

Hele's School

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



Friday, 29 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

You will no doubt have seen this week that the Prime Minister announced that it will not be possible to resume face-to-face learning immediately after the February half-term, and Monday 8 March is the earliest date cited for a possible return of some/all children. There is much that remains uncertain, however, so we need to continue to plan together and provide as best we can in the interim.

Virtual School survey: we have received a large number of “thank-you” emails from parents/carers in recent weeks, and this has meant a great deal to us, but we are also keen to improve our virtual school further. We would really appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to answer the 5 very brief questions on [this survey](#). We will use parent, student and staff feedback to refine our provision further after half-term, so your voice really will make a difference.

Virtual classrooms: thank you for your support over recent weeks; we know that this a challenging time for parents/carers but you really are doing a great job by giving your child(ren) a quiet place to work, reducing distractions and providing the encouragement they need. That said, please do remain hyper-vigilant about background noise when children are in their virtual classrooms. I really do understand that many households are incredibly busy with several activities underway during this lockdown and we are all doing our best to juggle these demands, but please be mindful that a few lessons this week have been interrupted by some rather choice language from adults in the background that was clearly not intended to be heard by a classroom full of children! Your support in this matter really is appreciated.

Also, a polite but strong reminder that parents/carers or other family members are not to join the lesson or ask to speak to the teacher under any circumstances please; I would neither expect nor tolerate a parent/carer walking into a classroom to address a teacher or comment on the learning in ‘normal’ times, and there remains a clear line in the sand for virtual classrooms. We have systems in place for dealing with any queries or concerns and those systems remain firmly in place throughout the remote learning period. Please contact the school in the normal way (phone call or email) and we will gladly direct your enquiry to the appropriate person to deal with any concerns you have in a timely and constructive way.

Help with MS Teams: please remember that we have a series of short videos to help you and your child navigate MS Teams. These helpful resources are highly recommended and are listed below for ease of reference and are all available on our website. If you require any technical support, please contact ITHelpdesk@heles.plymouth.sch.uk.

Teams Software: How to download MS Teams on to your phone or home device: <https://bit.ly/32CD0yO>

Assignments (This will be in the form of homework): How to access an assignment set by your teachers: <https://bit.ly/2ZHW0tz>

How to hand in your assignment: <https://bit.ly/3c4MYvL>

How to see the feedback from your teachers: <https://bit.ly/2ZLA0ye>

Curriculum Teams (This will be where students access work and resources if they are self-isolating : How to access Curriculum Teams: <https://bit.ly/33xWnZ4>

Accessing live lessons: How to access live lessons <https://bit.ly/2LpoLqO>

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



Devices: if you have a school-loaned laptop or IT equipment that you no longer need, please let Reception know and we will be glad to arrange collection at a convenient time. This will allow another child in need of a device to benefit.

Exercise books: if your child requires a new exercise book for any subject, please contact Reception to arrange a time for collection and we will ensure you have all you need.

Virtual Parents' Evenings: we have been encouraged by the success of this week's inaugural virtual Parents' Evening for Post-16, and plans are well underway for the Year 11 Subject Evening next week, 3rd February. Please be assured that every other year group will have a Parents' Evening this year in line with the planned calendar:

- Year 10 - 24th March
- Year 9 - 5th May
- Year 8 - 17th March
- Year 7 - 19th May

Year 8 KS4 Options process: students will have an assembly in tutor time next Friday 5th Feb to launch the KS4 Options Process, and the Virtual Options Evening will take place online on Tuesday 9th February for all Y8 students, parents and carers. Further details to follow next week!

Virtual Careers Fair: this exciting resource will be made available for parents, carers and students to access from 4.00pm on Tuesday 2nd February, remaining on our website throughout the year. It will be a valuable addition to our Careers Education Information and Guidance resources. Details on how to log in to the Virtual Careers Fair will be emailed to Parents/Carers on Tuesday to enable access. Students will also receive an email with access details.

End of term and WeST training day: term 3 ends on Friday 12th February at 3pm and term 4 begins for all children on Tuesday 23rd February. There is a calendared Trust-wide remote staff training day on Monday 22nd February, and hence there will be no remote provision on this day.

Children's mental health: Heads of Year are promoting activities throughout the whole of next week that will support wellbeing for body, mind and emotions. In the meantime, a couple of good resources to point you to:

- Sustrans (a charity that strives to create 'healthier places and happier lives for everyone') has developed a series of short videos, each one 2 - 4minutes in length, with [activities to help keep us all positive and happy](#).
- [Lockdown lunches](#): some fantastic, simple, cheap and nutritional lunch ideas from Change4life.

Good news: I am constantly amazed – though not surprised - at the sheer determination and resilience shown by Hele's students during a very challenging time. UCAS connects people to University, apprenticeships & internships and is an important part of the Year 13 calendar. Today is the deadline for September applications, and I am delighted to hear that 67 applications have been submitted – last year at this stage, 47 Year 13s had applied through UCAS. This impressive figure demonstrates the resilience of our wonderful young people and how they remain future-focused and planning their next steps, in spite of being in the midst of a global pandemic. Thank you to Mrs Earnshaw for coordinating the UCAS process and the whole Post-16 Pastoral team for their support of our Year 13s. Best of luck to all those submitting applications!

At the other end of school, it was an absolute pleasure to phone Emma Beasley of 7G yesterday (and a very proud Mrs Beasley, of course) to pass on my heartfelt congratulations for being the first to achieve the Diamond Award for Achievement Points this academic year. Emma currently has 220 positive points on ClassCharts (and no negatives), smashing the benchmark of 200 to achieve the highest accolade, and with 5 months still left of this academic year! A phenomenal effort - well done, Emma, and keep up the great work!

Wishing you all a restful weekend.

Kindest regards,

Justine Mason

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

