

# Hele's School

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



Friday, 25 November 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

An exciting plan has launched at School this week - the Wilding Schools Project - which enables Hele's students to work with SOS-UK (Students Organising for Sustainability) on a long term project to create more space for wildlife on the school site. Geography Teachers, Ms Waters and Mr Kelly, with support from our Premises and Operations teams, are encouraging our committed Eco Club members to get the balance right between nature and humans through increasing wild areas across our site and encouraging biodiversity. There is plenty of ground work to be done in mapping the site boundary and using online tools to design wildlife areas around the school grounds, but this promises to be a transformational project and we are excited about how the environment can be developed over months and coming years.

On a related note, our 60 free trees have now arrived from the Woodland Trust and our students plan to break the soil after school this evening and plant the first few saplings. Wrap up warm, team!

**Extra-curricular activities:** Our Student Council met recently and fed back that some students did not know what was on at Break 1 and Break 2, on which days. This information is shared through the daily morning student bulletin and on the information screens around school, but it would be helpful if you could also alert your child to opportunities to reinforce the broad offer available to them, and encourage them to get involved. Please find attached an overview of the many activities which are available to keep them busy during break times!

**Staffing news:** Lucy Speaight, History teacher, embarks on her Maternity Leave today. We wish Mrs Speaight and her family the best of luck for the weeks ahead, and we are all looking forward to welcoming the newest member of Team Hele's to the world very soon! Mr Carter, a Learning Supervisor at Hele's and a qualified Humanities Teacher, replaces Mrs Speaight's teaching until she returns in July.

**The Big Ambition:** The Children's Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel De Souza, has launched an opportunity for the children of England to tell political decision makers what is important to them ahead of the General Election. I have shared this link previously, but this is a great opportunity to teach children about politics and why it is important for them to use their voice, so please do encourage your child to complete the survey here: <http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigambition>.

**Attendance challenge:** Well done to 8A (Mrs Davies/Mrs Warner) and 7E (Miss Metters) who tied for top attending tutor group last week, and each received a tub of chocolates to share with their students. 1085 students achieved 100% attendance, an increase on the previous week, and 10 names were selected from a randomiser for weekly treats. Thank you for your support in maximising attendance.

**Christmas lectures:** the University of Plymouth is one of the livestream venues for this year's Christmas Lectures from the Royal Institution. Running for almost 200 years, they were started by Michael Faraday to inspire and engage young people with science, and this year Professor Mike Wooldridge will be exploring the truth behind Artificial Intelligence (AI), the most rapidly evolving field of science. This event is perfect for young people aged 11 – 17 and their families who can watch the magic of the lectures unfold in real time as they are filmed in front of an audience in the RI's Theatre in London. All the details and booking form can be found at <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/whats-on/royal-institution-christmas-lectures-2023-livestreams>. There is no charge for the event.

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WESTCOUNTRY  
SCHOOLS TRUST

**Free swimming lessons:** Community Youth in partnership with Plymouth Active are offering free weekly swimming lessons and a free weekly fun session at Plympton Pool starting the week beginning 27 November:

- Tuesdays, 15:30 – 16:00 - free swimming lessons for young people aged 11 – 16
- Wednesdays, 12:00 – 13:00 - free swimming lessons for young people aged 16 – 18 or up to 25 with SEND
- Fridays, 18:30 – 19:30 - free fun session for young people aged 11 – 16

All sessions have limited numbers and booking is essential. Please book by phoning 01752 348459.

**Road safety:** Thank you to the majority of car drivers who show careful consideration when driving and parking around Hele's School, especially at drop off/pick up times; your support in keeping our children safe is appreciated. You will know I regularly remind parents through this weekly update that there should be no drop off at the immediate entrance to School, no stopping at all on the yellow zig zags or in yellow boxes, no mounting pavements, and there is a regular plea to show respect for local residents. Sadly, not everyone takes note of this advice, and there have been several complaints recently from residents to a local Plympton Councillor about illegal parking and inconsiderate drop off/pick up near School, causing danger to others. Consequently, I understand that arrangements are being made for Plymouth City Council's camera car to be deployed to catch and fine motorists who are flouting local traffic and parking restrictions – as well as the obvious safety aspects for our community, avoiding a fine or points on your licence are other good reasons to be particularly vigilant!

**Good news:** Sporting success aplenty this week, with news that Lexi Tonguc and Isla Knight in Year 7 came 3<sup>rd</sup> in their Devon U13s team championships all round gymnastics competition last weekend – a great result from a highly competitive meet.

The U13 girls football team made an impressive start to the season with two wins in the National Cup – a closely fought 2-1 win against Stoke Damerel and a flawless 6-0 victory against Okehampton. These results guaranteed a place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> round, which was played last week, but despite a spirited display from the team, the girls will progress no further following a defeat to a strong Plymstock side. Well done the whole squad: Freya Senior Gosling, Olivia Powell, Lily Salame, Isabella Pitman, Amelia Cox, Tilly Wong, Isla Knight, Evie Skelton, Maya Roberts, Maddie Bickford, Bethany Brannan, Ruby Hahn, Edith Luckraft, Lizzie Hoare and Macey Snell.

Congratulations to Oscar Houghton in Year 11 for some super exam success this week. Not only has Oscar has been in the thick of his Year 11 Mock exam series and in regular rehearsals for the School Show, Les Mis where he is set to play a main part of Thenardier, but he was placed 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in his Monologue and Sight Reading LAMDA exams too. As if this wasn't enough dramatic success for one week, Oscar was also awarded a special Achievement Cup for his exceptional comic timing – anyone who has seen Oscar perform knows that this is an absolute gift!

Please do keep School informed of any success your child has beyond the school day – we delight in shining a light on the achievements of our fabulous young people and sharing the good news!

**Looking ahead:**

Saturday, 25 November:	CCF RAF Gliding, Predannack
Sunday, 26 November:	Ten Tors training walk, Dartmoor
w/b Monday, 27 November:	Year 11 Mock Practical GCSE Exams
Tuesday, 28 November:	Visit from Cllr Sally Cresswell, Cabinet Minister for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships, Plymouth City Council
Thursday, 30 November:	Year 9 Parents' Evening via MS Teams
Tuesday, 5 December:	All Year 9 working with social enterprise company, Humanutopia
Wednesday, 6 December:	Duke of Edinburgh Awards Evening, 6pm in The Studio.

Wishing you a restful weekend.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason  
**Principal**