

# Hele's School

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



Friday, 27 January 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

Our Junior Leadership Group at Hele's School recently engaged with Student Council representatives from each tutor group across all years as part of our planned opportunities to hear student feedback. The team then led school assemblies to feed back the key themes emerging and to share next steps with the full school so that our students understood the work that continues to go on to make our school a great place to learn and grow.

A key investment that has been made as a direct response to student feedback came to fruition just this week. Our fantastic young people told us that they were confident that they knew who to ask for help and support if they were worried about anything or anyone and that they would be listened to and heard. They also said they were clear about facilities such as the 'Tell Us Now' email accessed from the student IT launchpad and reviewed daily by the wider Safeguarding Team. They were very appreciative that they felt their mental health, wellbeing and care was held in high regard and stated that they were safe and well cared for within the school community. Many also appreciated having informal access to our 2 Youth Workers who we commissioned to work across the school during Break 1 and Break 2 each Monday and build relationships with young people.

However, some students did say that they'd also like to be able to have someone 'more their own age' to talk through any little frustrations or challenges as they arose, which may or may not be connected to their school experience...cue the birth of the Peer Listening Programme at Hele's School! Year 12 volunteers have come forward in their droves to be trained to provide such a listening service for our younger students, and have this week received their training from The Zone, Plymouth. We are really excited about how this project can add to an already strong provision.

This is just one of the great ideas that has been developed on the back of our student voice. We will update you with other key developments as they arise but, in the meantime, please do continue to encourage your child/ren to contribute to making our school experience better each day for everyone – their voice is really important to us and we want to make sure that every member of Team Hele's feels safe, happy and cared and enjoys coming to school.

**Strike action:** You will have already received a letter from me detailing the plans for partial opening of Hele's School on day 1 of the NEU teacher strike on Wednesday 1 February. It is worth stressing that - whilst Year 9 and Year 10 will be working remotely from home this coming Wednesday with set work on Maths, English Language, English Literature and Science, and all other year groups are on site at Hele's, the model for opening on each of the 3 confirmed NEU strike dates is likely to see different year groups working remotely at home on future strike days.

I cannot confirm arrangements too far in advance, as we will not know until much nearer the time whether the NEU will continue with the strike action or indeed how many of our staff are likely to support the strike action, meaning there will other factors to consider in our risk assessment. However, following Wednesday's strike, we are likely to be better placed to gauge possible future staff participation rates, and hence I hope to be able to give an indication of the year groups that may be asked to work remotely on the March dates so that families can look ahead and make provisional arrangements with as much notice as possible.

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## Looking ahead:

- Wednesday, 1 February: NEU Strike – Years 7, 8, 11, 12 and 13 in School and Years 9 and 10 working remotely from home.
- Monday, 6 February: Opening night of the School Show, *Fame*. Performances run all week.
- Friday, 10 February: End of Term 3.
- Monday, 20 February: Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST) Staff Training Day – all WeST Primary and Secondary Schools closed to students for staff training.
- Tuesday, 21 February: All students return to School to start Term 4.

As we head towards the final throes of a busy term, don't forget to grab your tickets for the school show, *Fame*! Over the past two weeks, the cast have performed in assemblies for every year group to give a sneak peek of what's in store and whet the appetite, and Thursday and Friday night performances are now fully sold out! Our young people and staff have worked so hard for so long to ensure they bring the highest calibre of production to our school community, and I know they will greatly appreciate your support so don't miss out! I look forward to seeing many of you in the audience in the last week of term.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason  
**Principal**