

Hele's School

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



Friday, 13 May 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

It has been a busy week this week, with Hele's students spread far and wide to enrich their learning opportunities. The tremendously resilient Ten Tors team completed their 35-mile gruelling expedition with just 20 minutes to spare on Sunday after overcoming a set back over the weekend, the Year 10 Geographers visited Bristol Harbourside for their fieldwork, a large group of theatre fans delighted in The Lion King in the West End of London, and today our KS4 Travel and Tourism students are exploring Thorpe Park in Surrey as part of their learning about tourist attractions, with our Duke of Edinburgh Bronze students then undertaking a practice expedition tomorrow – what a week!

In school, we experienced the CCF Biennial Inspection, which is one of the biggest events in the CCF's calendar, and what a hugely and successful event it was too! The Principal of a school with a CCF attached holds the title of Commander-in-Chief of the CCF, and this is a role that I feel very privileged to hold. I had the absolute pleasure of watching our Cadets in each Section perform their command tasks and drills and discussing the 80-year history and impact of our Hele's CCF with Colonel Rob Guest and guests with Contingent Commander Major Kevin Randall and his team. Our Cadets and Staff were truly exceptional, and we received outstanding feedback on the inspection. Supporting this prestigious event, our Year 9 and Year 10 Hospitality groups were tasked with planning, preparing and serving a buffet lunch for 30 visitors as part of their course requirements, and the quality of food and service blew everyone away! It was exquisite in every measure and very well-received by all who were lucky enough to partake.

Awards were presented by Colonel Rob Guest to the following Cadets:

Royal Navy Section: Best Senior Cadet - Ellena Ackerman

Best Junior Cadet - Eleanor Screech

Army Section: Best Senior Cadet - Mollie Naughton

Best Junior Cadet - Fraser Aitkin

RAF Section: Best Senior Cadet (plus First Aid Badge) - Verity Winn

Best Junior Cadet (plus First Aid Badge) - Daniel Svitak

First Aid Badge – Jacob Frost

Contingent Commander: Admiral Nelson Award: Elise Dilworth

Coldstream Guard Award - Poppy Laird

Sir Douglas Bader Award (plus First Aid Badge) - Isobel Prowse

Thank you to all Cadets and Hospitality students and staff involved for their efforts and well done to all involved, especially our award winners – a great show by the contingent, ably supported by our Hospitality groups.

Responsible use of Social Media: There is a new TikTok 'challenge' doing the rounds which is leading to some abusive posts from pupils about other pupils. Sadly, I have been made aware of a couple of accounts in recent weeks that are making unkind and untrue statements about other students at Hele's School.

Whenever we are made aware of such offensive material, we do what we can to track down the perpetrator(s) and sanction accordingly and suggest parents/carers refer to the Police, where appropriate. Should your child be the subject of such abuse via TikTok, as well as informing School, we strongly advise that you send a link to the offending posts to the UK Safer Internet Centre; the Director and his team have proved immensely adept at getting this material removed with reassuring efficiency.

I wrote in the autumn term when the 'craze' at that time was to belittle staff and we were successful in getting this material taken down. Students in all year groups get regular input about the appropriate use of social media and the impact of leaving a digital footprint. Mrs Crawford, Deputy Principal, will be leading assemblies over the coming fortnight along with the Police who we have invited in to support a strong message being delivered to all our young people. Your support in reinforcing responsible use of social media is much appreciated.

Covid vaccination clinics: A walk-in clinic with no booking required is being run on Sunday 15th May, 10am-5pm, Plympton Library. 1st, 2nd, 3rd primary and booster vaccinations are currently being offered. Please note, you will

have already been contacted if your child is eligible for the 3rd primary and booster so please do take evidence of this along with you if you have received it. A reminder that your child cannot receive a vaccination if they have had a positive COVID-19 test in the last 3 months. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate in contacting the COVID-19 Coordination Hub on 01752 308634 or by email at covid19@plymouth.gov.uk.

Mental Health Awareness Week: You may be aware of the national focus this week on positive mental health, not just for young people but adults and children alike. In school, students routinely access input and resources to support positive mental health and from September, we will have a Senior Mental Health Lead in school, coordinating the mental health provision for our children and families. If this is something you are interested in and would like to be part of shaping, Emma Clapham, Assistant Principal, is looking to meet with parents to help shape our provision going forward. Please do make contact if you'd like to get involved: clapham@heles.plymouth.sch.uk

Are we included? Research project with the University of Plymouth and Marjon: We wrote to all parents prior to the Easter break regarding a research project with our local universities around the subject of inclusion. The research is part of the development of an intervention aiming to support inclusion in schools. As part of the study, we are asking parents and carers to complete an online questionnaire lasting about 10 minutes. You will be asked questions relating to your and your child's experiences of inclusion and, in particular, about teacher and school support, student engagement and students' friendships. All answers are anonymous and we will receive a report at the end of the project with detailed feedback which will inform our future planning. We would be really appreciative if as many parents as possible could complete the online survey. The link to the parent/carer survey is [here](#).

Staffing news: A heartfelt thank you and farewell to Steve Gibson as he leaves Hele's today. Steve has done a fabulous job as a Maths Intervention Tutor for our young people over the last few years (more than expected, thanks to Covid!) and students have really valued the time and effort he has put into their sessions, along with his calm and humorous manner of delivery. We will certainly miss his input but wish him well for the next exciting instalment of his career. A warm welcome too to Gail Coath who has joined the team as Pastoral Support Manager this week. Mrs Coath – who has had plentiful experience of working with young people both in schools and in youth work settings - will work alongside Mrs Skingle (Head of Year) and Year 9.

Good news: Congratulations to our 35-milers on completion of last week's Ten Tors - Dominik Drajer, Isobel Prowse, Matthew Duckworth, Niamh Bennett and Jacob Frost, all Year 10 students. Whilst Louise Beatson unfortunately had to be taken off the moors due to unforeseen circumstances, the strength and resolve she showed and her selfless decision to support her teammates' success was commendable and should be celebrated.

Completing the 45-mile challenge was Year 11 student, Evan Legg, who formed part of a team from the Air Cadets, which he attends out of school. I trust Evan is suitably recovered and ready to take on his next challenge, which is the start of his written GCSE papers next week! Well done to all on a huge personal achievement.

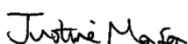
We are proud and excited for one of our Year 10 students who has achieved much acclaim for a poem she submitted to Coram Voice, a national creative writing competition. The competition provides a platform for young people to express their creative talents and to build understanding of their experiences, with many past winners going on to write for national publications. School was contacted yesterday to confirm that her poem has been short listed as a finalist and that she has been invited to London for an awards event – what wonderful news! We wish our superstar – whose name is being withheld at this stage of the competition - the very best of luck for the forthcoming finals.

Looking ahead:

- Monday, 16th May – GCSE & A-Level written exams begin. Best of luck to all exam groups!
- Tuesday, 17th May - Year 9 Art Trip to St Ives (Year 12 Art students if places remain)
- Wednesday 18th and Thursday 19th May - WeST Curriculum Review of Hele's School
- Thursday 19th May – Trial CCF session for all potential Year 9 Cadets, 3.00pm to 5.30pm

Finally: We appear to be hurtling towards the end of a short but action-packed term, so a reminder that school ends on Friday 27th May for a week. All staff and students will return on Monday 6th June (Week A).

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason

Principal

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