

# Hele's School

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



Friday, 15 May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Having hit a milestone yesterday in celebrating half a century on this planet – and an interesting lockdown birthday it was too, celebrating virtually and remotely with my loved ones through the means of Facetime and receiving the most wonderful video message from over 100 colleagues and students – I begin a new decade today, full of optimism and hope for the future! I'm also more than aware, however, that there is a great deal of anxiety and uncertainty amongst our community in response to the government's plans to get the nation back to work.

**Government guidance on reopening schools:** On Sunday evening, the Department for Education released plans with regards to the return of students to schools in England, with further guidance being issued throughout the week. If you haven't seen it, guidance for parents and carers can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>.

The key paragraph in the guidance relating to secondary schools is as follows:

*'From 1 June 2020, we expect that secondary schools and colleges will be able to offer some face to face contact with year 10 and year 12 pupils. This will not be a return to full timetables or pupils back in school or college full time, rather some support to supplement pupils' remote education.'*

As always, our priority will be the health and safety of students, staff and families and so over the coming weeks, we will be planning carefully to consider the safest time and model to deliver some contact at Hele's School with students in Years 10 and 12. In order to limit the spread of COVID-19, we will have to introduce significant changes to the activities that take place during the school day and the structure of the day. For example, significantly limiting class sizes to adhere to strict social distancing requirements (which will mean that not all subjects will be taught), staggering break and lunch times to limit interactions with others, and by adapting the way we move around the site. There is a great deal to consider and mitigate against, and I will write again to explain the procedures we will be putting in place to minimise risk to students, staff and families at an appropriate time.

It is clear that all other year groups will be required to continue with home learning until September at the earliest, and please be assured that our remote learning delivery model will continue to evolve as we move into term 6 and beyond to support students and families with an extended period of home learning. We will continue to prioritise pastoral care via telephone calls and emails, as well as weekly updates to support families.

I am sure you will have many questions and I thank you in advance for your patience and understanding. Our communication with you over the coming weeks should answer any questions you have, but as always, please let us know if you have any urgent concerns.

Please be advised that Rob Haring, CEO of the Westcountry Schools Trust, will be writing to parents/carers later today on behalf of the Trust with some key messages for all families.

**Extension and enrichment ideas:** A reminder of additional tasks that are available to students who wish to extend their curriculum beyond the 2.5 hours per day we are setting through subjects for Years 7-10. There really is so much to get lost in for those wanting a 'bit extra', including:

- **Reading for Pleasure** - We are keen to encourage a culture of reading Hele's School students can make use of our ePlatform to **access both audio books and e-books from home:**
  - The link to the web-based site is available in the Library folder on the School launchpad or from this link: <https://helesplymouth.wheelers.co/>
  - Login with a student's usual School login details, for example a Year 7 student would have a username of **19surname** and then would enter their password

- Students may prefer to access the ePlatform using the app. To do this, search in the relevant app store for the ePlatform app from Wheelers, then search for Hele's School when the app is installed.

Our audio books include popular fiction and GCSE texts. The e-book collection includes over 2,000 titles with both fiction and non-fiction titles to choose from, offering a good range of choices.

- **Academic reading** - We have collated academic reading lists for each subject and would like students to access these for 30 mins a day, 3 times a week, and will be directing students to articles from 'The Day' for the other two days a week throughout this period. We know that this is a good use of time as this will help develop subject specific vocabulary, imagination and understanding of the wider world. The tasks which appear at the end of 'The Day' articles are optional and some require discussion or consideration, which you may be able to talk through as a family unit. If you are asked for a username/password for The Day it is heleschool/theday.
- **Knowledge Organisers** - Students have Knowledge Organisers for Terms 1-5 and these contains the core knowledge that they need to build in each subject over the five years. They will need to revisit this knowledge and so it is important that they go back over these key facts repeatedly in order to ensure this information is embedded in their long-term memory. Students are encouraged to use the look, cover, write, correct technique because it is the most effective and efficient. This strategy plus others, together with Knowledge Organisers, can be found on our website: <https://www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk/page/?title=Knowledge+Organisers&pid=175>
- **Centre of Excellence** - For those students who are really passionate about a particular subject and keen to pursue it at University, they may wish to select some of the activities from our home study super-curriculum log book that can be found on our website at: <https://www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk/page/?title=Centre+Of+Excellence&pid=125>
- **Physical Activity** - The Joe Wicks' half hour of daily exercise remains an important cornerstone of our provision in order to encourage physical activity, but could be alternated with outdoor exercise as permitted, in line with government guidance.
- **Weekly Quiz** - Our Heads of House are providing a weekly family quiz for those who would like to get involved.
- **Subject ideas** - There is a link on the website in the COVID-19 section called 'Year 7-10 Optional, Additional Tasks for Remote Learning'. This has been sent to all pupils via Classcharts in April, but it is worth flagging up again as there is so much available to whet the appetite of those who are wanting more! The ideas can be found at <https://www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=767&type=pdf>

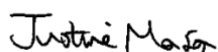
**Office 365 tutorial:** Our recent home learning survey highlighted that a significant number of parents do not have (or are unsure if you have!) Office 365 installed on their device. As a member of the Hele's School community, your son/daughter can use their school login details to download and install Microsoft Office 365 for free! Installing Office will make it easier to access and download assignments and resources. Please follow Mr Edwards's simple video tutorial here <https://bit.ly/3dH3D8g>. Office 365 can also be installed on Google/Android devices via Google Play Store and Apple devices via the App Store.

**Tutor contact:** Some people have been asking when the best time to check email contact from Tutors has been made so they can follow this up with their child/children. Monday is the agreed day when emails will be sent to tutees via their School email. Should there be any concerns, or indeed if you feel a follow-up phone call is necessary, then please do contact the appropriate Tutor.

**Final Thought:** Next week is Mental Health Week UK, with the theme this year being 'kindness'. One thing that we have seen all over the world is that kindness is prevailing in these uncertain times, and we have learnt that amid the fear, there is also community, support and hope. Let's be kind to each other, knowing we are all in this together, and be kind to ourselves, knowing that we are doing the very best we can for our children.

In the meantime, please stay at home wherever possible and stay safe and well.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason

**Principal**

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