

Hele's School

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



Friday, 7 July 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

This week has seen the end of an era for our Year 11s and Year 13s with their respective Prom events, marking the end of 5 or 7 years of secondary education for these fabulous groups of young people, but also the start of a new one for the 240 newest recruits to Team Hele's who joined us for the Year 6 Induction Day yesterday. Our Year 9 Mentors did a tremendous job of helping soon-to-be Year 7s settle into their new school and I couldn't be prouder of them.

Hele's Centre of Excellence: Results are in this week for the students who took part in this year's Scholar's Programme; a programme led by Mrs Brookshaw, in conjunction with the University of Exeter as part of Hele's School's affiliation to The Brilliant Club. The Scholar's Programme introduces students to university-style learning both at Hele's and through university visits, on subjects beyond the standard curriculum. Lectures and small group tutorials are led by world-class researchers and, supported by a PhD tutor, students put their skills in critical thinking, subject knowledge, and written communication to the test by completing a final assignment. Our students have been writing a 2000-word dissertation on research within the public sector, which is marked against strict criteria and graded using the university grading system.

Huge congratulations to the following students on some fantastic outcomes, and for graduating in a ceremony at the University of Bristol this week: Aaron Yates, Year 8; Emma Beasley, Dylan Croft, Alex Keyes, Rosie Edwards, Oliver Foster, Jenson Healey, Elliott Palmer, Lacey Pritchard, Alfie Randall, Ynah Sala, Maggie Willcocks, Elliot Worley, all in Year 9; and Kaidan Turton, Year 10. Just brilliant! A special mention to Elliot Worley, who was awarded a 1st Class for the standard of his dissertation – a tremendous achievement, very well done Elliot! Please do have a look at the photos of the day posted by Mrs Brookshaw on Twitter [@heles_excell](#), they really are a joy to behold!

Trial closure of toilets during tutor and lesson time: As I have reported in previous newsletters, student use of toilets during the school day is becoming an increasing problem in schools across the country and we continue to work with our student body to ensure we are doing all we can to keep them safe and supported in school. Having done a review of all Toilet Passes issued in school earlier this term, we now have a very small number of students who may require the use of a toilet during lessons, however, groups continue to congregate in these areas, particularly during lesson changeovers. One issue with students congregating in toilets has been the use of vapes and a recent Student Voice exercise showed that the vast majority of students are fed up with the behaviour of a small minority whose actions are creating an unpleasant environment for others. As such, we are trialling a new system in school to respond to the feedback from students:

- **Except for toilets in the Maths block**, all other student toilets will be locked during tutor and lesson time; any student who needs to use the toilet with a toilet pass or in an emergency WILL be able to use the **Maths toilets (geographically they are at the centre of the school site) during tutor or lesson time, and these toilets will remain open throughout the school day**
- All toilets across the site will be open at the beginning of the school day, before 8.40am, during both break times and after the school day at 3.00pm
- Signage will be on all toilets to direct students to the Maths toilets during tutor and lesson time for those who hold a toilet pass or require it in an emergency

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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- Students access their year group toilets in their assigned zone during breaktimes, before school and after school - signage is on every toilet door clearly stating which year group should use that toilet during breaktimes
- Premises staff will be responsible for locking and unlocking toilets for breaktime use

These changes have been put in place to reflect the wishes of the majority of students to ensure facilities can be used without fear of others and we are glad to be able to support this. We thank you for your support with this as we look to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students.

On the note of vaping, again I have written previously about the education being given to students on the latest known dangers and health implications of vaping but we know that nationally, an increasing number of young people are now vaping. Research and our own experience also shows that parents are often aware that their child vapes and in many cases, vapes are being purchased for students by parents. I would remind you that vapes and vaping paraphernalia is strictly prohibited in school and sanctions will be imposed where students break this rule. Your support in ensuring your child is not bringing a vape or any other banned items into school is greatly appreciated as we work together to safeguard all whole school community.

Road safety on Seymour Road: Vehicles parking on the footways immediately outside the gates on Seymour Road have caused a hazard for pedestrians in recent weeks, especially at school peak travel times. I'm pleased to report that Plymouth City are taking the safety of Hele's students and members of the public seriously in that they have agreed to deploy their road safety parking enforcement car to the school rota in the new term and will prosecute offending vehicles.

Staffing update: We welcome back Charley Farmer and Chelsea Butler to the History department next week, as they both return from Maternity Leave.

Good news: We have had 5 Hele's students who have been selected to have their Latin fables published in the final booklet as part of the *Young Aesopi Fable* national competition run by the Centre for Latin Excellence – I have been informed that this is a record for the most fables from one school to make the prizewinning list, which is just super news! The competition always attracts a flurry of fantastic entries, so it is a great achievement for some of our Latin scholars to have their submission selected for inclusion in the publication. For being highly commended, congratulations to: Annette Rashkova in Year 7; Alice Shelley and Josh Dyke in Year 8; Elliot Worley in Year 9; and Iulia Pop in Year 10. A special mention must go to Josh Dyke, who won 2nd prize overall nationally – what an accolade! Well done, Josh! We are very proud of all our scholars and can't wait to see their excellent work in print!

Looking ahead:

Friday, 7 July:	Duke of Edinburgh Silver Assessed Expedition, Dartmoor - Fri. 7 – Sun. 9 July, inclusive
Sunday, 9 July:	Sponsored walk for Kenya expedition fundraising - meet at Admirals Hard, 9.50am
Tuesday, 11 July:	'No Labels. No Limits' – Employer presentation with selected Year 9s and Year 10s Centre of Excellence visit to The Lord Mayor's Residence, 3.30pm
Wednesday, 12 July:	Sports Day Awards Evening for Years 8 – 10, Boringdon Golf Course, 6.15pm for a 6.30pm start
Thursday, 13 July:	Post-16 students v Staff charity Netball match 1.30pm in the Dome, in aid of Devon Mind
Friday, 14 July:	Sports Day reserve day in case of bad weather on 12 July
Mon, 17 – Fri. 21 July:	Enrichment Week Year 10 and Year 12 Work Experience
Friday, 21 July:	Last day of the academic year

The Duke of Edinburgh Gold Practice Expedition has made a good start, with our students camping out overnight unsupervised around Princetown; I'm left in no doubt that those who embarked on their Silver Assessed Expedition today for a weekend on Dartmoor will be just as focused. Best of luck to all our campers!

Wishing you a restful weekend.

Kindest regards,

Justine Mason

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Principal