

# Hele's School

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



Friday, 16 October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

This week has demonstrated the complexity of schooling and education during these current times and the absolutely remarkable ways that staff, young people and families are coping with the unprecedented demands placed upon us all. As you'll know from my letter on Monday, we acted on professional advice from Public Health England for half a year group to self-isolate for 14 days as a precautionary measure after receiving news of a positive COVID case. I recognise this is both unsettling and also inconvenient for those families having to arrange childcare with very little notice, and I know you understand that this was a very necessary decision that hasn't been taken lightly. Thank you for your support and patience at this time.

What this means 'on the ground' is that our model of learning to ensure continuity of learning has been implemented and consequently we have a complex and dynamic teaching and learning landscape with:

- 120 children accessing live lessons via MS Teams from home, delivered by staff in school in line with their normal timetable and teaching load
- A small number of classes in school receiving live lessons from teachers who are perfectly fit and well but directed to self-isolate at home until a member of their household receives a result from a COVID test, or who are having to work from home because their own child has been asked to self-isolate by their own school because of COVID-19 test in the community
- Almost 1200 young people accessing their usual lessons in school, as normal
- A small number of classes covered by a Supply Teacher where a teacher is absent from school due to illness (not related to coronavirus).

Not an easy situation to manage, then, but I have been in awe of the 'can do' attitude and the positive way staff and students have risen to the challenges presented to us to ensure continuity of learning. Please do keep talking to us and feeding back your experiences, particularly if learning remotely from home, so that we can continue to fine tune provision and overcome barriers swiftly where they may occur.

**Learn & Grow sessions:** I wrote last week about the launch of our Learn & Grow provision in Term 2, but with the deadline for expressions of interest fast approaching, here is a reminder of the provision available to all children across school: Running separately in each year group bubble and open to all students in Years 7-10, Learn & Grow is an after-school provision offering both generic and targeted support and tutoring, as well as an opportunity for students to complete homework and extension tasks. The provision will be funded through the Catch-Up Premium issued by the Government to assist students in bridging any gaps they may have from the lockdown period, and it will form part of our core offer. The sessions will run Monday - Thursday each week after-school, with each session lasting one hour. Learn & Grow will be staffed predominantly by a team of high-achieving, fully trained Post-16 students who will offer both classroom and computer-based learning opportunities. Previous student voice activities, other student-led activities in school and educational research have all shown peer-tutoring to be hugely beneficial in the learning of students and we envisage this provision to be highly effective and in demand. If you would like your child to attend,

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please complete the short survey below to state your preferred day(s). *The deadline for securing a place on next term's Learn & Grow provision is this Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> October. Please follow the link below to register your interest. All places will be confirmed before the end of this term:*

<https://bit.ly/2SxrZsL>

**Year 11 Support & Intervention:** thank you to parents and carers for engaging so well with the Parent/Carer Information Briefing sent to Year 11 families by Ms Clapham by video message last week. Your support has led to strong attendance from Year 11 at after-school Controlled Assessment and Coursework Support Sessions this week. Not only has the take up from our students been incredible, but the work ethic displayed at these sessions has been highly commendable. As you know, this provision will continue next term and is a valuable provision for supporting students with their preparation for GCSEs. From Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November, we also launch our Study Café for Year 11, offering support around study skills and revision, tailored help with homework and bespoke small group and 1:1 tutoring. Your ongoing support and encouragement around engagement in the support available to Year 11 is much appreciated.

**End of Term 1:** a reminder that the last day of term, Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October, is a staff training day. The last day of school for students will therefore be Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October, with the school day ending at the usual time (3pm or 3.20pm, depending on year group). Term 2 will start for all students and staff on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November at the usual start time (8.40am or 9am, depending on year group). The bubble model from term 1 will remain in place next term.

**Good news:** we received some fantastic news about staff achievements this week, demonstrating that Hele's School is a great place to learn and grow for adults, as well as our wonderful young people. Louise Skingle (Head of Year 8) and Sophie Prifti (Head of Year 9) received formal notification that they passed the year-long training and assessment for the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL), whilst Matt Cusack (Head of PE and Head Coach for Plymouth Parkway FC) received the Cornwall FA Adult Coach of the Year award for his superb achievements whilst Manager of Saltash United FC last season. I know you will join me in congratulating our staff on their fantastic achievements in and out of school. Great examples of how learning is a life-long endeavour!

Kindest regards,



Justine Mason  
**Principal**

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