

Hele's School

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



Friday, 16 December 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we draw the Autumn term to a close, I would like to thank you for all your support throughout this very busy term. Whether that support has been financial in terms of engagement in school activities, attendance at school events or simply supporting us as a school to do our very best for your child; as always, your support is greatly appreciated.

Sustainable Gifts Fair: Here is a prime example of parents and carers financially supporting a key event in the school calendar! You came out in your droves on Tuesday this week to support our Year 7 students who have been busy making and preparing for the evening for weeks. As adults walked away with all sorts, from chocolate teaspoons to driftwood Christmas trees, Year 7 took £1753.42 on the night! After the £1 per student investment was paid back, the grand total to share with charities is a whopping £1514.42. Thank you for your support and congratulations to all students and staff for their superb effort - especially to 7E and Miss Metters who raised the most across all Year 7 tutor groups.

Year 13 Leavers' Awards Evening: It was a busy week for hosting visitors in school this week. On Wednesday, the Main Hall was transformed from Y7 marketplace to Awards Evening venue as we welcomed back some familiar faces to celebrate last year's A Level cohort. It was wonderful to hear the tales of university life, gap year shenanigans and for some, the reality of life in the working world! Most notably, it was marvellous to see happy, smiling faces returning to the Hele's nest one last time but as we always say, once Team Hele's, always Team Hele's, so I'm sure we will see many of them again in different capacities in years to come!

Celebration Breakfasts: It has been a week of celebration breakfasts for students in Years 7-10, with the top 20% of each year group for commitment to learning rewarded for their ongoing efforts. The joy of celebrating students' commitment to learning is that it is open to absolutely all students, irrespective of starting point or academic ability and focuses on the effort they make on a daily basis. It was fabulous to celebrate these students and I look forward to seeing some new faces for the next round of celebrations in the New Year as students compete to be better each day!

Good news: I've heard tremendous reviews following the Sparkwell Amateur Theatre Company's Christmas pantomime, 'Mother Goose' last week. Matilda and Ruby Harris in 7F are new members of SATCO and they pushed themselves out of their comfort zone and took part in their first ever show for the company as part of the chorus. The girls have been bitten by the performance bug and are already looking forward to the next show!

Eleanor (10D) and Bethany (9A) Pike are Dartmoor National Park Junior Rangers and have been working towards John Muir Awards. They have so far gained a Discovery Award, Explorer Award and now the final Conserver Award with The John Muir Trust conservation charity. To achieve this, they have done all sorts from dry stone walling and coppicing, to bracken management, bridleway repairs and the clearing of invasive species. The list is endless! It was great to meet with the girls this week to hear all about their adventures to date and their plans for the future – well done, girls!

It was incredible to hear that BBC Radio Devon interviewed Sam Horton (Year 10) and his family recently about how they live with disability, awareness and kindness. Sam shared some inspirational words to remind us all how important it is to try to understand people and what is going on for them in their lives – we are all different and we

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need to show love, kindness and care to others. The world needs kind people! Do take a moment if you can to check out Sam's video: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CmJVGeuATbY/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY=>

Christmas support: 2022 has certainly been a challenging year, and with many people in our community facing a difficult winter, the Rees Wellbeing Centre with whom we work closely, has put together a list of emergency contacts so that no one in our community is left with nowhere to turn in a crisis this Christmas. The list is attached for reference and outlines key contacts should you or anyone you know require help over the festive period.

The Rees Centre has also been working with Plymouth City Council to secure funding to run Warm and Welcoming Space sessions at the centre. A full list of warm and welcoming spaces across the city can be found here: <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/warm-welcoming-spaces> There are also some amazing services locally who haven't registered as official warm spaces – please see the attached poster specifically containing warm spaces and community cafés locally too.

Homework: As we want Christmas to be a time of rest and recuperation for staff and children alike, please be advised that staff have been asked to refrain from setting any formal homework for students in any year groups over the forthcoming break. This is our standard policy, so this serves purely as a reminder. We are aware that with exams falling for some year groups shortly after our return in January, some students may wish to study during the break – this is fine, but there is no compulsory requirement for completion over the duration of the break.

Staffing news: We wish Yasmin Fursman the very best of luck as she leaves Hele's today to embark on an exciting new chapter in her teaching career in Hackney, London. Miss Fursman has been a fantastic member of the English department and a super tutor in her time at Hele's, going above and beyond through running a number of clubs and activities for our young people, the most recent being Gardening Club. One school's loss is another school's gain, and the key think is that Miss Fursman will continue to make a difference to lives of young people through her teaching of English.

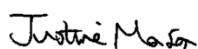
Looking ahead:

- Tuesday, 3 January: Staff training day. Non-pupil day
- Wednesday, 4 January: Term 3 starts for all students
- Thursday, 5 January: Year 10 Subject Teacher/Parents' Evening via MS Teams
- Friday, 6 January: Year 11 Mock GCSE results event, 8.30am
- W/b Monday, 9 January: Year 9 internal exam period for running in-class assessments
- Tuesday, 10 January: Y7 – 9 Flu vaccinations (nasal spray)
Careers Fair, 4.30pm – 6.30pm
- Wednesday, 11 January: Post-16 Opportunities Evening, 5pm

Finally, as we prepare for tickets to go on sale for next year's production of Fame, the senior cast have made a short Christmas video to whet the appetite: <https://youtu.be/poOXrE0ltQM> Don't forget to snap up your tickets early in the New Year – they go on sale from 4th January.

All that remains now is for me to wish you a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year on behalf of all the staff and governors at Hele's School. I hope you manage to rest, relax and enjoy the company of those close to you over the festive period. We look forward to welcoming all students back on Wednesday, 4 January.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason
Principal