



De La Salle School

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Dear Parent / Carer,

The start of this second half term has been a very busy one including all of our students undergoing assessments or mock exams, plenty of rehearsals, performances, sporting sessions, school trips, activities and of course our annual Prizegiving Evening for our Year 11 leavers which took place this week and I will include in the end of term newsletter.

As always, my letter at the start of the half-term is more information focussed than the swag newsletter at the end of each term. I apologise for the length of this letter but I have quite a lot of information to share with parents and so I have written this letter in sections to allow you to dip in and out, as you see fit.

Mock Interviews – Can you help?

We are currently recruiting volunteers to help with our Year 11 Mock interviews. You don't need to be the Head of ICI (though if you know him/her give them a nudge) to do this, all we require are supportive adults who can work through a 15 to 20 minute 1:1 interview with our students and provide feedback on what they did well and what they could improve. The interviews will be taking place on Wednesday 22nd January and Thursday 23rd January between 3.30pm and 5.30pm. If you, or somebody you know, would like to volunteer for either or both dates, then please contact the school at delasalle@delasalleschool.org.uk. You can also follow the Careers Team here at De La Salle on Instagram under the tag (I have no idea if that is what they are called): [Delasalle_Careers](#)

Assessments

As I have mentioned, the whole school has recently undergone assessments or mock exams in the first of 3 assessment windows across the year. With almost 1200 students involved, it has been a logistical challenge but one that Mr Ross and Mrs Mulhall have risen to. Likewise, the students, in the main exam venues have behaved very well, with particular praise to the Year 11s who were excellent across the two weeks.

Staff are now marking these assessments and feeding back to students over the next couple of weeks. Parents will then receive a progress report just before Christmas – these will be the new style of report which, we hope, will provide you with much more useful information on your child's progress.

Baseline Data Report

As well as our new reports for how well students are currently doing, all students in Years 7-10 will receive a baseline data Report. This will contain information that we have from when your child started secondary school – including their Year 6 SAT scaled score and where that placed them within the year group (by quintile). It will also contain information on how students with the same Year 6 score (or equivalent) performed in key subjects at GCSE. These baseline reports will be sent out in the next week along with an explanatory letter and FAQ sheet.

You can perform miracles by touching the hearts of those entrusted to your care.

Stranger Danger

We have been notified of a couple of incidents recently where young people from other schools have been approached by strangers. I would remind parents to echo our message to students about being vigilant on their journey to and from school. In particular:

- to avoid walking alone
- stick to busy and well lit roads
- do not talk to strangers

Any concerns or incidents should be reported immediately to the police.

Copper Awards

Our first set of Lasallian Star Awards are currently being given out for students who have accumulated sufficient star points for attendance and good behaviour so far this year. Please look out for the certificates, most probably at the bottom of your child's bag next to an aging banana!

Parental Concerns/Meeting with the Head

We would always encourage parents to contact us if they have any concerns and, under our Parent Charter, we are clear that:

- We will never turn you away: you will always be seen by a trained member of our staff.
- We will respond to any concerns within clear time frames (24 hours for the most serious issues and 48 hours for all issues).

However, on some occasions parents have insisted on seeing me personally about their issues. Of course, I am more than happy to meet with parents and, in a similar way to when I meet with students, it is a genuine and enjoyable break from the often tedious bureaucracy of being a secondary headteacher. It is also a healthy reminder of why we are here in the first place, to serve the young people in our school. However, in most cases, there are staff within the school who will be in a much more informed or appropriate position to address any of your concerns.

Certainly, if you are unhappy with the response you receive, we have Heads of Department (for subject-based issues) or Heads of Year (for pastoral issues) and then each of these have a member of the Senior Leadership Team who has direct oversight of their work.

Following this structure will, in the vast majority of cases, ensure your concerns are addressed quickly and efficiently.

Big Ask

Last week we sent out our termly Big Ask to parents, students and staff. I would encourage you to share your views with us. This is not simply a tick box exercise for the school; we are genuinely keen to hear the views of all of our community. Last year I shared a list of the 'You said...We Did' items that we changed. Your views really do help our school improve.

Ofsted

I keep checking our phone line is working, but still no sign! As with the Big Ask, Ofsted will be very keen to hear the views of parents via their survey at Parentview which can be accessed via this link: <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/login?destination=give-your-views> Often the only people who make the effort to give their views can be those who are unhappy or might have an issue with a school. It is quite right that they have that option but it is equally important that the views recorded reflect those of as many parents as possible.

E-Safety and Social Media

E-safety and all the various elements of it are a constantly changing issue which, when used appropriately, can bring great joy and improve communication, however, when used inappropriately, can cause considerable damage and hurt. We are constantly seeking to

ensure the students, staff and wider community are kept safe and fully informed in all aspects of e-safety.

The school is currently reviewing and re-writing all of its policies in this area and, where new policies should be in place, writing new ones. Over the next couple of months, we hope to be able to share with the appropriate group the following new or updated policies:

- E-safety Policy
- Social Media Policy
- School Social Media Accounts Policy
- Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents

Though we have had some of these in place, we are looking to have them more connected by using a nationally recommended set of policies, linking the key policies and responsibilities together.

Dinner Money

The canteen staff have reported that there has been a marked increase in the number of students getting to the canteen tills without sufficient money on their accounts (please note, we would never stop a child having something to eat for this reason). As a fairly useless father myself, I often get a text from my son to tell me to put more money on his account, when I should really just check it once a week. If parents could do this, it might help with the problem. Luckily, as my other son is now at university, he has taken his huge swathe of money in one go!

Mrs Thompson – Fundraising

We recently had Mr Leighton take part in a fundraising charity wrestling match, which he won. Now Mrs Thompson is taking part in the Santa Dash as part of the Year 8 fundraising efforts leading up to Christmas. If, having updated your child's dinner money (see above), you still have some spare change, you may consider sponsoring her. The Just giving page can be found at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/jacqueline-thompson5>

Mobile Phones

Just a reminder that students should not use or have their mobile phone turned on between 8.30am and 3.00pm. Students who decide not to follow this rule, may have their phone confiscated and either collected by their parents at any time or themselves at 3.00pm Friday. Could we ask for parental support with this, as we have had a couple of occasions where parents, upon hearing their child's phone has been confiscated, have raced to school to hand it straight back to their child.

Cold Weather

Last week started off with a cold snap and plenty of frost in the morning. I did notice, when greeting the students at the gate, that a considerable number of students didn't have a coat, hat or gloves and looked extremely cold. If you could encourage them to wear at least a coat when coming to school that might help them. Obviously when the weather is excessively cold or wet, we do allow the students to access the house bases of a lunchtime.

Attendance

Our attendance is considerably lower this year than this time last year. This is partly as a result of families taking holidays in term time and also higher levels of student sickness and absence affecting staff and students. As always, we ask parents to avoid withdrawing their child from school during term time.

Let's Do It Together

During the winter period, there is an increased demand for the services of the NHS. The school is working with the Local Authority and the NHS to help raise awareness of the different services on offer and to help people make the right choice of service, this project is

called 'Let's Do It Together'. The project is particularly aiming to reduce unnecessary demand on A&E services. All students will receive a Z-card which highlights the most appropriate service for individuals to use when required. They have also asked us to share the following video with all of our families. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCB-MIn_HRI

Christmas Challenge

From now up until Christmas, we will be running our Christmas Challenge. Every form will win weekly points depending on Star Points earned, Behaviour Points lost, percentage attendance and percentage late marks. Mr Hale is running the challenge but is keeping tight lipped about the prizes, though the very similar Easter challenge prizes were Easter eggs, so I think most of the students have worked it out.

You will be relieved to read that this concludes my letter. Can I thank you for your continued support for the school as it continues its journey of improvement.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Rannard
Headteacher