

# Hele's School

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



Wednesday, 18 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am sure you will have by now seen or heard the news about the national school closures that was announced by the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State late this afternoon. Whilst we do not have all the answers at this point and need the day ahead to work some things out, I do wish to share with you some of the most prudent elements.

In the next 24 hours, I will be ascertaining which staff are able to work within Hele's School (given their own demands for child care, caring responsibilities, personal health, etc), which children are likely to be remaining in School and ensuring that all children, whether working remotely or in School, have access to educational materials. There is much we do not yet know as the government have not released their thinking to school leaders, but here is what we do know currently;

- The School will remain closed to Year 12 students tomorrow and Friday.
- The School will close to the vast majority of students from Monday onwards. There is an indefinite time period to this and we will rely on government advice as to when we reopen to all students.
- The School will remain open to any children identified as 'vulnerable', to include those with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) and those students whose parents work in nominated services – a definition of 'key workers' and further guidance is due to be released by the government at some point tomorrow, and we will act on collecting this information from parents and carers as soon as we receive this guidance.
- All examinations for May and June, both A level and GCSEs, have been cancelled. We have no information about next steps but we do know that Ofqual has stated they will now liaise urgently with the Department of Education to work through the details of this decision and provide more information as soon as possible. Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education, has offered assurances that 'we will make sure that pupils get the qualifications they need and deserve for their academic career'.
- The government are asking that schools remain open over the Easter holidays for the purpose of continued support of local services. This will be in a caring capacity rather than an educational provision. Staff-dependant, we are committed to providing this in some measure to support frontline services and the wellbeing and health of the nation.

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**Principal: Justine Mason**

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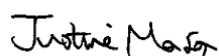
These are the most terrible of times and I would like to extend a huge thank you to the staff, students and families that have this week maintained a positive attitude, worn a smile on faces and remained good humoured in the face of uncertainty and adversity. I feel desperately sorry for our students who have worked tremendously hard towards GCSE and A level exams that will now not happen and the cancellation of celebrations which ordinarily follow to mark a school life completed.

I thank you all for the positive messages of support we have received. During this difficult time, it has been greatly appreciated and much needed.

We will share with you tomorrow our guidance and tools to support distance learning. We have been collating some physical materials also for those who have no access to a device for accessing online materials, and these will be given to relevant students on Friday. Please let us know if you struggle to access resources electronically and we will ensure you have means to support the continued learning of your child(ren) at home.

I will continue to keep you updated with every development as we get them. Stay safe and healthy.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason

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