and a link to the uniform web shop can be found on the Hele's School website, [here](#).

I am always heartened when I speak to our parental body that they share our high standards and want to support the school in ensuring our students take a great sense of pride in being a student at Hele's School. We value your help with this matter enormously as we aim to prepare students for successful futures in the world of work where dress code and presentation remains of utmost importance.

**Mobile phones:** Our policy around mobile phones remains the same in that phones must be switched off and out of sight between 8.30am and 3.00pm, including social time. Again, your support in ensuring your child understands the need to conform to this rule is much appreciated so that items are not confiscated, or situations escalated unnecessarily. Should students choose to bring a phone or other valuables (such as AirPods) to school, they do so at their own risk and take responsibility for safekeeping - the school will not take responsibility for loss or damage.

**Super Six:** To keep a sharp focus on learning we will be continuing with our daily 'readiness for learning' checks for students during tutor time to ensure that students arrive for the school day with the basic equipment (their 'Super Six'). We appreciate your support in ensuring that your son/daughter arrives to school each day with their Super Six: a blue or black pen, a green pen, a pencil, a ruler, a Knowledge Organiser folder and a mini whiteboard kit. All of these items are available to purchase in school very cheaply if a student is not able to provide from home. Failure to produce equipment will result in a same-day 30-minute Catch Up detention. We much prefer to celebrate a student's readiness for learning, however, and will recognise this through ClassCharts.

**Covid vaccinations:** NHS England are keen to ensure that all children have the opportunity to receive their 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Covid vaccinations as soon as possible after they become eligible, and vaccine centres have increased their capacity over the half-term to help to support this. If you would like to have your child vaccinated, please [book an appointment via the national booking system](#) or call 119. Please note your child needs to be 12 weeks since a positive Covid test before they have their vaccination and there needs to be a 12-week gap between the 1st and 2nd Covid-19 vaccination doses.

If you prefer a walk-in option where no booking is required, then you can access:

- Home Park Vaccination centre – PL2 3DQ
- Knowle House Surgery – PL5 3JB
- Devonport Pharmacy (Plymouth Albion, Brickfields recreation Ground) – PL1 4NE
- Plymouth City Council are offering some smaller scale walk-in clinics with no booking required. Plympton Library (PL7 2AS) is offering a clinic on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> February, 10am-5pm.

The Department for Education has produced some [frequently asked questions \(FAQs\) on the vaccination programme](#) including information on eligibility, accessibility and advice for parents of children at high risk from COVID-19.

**Good news:** The Friends of Hele's has very kindly donated just short of £4,000 this week for subject areas to buy equipment to enrich the learning opportunities for students. We are incredibly grateful to The Friends for their generosity and look forward to supporting future fundraising events.

**Staffing update:** We bid a fond farewell to the following staff today -

- Sophie Holmes, Teacher of RS, who leaves after 17 years at Hele's to pursue her passion for working with young people with complex needs to take up a teaching position at a Pupil Referral Unit in Devon.
- Hannah Waters, Creative and Performing Arts Admin Assistant, who leaves to relocate to London and take up a role in Marketing.
- Stanley Butt, Science Technician (part-time), who leaves to take up a full-time Science Technician role at the University of Plymouth.

Joshua Bean, a trained teacher who has been working as a Cover Supervisor this academic year at Hele's, will take over from Mrs Holmes from next term. The other two vacant roles are currently being advertised – please see the Hele's School website for further details.

**Finally:** A reminder that Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> February is a non-pupil/staff training day. For students, lessons begin on Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> March. Year 11 and 13 will be returning to their Mock Exams and for all other year groups it will be business as usual.

We look forward to welcoming back our students on Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> March. In the meantime, have a restful term and thank you for your ongoing support this term.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason  
**Principal**