

# Hele's School

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



Friday, 10 March 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

Our sports stars have been busy this week taking part in local competitions, with commitment and enthusiasm displayed in abundance. The Plymouth Swimming Gala saw over 20 swimmers competing in a Hele's team for the first time ever on Monday evening - I'm told that it was a great team effort, and everyone had a brilliant time! The U14 Cross Country Meet last night saw a trio of Year 8 boys compete, with Jamie Farmer securing 3<sup>rd</sup> place, Knox Townsend coming 5<sup>th</sup> and Marley Garland finishing just outside of the top 20. Out of school, Grace Nicholls (9F) and Talia Penrose (7A) have had fantastic success in the Street House Southwest Regional Championships with their dance school, with Talia even qualifying for the 3-day British championships in November. Well done to all our superstars!

**Invacuation procedure:** We are all familiar with the evacuation drill and we practise this each term as a whole school to ensure our procedures remain sharp and effective. This allows us to remain confident that we can get everyone out of the building to safety in the event of a fire, for instance.

Of course, there may be occasions where we need to quickly restrict access to a site or a building in response to a threat, either external or internal, and to keep people inside the classroom/building rather than evacuate. Whilst we have a procedure in place for 'invacuation', it has not been routinely practised until now. Like many public organisations, we feel it is prudent to plan for every eventuality and introduce regular practices to our safeguarding procedures. We have been talking to students in Assembly recently about what to do in the unlikely event of an emergency at school requiring an invacuation procedure. As you can imagine, this caused excitement amongst many and anxiety amongst some, especially in the lower year groups. The intention isn't to worry or frighten anyone, but rather to ensure we are well-placed to respond quickly and safely to any eventuality we may be faced with. *It is important to stress that the likelihood of ever needing to invacuate is minimal, but nonetheless it is important that we prepare, plan and practise.* Please be assured that later this term we will have a controlled walk-through of this drill, so that we all become familiar with this routine. Should you have any questions about our invacuating procedure, please do not hesitate to contact school.

**NEU strike action, days 3 and 4:** detailed information has already been emailed to all families, but in summary:

- Wednesday 15 March - Year 9 plus Years 11, 12 and 13 in school and Years 7, 8 and 10 remote learning at home.
- Thursday 16 March - Year 10 plus Years 11, 12 and 13 in school and Years 7, 8 and 9 remote learning at home.

We have managed to maintain an in-school provision despite significant pressures faced through staffing challenges and ensured that all year groups will have had at least 1 in-school day across the 4 days of action. However, we do appreciate that industrial action is disruptive, and recognise you may need to change your plans or working arrangements whilst this action is ongoing, often with financial impact or causing significant inconvenience to you and your family. We thank you for your patience and understanding at this time.

**Library book amnesty:** Library staff have been scanning all the books we have to undertake a stocktake so we can be sure we know what we have and identify gaps in provision. We are asking for ALL overdue books to be returned to the

**Principal: Justine Mason**

Seymour Road, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 4LT

Telephone: 01752 337193 Fax: 01752 331460

email: heles.school@plymouth.gov.uk website: www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk

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Library please and would value your support in reinforcing this message and checking for books at home. This is a great reason to ask for your child to tidy their bedroom should you need one! Thanks in advance for your help and cooperation.

**Good news:** It was a pleasure to be invited to present certificates to our wonderful Arts Ambassadors this week, and to congratulate them on securing their Arts Award Level 1. The quality of work I looked at was incredibly high, and it was a joy to hear about the experiences these young people documented in their portfolios. It has taken a while to get to this stage, as the lockdown around Covid-19 fell just as students started the programme. What resilience and perseverance though, to get back on track and complete the course! Well done to:

Year 8 students: Isabelle Baxter, Jacqueline Garbu, Phineus Matthews, Briony Page and Emily Rawlins.

Year 9 students: Emma Beasley, Sam Fagan, Cobey Jackson, Daniel Keeler, Nell Kowalczyk, Ruby-Mae Lewis, Harvey Liddicoat, Emily Phipps and Henry Tayler.

**Free support sessions for parents and carers:** Plymouth City Council are running a series of 90-minute online sessions over the next 3 weeks about some of the challenges young people are facing today, with practical advice and tools about how you can best support them. Topics include: drugs and alcohol; body image; safety online; mental health; social risks; peer pressure. Sessions are online from 7pm to 8.30pm on Tuesday 14, Tuesday 21 and Tuesday 28 March. Visit <https://letstalkplymouth.eventbrite.co.uk> to find out more about each session and book your free place.

**Careers support:** Our Year 9s have had some informative visits to Boringdon Hall Hotel this week to discover more about the Construction and the Hospitality industries and to have a tour around the complex of luxury rooms being built. Students got to meet a Degree Apprentice from Obedair, who told them about his career journey and how varied and rewarding his role as an apprentice Quantity Surveyor is. They also signed some of the steelwork being used in the construction, so in centuries to come, people may discover it if ever excavations at the site take place!

STEM careers are being put under the microscope next week as part of the Science Department's 'speed dating' event for Post-16 students to meet with researchers and employers and hear first-hand about routeways into Science-based careers. This will be the second event of this nature we have run at Hele's, and we know this event will be bigger and better than the last.

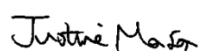
For those of all ages wanting to explore routes into training and employment, an early careers fair is being held at Home Park (ground of Plymouth Argyle FC) this Saturday between 10am - 2pm. Local employers, including Princess Yachts, AECOM, Babcock International and Keir Construction will be exhibiting, along with a whole host of other local training and education providers. Further information can be found [here](#).

#### Looking ahead:

- Saturday, 11 March: Gold Duke of Edinburgh Training Walk, Harford and surrounds.  
Early Careers Fair, Home Park, 10am – 2pm.
- Tuesday, 14 March: Year 10 Geography fieldtrip to Bristol.  
WeST Curriculum Review of Hele's School.
- Wednesday, 15 March: NEU strike day 3.
- Thursday, 14 March: NEU strike day 4.  
Science Sixth Form 'speed dating' event with employers and researchers.

Good luck to the Gold Duke of Edinburgh group who are training on Dartmoor tomorrow. Wrap up warm!

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason  
Principal