

# Hele's School

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



Friday, 22 May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

As a full term of home schooling and EduCare draws to a close, I've no doubt that for children and adults alike, 3pm today can't come quick enough! There are some important updates to share with you however, before we sign off for some much needed R&R.

**Update on reopening of schools in England:** At the time of circulation, the eagerly anticipated government guidance document for Secondary School reopening has still not been released, even though school leaders were assured we would receive this at the beginning of this week. Whilst frustrating in terms of preventing further thinking around the final delivery model Hele's will adopt in any partial re-opening for Year 10 and Year 12, we have pressed ahead with the process of planning and risk assessing the implications for School reopening based on clear principles and non-negotiables around use of PPE, stringent social distancing measures and keeping class sizes small with limited opportunity for mixing or spread of infection.

You will be aware from the media that because of the challenges and difficulties involved, school reopening has now become subject to considerable national dialogue and dispute involving teaching/non-teaching unions and the government. I am sure you will appreciate that in order to ensure everyone's health and safety, planning for the return of some of our children is complex and something which we cannot take lightly, nor will we rush. The wellbeing of every member of our school community is of fundamental importance, as well as ensuring that we provide a high quality educational experience for the children.

WeST is working towards its Primary Schools re-opening, in part, on Monday 8 June. Our expectation is that WeST Secondary Schools will look to offer some 'face to face support' for Year 10 and Year 12 sometime from mid-June. Please rest assured we will not rush into any decisions unless they follow published guidance, are realistic, safe and manageable. ***We hope you understand that we cannot plan to deliver the same sort of education, wraparound care or social experience that we did when School was fully open before the pandemic. Any movement around the site and within the classroom will be strictly controlled to adhere to stringent social distancing expectations and students will remain in pre-determined groups for taught time and social time; they will not be able to meet and socialise with others outside their allocated group at all. It will be a very different and alien experience for us all, but a very necessary one at this time.***

We will continue planning for a phased return that facilitates some face-to-face contact and support for our Year 10 and Year 12 students. This will be alongside maintaining both the current Key Worker and Vulnerable student offer, as well as the continued provision of remote learning for all children in all year groups (including Year 10 and Year 12 students).

I know that right now we all crave normality or, at the very least, certainty. I am aware that this is neither. What I can tell you, with absolute certainty, is that Hele's School will always make decisions based on what is best for our School community's safety and welfare. I will be in touch again at the start of term, when we will have further updates to share with you.

**Planning for re-opening of School for Year 10 and Year 12 students:** For parents/carers of children in Year 10 and Year 12 only, a link to a very quick survey will be sent separately to you via InTouch later today. This survey will help us get a sense of how many Year 10 and Year 12 students we would expect to turn up to any provision at a later date next term, if our risk assessment deemed it safe to do so. Completion is appreciated by noon on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May please. It is important that you complete this form even if you do not wish your child to attend.

**Remote Learning, Phase 4:** As we move into Term 6, we are making further improvements to our Remote Learning package for students across all Key Stages. Whilst we are confident we have got a good balance of time in terms of directed tasks and optional additional tasks for students to complete, we are all keen to have more personalised contact with students and know from parental feedback that students want to see us too! With this in mind, you can expect to see the following changes in the coming weeks:

- From w/b 1<sup>st</sup> June – Year 12 to start using pre-recorded video lessons with Hele's staff presenting and explaining new material. Lessons will be structured around 5 sections: Introduction, Activation, Explanation, Practice, Reflection.
- From w/b 8<sup>th</sup> June – Year 7 and Year 10 to have some pre-recorded video lessons as above.
- From w/b 15<sup>th</sup> June – Year 8 and Year 9 to have some pre-recorded video lessons as above.

We've ensured that the format of the video files is mobile-friendly to take into account the fact that some of our students are accessing their work on mobile phones; the videos will be accessed via Classcharts in the usual way, from a link to a file on the OneDrive. Therefore, **students must ensure that the OneDrive app is downloaded as part of the Office 365 package**, which is free to all Hele's School students. Please follow Mr Edwards's simple video tutorial here <https://bit.ly/3dH3D8g> to support you with this. Office 365 can also be installed on Google/Android devices via Google Play Store and Apple devices via the App Store.

Staff are currently taking part in further, extensive training to support our strategic move towards a virtual classroom, which will enhance any prolonged episodes of remote learning in the future, as well as our work in School longer term.

**Government guidance for Parents/Carers:** This advice, published yesterday, is to help secondary school children continue their education during coronavirus. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-secondary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19> It gives practical tips on helping to organise time, including screen time, signposts support to ensure good mental health and links to a range of educational resources.

**EduCare for Children of Key Workers:** Prior to the school closure, we put out an email to all parents and carers asking that they self-identify if they felt they classed as Key Workers, even if they didn't intend to use our EduCare childcare provision. Over 100 families responded to this and have been receiving fortnightly emails, including an online booking form for EduCare, throughout the last term. Over the past week, however, we have had a number of families contact School requesting a place at EduCare for their child as they have to return to work. Could I please remind you of the following considerations when making such a request:

- 1) At least one parent must be classed as a Key Worker under the Government's classification system. The full list can be found using this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

**Please note: we are obliged to ask for full details of your employer for verification purposes if you wish to use the service.**

- 2) If you are a Key Worker but your child is safe to work from home, they should continue to do so. EduCare remains an *emergency childcare facility* and no children are 'taught' whilst at EduCare.
- 3) If you feel you do qualify as a Key Worker but did not respond to the original email AND you do not feel your child is safe to work from home, please contact Emma Clapham (Assistant Principal) by email at [clapham@heles.plymouth.sch.uk](mailto:clapham@heles.plymouth.sch.uk) and she will advise you further on availability.

**Leavers' Events (Year 11 Prom/Y13 Leavers' Evening):** Following the release of the Government's road map out of lockdown recently, we can confirm that this year's Leavers' Events will definitely not take place as planned; every school, wedding and large party across the country planned throughout this period is sadly in the same position. We would still hope for our Year 11s and Year 13s to have the chance to celebrate the passing of important transition points together at some point in the future, we just have no idea when that will be or what it will be at this stage.

In terms of services linked to the Prom, it is worth considering that many, if not all, of these services cannot open currently (hairdressers/nail technicians/car services) and are not intended to open until July 1st at the very earliest so they cannot fulfil any bookings you have made with them. If you have paid a deposit, my advice would be to contact them to inquire about getting any monies returned, rather than you cancelling the service - as with holiday bookings, etc, where you make the cancellation, your rights are very different to if the company makes the cancellation. If no money has been paid then it

makes little difference, but I wouldn't want you to be out of pocket. If it is still viable to reschedule the Prom when government guidance permits large gatherings once more, we will aim to ensure sufficient notice is given to re-book these services and give our young people the celebration they so deserve after 5 or 7 years at Hele's School.

**Year 8 Options:** I am delighted to report that Year 8 students have now all been allocated to 4 subjects through the Options process, and this information will be sent to parents/carers today via InTouch. Please read the information attached to the InTouch message, should you need to contact Mrs Ayres.

**Aspirations Week:** In these uncertain times, we are working now with Westcountry Schools Trust to ensure that we are able to refund monies for trips which are no longer able to go ahead. Currently, we are contacting the venues and activity providers and hope to be able to secure your refunds as soon as possible. We appreciate your patience around this matter.

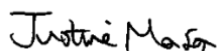
**Free School Meals:** Please be aware that the Government has advised that vouchers provided by Edenred will not be available throughout the May Half Term. The Edenred website will continue to be available during the holiday, but to allow for the creation and redemption of vouchers for the upcoming term only. If you are in need of any additional support around food, please contact your child's Tutor or Head of House who will be able to signpost you to services which can help, or see below.

**Plympton Foodbank:** As half term is nearly here, I wanted to remind you about the Plympton Foodbank that has recently opened at St Mary's Church hall. If any households are in need of food, or struggling to provide enough food, the Plympton Foodbank can help. Your child's Head of Year/Head of House can make a referral on your behalf, or alternatively you may wish to self-refer by email to [foodbank.plymptonteamministry@gmail.com](mailto:foodbank.plymptonteamministry@gmail.com) This will prompt the Foodbank Coordinator to contact you for further details in order to generate a voucher. Food packs will be delivered to your doorstep, maintaining social distancing. All referrals are dealt with in the strictest confidence. We all recognise that many households face an uncertain future, and the Plympton Foodbank is a very welcome source of support.

**Final Thought:** The Principal's directive is that there should be plenty of downtime, rest and relaxation for all next week – and plenty of laughter too, of course – but please ensure that your children continue to adhere to the government guidance around social distancing during the half term break. Thank you for your tremendous support, kind words and constructive feedback this term, not to mention your admirable efforts supporting your child/children with remote learning.

Please stay at home wherever possible, stay safe and enjoy a well-deserved break!

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason

**Principal**

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