

Information for Families for Full Re-opening in September 2020

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The government has confirmed that from September all secondary school students should return to full-time education. The DfE guidance can be read at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

Westcountry Schools Trust has provided all our schools with a detailed 'Toolkit for Full Reopening' to aid our planning and risk assessment. This can be accessed on the Hele's School website at:

<https://www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=827&type=pdf>

When will Hele's School reopen?

Providing the government's assessment of the risk from Coronavirus remains that it is safe to reopen, we will stagger opening to all students throughout the week beginning Monday 7th September 2020 to allow for a detailed induction into new routines and expectations. Details of your child's return date/time, zone, access point and tutor will be emailed separately to all students and all parents/carers.

- Staff will return on Monday, 7 September.
- Years 7 and 12 will return on Tuesday, 8 September.
- Years 8 and 10 and 13 will return on Wednesday, 9 September.
- Years 9 and 11 will return on Thursday, 10 September.

Will you reopen full-time?

Yes.

Which students can attend school?

All students in all year groups. The only exceptions will be those:

- shielding on medical advice.
- displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or told to self-isolate because others in their household have tested positive for COVID-19.
- too ill to attend and so are absent due to 'normal' reasons of ill health.

Should my child attend school?

Yes. Parents/carers will have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child(ren) attends.

The government recognises the importance of children and young people attending school – for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development. We completely agree with this and we welcome the mandate that school will be compulsory for all young people.

We understand that there may be some nervousness about your child returning to school, however, and we will do everything we can to work with you to allay these concerns.

Will I get fined for not sending my child to school?

The Secretary of State for Education has confirmed that the usual system to enforce school attendance will be applied from September 2020 and that parents/carers could be fined by local authorities for periods of unauthorised absence.

We do recognise that some families may feel anxious about returning to school after a prolonged absence, and so please contact us as soon as possible if there are barriers to attendance so we can work alongside you in restoring full and positive attendance.

We appreciate that, as we look ahead to the summer holiday period, some families may wish to travel abroad. Please be aware that we have a duty to enforce the law in respect of attendance and therefore we will not be able to grant permission for your child being out of school for this reason. We would also urge you to carefully consider the timing of your holiday as it may be the case that quarantine measures are in place, depending upon where a student has travelled to and the timing of the travel in relation to government guidance. We would be grateful if you could continue to monitor the guidance carefully and inform School of your child's personal circumstances where necessary.

I've received a letter from the NHS saying I should be shielding. Does my child have to attend?

Yes, unless the letter specifically states that members of your household must also shield.

How are you preparing to reopen?

We are taking a number of steps to make sure we can open safely and sensibly. In summary:

- School will have been deep cleaned prior to the phased re-opening from 7 September.
- Hand sanitiser will be available in each teaching room and at egress points, and clear routines around hand sanitising and hand washing will be implemented.
- Staff will have PPE to administer first aid where necessary, or for those requiring intimate care.
- We have put up signs to remind students to wash their hands frequently throughout the day, and students will be directed to do this regularly.
- We have put up signs to remind students to maintain social distancing of 1m+ wherever possible, in line with PHE guidelines.
- The layout of our classrooms has been altered with furniture removed and desks changed to face front wherever feasible.
- We have reconfigured the vertical tutor groups into horizontal age-based groups so that each year group becomes its own protective 'bubble'. Please note that significant thought and planning has gone into the configuration of these tutor groups and they cannot be changed.
- Each year group 'bubble' has been assigned to its own zone in school, with its own classrooms, toilet facility, eating facility and outdoor space allocated.

How will you keep my child safe?

All our planning follows the latest government and PHE guidance, which has been used to produce a detailed and dynamic COVID-19 risk assessment. We will be operating on the principal of 'soft' year group bubbles, and 1m+ social distancing wherever possible. Whilst we cannot always guarantee complete separation of year groups, we will take all reasonable steps to avoid social mixing between year groups and to maximise the potential for social distancing. The safety of all our staff and students is paramount and we will be regularly reviewing all our procedures and we will adapt and change things as required.

- Those who either have COVID-19 or are showing symptoms of it will not be allowed on-site. If someone develops symptoms whilst on-site, they will be isolated whilst arrangements are made for them to leave safely, and as quickly as possible.
- Year groups will be allocated to zones for learning, eating and socialising with as little mixing as possible between bubbles:

- Year 7 – Maths
 - Year 8 – Science
 - Year 9 – English
 - Year 10 – West Quad
 - Year 11 – East Quad
 - Year 12 & 13 – Post-16 block
- Teachers will escort their classes to and from the year group outdoor zones to ensure that the movement of students around the school is controlled.
 - The timing of Tutor will allow the school day to be slightly staggered to avoid congestion as year groups arrive/leave the site.
 - Food service will be decentralised from the Dining Hall and each year group will instead have its own food cart provision in its zone with a limited menu offer. Year groups can only purchase and eat food in its allocated zone.
 - There will be a focus on regular and rigorous hand hygiene (washing and sanitising) and respiratory hygiene (catch it, bin it, kill it).
 - Handwashing/social distancing posters will be displayed throughout the school.
 - Staff will actively encourage regular hand washing/sanitising throughout the day as part of new routines.
 - Handwashing/sanitising will happen before entering and leaving the building and each classroom.
 - There will be enhanced cleaning through the day and daily 'deep cleans' of the school.
 - Toilets will be cleaned and sanitised regularly throughout the day. These will be used on a 'one in one out' basis to ensure social distancing.
 - Desks will face forward, with students sitting 'shoulder to shoulder', wherever possible.
 - Personal belongings (food, pens, books, etc.) will not be shared. **Students must bring their own equipment.**
 - Where subject-specific requirements mean resources must be shared (e.g. PE equipment or Art equipment) a separate risk assessment will be followed, e.g. students will sanitise hands before and after handling equipment and the equipment will be cleaned between groups.
 - Doors will be propped open to minimise touching door handles, wherever fire regulations allow us to do this.
 - We have PPE available for staff administering first aid and intimate care, where necessary.
 - One-way systems will be in place, where feasible, to minimise movement and social mixing as students and staff move around the school.
 - We will not accept visitors on-site, except in emergencies or with pre-arranged appointments.
 - As far as reasonably possible, meetings with parents and/or agencies will be conducted remotely via MS Teams.

Will there be increased cleaning?

Yes. Prior to the phased re-opening the school will be thoroughly 'deep cleaned'.

We will also be increasing cleaning throughout the school day. This will include:

- Touch points, such as handrails and door handles
- Toilets
- Emptying of bins
- Desks and other surfaces

Will children be social distancing?

As far as is reasonably possible. The DfE recognises that schools cannot maintain full social distancing if all students are on-site, but we will take all reasonable actions to minimise extended, close contact between students. For example:

- Classrooms will be re-arranged to maximise the space and seat students 'shoulder to shoulder' and facing forward, wherever possible.
- We will run assemblies using MS Teams so that large groups of students do not need to gather in close proximity.
- As far as is reasonably possible, staff will ensure that students observe 1m+ distancing when queuing.
- We will operate a 'one in, one out' system of queuing to access a toilet block.

How will students and teachers be protected?

No-one with COVID-19 symptoms will be allowed on-site. If someone develops symptoms whilst on-site, they will be isolated whilst arrangements are made for them to leave safely, and as quickly as possible.

We have PPE available for staff administering first aid, where necessary, and for providing intimate care.

How should my child get to school?

Government advice is that students should, as far as possible, walk or cycle to school.

If you wish to accompany your child to school, please do not enter the school premises. This procedure will ensure that as few people as possible are on school premises at the same time and contribute toward minimising the risk of infection spreading.

Your child will be allocated a designated time at which to arrive at school, as well as a designated arrival zone. Students are not to arrive to school more than 10minutes before their allocated start time as far as is practicable. When they arrive, students must enter the allocated gate for their year group bubble and walk to their tutor base in their allocated zone, sanitising hands as they enter the building.

If you are planning to drop your child off by car, please be aware that there will be no vehicle access for parents, unless your child has a particular need. If this is the case, please email blakey@heles.plymouth.sch.uk with the make, colour and registration number of your car so that we can ensure staff allow you access to the site. Please be considerate to our neighbours if dropping your child off on Seymour Road, Plymbridge Road or Trelawney Road at the allocated year group egress point.

If your child needs to use public transport, please remember that face coverings are now a legal requirement. If your child is wearing a face covering on the bus it must be disposed of carefully if single-use or placed inside a clean plastic bag, inside their school bag if re-usable. It is recommended that re-usable face coverings are washed daily. Whichever type of face covering is used it should be removed with care and your child should wash or sanitise their hands immediately afterwards.

The latest government guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

A number of our students access the 21 or 21A, and we are informed that this service will be operating at 10-minute intervals throughout the working day from May 31. Please refer to Citybus regarding their services: <https://www.plymouthbus.co.uk/>

Please note that for Post-16 students accessing A Level courses in Consortium schools, the Consortium minibus will operate as now. However, new routines and expectations around cleaning and hygiene will be implemented and all students accessing the Consortium transport will be required to use a face-covering that they are expected to provide.

Will my child have to wear uniform?

Yes. Government advice now states, *“Uniforms do not need to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.”* We expect all students to wear the full and correct Hele’s School uniform from September. This also applies to the correct Hele’s PE kit for PE practical lessons. A reminder that the uniform list and PE kit, along with how to order/source this, can be found on the Hele’s School website.

The new, pleated black school skirt is compulsory for all Year 7 this year, and we would encourage students in other year groups who are replacing their skirt this year to do so with this new style.

With the move from a vertical pastoral system to a horizontal one in September, the House tie is being phased out. All Year 8 – 11 students will eventually have the gold portico tie, but we recognise a replacement tie may not be required just yet for some. It is acceptable, then, to continue to wear the House tie until such a time that a new tie is required, at which point the new tie should be purchased please.

Please note that we will run a 2-week ‘amnesty’ for uniform infringements at the very start of term to support students with getting into new routines and expectations.

Does my child have to wear a face covering?

No. The government and PHE are not advising that face coverings are necessary in school. If a member of staff or student wishes to provide and wear their own face covering, however, this will be permitted.

Please remember that face coverings are now a legal requirement on public transport. If your child is wearing a face covering on the bus it must be disposed of carefully if single-use or placed inside a clean plastic bag, inside their school bag if re-usable. It is recommended that re-usable face coverings are washed on a daily basis. Whichever type of face covering is used it should be removed with care and your child should wash or sanitise their hands immediately afterwards.

What should my child bring to school?

Students should bring their ‘Super 6’ (basic school equipment) in a bag and any books for their subjects that will be given out in September. Students will not be allowed to share equipment as a rule, and any shared class resources (e.g. for Art or PE) will be sensitised before sharing within and between classes. We are also strongly advocating that students bring a packed lunch, snack and drink with them each day, if possible, to reduce the need for queuing at the snack cart.

What will my child be learning?

Our aim is to deliver a full curriculum that is as close as possible to that which we would offer if there were no COVID-19 to consider. Practical subjects will need to make some adjustments to the activities that they offer in order to be COVID-19 secure.

We recognise that for many students who have not been in school for a significant period, there will be a need to re-establish social and learning behaviours alongside teaching a more formal curriculum. A degree of informal assessment will be required to identify the knowledge, understanding and skills that students have developed while spending such a long time away from school. Learning will be reinforced and bridged where necessary through:

- Revisiting areas of the curriculum covered before the school closures.
- Re-establishing previously learned concepts and understandings.
- Assessing what students have learned and developed through home learning.

Our teachers will be focussing on helping students assess how much progress they have made with their learning whilst school has been closed and discussing the ‘next steps’ in their learning.

Will there be homework set?

Yes, in line with the homework policy.

Please note that we will run a 2-week 'amnesty' for homework at the very start of term to support students with getting into new routines and expectations in school and to settle into the rhythm of the year.

Will there be an extra-curricular or enrichment offer?

We see provision of clubs, trips and activities as an important part of an extended curriculum and are committed to convening provision when it is safe to do so. In line with all Secondary Schools in the Westcountry Schools Trust, we will not deliver extra-curricular activities, sports fixtures or trips - within or beyond the school day - for term 1 in the first instance but will keep this under close review with WeST schools and government guidance.

Will remote 'distance / online learning' continue?

No, as all students are expected to attend school. The only exception will be for students who are shielding, for whom we will make appropriate arrangements.

However, if the school must close, e.g. due to a localised outbreak of COVID-19 and a subsequent lockdown, we have a detailed contingency plan in place to revert back to high-quality, online learning. Details of this plan can be found on the Hele's School website.

Please be advised that from September, the IT Helpdesk will be available to offer technical support with hardware/software if required, and can be emailed at ITHELPDESK@heles.plymouth.sch.uk.

Will the behaviour system still operate in the same way?

The same expectations around being 'Committed, Respectful, Safe' will apply to ensure all students are able to learn and are safe. We recognise the difficult situation we have all been in and a number of pastoral and support workers, teachers and SLT will be on hand to support students who are struggling with our expectations and routines and to give students the time and space to reflect and get it right so everybody can learn.

That said, due to the risks posed by COVID-19, we all have a heightened awareness of the need to ensure the behaviour of any student does not impact on the health or wellbeing of another. Our low levels of tolerance for poor or anti-social behaviour remain the same, and any student disrupting the learning or wellbeing of others will be sanctioned in line with the amended behaviour policy and procedures, which can be found on the Hele's website. Added to our behaviour policy are deliberate actions around poor hygiene and disregard for infection mitigation, e.g. refusing to sanitise hands when directed to, threatening to or actually spitting at someone, deliberately coughing in the direction of another student or member of staff, or invading the personal space of another student or member of staff.

Please note that although we will not be running the usual procedures for internal isolation at Hele's or external isolation at another WeST school in the same manner for the time being, we will continue to run after-school detentions. Government guidance suggests that students from other bubbles will be required to mix for some purposes, and this is an example where 'permeable' bubbles may be called into operation. Should students from different year groups need to undertake detention together, social distancing and safeguards will be employed to minimise any close contact.

As always, though, our intent is for students to be happy, content, and relaxed while in school, and we will continue working hard to ensure this remains the case and to reward those good behaviours around being 'Committed, Respectful, Safe'.

What will breaktime/lunchtime look like?

We are asking parents/carers to provide drinks, snacks and a packed lunch for their child to bring to school each day, wherever possible. Lunch (in the form of a 'grab bag') will be provided for students who are eligible for Free School Meals.

To mitigate against cross-contamination, there will be no longer be a centralised canteen service; instead, each zone will have its own food cart (at break 1 only). A reduced menu will be available to minimise queuing, including packaged sandwiches and baguettes, pre-packed cheese and tomato pizza slice, tomato pasta pots, fruit, cookie/muffins, water (including flavoured varieties), and limited hot baguettes. Students will eat in their zones to minimise any risk of cross-contamination.

We have reworked the timing of breaks throughout the day, so we now have 2 x 30-minute breaks (break 1 and break 2) rather than a 20-minute break and a 40-minute lunch as is usual. This is a model that has worked very well since wider reopening in June and is much preferred by students. Under our current school day structure, we have become increasingly conscious that more and more children are buying and eating their lunch at breaktime (late morning) and spending their lunchtime playing or socialising. With that in mind and given we will now have 6 dispersed food points across the site rather than one centralised canteen, we will move our catering provision to break 1. The speed at which we can serve children will be much faster too, and hence we are able to extend break 1 by 10 minutes (to 11-11.30am) and reduce the traditional lunch break, now called break 2, by 10 minutes (from 1.30-2pm).

Are mobile phones allowed?

Our policy on mobile phones will operate as normal so students will only be able to use their phone if their teacher permits this. Otherwise, it should be on silent and out of sight all day, including break and lunch time.

Will School Reception be open?

Yes, but there will be no facility for walk-in visitors without an appointment or unless in an emergency. This is because we want to restrict the number of people accessing the school site, and hence minimise situations that pose the threat of cross-contamination.

Should you need to urgently contact your child or school, please telephone Reception on 337193, or to report an absence please telephone the absence line on 231730 for Years 7-11 or 756715 for Post 16.

What's the procedure for my child leaving school?

Your child will be allocated a designated time and designated leaving area. If you wish to collect your child, please wait outside the school premises. This procedure will ensure that as few people as possible are on school premises at the same time and contribute toward minimising the risk of infection spreading.

What should I do if I suspect my child, or someone else in my household, has COVID-19?

PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IF THEY ARE UNWELL OR IF DISPLAYING ANY SIGNS OF CORONAVIRUS (TEMPERATURE AT 37.8°C OR HIGHER, A NEW, DRY, PERSISTENT COUGH, OR LOSS OF SMELL OR TASTE).

Seek and follow the latest government advice. Currently, this would be to arrange a COVID-19 test and to isolate whilst awaiting the result, after which you must follow the guidance of the NHS 'Test and Trace' team.

If someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms like coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.

If someone tests positive, they should follow the ['stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection'](#) and must continue to self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their

symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste.

As it is possible for someone with COVID-19 to be asymptomatic (meaning they are not showing any signs or symptoms of having the virus), we cannot guarantee that no one with the virus comes into school.

However, as you can see from the measures outlined throughout our responses to these FAQs — such as limiting visitors to site, creating staggered entry and exit times, taking temperatures on arrival, and keeping students and staff in 'bubbles' — we're doing everything possible to limit the number of people on the premises while students are in school. These limitations even extend to teaching and school staff who are not directly involved in providing face-to-face support to our young people, who will be instructed to remain off-site.

What can I do to reduce the risks of catching COVID-19?

Please continue to follow government and Public Health England guidelines regarding frequent hand washing, respiratory hygiene and social distancing, and remain aware of potential symptoms of the virus.

How can I help the school and my child?

We very much appreciate your support in working with us in a number of ways:

- Prepare your child adequately by reinforcing the importance of good hygiene routines, such as sanitising and washing hands regularly. Also discuss the ways in which school will be different and the importance of adhering to expectations and routines.
- Send your child to school properly equipped with their Super 6, a packed lunch and drink (wherever possible) and dressed in the full and usual Hele's School uniform.
- Inform the school in good time should your child not be able to attend on a particular day.
- Understand that the times of the day and the allocated gate for entry/exit to school is non-negotiable due to safety and operational reasons.
- Support with your child's learning wherever possible and keep us informed of any issues that may arise so we can address them in a timely and constructive manner.
- Adhere to the government guidelines at all times outside of the school premises and ensure that your child also follows these guidelines.
- Respond in good time to requests from the school for information that aids our ability to plan, prepare, and maintain a happy and safe school environment.
- Be polite and courteous to members of staff at all times – we are trying really hard to manage a very challenging situation for everyone. If you are concerned about something that doesn't appear to be going to plan, please inform us in a constructive and supportive way and work with us to try to find a speedy and satisfactory resolution. We are in this together!

What should I do if I have questions?

If you have subject-specific questions, please email your child's teacher.

If your question is about your child's well-being, then please contact their tutor. **All Hele's School staff emails can be found on the school website.**

Safeguarding issues should be raised with our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Sandra Crawford, crawfords@heles.plymouth.sch.uk.

If you have general questions, please email heles.school@plymouth.gov.uk and these will be directed to a member of staff to answer.