

Hele's School

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



Friday, 18 November 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

There has been much to cheer about this week in the shape of so much positive feedback directed my way about our amazing Hele's students. From emails and phone calls received congratulating our CCF Cadets and staff for the part they played in poppy selling last Saturday and taking part in the Remembrance service and parade around Plympton on Sunday, to seeing Hele's School Year 7 student, Daniel Cook, talk so eloquently on BBC Spotlight about how Children in Need charities have supported him playing football at Argyle - weeks like this make me a very proud Principal indeed and remind me just how lucky I am to be part of this community!

Let me continue the positive affirmations for our fantastic young people by heaping praise on our Year 11 and Year 13 students who today complete an intense fortnight of Mock GCSE and A Level exams - to say they have been exceptional in their conduct before and during exams is an understatement. Their commitment was summed up by an invigilator at the school who used to be a Headteacher herself, when she stated she was *'in awe of Hele's students and their polite, respectful and purposeful demeanour and application to work'*. High praise indeed, and a very well deserved commendation. Good luck now for the practical mocks which lie ahead next week.

Hele's Alumni: We were delighted to welcome back Hele's alumni, Sam Partridge and Matt Ottley, this week to share their Apprenticeship career journey after leaving Sixth Form in 2021. Matt is working as a Level 3 Apprentice Accounting Technician at Westcott's Chartered Accountants and Sam is employed by the MOD on a Nuclear Degree Apprenticeship scheme supporting the submarine delivery agency. Our Sixth Form students got so much out of the Q&A session with the boys. If any Hele's alumni wish to share their experiences since graduating school, please get in touch with Mr Stone at stoneka@heles.plymouth.sch.uk. We'd love to hear from any ex-students. Remember, once Team Hele's, always Team Hele's!

Anti-Bullying Week: This week, student reps have been asked to lead a piece of work looking at site safety and 'hot spot' mapping. This is an important piece of student-led work and we will work with our student body to analyse the outcomes and agree next steps accordingly. The theme for Anti-Bullying Week this year is 'Reach Out'. Students were taken through an assembly on this theme and reminded of the dedicated 'Tell Us Now' alert on our website and the QR code for instant reporting.

Several Year 10 students have been working with the NSPCC for the past year and have been busy promoting their podcast on the theme of 'Healthy Relationships', as well as giving out wallet-sized cards promoting the Tell Us Now button. We want all of our students to be comfortable to report any issue, no matter how big or small, and to be confident in knowing how to do this, either in person to the pastoral team, or to their tutor, or via the online method.

World Cup: As many of you will know, I am an avid football fan but even my passion for sport and country cannot be wavered when it comes to learning! I want to be clear that we will *not* be stopping lessons to show England's first match in the World Cup group stages v Iran next Monday and lessons will continue as normal. That said, we will explore whether we can provide some limited access to the game throughout Break 2 while students eat their lunch between 1.30 – 2pm. No promises, but we'll see what we can do! Fear not, all remaining group stage games for England are evening kick offs so there will still be plenty to enjoy after a hard day's learning!

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Attendance: Thank you for your ongoing support in ensuring that students are in school and in lessons every day. Just a quick reminder that we will not authorise absence for Christmas shopping or watching the World Cup. Thank you for your support in ensuring that every minute of every day matters.

Reach for the stars: We are getting very excited at Hele's about the countdown to the very first UK rocket and satellite being sent into space from Spaceport Cornwall (Newquay). The link below enables students and parents to gain access to the background of this event and a broadcast from British Astronaut, Tim Peake:

<https://learnliveuk.com/countdown-2-launch>.

This link has kindly been provided by Mike Grocott, the Regional Engagement Lead for the Institute for Research in Schools who we are fortunate to be working alongside.

Christmas dinner bookings: A letter was emailed to all families yesterday with the dates for year group sittings and details of how to book a Christmas Dinner in the last week of term. A reminder that bookings will close at noon on Friday 25th November and there will be no further opportunity to book thereafter. Please click on the link below to book and make payment in the usual way via ParentPay (those children in receipt of Free School Meals will not be charged):

[CHRISTMAS MEAL LINK](#)

Good news: Congratulations to Harry Webb in 7F who performed with great aplomb at Plymouth Music Festival last week, and achieved a Merit for his superb performance. Well done, Harry; we are all very proud of you!

A special 'well done' to Nathan Bendell in 11D for his Passing Out at The Plymstock Police Cadets last week. You will recall I shared my pride of the many Hele's students who took part in this prestigious event and achieved highly, but I regrettably missed Nathan from the list of Cadets despite seeing him on the night and commenting on how smart he looked! Great job, Nathan, very well done!

A busy week of sports fixtures – which included a 20-strong squad of Year 7 netballers competing in a city-wide tournament and the Year 7 and 8 girls' football team losing an exhilarating match with Devonport High for Girls by the smallest of margins – culminated in our boys' badminton team successfully defending their title to become Plymouth Schools U16 Badminton Champions for the second year running! What an achievement, and warmest congratulations to Mebin Mathew in Year 10, and Year 11 students Isaac Jackson, Zak Munnings and Oliver Gill.

Looking ahead:

- Monday, 21 November: Exeter University visiting Hele's to deliver workshops to Post 16 students
- Wednesday, 11 January: Advance notice of our rearranged Post-16 Evening, 5.00 – 7.30pm

On behalf of all at Team Hele's, I'd like to wish the young people from The Linda Mortimore and Charlotte Smith School of Dance the very best of luck for this weekend as they gear up for a huge event - performing at the Barbican Christmas light switch on on Saturday. We are blessed to have several talented and enthusiastic Hele's students who form part of the dance school and I know they will give this performance everything they've got! If you are in the vicinity of the Barbican on Saturday afternoon then do swing by and show them your support - they are performing between 4.10 - 4.40pm. Good luck to all!

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason
Principal