

# Hele's School

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



Friday, 24 February 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome back to term 4, which marks the halfway point of this academic year – where has that time gone? For many students and staff, half term will have been a much-needed opportunity for some rest and relaxation, particularly those who finished the term with a flurry of Fame performances – what a week of music, dance, drama, and entertainment that was! For others, like the group that spent the week in Florida on the STEM trip (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths), speed and adrenaline was the order of the day! However your family spent the half term break, I hope you had a good one.

Term 2 has started with a bang, with Year 11 and 13 coming straight back to their Mock GCSE exams, as well as a Drama trip to the Theatre Royal to watch the National Theatre production of *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*. Of course, if you are a Plymouth Argyle FC fan, there was much drama to be had mid-week too. I know our Hele's Plymouth Argyle Supporters' Club aren't the only ones who are still celebrating a dramatic end to the penalty shoot-out with a trip to Wembley to look forward to!

**Strike:** I wrote to families yesterday to confirm plans for partial opening on the second day of NEU strike action on Thursday, 2 March. In summary, all students in Years 7 – 9 (720 students) will be learning from home with work set via ClassCharts next Thursday. Years 10 - 13 (630 students) will be in school following their usual timetable as far as possible.

Please be assured that there were many facets to this decision as part of our risk assessment planning, and the decision about which groups we can accommodate onsite is never taken lightly. We are determined to stay open to some year groups on each strike day, even though almost 30 teachers went on strike on 1 February, and we are expecting as many to strike again next week.

There are 4 planned strike days from the NEU and so the year groups we bring into school will need to change on some of these days; we are working hard to ensure our exam groups (Years 11 and 13) can attend school as normal on all 4 days, and every other year group can have 1 or 2 of the 4 strike days in school. For parents of Year 9 children who will have been working from home on both strike days to date, please be assured that it is our intention that Year 9 will be prioritised for school-based provision for at least one of the forthcoming strikes in mid-March.

We do understand the worries and frustrations the strike action may cause for families, but teachers nationally – like many others in public service – are taking this action legitimately and as a last resort and to safeguard the long-term education of young people. Regardless of whether you support teachers striking or not, please be assured that we will continue to manage this really difficult situation in the best way we can for our young people and families.

**Good news:** We are delighted to hear that Erin Rumble in Year 13 has just secured a Degree Level Apprenticeship with Bishop Fleming to train to become a Chartered Accountant. Erin will be studying towards a Level 7 Apprenticeship with an ACA qualification - the equivalent of a Masters degree - over the next 5 years. We know just how competitive it is to secure a high-quality apprenticeship, so this is a fantastic achievement, and we are very proud of Erin.

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**Principal: Justine Mason**

Seymour Road, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 4LT

Telephone: 01752 337193 Fax: 01752 331460

email: [heles.school@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:heles.school@plymouth.gov.uk) website: [www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk](http://www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk)

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At Hele's, we are seeing an increase in the number of young people who are staying on to secure their A Levels and then moving into a Higher Level Apprenticeship rather than leaving at 16 to pursue a standard apprenticeship. Whether pursuing this route to training and employment at the end of Year 11 or at the end of Sixth Form, Hele's School graduates continue to make up more than double the local average percentage of young people being accepted onto apprenticeships, demonstrating the excellent academic, practical and employability skills and attributes they develop throughout their 5 or 7 years with us, and the effective careers information, advice and guidance they receive. If you are interested in routes into apprenticeships, please reach out to our Careers Manager, Mrs Yeomans, who will be only too pleased to offer advice and signpost you to further information: [yeomans@heles.plymouth.sch.uk](mailto:yeomans@heles.plymouth.sch.uk).


#### Looking ahead:

- Thursday, 2 March: NEU Strike Day. School open to all students in Years 10 – 13 inclusive. Years 7 – 9 will work from home on work set via ClassCharts. Details to follow in due course.
- Friday, 3 March: Hele's Centre of Excellence trip to the Neuroscience Festival at Bristol University, 10.00am - 5.40pm.  
Year 12 Art group attending a Textiles workshop at Ivybridge Community College, 8.20am – 11.30am.
- Monday, 6 March National Careers Week.  
Year 11 Mock MFL Speaking exams.
- Tuesday, 7 March: Year 9 Open Sites visit for selected students to Boringdon Hall.
- Wednesday, 8 March Year 9 and Year 12 National Theatre Connections performance.
- Thursday, 9 March: Year 9 Open Sites visit for selected students to Boringdon Hall.  
English trip to the Theatre Royal Plymouth to watch 'An Inspector Calls'.
- Saturday, 11 March: Gold Duke of Edinburgh Training Walk.

We encourage our youngsters to dream big and fly high, but some cadets from the CCF RAF Section are taking that literally and are heading to RAF Predannack at the crack of dawn in the morning for a gliding lesson, where they will be at the controls over 1000 feet Helston. What a way to start the weekend!

Thank you for your support in ensuring it has been a positive start to the new term.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason  
**Principal**