

Hele's School

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



Monday, 8 June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Plans for a partial re-opening of Hele's School to Year 10 and Year 12

Following my communication in my weekly update to parents and carers on Friday, I write to you today to share our plans for re-opening following the release of the government's communication to all secondary schools: *'Guidance for Secondary School Provision From 15 June 2020'*.

Within the government's communication, it set out a number of important expectations:

- The date of re-engagement at school for 'face-to-face support' for secondary students facing examinations next year (Year 10 and Year 12 students) is Monday 15 June, providing that there is no rise in the 'R' rate (reproduction rate) as a result of other measures of easing the lockdown.
- No more than 25% of the cohort is permitted on site at any one time or during any one day.
- *'Some face-to-face support'* is to *'supplement the remote education of Year 10 and Year 12 pupils, which should remain the predominant mode of education during this term for pupils in these year groups'*.
- The in-school offer for Year 10 and Year 12 students is to run alongside the full-time essential provision for children of critical workers and vulnerable students in all year groups (including Year 10 and Year 12).

In line with other WeST secondary schools, and based on government guidance and our own thorough COVID-19 risk assessment, we are actively planning to partially re-open Hele's School to students in Year 10 and Year 12 from Monday 15 June. Understandably, a lot of parents and carers have questions and concerns about their child returning to school, so we have answered a number of FAQs - frequently asked questions - to address those queries (attached as a separate document to this letter and also as a separate document on the Hele's School website for reference). It remains of the utmost importance to us that we continue to do everything we can to reassure you, as far as is possible. As we hope you are aware, we have been meticulously planning for students' return to school for a significant period of time.

We have put in place a range of approaches and actions which can be seen as a hierarchy of controls that, when implemented, will create an inherently safer environment, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. This includes:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that students or members of staff who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school;
- cleaning hands more often than usual - students and staff will be actively encouraged to regularly wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly, and regularly use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered;
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach;
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach, and deploying our cleaning team to work extra shifts throughout the school day;
- minimising contact and mixing by keeping students in small bubbles for face-to-face support and keeping those groups as consistent as possible whilst in school (e.g. for arrival, lunchtime, breaks and departure);
- minimising numbers of staff and students on site on any one day, and operating tightly-controlled 'bubbles' composed of the same 9 students and 3 staff, with no opportunity for 'bubbles' to mix; and
- altering the school environment (e.g. changing classroom layouts so desks are further apart and dividing 'bubbles' into different zones).

In order to observe adequate social distancing and comply with the 25% cohort ceiling set by the government, a maximum of 54 Year 10 students will attend on any given day, with each Year 10 student attending for one day each week. Each daily

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

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cohort will be arranged into 6 'bubbles' of 9 students and 3 staff. One cohort of 54 (or 6 'bubbles') will receive additional support each Monday to ensure students are clear on the expectations for the week ahead and to focus on study skills to support their learning from home. This group will access their Core provision each Thursday and the additional Core Plus provision each Monday.

In summary, our plans for Year 10 are as follows. Students will:

- Be assigned into a new, smaller class of 9 students, based on Maths tiers of entry, known as a 'bubble'. It is essential for individuals to be in only one 'bubble', and two or more 'bubbles' should not cross. By ensuring that they only have contact within their 'bubble', individuals are protected against cross-contamination.
- Attend school for one-day per week (with one group accessing a second day) and be taught only with the other 8 children in their 'bubble'. This approach is non-negotiable, as relaxing these rules would jeopardise the safety of every person in our community.
- Be taught in a single room and sit at the same desk for each lesson throughout the day and for each day they attend. Only teachers will move between classes.
- Be taught some maths, English and science to identify misconceptions and support remote learning.
- Be taught by a consistent, small group of teachers on the same day each week - this is unlikely to be their usual class teacher, but it will be a subject specialist.
- Take supervised breaks (outside, weather permitting) in an assigned area of the school. Students will NOT be allowed to move around the site freely or mix with students in another 'bubble'.
- Have a designated entry and exit point and access to their 'bubble's' own set of toilets.
- Be required to bring a packed lunch to school as there will be no catering facilities available and children will NOT be allowed offsite to purchase any food. We will continue to issue weekly vouchers for families eligible for Free School Meals, and hence the expectation is that these children will come to school with their own packed lunch – a school packed lunch will NOT be available. Supervised lunch will take place in the designated area for that 'bubble'. Weather permitting, this will be outside in a designated area, but wet weather will necessitate staying 2m apart in the designated classroom.

By tomorrow, we will have emailed your child(ren) with confirmed details of the day, time and 'bubble' they have been assigned to, as well as their timetable and the logistics for their day. We will copy you into this email, so you also have the details. Please respect that this offer, and the day/'bubble' assigned to your child(ren), is non-negotiable and cannot be changed.

Year 12 have a different delivery model to Year 10. The model is designed to give a personalised and blended experience of pastoral and academic support, as well as planning for next steps and progression, access to remote learning, discussion of barriers to learning and required support and interventions, where necessary.

In summary, our plans for Year 12 are as follows. Students will:

- Every student will receive a pastoral tutorial in Term 6 ('face to face' online via MS Teams) from Mr Stone or Mrs Curtis to support their wellbeing, academic progress and UCAS/Careers advice.
- For a small number of students, it will be more appropriate for them to have their 'face to face' meeting in school to offer personalised, targeted support. These meetings will be completed by Mr Stone and Mrs Curtis and will follow all social distancing protocols.
- Information of a subject-specific nature arising from this session will be passed through to subject teachers to pick up with students in a weekly Microsoft Teams seminar with their usual teaching class.
- 'Face to face' subject support will be provided for every Year 12 student in every subject they study via MS Teams, once each week – if a student studies 3 subjects, then they will receive seminars in each of these 3 subjects each week from their usual subject teachers. Each seminar will be 1 hour per week, in line with their current timetable, with slots to be coordinated by the subject teacher/Head of Department. At all other times they should continue to study from home. This will also be supported by one narrated PowerPoint per week per subject.
- Students will complete assessments for every subject every 2 weeks and will receive feedback on these formal assessments. These assessments replace the Year 12 mocks.
- On the 15th June, students will have completed the first assessment and therefore we will have a 2-week window of assessments and a blend of MS Teams tutorials with pastoral intervention to assess the impact.
- There is the possibility that later in the term (29th June or 6th July), we may need to introduce targeted 'bubbles' for subject intervention where students will come in for specific subject intervention where students are not making sufficient progress with the Post 16 remote learning package. This will be dependent on staff availability, as well as the latest government and health advice. We will keep families informed of developments in this area.

- For specific students, a Post 16 intervention 'bubble' will run on Tuesday and Wednesday in school each week from 10:00-13:30. This will be by *invite only* from Mr Stone (up to a maximum of 18 students) and will offer structured time/space for those students who are really struggling to work from home for a variety of reasons. All sessions will be monitored by Mr Stone.

Mr Stone will be in touch soon with further details for Year 12 we will email your child(ren) with confirmed details of their pastoral tutorial with Mr Stone/Mrs Curtis, and any in-school provision they have been directed to. We will copy you into this email, so you also have the details.

It is important to recognise that school life this term will be very different to before the lockdown. Government guidelines still highlight the importance of reducing contact between people, including children in schools, to reduce the risk of the virus spreading, and parents/carers and students need to have an insight into what this partial re-opening will look like. The Frequently Asked Questions attached to this email/on our website should prepare young people appropriately, and some short videos will be shared imminently to give a visual insight to the changed environment and to talk through protocols, routines and expectations.

It is also very important to understand that *this is an offer, and not an entitlement*, to Year 10 and Year 12. One thing I have learned in Headship over the years is that you can't please all people all of the time – or even all people some of the time! I've no doubt that some families may disagree with the delivery model or the subsequent groupings that School configures, but neither is negotiable. I'd appreciate your support and understanding in this. Whilst our organisation of the school day and groups is underpinned by robust educational and health guidelines, I do respect parents/carers in exercising their right to decide whether to engage with this provision, or not.

The parent/carer survey completed at the end of last term suggested between 60-80% children in Year 10 and Year 12 would be most likely to return from June 15. We are planning our groups assuming every child will attend, though know in reality this is unlikely to be the case. Building the model in a such a way from the outset allows us to ensure room for safe and manageable growth as parent/student confidence increases over time. It also allows all families who initially said they were not intending to return this term the opportunity to change their minds in light of the confirmed model of delivery and arrangements and having access to the FAQs.

Our EduCare provision will continue to run on a daily basis from 9.00am to 3.00pm for vulnerable children and the children of Key Workers where *essential* care is required. We are anticipating numbers in this provision to increase as the lockdown eases. Likewise, our EduCare Plus provision is being enhanced to support some of our students with an Education Health Care Plan, and this will run on a bespoke provision, dependent on need.


Beyond the onsite provision, teachers will continue to set work for other classes using ClassCharts as the primary means of communication (including for Year 10 and Year 12 students). I would like to thank you all for the feedback we have received about our online learning provision to date, including the responses to our online survey. We have used this feedback to plan the next phase of our online provision, and this term sees the roll out of more pre-recorded and live lessons for Year 10 and Year 12 in the first instance, before rolling out to other year groups.

I would like to remind all parents/carers that students should not be on the school grounds unless for agreed contact time or attendance as detailed above. Furthermore, I would like to re-emphasise the importance of reducing the risks of transmission outside of school; this includes refraining from socialising with each other in large groups and ensuring social distancing practices are observed when meeting other people.

Our plans have been underpinned by government and health advice, as well as sound educational principles and staff capacity. The Westcountry Schools Trust Toolkit for Reopening has been used to plan our provision, a copy of which can be found on the Hele's School website in the COVID-19 section. As always, the safety and wellbeing of our young people, their families, and our staff is our top priority, and we hope the measures we have put in place reassure you that your child will be safe upon returning to school.

We are very much looking forward to being able to open Hele's School more widely from 15 June and are genuinely excited about seeing many of our wonderful young people again! I will endeavour to update you with any information as soon as I am able to and, as always, please do get in touch with us if there is anything we can do to assist you.

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason
Principal

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