

Hele's School

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



Wednesday, 18 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Further to the advice and guidance shared by Rob Haring (CEO), in a letter on behalf of the Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST) on Tuesday, 17 March 2020, I want to continue to assure you that the health and wellbeing of our School community is of paramount importance. In light of the UK Government's move from the 'contain' to the 'delay' phase of their coronavirus action plan, and the updated advice, Hele's School remains open until further directive has been provided by the government in the event of forced school closure. We are monitoring staff attendance carefully and making strategic decisions daily to keep provision as safe and as extensive as possible. We have this morning decided to allow Year 12 to work from home for the remainder of this week and of next week to create the capacity required to keep provision going for other year groups, and particularly for examination groups. Year 12 have been fully briefed and prepared this morning by Mr Stone, Director of Post 16, and his team of Tutors.

Year 13 Hele's students who ordinarily access A Level courses in a consortium school will remain at Hele's School to work. Teachers from 'host' schools have been asked to contact all students they would teach from consortium schools with work to complete, either via email or through the relevant school programmes used for setting work. Students who may need to visit a consortium school for a practical subject undertaking controlled assessment will be updated on a case by case basis.

During this period of uncertainty, we have made the decision to take the following appropriate actions to mitigate any spread of infection with effect from Wednesday, 18 March 2020:

- School will presently remain open during normal working hours (8.30am -3pm) to all year groups, except for Year 12, who will work from home until further notice.
- Year 13 consortium movement will cease with immediate effect and learning instead take place in the 'home' school.
- All enrichment activities which take place beyond the School day will be postponed until further notice.
- All calendared events beyond the normal School day will be postponed until further notice .
- All trips, visits and offsite activities such as Ten Tors training, Duke of Edinburgh, CCF, residential activities and sporting fixtures have been postponed until further notice.
- All Community Sports/Arts provision and all evening and out of hours lets will be cancelled until further notice.

Principal: Justine Mason

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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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WESTCOUNTRY
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- All Easter holiday activities have been cancelled.
- Cancellation of any non-urgent meetings.
- Issue of Tutor reports have been delayed, allowing staff to focus on in-class provision during a difficult and dynamic time and prepare for setting high-quality work and instruction during an impending closure.
- Postponement of Parents' Evenings until further notice. We hope that the cancellation of the Y8 Parents' Evening will not have a major impact on your child's decision making for GCSE; we know from the 1:1 tutor interviews that the majority of students in Year 8 have clear and appropriate ideas about the courses they wish to follow at Key Stage 4. If, however, you feel it is urgent and absolutely necessary to discuss a particular subject or choice with staff prior to submitting the form, please contact Mrs Ayres via email ayres@heles.plymouth.sch.uk and she will endeavour to get a response back to you. To assist School in forward planning at this time we are bringing forward the deadline for the return of Options Forms; any completed forms should be brought in to your child's tutor as soon as possible and by Friday 20th March at the latest. Should this not be possible because your family is self-isolating, please could you consider photographing the completed form and emailing a copy to Mrs Ayres.

We recognise that the actions we have taken are significant and may cause some upset and disappointment for many of our students and staff. However, our main concern is the health and wellbeing of the whole Hele's community.

These are extraordinary times and levels of anxiety will be accordingly high. We have delivered a tutor presentation this morning to all students to remind them of the best practice to keep themselves safe and to sensitively reduce anxiety and support our students as best as we can. A copy of this presentation can be found on the Hele's School website, along with some simple but effective advice issued from the British Psychological Society about how to speak with young people about COVID-19.

Can I please remind all parents and carers that if a member of your household presents with a high temperature (37.8° or above) or a sudden, persistent cough, then please visit the NHS website and keep the young person off school for the period of 14 days. Please advise us in these circumstances so that we can update our records accordingly. All absence related to this illness will be coded consistently and will not impact on any attendance measures. Likewise, we do appreciate that some of our students may have health vulnerabilities and/or live with family members who do. Where this applies, please phone us and we will authorise absence in these exceptional circumstances.

At present, can I please advise students self-isolating at home to make good use of the resources on our website, particularly the Knowledge Organisers section, and online learning platforms such as ClassCharts, BBC Bitesize, Seneca, MyMaths, Sparx, etc. as teachers' priorities will still be to plan and deliver lessons in the classroom as well as continue to plan for resourcing a high-quality programme for when closure becomes imminent. Please do not contact the School asking for separate work to be sent home as we are unable to meet that request, given the challenging circumstances we are in currently. Your support in this matter is appreciated.

Whilst we remain open, we will continue to promote high levels of hygiene as recommended by Public Health England to ensure all students under our care can access their education. We continue to have plenty of cleaning products, sanitiser and tissues available for all staff and students and we continue to promote good hygienic practices. Please be assured that all toilets are open throughout the day and we are continually checking soap and towel supplies. In addition, hard surfaces in classrooms are cleaned down at the end of each day. I would appreciate your support in reminding children that our toilet facilities must be treated with respect, so that our staff aren't placed in a more vulnerable position and we can continue to prioritise the right things.

In the event of any further developments, the main point of communication with parents/carers will be via the home page of the Hele's School website, through social media and email. If the School moves to forced closure, we will provide a comprehensive education study programme for all students. Year 11 and 13 examination courses will be closely supported with further study materials and we will communicate on all examination updates when notified by the relevant bodies. The School will continue to do its best to keep parents/carers and students informed on all developments as soon as we are provided with further advice and guidance from the Department for Education.

We will continue to stay in touch. Please take care and thank you for your ongoing support and cooperation in this matter.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason
Principal



Carl Atkinson
Chair of Governors

Principal: Justine Mason

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