

Hele's School

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



Friday, 24 April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope this weekly communication finds you and your family well. Whilst this is a long update – the weeks continue to be incredibly busy - it is broken into sections to ensure you can easily identify the sections most pertinent to you.

We are now fairly clear from the Secretary of State's government briefing last Sunday that lockdown for schools is likely to continue for the foreseeable future, so we should assume that the whole of this term will be delivered through our remote learning. A brief reminder then about the change in our delivery: on return from Easter, I explained that in Phase 2 (now) we have adjusted delivery to be more sustainable over a longer period of time. Whilst we are encouraging students to keep to a routine around the normal timetabled day, some discretionary time during the day is a good thing to help develop some independence of learning.

Planning for Phase 3 delivery – ClassCharts Survey: Feedback from parents, carers and students has been instrumental in helping us to shape our remote learning strategy so far, allowing us to be responsive to need and to remove barriers to remote learning wherever identified. 858 students have accessed their ClassCharts account regularly since Phase 2 work was posted, which is fantastic. Staff are contacting the 100 or so students who have been slower to start this term. If your child falls in this category, we are really keen to hear from you so we can improve access, whatever the reason. We are ordering some text books and producing limited hard copies of resources for those who may be struggling with online access – do make us aware if you feel your child would benefit from an alternative approach.

We do appreciate that some students in Years 7 and 8 and also some SEND learners have said that they have found some of the tasks set very challenging. Please be advised that staff have been asked to keep instructions simple and precise, and our teachers and LSAs are working hard to differentiate tasks. It is also worth reiterating that subject teachers would actively welcome any contact from students who do not understand work. We want to be a source of support, not anxiety, so please keep taking to us and we'll work things through together!

A new survey is going live today to allow us to gather further information on issues that have arisen since last term. I'd be pleased if you could find a couple of minutes to complete the brief survey to help in shaping the Phase 3 delivery model: <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=wQAYmk5Obka11fL-Sz2qKe9hN244709KrmnlgUK8EmxUOTRZR085OERMV0VHQkk5SVpTSVIPWUJFVS4u>

Current Affairs: 'The Day' is a daily newsletter for parents and carers at home with children, helping to enrich learning with real-life knowledge and skills. Published at 7am each school day, it provides a brief guide to the important news of the day and picks one live topic per day for you to debate with children, offering some context, suggested angles, and activities to go with it. It is well recommended to stimulate debate, and support literacy and oracy – and it is currently free! <https://theday.co.uk/subscriptions/the-day-home>.

Digital Resources for Disadvantaged Young People: On 19 April, the government announced support would be made available for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people who do not have access to a digital device or don't have an internet connection. The statement read:

'Digital devices will be made available for all young people who have a social worker, and to care leavers. Digital devices will also be provided to Year 10 pupils who are preparing for exams next year, who do not already have a laptop or tablet.

4G dongles will also be made available for children who do not have an internet connection already and are: children with a social worker who are in secondary school or 16 to 19 education, care leavers or Year 10s.'

Please be advised that schools have received no further information from the government to date; we were told to expect further information on eligibility and how to order devices on Wednesday just gone, but that hasn't transpired. It is my understanding that the relevant Local Authority will be responsible for placing orders and they will work with schools to identify eligible children and young people. Pastoral staff will liaise with eligible families directly when we receive further detail.

E-Safety: activity packs with simple 15-minute activities you can do with your child to support their online safety at home have been posted on the Hele's School website in the COVID-19 Updates: Parents section.

Year 8 Options: Thank you to the overwhelming majority who have submitted final choices ahead of today's deadline. Mrs Ayres is working hard on staffing and timetabling the curriculum, which is a long and complicated process. Further details will be sent directly to parents and students in the coming weeks, but any queries in the meantime, please contact ayres@heles.plymouth.sch.uk.

Year 11: The English and Maths departments have developed packages of work to enable students who think their grades over the last year indicate that they may not be awarded a Grade 4 to continue their studies remotely IN CASE they need to re-sit maths or English GCSE next year. Year 11 have been emailed with further details, so please do ask children to check their school email.

Those Year 11 students who are planning to return to Hele's 6th Form to continue their Post 16 studies must also check their school email as there are instructions on induction tasks which need to be completed over the coming weeks. I am sure you will agree, it is vitally important they continue with their learning as we want to build on all the fantastic knowledge and skills they have developed in Year 11. All induction tasks are available on the Post 16 section of the Hele's School website:

<https://www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk/page/?title=Induction+Tasks&pid=126>.

Teachers will expect students to communicate with them via email or online quizzing platforms regarding feedback, so your support in encouraging this is appreciated.

Staffing update: A reminder that Mrs Davies (Geography) returned from maternity leave this term. Some students are still trying to send work to Mrs Dunwell (who covered the maternity leave but is no longer at Hele's) and it's not always been finding its way to Mrs Davies. Your support in reminding children of this would be appreciated – let's make sure we keep Mrs Davies busy!

I have had a very busy week conducting virtual interviews with teachers from all over the country without leaving my living room, and I am delighted to report that we have added some fantastic teachers to Team Hele's in English, Maths, Art, Music and History, all of whom will be starting in September. I'm not yet in a position to confirm names as the ink on the contracts hasn't dried yet, but be assured that I'm thrilled to have recruited so strongly to the staff and have been overwhelmed by the desire of so many to want to join our school. More to follow in the coming weeks.

Resources to support independent learning: This week has seen the launch of several online resources, including:

- The Oak National Academy is a brand-new enterprise created by 40 teachers from some of the leading schools across England and backed by government grant funding. It will provide 180 video lessons each week across a broad range of subjects from maths to art to languages, for every year group from Reception through to Year 10. Each Oak National Academy lesson will be an hour long, with elements

such as a quiz, a video explanation from the teacher and a worksheet:
<https://www.thenational.academy/information-for-parents-pupils/>

- The BBC is delivering an education package across TV and online, helping to keep children learning and supporting parents: https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Please be advised that Mrs Pomfret and her team are currently reviewing these resources, amongst others, with a view to signposting particular lessons/resources to fit in with current schemes of learning and building relevant aspects into our Phase 3 delivery of remote learning to complement existing work. You may have dipped into some of these resources already, or indeed want to have a closer look.

Safeguarding and tutor contact: As you are aware, as part of our duty of care to our students, all tutors have been asked to make weekly email contact with their tutees to check on their well-being and to ensure any appropriate pastoral support can be offered. Telephone contact will be made if there is no response, and if this proves unsuccessful then a referral will be made to our Educational Welfare Officer, who will arrange for an alternative means of contact to be made. I'd appreciate your support in ensuring your child responds weekly to their tutor so that any unnecessary escalation is avoided.

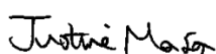
VE Day: As you know, this year's VE Day will be marking 75 years since the end of the war in Europe. Although Plymouth's planned commemoration event on Plymouth Hoe can no longer take place, Plymouth City Council and The Box are hosting lots of great activities to commemorate and celebrate this very special occasion. They are wanting to create a wonderful gallery of photographs from Veterans as well as serving Military and their families, all saluting for VE Day 75. They are encouraging families to send photographs taken from the safety of your own home or garden and hope to get the photograph gallery up on their website early next week. If you'd like to get involved in this fantastic project, please email your photograph to Lloyd.Owen@plymouth.gov.uk. The exhibition will be shared via www.visitplymouth.co.uk/VEDay75.

Recipe sheets: Food is Fun CIC have been producing recipe sheets to support families across Plymouth and a copy of one of the recipes is attached for you to perhaps try. There are some fantastic ideas on feeding a family with a nutritious and varied menu whilst ensuring it is cost-effective. Their FaceBook group, *Food Buddies South West*, is for anyone worried in any way about food or cooking during the COVID-19 pandemic, and they are asking people to interact and share tips and tricks about what and how to cook with limited ingredients and money.

A bit of fun is OK: It has been lovely to see some of the great things going on with Hele's families via Twitter and other social media, from photos of culinary delights created by our Hospitality students and others, to home videos parodying blockbuster movies, Tik Tok dance routines, and everything in between! It's OK to build these sorts of activities into the school day, no matter how wacky – in fact, it's better than OK, it is positively welcomed! On that note, I must share the link to the student response to the staff Grease video shared a couple of weeks back. Led by Liv Kennedy in Year 11 and featuring a number of students, this has just got to be seen! What a brilliant, uplifting response and a reminder of just how thoughtful and creative our young people are: <https://youtu.be/EJQOHJ9QRko>.

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

Kindest regards,



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