

Hele's School

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



Friday, September 8, 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to students and their families, old and new; we hope you are ready for the busy term ahead! I appreciate this is quite a lengthy letter, but I hope it provides you with the information you need for the term and year ahead.

This week, we delighted in welcoming back to school all staff and students, and we have been particularly impressed with the manner in which students have fallen quickly back into school routines and expectations with such enthusiasm after a 6-week break.

Our 240 new Year 7s have had a particularly demanding week as they navigate new environs and find their feet, but they really have been fantastic! I've no doubt that our wonderful Year 10 Mentors have had an important part to play in them quickly settling, but I've certainly been impressed by the resilience and effort of our new students.

Thank you for working in partnership with the school to ensure students wear the correct shoes and uniform appropriately, in line with our policy, and for making sure young people are properly equipped for learning. Tutors will have a keen eye on tutees over the coming weeks and will pick up on any uniform that is not acceptable, alerting parents/carers so that action can be taken to rectify anything necessary. We appreciate your support in working with us should we need to resolve any infringements.

Welcome to new staff: I am pleased to confirm that we start the new academic year fully staffed with specialist subject teachers and have added to our teaching and support team over the summer term. I extend a warm welcome to our new staff:

Teaching Staff	Support Staff
Carmen De Pablo Lopez (MFL)	Charlie Trevithick (Cover Supervisor)
Stacey Greenway (Science)	Catherine Davis (Cover Supervisor)
Alan Irvine (Computing HOD)	Tracey Hingston (SIMs Assistant)
Kat Marment (PE 2 i/c)	Callum Toms (LSA)
Hannah Adamson (English)	David Opie (LSA)
Tara Edwards (Computing)	Karen Goodman (LSA)
	Sarah Gregerson (Cleaner)
	Phillip Dyer (Community Sports & Enrichment Manager)

Clubs and activities: We are excited to be able to offer a full extra-curricular programme for all year groups and we will release a comprehensive overview of the offer shortly via Tutors and on the Hele's website. Year 7 have a university-style 'Fresher's Fair' next week to promote some of the opportunities on offer. Whichever year group your child is in, please do encourage them to sign up to clubs and activities and make the most of the extensive opportunities on offer.

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Hele's School is part of Westcountry Schools Trust. Registered address: Harford Road, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0AJ

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The Fitness Suite and Community Sports Centre are open and available for wider use in the evenings. Should you want to find out about the offer, access the gym and fitness equipment, or indeed book any facilities for community use, please contact our new Community Sports Manager, Phillip Dyer on 231739 or communitysports@heles.plymouth.sch.uk

Our next Holiday Club will be taking place from Monday, 23 October to Friday, 27 October 2023. For more information or to book, please contact holidayclub@heles.plymouth.sch.uk

Behaviour policy update: At Hele's School we teach and encourage all pupils to conduct themselves in a 'Committed, Respectful and Safe' manner to ensure our school is a great place to learn and a great place to grow for our whole school community.

We continually review and update our policies to ensure pupils have the best educational experience possible. In light of our most recent review in the summer term, we have made some minor alterations to the implementation of our established behaviour policy for the year ahead. These tweaks are summarised below:

- **Public praise, private sanction:** We will continue to amplify positive behaviour by praising and rewarding students publicly and regularly. Staff will continue to recognise and praise students whose conduct goes 'above and beyond' - this could be for excellent work, helping others or being a positive role model. The achievements and positive conduct displayed by students will be visible to parents and carers on ClassCharts; we will have an even greater focus this year on 'catching students being good' and celebrating and rewarding this.
- **A stepped approach to manage classroom behaviour:** Staff will continue to use a stepped approach to manage classroom behaviour, consistently using our 'Warn, Move and Park' processes to maintain a positive learning environment for all. This has proven extremely successful in recent years, allowing a disruption-free classroom whilst also supporting a student falling short of expectations to reset their behaviour and re-engage.
- **Communication via ClassCharts:** In a bid to keep families fully informed of your child's behaviour and attitude to learning in lessons, an extra layer of communication has been added to our system which allows you to now be notified via ClassCharts if your child is 'moved' in a lesson; this is in addition to the existing notifications you receive via ClassCharts if your child is 'parked' in another classroom (i.e. removed from their lesson to continue their learning in another room because they have been unable to reset their behaviour).
- **Sanctions for repeated disruption to learning:** If a student is moved three times in one week, this will result in a 1-hour after-school behaviour detention.
- **Behaviour detentions:** Whilst the overwhelming majority of our students conduct themselves impeccably both in and out of the classroom, there are times when a young person may fall short of our 'Committed, Respectful and Safe' expectations and their behaviour impacts upon the learning or safety of others. In such an instance, a child will be issued with a 1-hour after-school behaviour detention and parents will be informed of the detention and the reason for it **via ClassCharts** in the first instance. Should there be repeated behavioural issues, then staff will contact home by telephone for a further conversation.

To ensure that you can stay fully abreast of your child's achievements and conduct in school, please ensure that you regularly access ClassCharts and set up appropriate notifications. Please do contact School if you have any issues accessing your child's account.

Attendance: There is a clear link between positive school attendance and educational outcomes, so we remain committed to working with families to continue to promote the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. We have a team of pastoral staff in school ready to work with you, if required, to overcome any hurdles you might have in getting your child to attend regularly. Please do get in touch with us if you think we can support you and your child in any way. In the meantime, we would ask you not to book holidays during term time. Please also try to keep medical appointments outside of school hours wherever possible, though we accept that there are times when you may have little say in this.

Looking ahead:

Monday, 11 September: Results event for Year 11 (Year 10 exams, Summer series)

Tuesday, 12 September: GCSE and A Level Drama trip to 'Metamorphosis', Theatre Royal Plymouth, 7.30pm

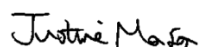
Wednesday, 13 September: Year 11 Parent Information Evening, 6pm
Thursday, 14 September: Year 12 Parent Information Evening, 6pm
Friday, 15 September: Year 9 photos
Wednesday, 20 September: Year 12 CCF Cadets visiting The King's Guard, London
Year 6 Open Evening, 5-8pm.

Parental engagement and communication: Regular, positive communication and inviting constructive feedback to ensure we deliver the very best experiences for our young people, families and staff are key features that underpin the Team Hele's ethos and make our school such a special place to be. We are looking forward to the relaunch of our Parent Barometer Group (PBG), with a termly focus on an aspect of school policy and practice to which we would appreciate parental feedback. Further details of the PBG and the programme for the year will be shared in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, as an appendix to this letter there is a reminder of our home/school communication protocol; I'd appreciate it if you'd spend a few minutes reading through it so you are clear about who, how and when to make contact with school. Remember, we are working together to ensure that your child has the very best experience of school possible, and positive home-school communication based on partnership working is key to this endeavour.

I'm confident you will continue to support our staff in working to maintain high standards and ensuring routines and expectations are adhered to. Here's to a fantastic year ahead for all - let's make this academic year the best one yet!

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason
Principal



Parent/Carer to Staff Communication



Principles

At Hele's School we are committed to open, honest and timely communication. We are also committed to communication being respectful, measured, sensitive and constructive.

In adhering to these principles, we aim to strengthen the goodwill and the positive partnership between parents and the school, to enhance the wellbeing and learning opportunities for our students.

Hele's School will:

- Work in partnership with parents to support their child's learning.
- Collect email addresses from the parents/carers of students upon starting at Hele's. This will facilitate improved communication through use of 'In Touch' to email whole cohort/school messages.
- Create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for students, staff and parents.
- Seek a constructive solution to all issues.
- Model appropriate behaviour for our students at all times.

We expect parents, carers and other visitors to:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of our school.
- Work together with staff in the best interests of our students.
- Treat all members of the school community with respect – setting a good example with speech and behaviour.
- Correct their own child's behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe conduct.
- Approach the right member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern.
- Inform Hele's School of any change in email address, address, phone number or other contact information.

In order to ensure that all communications are both positive and productive, we ask parents/carers to respect the following:

1. Be aware that any emails sent outside "office hours" (8am - 4pm, Monday to Friday in term time only) will be dealt with the next *working day*. Staff are not expected to respond to emails out of working hours/out of term time. We **aim to respond to parental emails within 48 hours** but please do understand that teachers may need a *working day* or two to respond to emails as schedules are very busy at School, and the answer may involve meeting with other teachers, staff or students who may have valuable input. Under normal circumstances, staff will look to resolve an issue within 5 working days. More complicated issues may take longer to fully and effectively resolve.
2. Send emails intended for staff to the Hele's School email address: Heles.School@plymouth.gov.uk or use the [contact form on the Hele's School website](#). The email will then be forwarded onto the appropriate staff member. Please mark your email clearly with both the subject matter and 'for the attention of...'

Alternatively, [a list of staff email addresses can be found on the School website](#).

The points of communication should be as follows:

Area of concern	First point of contact
SAFEGUARDING	Designated Safeguarding Lead/Principal
ACADEMIC	Subject Teacher or Head of Department
PASTORAL (low level)	Tutor
PASTORAL (medium level)	Head of Year
ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (low level)	Tutor
ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (high level)	SENDCo
SERIOUS – ACADEMIC or PASTORAL	Head of Year and/or Senior Leadership Team
ADMINISTRATIVE	School Reception
FORMAL COMPLAINTS	Principal in the first instance

Send only non-vital messages by this medium. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher that your child is to wait for you at Reception after school or meet you somewhere when the day ends, since a teacher may not have time to read your message in a timely fashion. Instead, use the telephone to contact the Reception to be sure your message is received and clearly understood.

3. Do identify yourself in the subject line of your email message and, if appropriate, the name of your child.
4. Keep communications focused on your child only. Matters of a personal nature should never be in email but communicated in face-to-face meetings.
5. Be mindful of what you say/write/post about staff in front of children and other parents in order to maintain positive relationships with School. This courtesy applies to online comments as much as to face-to-face.
6. Understand that email responses from teachers may be short due to time constraints, but that teachers will remain open to discuss issues further via telephone or a pre-arranged meeting.
7. Email is for information. If you wish to discuss your child's academic/learning progress, please make contact via telephone or by scheduling a meeting with your child's tutor/teacher/Head of Year, as appropriate.
8. Note that, when agreed between the teacher and the parent following face-to-face or phone conversation, email may be used as a form of regular communication about a student's day at school as part of a broader dialogue about progress.
9. Please refrain from using the blind copying (bcc) of third parties into email communication; the email must address the intended audience.
10. Please do not attend School without having previously made an appointment, as this can be very difficult to accommodate due to teaching schedules and meetings before or after school.

Maintain a courteous and respectful manner when communicating with School staff at all times. It is important to remember that our staff are qualified professionals and that the focus of communications should be on a collegiate approach to advance your child's progress, either academically or socially. Emails should never contain negative comments about any individual. Staff will not respond to abusive or confrontational emails and will forward them to the Principal for follow-up action (refer to the [Safeguarding Staff from Abuse](#) policy on the Hele's School website).

Welcome to Hele's School



We value positive relationships and encourage close links with parents, carers and the community.

We believe young people benefit when the relationship between Home and Hele's School is a positive one.

We model the behaviour we teach and place high importance on good manners, positive communication and mutual respect.

If you have concerns we will always listen to them.

Every member of our school community has the right to work or be in school without fear of aggression or abuse from visitors; we do not tolerate aggression, abuse or threatening behaviour towards any adult or young person in our community, whether via written communication (including social media and online), on the telephone or face-to-face.

Visitors behaving in this way are likely to be removed from the premises and prosecuted.

Please treat others as you would like to be treated - with care, consideration and respect.



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