

Hele's School

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



Friday, 10 June 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

It's that exciting time in the school calendar when we get to meet the families who will be join Team Hele's in the new academic year - which unbelievably happens to be in just 6 school Mondays' time - and this week we have visited Woodford Primary School and Borringdon Primary School to kick start the transition Secondary School programme. It has been an absolute delight to have met so many lovely children and their parents and carers, though there remains a large number still to meet!

The reason I mention this is because of the key messages being given at those engagements, and 2 messages in particular that impact on the whole school community, whether joining the Hele's for the first time in September or returning to a new year group. These relate to uniform and the school day/length of the school week, as detailed below.

Uniform: Never one to miss an opportunity to drip feed the expectations around standards and uniform, I want to be really clear that the regulation school skirt (black pleated) is the *only* skirt that will be accepted for **all** year groups from this September. I have already shared this policy change in several communications to parents and carers this academic year so forgive me for sounding like a stuck record, but you will be considering buying new uniform in readiness for the new year and I want to ensure you do not waste your hard-earned cash by purchasing the wrong skirt! A reminder that the regulation skirt can be purchased from our uniform supplier Adelle, or ordered online via [the 'Uniform' section of the Hele's School website](#). Trousers remain an acceptable alternative to the skirt, so long as they meet our requirements of being black cotton or polyester and full length. Any queries, please see the website for guidance or contact your child's Tutor.

Length of the school week/school day: I wrote in the Spring term to alert families to an upcoming change in the school day following the publication of the Government's white paper, '*Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child*'. This document makes clear the expectation that all state-funded mainstream schools should work towards providing a working week of at least 32.5 hours by September 2023. For Hele's School, this means we need to add a further 50 minutes to our timetable by the start of the academic year 2023/24.

Since the Government's announcement, we have worked with key stakeholders to consider how Hele's School could make the best use of an extended school day, with due regard to the most impactful time to introduce the change. Having met with the Chair of Governors to ratify the proposed timescale just this morning, I can confirm that **at Hele's School the school day will extend to 3.10pm each day in September 2023.**

There is a strong and considered rationale behind this decision:

- We want to give plenty of notice of the later finish to the school day so that families and staff can make any required adjustments to childcare or transport routines in good time and with as little stress as possible.
- A key driver of our Literacy strategy is our ambition that every child should read at an age-appropriate level or better and be exposed to a wide range of texts to both support the curriculum and develop a love of reading. The extension of the school day from September 2023 will allow us to properly implement an evidence-based, robust Guided Reading Programme for all year groups; the academic year 2022-2023 will provide the time to research, define and resource the best model to deliver a rich and exciting programme with fidelity, whilst allowing time to ensure staff are fully trained and prepared for roll-out in September 2023.
- September 2023 is when the common curriculum structure agreed by all WeST Secondary Schools is fully implemented, so extending the day at the same time will support this other systemic change - it makes sense.

We are planning something special that we believe will be transformational with regards to developing literacy for all, regardless of starting point. I will keep everyone updated with developments in this area as we progress with our thinking into the Autumn term. For September 2022, the end of the day remains 3pm.

An evening with the Arts: A flyer was sent this week advertising this inaugural event, which will run on 23rd June 4-6pm. It promises to be a wonderful celebration of the Arts, with an exhibition of artwork across all year groups, a selection of Drama performances, vocal and instrumental musical pieces from A Level and GCSE students and The Hele's School Orchestra. We'd love for you to join us!

Westcountry Schools Trust - The Learning Institute: Ever thought of training to teach somewhere local, convenient and accessible? There are routes available that are run and organised by WeST. Training is provided by WeST staff with guaranteed placements in WeST schools. A flyer advertising a Primary Teacher Training programme starting this September is attached to this letter.

On a related note, there are plentiful opportunities to further your career with highly flexible degree pathways delivered in WeST schools, as well as a range of apprenticeships available through our Multi Academy Trust. Come to Morley Meadow today, Friday 10th June from 5pm or Thursday 23rd June from 5pm to find out more about the exciting opportunities that exist directly from our WeST team of trainers. Morley Meadow is conveniently located just off the A379 at 51 Encombe Street, Plymouth PL9 7GN.

COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic: There is a walk-in clinic with no booking required on Sunday 12th June 10-5pm, at Plympton Library, PL7 2AS. Please note 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.

Good news: I could have danced myself when I heard that Year 9 Maisie Oram came second at the All England Dance Regional Finals recently and in doing so has secured herself a place in the National Finals in London - what an achievement! We wish Maisie all the best for the National Final and we will all be rooting for her.

The Devon Lieutenancy and the County Joint Services Cadet Committee have completed a highly competitive process recently to appoint Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant's Cadets for the County of Devon for 2022-23. To achieve a nomination for this prestigious role is an honour in itself, but to be appointed as a LL Cadet is a tremendous accolade. We were absolutely delighted then to hear news that Cadet Corporal Isobel Prowse, a Year 10 student in the Hele's CCF (RAF), has been appointed as one of just seven cadets nationally to this position. Isobel will be invested at an awards evening in October and will be 'on call' to attend events with Lord Lieutenant David Fursman for the period of her tenure until October 2023. She follows in the footsteps of Cadet Sergeant Hannah Duckworth in Year 13, who has performed this role with great commitment, professionalism and aplomb throughout the past year.

Returning a Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for successive years is particularly noteworthy for our CCF and a significant factor of Hele's cadets successfully achieving this status is down to the continuous high standards, relentless investment in time and opportunities for cadets and staff, and outstanding leadership exhibited by Major Kevin Randall and his team across all three CCF sections. We are incredibly proud of Cdt. Cpl. Prowse and wish her the best of luck for her forthcoming tenure.

Staffing news: This week, we welcomed IT Technician Shane Froggatt to Team Hele's. Shane is a former Hele's School student who left in 2017, and it always gives me an extra sense of satisfaction to be able to add a Hele's School graduate to our workforce! There has also been a warm welcome back for Mrs Blandin-Neaves, who returned to the classroom this week and resumed her Head of MFL role.

Finally: Whether it's by giving back to their community, developing a passion for a particular cause, or learning a new skill, the Volunteering section of the Duke of Edinburgh scheme changes lives and has a positive impact on communities. We heard this week that participants from Hele's School dedicated 806 hours to volunteering between April 2021 and March 2022 alone, with a social value of £3723.72 – what a phenomenal effort! Another strand of the D of E is the Expedition, and this weekend our Silver team are walking and camping overnight on Dartmoor. We wish the group a safe and comfortable expedition, and if you happen to see our amazing young people in the Princetown or Yelverton vicinity then please do give them a wave and a smile - I've no doubt you'll get the same back!

Kindest regards,

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