

Hele's School



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

8th July 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

I write to confirm that the last day of school this academic year is Friday 19th July, and my goodness what a busy year it has been! Over the past fortnight alone, we have been treated to a presentation by the Coldstream Guards, the Year 11 and Year 13 Leavers' Proms, the Big Bang South West STEM Fair, the SW Classics Hub presenting to the Hele's School Centre of Excellence, a visit to the Theatre Royal to watch *Les Misérables* (complete with backstage tour), the launch of the Elmer parade in aid of St Luke's Hospice with our KS3 Arts Ambassadors, our RS and Student Ambassadors and Language Leaders delivering sessions in our Plympton Primaries, French workshops on conservation at Newquay Zoo, the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Qualifying Expedition on Exmoor, Year 5 Challenge Days, Year 6 Induction, a Year 7 e-Safety Parent Workshop and the fabulous production of *The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe* by our talented KS3 students. All this on top of the core business of teaching and learning, and we aren't done yet! Still to come this week we have the Year 8 -10 Awards Evening, our Summer Music concert, Sports Day at Brickfields, and our whole school sponsored walk, before we head into Aspirations Week – 'winding down' for the end of the academic year is clearly not something we do at Hele's School!

It has been wonderful to take stock and celebrate our achievements as a school community over the year and to thank all those students, parents and carers, staff and governors for the part played in helping Hele's go from strength to strength. Particular thanks to those families who now end a long association with Hele's as Year 11 and Year 13 head off to pastures new; we wish you all the very best of luck for the future. Thanks too, to the hardworking Friends of Hele's, whose tireless work to raise money to support our children at School does not go unnoticed. This year, again, they have been able to donate over £6000 to add value to our children's education – the important part that all of us play in supporting the events of the Friends cannot be stressed enough.

Staffing changes: I would like to pass on my warmest thanks to the staff that leave us at the end of this term to head off to new challenges; their support of Hele's School has been immense and we wish them all the very best for whatever lies ahead:

Support Staff: Heather Hollick, Learning Support Assistant; Kharis Smith, Learning Support Assistant; Luke Thomas, Learning Support Assistant; Tamsin Algar, SIMS and Data Manager.

Teaching Staff: Jason Booth, Maths; Dave Clemow, English and Head of Year 7; Tom Graham, Geography and Assistant Principal; Dan White, PE and Head of Weston House; Kate Payne, Maths; Jon Skinner, Maths. The following temporary teaching posts also come to an end: Danny Damarell, Science; John Deacon, Science; Caroline McVicker, Geography; Beatriz Peris-Sanz, MFL; David Tucker, Maths.

I am delighted to say that we have recruited strongly this term and hence will be fully staffed for September; I will write again at the start of the academic year to introduce you to the teaching and support staff joining Team Hele's.

Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST): We are excited that talented teaching staff from across the Trust have been appointed to the role of Lead Practitioners in a range of subjects, with the remit of working with colleagues from each of the WeST Secondary Schools to jointly plan our curricula, share teaching resources, train staff, moderate assessments and continuously drive improvements in our classrooms so that teaching and learning is excellent. To facilitate this important strand of work, the WeST Trust Board are planning to grant all WeST schools an extra teacher training and planning day, proposed to be Monday 29th June 2020. Should this be agreed by Trustees later this week, I will add the date to the calendar for next year, which can be found on the Hele's School website. Please do check the website to remind yourself of previously published term dates and training days, although I will remind you of these in September.

Uniform: I appreciate that most parents will be purchasing new uniform in September and would just like to take this opportunity to reflect on our high expectations around uniform. I am always heartened when I speak to our parental body that they share our high standards and want to support the school in ensuring our students take a great sense of pride in being a student at Hele's School. We value our school uniform and want all of our students to wear it correctly. In particular we would like to focus on the following:

- All students are wearing plain black formal school shoes – no trainers or trainer-like shoes with logos, in either canvas or leather;

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- Skirts are of a reasonable length (one inch above the knee) and are made of durable material, not Lycra (please note that we are exploring the feasibility of introducing a standard school skirt for September 2020 and will keep you posted on any developments in the autumn term);
- School trousers - no jeans, leggings, or ¾ length trousers;
- Make up is unobtrusive and natural and worn only in years 10/11 – no nail varnish or hair extensions allowed. Hair needs to be of a natural colour only; and
- Ear piercings are a plain silver or gold stud – no nose studs, lip, tongue or eyebrow piercings, or ear stretchers permitted.

Our rules and expectations about uniform are clearly laid out on our website. Incorrect uniform will be challenged and will need to be replaced if not in line with these expectations. If you are unsure as to whether a garment or a pair of shoes is acceptable for school then please do not hesitate to get in touch to check before spending your hard-earned cash – I am aware that many retailers market their wares as ‘back to school’, which can be very misleading for parents since it doesn’t always match a school’s own uniform expectations.

Equipment (Super 6): To keep a sharp focus on learning we will be continuing with our daily “readiness for learning” checks for students during tutor time to ensure that students arrive for the school day with the basic equipment. We have tweaked our expectation for the Super 6 this September to support the work we are doing on memory for learning, quizzing and cooperative learning (see items 5 and 6 below):

1. Blue or black pen*
2. Green pen*
3. Pencil*
4. Ruler*
5. Mini-whiteboard kit (with mini-whiteboard, pen and eraser)*
6. Knowledge organiser folder (provided by the school)

*Items 1-5 can be purchased individually from the School Library: pens 10p; pencil 7p; ruler 20p; mini-whiteboard kit £1.68. There is an option to purchase a complete Super 6 kit from the Library at a cost of £2.00).

All students in Years 7-8 are also expected to have a reading book with them each day for DEAR time. We appreciate your support in ensuring that your son/daughter arrives to school each day fully equipped for learning.

Behaviour Review: We have completed a thorough review of our procedures around behaviour this year in a bid to build on the Good judgement we received about behaviour from Ofsted, and in 3 external reviews conducted this academic year. Consequently, in September we are launching a new Behaviour Blueprint, which incorporates: simplified school rules to fall under one of 3 areas - committed, respectful, safe; visible consistencies across all staff in the form of a positive meet and greet each lesson, Super 6 checks to ensure readiness for learning; and positive social interactions, in and out of the classroom; a focus on relentless routines; and recognition of ‘over and above’ behaviours. Our current stepped boundaries of ‘Warn, Move, Park’ will remain in place, alongside teaching learning behaviours. We will be communicating with parents/carers and students in the new term so that everyone has a clear understanding of expectations, and will also offer a face-to-face session for parents in term 1, should you be interested in finding out more about the philosophy and principles underpinning the Pivotal Behaviour approach.

Punctuality and attendance: With your valued help as parents we have seen a huge decrease in the number of students arriving late to school this term and a reduction of the number of students with authorised absences. We thank you in advance for helping us to maintain high levels of both punctuality and attendance and would ask you to contact our pastoral support team if you are having problems with any aspect of school attendance.


Parent communication: A reminder that from September we are moving all our written communication to email, rather than send home letters, reports and other documents via children as a hard copy. This is to ensure timely delivery of information direct to you and to support our aspiration to direct as much money as possible into teaching and learning rather than printing. It is therefore important that we hold details of your live email account on file. Please contact Reception should you need to alert us to a change of details. All letters will continue to be posted on the School website. Should you not have access to an email account, then please once again alert Reception and we will make alternative arrangements.

Start of term: We look forward to welcoming Year 7 only back to school on Tuesday 3rd September and are delighted that our Year 7 intake has increased from 210 students to 240 in a bid to support parental choice, and that the year group is full with a waiting list, demonstrating the confidence that our community has in Hele’s School.

Business will resume as normal for the whole school community when all year groups are welcomed back on Wednesday 4th September at 8.30am for an 8.40am registration.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support of Hele’s School and to wish you and your family a restful summer holiday.

With very best wishes,


Justine Mason

Principal