

# Hele's School

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



19 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

In light of the news confirmed just this morning that GCSE and A Level exams for this season are cancelled, not postponed, and that students will be issued with a set of grades towards the end of the summer, I led a briefing for all Year 11 and all Year 13 students this morning in order to keep them informed and offer support. We are told that the Secretary of State for Education will confirm with school leaders tomorrow how students' grades will be arrived at, but please be assured that the School's priority is to work closely with professionals and awarding bodies to ensure the best outcomes for our students. With this in mind, it is important that any Y11 or 13 students who are in possession of any coursework or work towards their final GCSE/A Levels, complete or incomplete, return this to their subject teacher as soon as possible.

I fully appreciate that our Year 11 and Year 13 pupils have not had the opportunity to say a proper farewell to one another today, certainly not in the customary manner associated with a final day at school. However, it is important to share with you the impeccable way in which all students conducted themselves this morning, with maturity, compassion and understanding. The number of emails sent to staff today to offer thanks and share memories has been phenomenal and very well-received by staff in times of ongoing uncertainty. I am mindful too of the importance to our pupils, and their families, of the social aspects of celebrating exam success and transitions to next stages of education or employment. As such, I have promised both year groups that the School will seek to organise suitable events to recognise their hard work to date once the coronavirus pandemic is under control.

We know now that from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, the School will be closed for the foreseeable future, except to a small number of pupils. There are still many details as to how these arrangements will work, but my staff are working tirelessly, with colleagues from other agencies, to gather the necessary information and put appropriate plans in place. I am also ascertaining which staff are able to work within the school (given their own demands for childcare, caring responsibilities etc.), which children will be remaining in school and ensuring that all children, whether working remotely or in School, have access to educational materials.

Whilst there is still much information to come, here is what I do know, currently;

- The School will remain closed to Year 12 tomorrow (Friday 20 March) and this closure is now extended to include Year 11 and 13, due to staffing constraints. This was communicated to parents of students in these year groups earlier today.
- The School will close to the majority of pupils from 3pm tomorrow. There is an indefinite time period to this, and I will rely on government advice as to when the school can reopen to all students.
- The School will remain open to any children identified as vulnerable, to include those with an EHCP and those students whose parents work in nominated services and are regarded as 'Key Workers'. These services have yet to be confirmed by the Government.

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**Principal: Justine Mason**

Seymour Road, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 4LT  
Telephone: 01752 337193 Fax: 01752 331460  
email: [heles.school@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:heles.school@plymouth.gov.uk) website: [www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk](http://www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk)

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- The Government is asking that schools remain open over the Easter holidays for the purpose of continued support of local services. Staff-dependant, we are committed to providing this.
- Canteen staff will be able to provide lunches as normal to pupils and staff who remain on site.
- Staff have already prepared resources to support pupils' online learning from home, and these go live from Monday morning via ClassCharts.

In the meantime, there are some practical things you can do now to support your child's readiness for learning from home:

1. Consider how you can help your child have access to the internet for online learning. In particular, make sure that you and they can access our School website – [www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk](http://www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk). If you haven't done so already, please contact Reception to alert us to any issues regarding internet access and we will provide a resource pack.
2. Ensure that both you and your child are able to access ClassCharts, as this will be the main way that teachers communicate with students about what work to do and when. If you do not have your log-in details, then please email Linda Smith at [smithlj@heles.plymouth.sch.uk](mailto:smithlj@heles.plymouth.sch.uk)
3. Ensure that your child is able to access their School email account and alert Reception if there is an issue.

During the period of time away from the School, it is important that progress in learning doesn't just stop. We will share with you imminently some useful information to provide tips on how to support your child(ren) during this time, so that the disruption caused over the coming weeks/months will not have a lasting impact on our young learners.

As always, many thanks your ongoing support.

Kind regards,

Justine Mason

**Principal**

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