

Hele's School

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



Friday, 21 April 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome back to Term 5! I hope you and your family had a restful Easter break and are looking forward to the term ahead as much as we are.

I spent the latter part of my break on a self-funded educational study visit to Nashville, Tennessee where I had the privilege of networking with system leaders from the USA and the UK and visiting a number of Charter Elementary and High Schools over the course of 6 days; a busman's holiday perhaps, but an absolutely fascinating experience and I've no doubt some of the learning I took from those visits will enhance our educational provision at Hele's and across the Westcountry Schools Trust.

Planned NEU strike action - Thursday 27th April and Tuesday 2nd May 2023: You may have seen in the news that the recent pay offer has been rejected by teaching unions. The offer, *being unfunded*, would put impossible strain on school budgets and would have a significantly detrimental impact on a school's ability to provide the highest standard of education to its students. Therefore, unions continue to pursue further negotiations with the government to see a satisfactory solution to this very difficult situation.

In the meantime, the NEU have announced two further dates of strike action so I am writing to give you notice of the impact this will have on our school ways of working during planned strike days. Our students in Year 11 and Year 13 are in the final stages of important preparations for their external examinations, therefore we are making specific plans to ensure their learning is minimally disrupted and we expect all students in these year groups to be in school; it is imperative that all students in those year groups attend to maximise their learning at such a crucial time.

A more detailed letter about arrangements for partial opening on both days will be emailed home in due course, but in short:

- **Thursday 27th April – Year 10, Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 are expected to attend school.** Years 7, 8 and 9 should not come to school on that day and should complete work set on ClassCharts from home.
- **Tuesday 2nd May - Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 are expected to attend school.** Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 should not come to school on that day and should complete work set on ClassCharts from home.

Young people who are identified as vulnerable and have attended school on previous strike days, will again attend school on these dates. The families of these young people have previously been contacted by our inclusion teams and the same arrangements as before will be in place.

I recognise that this is a significant change to our normal ways of working and I would like to again express my appreciation of your cooperation at this time.

Staffing update: We welcome 4 new staff Team Hele's this week. Fiona Donald joins the Food Technology department from Torbridge High School; Duncan Hefford joins the Maths department from Stoke Damerel Community College; Nick Bennett will cover Computer Science and ICT classes for the remainder of this academic year until our newly appointed Head of Computer Science and ICT is able to join us in September; Helen Kelly joins the Supportive Education department as a Learning Support Assistant. A warm welcome to all!

Principal: Justine Mason

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Good news: I am delighted to share that Oliver Chard in Year 11 has been selected to be the Youth Ambassador for 2023 - 2024, impressing the Executive Committee of Plympton Community Council with his confidence and eloquence. This really is an excellent appointment and I have no hesitation in saying that Oliver will work hard and will be an outstanding advocate for the young people of Plympton. Oliver will be invested in a ceremony on April 29, together with the new Stannator, Andrew Cooper, The Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Cllr. Sue Dann and MP Sir Gary Streeter. I hope that by his example other Hele's students will be encouraged to apply for this prestigious position in the coming years.

Congratulations to Ethan Mason in Year 10, who recently attended the National Indoor Athletics Finals and came away with a bronze medal, making him the third best thrower in the UK! We hold high hopes for Ethan as he continues to train hard for the upcoming series of English Schools meets.

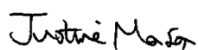
I had the absolute pleasure this morning of meeting our Diamond Award winners in Year 7 to share my pride in their achievement and to present their certificates. Warmest congratulations to Louis Kittlety, Oscar Manning and Nate Brooker – keep up the hard work, boys and thank you for making my Friday!

Looking ahead:

- w/b 24 April: Year 11 MFL GCSE Speaking Exams
Humanutopia (Social Enterprise Company) working with Y9 and 10
- Thursday, 27 April: NEU National Strike Day: Year 10, Year 11 and Year 13 attend school as usual
- Year 7, Year 8, Year 9 and Year 12 work from home
- Friday, 28 April: Ten Tors weekend
- Monday, 1 May: Bank Holiday
- Tuesday, 2 May: NEU National Strike Day: Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 attend school as usual
- Year 7, Year 8, Year 9 and Year 10 work from home
- Wednesday, 3 May: Centre of Excellence Presentation Event for Year 7 and Year 8, 3.30 - 6.40pm

Spring has most certainly sprung at Hele's, and we celebrate that today with a Spring Fete, organised by Year 13 and Miss Finnie. We have some fantastic stalls available during Break 1, including Soak the Teacher, Beat the Goalie, Tin Can Shy, my personal favourite of the Cake Stall, as well as many more fun activities. It promises to be a brilliant event with lots of laughter and an opportunity to raise money for a wonderful local charity, Devon Minds. What a fabulous way to end the week! Thanks to all involved in organising and supporting the fete.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason
Principal