

Hele's School

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



Friday, 17 March 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

I'd like to start this week by thanking you for your ongoing support around the NEU strike action. Days 3 and 4 of the planned 4-day period of action have now been completed and it seems talks between union leaders and the Government are set to begin in earnest next week. We hope this will see a resolution and avoid any further disruption but will of course keep you updated as we find out more.

This week also marked British Science Week, running from 10 -19 March. Activities have taken place across the school to help raise the awareness of science in our everyday lives. Years 7 and 8 completed a bingo contest across the week by completing a range of challenges, including Library-based research, to fill in their bingo card. For students in Years 9 and 10, Paul Aldersley, oceanographer and communications specialist, presented a series of talks in Science lessons and for our Year 12s, there was the opportunity to take part in a Science careers 'speed dating' event! To round off the week, we welcome Mike Grocott (IRIS regional lead) into school this evening, to hear from a selection of Year 10 and 12 students as they present the findings of the IRIS (Institute for Research in Schools) projects they have been working on. These students will then continue work on their academic posters prior to presenting their full set of data and conclusions at Exeter University in June alongside schools across the south-west.

WeST Curriculum Review: On Tuesday of this week, we welcomed 7 colleagues from across the Westcountry Schools Trust into Hele's to support us with a formative review of our curriculum. A huge number of positives were drawn from the day, with colleagues commenting on the warm and friendly ethos of the school, as well as the academic rigour and challenge within our curriculum for all students, and strong engagement in lessons. Student behaviour was seen to be excellent, and alongside a strong curriculum, it was reported that students of all ages and needs have very good conditions in which to learn. Without exception, each member of the review team articulated the evidence of commitment across the school to ensuring every child at Hele's gets the best possible opportunities and care and could see the impact of our ambition to know and provide for every child playing out in all areas of school life. Whilst reporting that the review was '*wholly positive and you have a very strong base on which to build*', we are not complacent and we will take forward the offered in our ambition to ensure our provision is exceptional for every young person. The key challenge is to ensure consistency within and across all areas, bringing everyone up to the standard of the very best. I am confident that our school improvement priorities for this academic year (embedding a culture of curriculum; reading with accuracy and automaticity; SEND provision; seeing the curriculum as the progression model; and mental health and wellbeing, including becoming a Trauma Informed School) and the ongoing staff development programme we have will in place to support us in getting better each day will have good impact. Thank you to those parents, students and staff who actively fed into the programme for the day.

Online safety: The NSPCC is running a series of FREE 1-hour online safety workshops to help parents and carers with topics such as: Gaming; Social Media; online bullying; mental health and wellbeing; parental controls, and more. Our experience is that NSPCC training is high quality and well-received by participants. For more information and to request joining details please email parentworkshops@nspcc.org.uk.

Fit & Fed Project: Plymouth City Council has received funding from the Department for Education to coordinate the Fit & Fed Project within Plymouth and to offer FREE Holiday Club places for children who: receive free school meals; have an EHCP; are in care; are from refugee or asylum seeking or Ukrainian families; have a child protection plan. Each eligible child can attend a maximum of 4 days over the Easter holiday. More details can be found here: <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/fit-and-fed>

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WESTCOUNTRY
SCHOOLS TRUST

FREE online meal planning: Theo Michaels (TV chef, author and founder of FiveDinners.com) has started an initiative to help families struggling with the cost-of-living to eat well. Theo has contacted schools nationally and is offering FREE lifetime access – no catch, no restrictions – to FiveDinners.com. I am sharing this in case it is of interest to anyone in our community; times are tough, and this may be of interest to some families. To be clear, Hele’s School cannot endorse this service and receives no benefit at all from sharing the details with our families beyond hoping it will help in these difficult times in some small way.

Forest Rising: Young people aged 16–28 can get actively involved and share views on how to improve the local environment through this exciting project. We have promoted this opportunity through our Sixth Form and our Geography department, but I’m sharing the information as you may have others in your family for whom this may be of interest. [Click this link for further details](#)

Good news: After a rigorous application process and interview, we are thrilled to hear that Hetty Aston in Year 12 has been awarded a place on an outward-bound course through The Sir Francis Chichester Trust. With access to incredible locations, including Loch Eil in the Scottish Highlands, Ullswater in the Lake District, and Aberdovey and Ogwen Cottage in Snowdonia, Hetty’s resilience will be tested in all manner of ways, but she will undoubtedly have the most wonderful of experiences with memories that will last lifetime! Congratulations, Hetty we are very proud of your achievement!

Multi-talented, Ethan Mason in Year 10 has just competed in the regional finals for athletics and won overall gold, with the highest score in the Under-15 age group across a range of sports, including running and throwing. Ethan will now represent Devon in the national finals in Stoke-on-Trent on the 1 April. We congratulate Ethan and wish him the very best of luck!

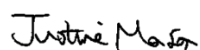
Looking ahead:

- Saturday, 18 March: Bronze Duke of Edinburgh training at Hele’s School
- Monday, 20 March: Drama department National Theatre performance, 4pm at Hele’s School
- Tuesday, 21 March: NT Connections Theatre Project, performance of ‘Tuesday’, 4pm in the Studio
Scholar’s Programme Summer School launch, Exeter University
- Wednesday, 22 March: Year 12 Higher Education Fair, Exeter Exhibition Centre
Duke of Edinburgh Awards Evening in the Studio, 6pm
- Friday, 24 March: GCSE PE Moderation
- Saturday, 25 March: Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh training walk, Buckfastleigh and South Brent
- Tuesday, 28 March: WeST Reading Review
NT Connections Theatre Production of ‘Tuesday’ at The Theatre Royal, 7pm
- Wednesday, 29 March: Year 12 Geography residential to Swanage Bay (until Friday 31 March)
- Friday, 31 March: Term 4 ends at 3pm
- Tuesday, 18 April: Term 5 starts for all students

Finally, Isaac Jackson in Year 10 is doing a fundraiser for Young Epilepsy next week, a raffle to win an amazing hamper of purple goodies (purple is the colour of the epilepsy charities). Isaac and his friends will be in the underpass every break and lunchtime next week (20 - 24 March) to raise as much money and awareness as they can in the run up to Epilepsy Awareness Day on Sunday, 26 March. The winner(s) will get their hampers delivered during tutor time on Monday 27 March. It is 50p per ticket - we’d love for you to support Isaac in this endeavour in any way you can, so please encourage your child to buy a ticket if you can.

Finally, for those celebrating St Patrick’s Day today, I hope you have a wonderful day and enjoy the craic!

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason
Principal