

# Hele's School

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



Friday, 17 April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Yesterday, the nation was informed that the national lockdown will continue for at least another 3 weeks and we were urged to continue to 'do our bit' for the greater good, whatever that looks like for each of us in our own context. The main message, of course, is to stay at home wherever we can. We do recognise how difficult it has been, and continues to be, for many families at home, trying to balance home schooling with our own working from home demands, as well as managing the general pressures and emotions of this challenging time. It's tough! I reiterate then, that we must be kind to ourselves, realistic in our expectations of each other, and supportive of the fact that we are working hard to do the best under difficult circumstances.

**Phase 2 Remote Learning and Edu Care:** detailed guidance for the next phase of our strategy for learning will be sent to students Monday morning via ClassCharts, but can be found from today in the COVID-19 information section of the School website: <https://www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk/news/?pid=130&nid=1&storyid=152> . Further information for Year 11 and Post 16 will be emailed by Ms Clapham and Mr Stone respectively.

We continue to offer Edu Care provision for a small number of children of Key Workers into the new term. I am incredibly grateful to colleagues who are putting themselves and their families at greater risk of infection by volunteering to staff this provision because they want to support our front-line workers to be able to continue with the amazing work we are seeing, reading about, hearing about and, sadly in some cases, experiencing first-hand. I know the difference that so many of our parents and carers are making to the lives of others through their daily efforts, and I am in awe of their commitment and selflessness. A pledge, then, that we will continue to look after your children where needed and support in whatever way we can.

I am so pleased to hear that there was many a smile raised (and quite possibly a few eyebrows too!) at the staff lip-synch video from Grease that I circulated at the start of this term. Although we are unable to be together at the moment, the staff at Hele's wanted our families to know that just because you are out of sight there is absolutely no way you are out of mind! It's incredible to see the video has received over 6,500 'hits' on YouTube to date and attracted countless positive comments through our FaceBook page – I'm so glad it was met with the spirit with which it was intended!

**GCSE and A Level results update:** Ofqual (the regulator for GCSE and A Levels in England) has published a consultation on the exceptional arrangements for awarding GCSE and A/AS levels in summer 2020. The deadline for responses to the consultation is 29 April. One of the key proposals within is for Year 10 students and below who were entered to sit a GCSE exam this summer to be awarded a grade this summer. There is a very small number of Hele's students impacted by this proposal, but nonetheless we are keeping a close eye on the outcome of the consultation and will publish further information once a national decision has been reached.

After some speculation a few weeks ago that summer exam results (based on centre assessed grades which will be nationally moderated) could be published as early as the end of July, the Department for Education has

this week confirmed that **A Level students will get their results on 13 August, and GCSE students will get theirs on 20 August**. More details to follow as schools receive them, but please make a note of these dates.

**Support for families:** please be aware that there is now a dedicated phone line for parents seeking advice, support and effective behavioural strategies to help with the challenges posed by the national school closures. PIAS (Plymouth Information, Advice and Support for SEND) have a team of dedicated facilitators skilled in a wide range of parenting programmes and behavioural strategies from birth to the teenage years. They are on hand to provide help, advice, support and a friendly ear from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Call PIAS on 01752 258933 and select option 2. Further details of the service can also be found at: <http://www.plymouthias.org.uk/parenting-programmes/family-phone-support>

**Wellbeing:** The extended Young Devon Wellbeing Toolkit has been posted on the Hele's School website, containing lots of tips, tricks and techniques for maintaining positive mental health during lockdown and beyond. Young Devon are still contactable, delivering wellbeing services over the phone or by video-call. If young people are struggling and need to talk to someone, email support is available via [wellbeingenquiries@youngdevon.org](mailto:wellbeingenquiries@youngdevon.org)


**Plympton Team Ministry Community Foodbank:** As mentioned in last week's update, Hele's is in close contact with a local foodbank to support families in need at this difficult time, and the first food parcels have been delivered this week. If you are in need of support, your child's Head of Year/House can make a referral on your behalf, or alternatively you may self-refer by emailing [foodbank.plymptonteamministry@gmail.com](mailto:foodbank.plymptonteamministry@gmail.com).

**Safeguarding Policy:** our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy has been updated to include a specific COVID-19 appendix. The policy and appendix can be found on the Hele's School website.

**Tutor contact:** We hold our duty of care to our students in high regard and so, as previously mentioned, all tutors of all students (including year 11 and year 13) have been asked to make weekly email contact with their tutees to check on their wellbeing and to ensure any appropriate pastoral support can be offered. This is part of our wider safeguarding strategy during this period of school closure and we would ask for parental support in reiterating to your child that **ALL STUDENTS MUST RESPOND TO THIS EMAIL ON A WEEKLY BASIS** so that we can be assured that there is nothing further they need support with. A reminder comes with this that your child has signed an Acceptable Use Agreement and misuse of School email will lead to immediate suspension of that account. If tutors do not receive an email response from your child, we have asked them to follow up with a phone call home. Thank you in advance for supporting us to fulfil our wider duty of care during this difficult time and for enabling us to maintain positive communication with your child whilst School is closed.

Please stay at home wherever possible and stay safe and well.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason  
**Principal**

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