

# Hele's School

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



Friday, 25 March 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

One of the highlights of my week was seeing our wonderful Eco Club students planting 30 tree whips around the site, accompanied by several enthusiastic staff who supported the venture with bringing in tools from home and even in some instances getting down and dirty themselves! I recall with fondness the meeting last term with Mr Kelly and the Eco Club, where the group pitched their plan to start landscaping the site; it is fantastic to see these ambitious plans come to fruition now and I am excited about their next endeavour to bring some colour to the Year 7 play area.

On a related note, I am delighted to hear from local pollinator conservation group Pollenize CIC that they plan to give every school child in Plymouth a FREE packet of wildflower seeds before the Easter break. The Seeds for Schools Project (S4S) is designed to encourage pollinator conservation and increase forage and habitats for all pollinators. I've no doubt there will be many eco-heroes as excited by this gift as I am!

We are always on the lookout for gardening equipment to support groups like Eco Club and the SEN Gardening Club, so if you are replenishing any tools this Spring, please do consider donating any old but good-quality equipment to School – I promise we will make good use of any donations!

**Covid contingency:** Last week, I flagged just how challenging it is in School to keep children learning on site with high rates of Covid-related absence amongst staff and the inability to secure Supply Teachers due to excessive demand across the City. I am incredibly grateful to staff for going above and beyond in exploring creative solutions around collapsing groups, covering lessons where they can above their usual teaching load, and being redeployed from Sixth Form lessons where students are better able to work independently with remote supervision so these staff can cover classes in younger years.

I am not being dramatic when I say that it is incredibly tough in School at the moment and, although we continue to do all we can to keep all students on site and engaged in their learning, it is on a knife-edge as to whether we can sustain this until the Easter break. We managed to get through another tough week without having to direct year groups to work from home to access online learning, but it is becoming more and more difficult. As I said last week, please be mindful that we may have to decide with little notice for a year group to work from home, depending on what each day presents with unplanned staff absence. Your support and understanding is appreciated.

**Road safety:** A polite reminder to those collecting and dropping off children not to wait or park on the zig zag lines outside the gates please or turn vehicles in the school driveway/entrance to the gates. Seymour Road in particular is congested at the start and end of school, and we had a near miss this week involving one of our children and a car trying to navigate a vehicle that was parked illegally and waiting to collect their child. Please do all you can to keep our school community safe.


## Looking ahead:

- Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April is the last day of term. School will end at the usual time of 3pm. We will be holding a 'mufti day' on this day in exchange for a donation of £1, with all funds raised going to the [Disasters Emergency Committee \(DEC\)](#) appeal to support humanitarian aid in Ukraine. Our Student Council is also planning other fundraising ideas to take place on this day.

**Good news:** 12A raised over £250 yesterday with a bake sale for the Post 16 charity, the Alzheimer's Society. Well done to Alex Griffiths, Izzy Smerdon, Lily-Jo Dyson, Grace Weaver, Amber Lord, Gabriel Awan for leading the event, and of course, those who brought some fabulous cakes in. A great effort!

**Staffing news:** There have been a few additions to Team Hele's this week - we welcomed Nicola Faithful to the Finance Team, we welcomed back a previous colleague, Carole Hines, as a part-time Science Technician, and we've had existing Hele's staff permanently appointed to internal roles in Gareth Allen as Learning Supervisor and Emily Hunt as part-time Music Teacher. Miss Hunt's passion is singing and now she is on a permanent contract she is intent on growing the Rock Choir with a vengeance, so please do actively encourage any wannabe singers that may be lurking in the shower in your home to step forward and get involved!

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason  
**Principal**

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