

Hele's School

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



Friday 5 June, 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

It has been an incredibly busy week preparing for a safe re-opening of Hele's School to Year 10 and Year 12 from Monday 15 June, with delivery models to reconcile against staff and student safety, government guidance from the Department for Education and Public Health England, significant changes to the estate and learning environments, ordering of PPE, writing of protocols & expectations, and finalising our risk assessment. I am delighted to say that we have today submitted our final plans for reopening alongside a robust risk assessment to the Trustees of the Westcountry Schools Trust. A reminder that WesT 'Toolkit for Re-opening' that we have used to frame our planning is on the School website, should you be interested in seeing the thinking behind our planning.

All being well – and I can see no reason why this wouldn't be the case currently – I will write to all parents and students in Year 10 and Year 12 on Monday afternoon with confirmed plans for reopening, providing detailed information about the logistics of the offer we have put together and how to access that offer, as well as providing a set of Frequently Asked Questions for both parents/carers and students that I hope will provide all the information required and also allay some fears and anxieties about returning from the 15th June. In the spirit of transparency and completeness, I will post the FAQs in the COVID-19 section of the School website from late afternoon on Monday so that those families with children in year groups other than Year 10 and Year 12 can get a really good sense of how we will reopen to some of our school community, and the safeguards at the heart of our planning to support the health, well-being and education of our children. Please do look out for the FAQs.

Whilst the planned re-opening has been the dominant focus of this week, there remains a few more general updates to share with you.

Looking ahead to the new academic year: I have received a few enquiries in recent days about thoughts about September and I'm afraid I've been able to provide anything concrete in the form of plans. Of course, nothing would please me more than to welcome all our children and staff back to our school and welcome our new intake of 240 Year 7 children. However, the fact remains that we will not know for some time yet what schooling will look like in September in England. Government guidance – and that's all we can go on at present – suggests that remote learning is going to remain the dominant form of learning for quite some time yet and in all probability throughout much of the autumn term. There is no point speculating at this point, as I would simply be giving false hope or making empty promises. All I can say, is that we will work to get our children back in a safe and timely manner as soon as we are able to do so and I will keep you informed of any developments along the way.

Uniform: In light of my comments above, I appreciate that the uncertainty of September makes it difficult to plan for buying uniform and understand that parents/carers will be reluctant to part with hard-earned cash to buy uniform when there is such uncertainty at present. I recognise that some people like to get ready early or some need to spread payments across the next couple of months, so it is worth me updating parents/carers on information from our uniform supplier to ensure that you can purchase your new school uniform in a safe and timely manner.

Uniform can be purchased online at our Uniform Webshop on the Hele's School website, found at: <https://app.parentpay.com/ParentPayShop/Uniform/Default.aspx?shopid=150>. It can then be collected from School Reception at an allocated time and day between June and the end of the summer holidays, respectful of social distancing rules. We have been assured that any orders placed by 31st July, will be fulfilled for collection from mid-August. Adelle has informed us that they have no plans as yet to open their unit at Beech Avenue, PL4 0QQ, to allow students to try on uniform,

Principal: Justine Mason

Seymour Road, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 4LT

Telephone: 01752 337193 Fax: 01752 331460

email: heles.school@plymouth.gov.uk website: www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk

Hele's School is part of Westcountry Schools Trust. Registered address: Harford Road, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0AJ
A charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales. Company number: 07398467



as they will be unable to support stringent social distancing, but they too can arrange for collections of pre-ordered uniform from the shop at an allocated time/day. Should you have any further questions about uniform, please phone Adelle on 660145 to discuss your requirements or ask for advice about sizes. Alternatively, please contact Mrs Castle in Hele's Reception on 337193 after 15th June.

From September there are 2 key changes to uniform that have been briefly alluded to in previous communications but have now been confirmed:

- The move away from a House tie to a generic School tie, which is exactly the same design and fabric as the current House tie, but with the Hele's portico in gold stitching for all, rather than the current colour of the House a student belongs to. Ideally, we would like all students to purchase the new tie on their return to School, but will only make it compulsory for years 8 – 10. Year 11 may continue to wear their House tie, given they will be in their last year. Year 7 will continue to have the 'traditional' black and gold design so everyone at School can readily identify them as new students and actively support them to settle in quickly and feel part of the team.
- The introduction of a standard School skirt, which is a washable, pleated, black cotton skirt that comes in 3 different lengths, to suit your daughter's height (details on the School website). This is in response to parent/carer feedback that it is becoming incredibly challenging to find a school skirt that is anything but Lycra, which does not conform with the uniform regulations. It is also a decision driven by my frustration over the past 2 years, shared by a number of staff and parents/carers, at seeing increasing numbers of Lycra skirts being worn, and how the shortness of these skirts (exacerbated by the fabric 'riding up') often borders on less than decent. I know that parents/carers want a viable option, so from September the School skirt is compulsory for all new Year 7 students. However, I would be delighted if as many as possible bought the regulation skirt, if planning on buying a new skirt for the coming year, as it looks far smarter, is more practical and sets an appropriate tone. Of course, girls also have the option of wearing trousers – needless to say, not Lycra ones!

Aspiration Week Refunds: Following confirmation that Aspirations Week for students in Y7-9 has been cancelled in line with government guidance, we will be processing refunds to all parents in the coming weeks. Thank you for your patience thus far. Please see further details from Mrs Ayres in the [linked letter here](#).


E-safety activity packs: the latest parent/carer packs from CEOP have been released and you may find them useful to support your child during remote learning:

- Guidance for parents/carers on activity packs: <https://bit.ly/2zQ8cP7>
- Home activity packs for ages 11-13: <https://bit.ly/2WJcLUf>
- Home activity packs for ages 14+: <https://bit.ly/3cMneDX>

Finally: Rob Haring, CEO of WeST, has written to all parents/carers with an update on the Trust's progress with re-opening our schools. Do look out for this important letter, which should be emailed to you and also posted on the website later this afternoon.

Stay safe and well.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason
Principal

Principal: Justine Mason

Seymour Road, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 4LT
Telephone: 01752 337193 Fax: 01752 331460
email: heles.school@plymouth.gov.uk website: www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk

Hele's School is part of Westcountry Schools Trust. Registered address: Harford Road, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0AJ
A charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales. Company number: 07398467

