



De La Salle School

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9th October 2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

Weekly Parental Update

Today, is #HelloYellow Mental Health Support Day and, in my previous 24 years of teaching (I started late), it has never been so needed to be conscious of mental health: that applies to students, staff and parents. I have included a section later in the letter with key information and support.

New Information

Current Situation

Let me start by giving you an update on our current situation:

- This week we had 2 students test positive – siblings in Year 8 and Year 11, and we have had 1 member of staff from the admin team test positive. Once again, all of these were unconnected and appear to be community transmission rather than school based.
- As a result, 51 Year 11 students have been required to self-isolate.
- So far since 1st September, we have had 14 of the school community test positive for COVID19.
- We currently have 132 students in self-isolation and 17 staff absent from school, these are for a variety of reasons: advice from test and trace, family members with symptoms etc.
- Our current attendance remains steady at 93% across the whole school and 82% once students self-isolating are included (under government regulations, students in self-isolation are coded X and do not count as absences).

Mental Health and Wellbeing

There is no doubt these are testing times for everyone and we would encourage anyone who has concerns about themselves or another person to seek help. This could be through school and the pastoral staff that we have. Alternatively, visit the special section of our website which covers:

- Direct links to lots of different types of support
- Advice and guidance
- Activities to help you or others
- Information on Anxiety, Mental Health, Wellbeing and Mindfulness.

The link is: <http://www.delasalle.st-helens.sch.uk/parents/coronavirus/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>

Lunches

We now have full access to our kitchens, but still have a number of staff in self-isolation. We have now been able to re-introduce a limited breaktime service and our

lunchtime offer has also expanded, though still not at 100%. We hope normal service can resume towards the end of next week, when we have a return to full staffing levels.

PE Kit

As you will be aware, students wear their PE kit on the days they have practical PE. However, very quickly, particularly with the older students, this has become more of a fashion parade rather than a PE kit. Your help with this is really appreciated and avoids unnecessary discussions with individuals.

So for clarity **PE kit is:**

- A blue DLS polo/ blue sports polo
- Blue DLS shorts/ blue sports shorts
- Blue skort (girls)
- Blue or white socks
- trainers which are suitable for sport (not fashion trainers i.e. Nike Air Huaraches, converse or similar)
- a blue DLS hoodie.

We have, in lieu of current times, allowed the following to also be worn:

- Black or navy blue leggings
- Black or blue sports pants (ideally not joggers as they get very heavy if wet)
- blue or black hoodies (no large logos- again these need to be sportswear rather than fashion branded)
- raincoats (these must be separate to the student's normal "outercoat")

The following **should not be worn:**

- Cargo pants i.e. Rab, Karrimor, North face etc branded wear.
- T shirts/tops which are not mentioned above
- Colours of tops i.e. grey/pink/yellow which are not part of the DLS uniform.

Blazers should still be worn on PE days- this is non-negotiable.

Extreme Weather

Last week I mentioned that we were still exploring possible solutions for shelter for our students, especially Year 10. I am pleased to say that, over the weekend, we will be having a large marquee installed in the Year 10 social area. I thank Mr Fairweather, our site manager, who has worked hard to overcome the various legal and technical issues and brought the cost down from extortionate to just daylight robbery, in order for this to happen. In other news Rannard and Sons Wedding Services have availability.

Testing

We have been informed that the Mobile Testing Unit will be deployed at Eccleston Park Golf Course this Saturday then at Clifton Street Car Park on Sunday. It will be open from 10:30am to 3:30pm and access is by appointment only which can be booked online <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

Students

Last week I singled out our staff for specific praise. This week, I would like to do the same for the students. The vast majority of our students have returned to school with a positive and mature attitude. They have been faced by a range of new rules and

requirements, have found themselves restricted in their movement and free time, stuck outside when the weather hasn't been great and haven't been able to enjoy the wider extra-curricular activities that help make school life exciting and enjoyable. They have done all of this very compliantly and without complaint. So a big thank you to them.

Regular Reminders

Reporting positive COVID tests

We have now created an email address for parents to report COVID test results to us. These are auto forwarded to myself and Mrs Peet and will allow us to act promptly, particularly if the results are received of an evening or over the weekend. Rather uncreatively the email is: covid@delasalleschool.org.uk if reporting a positive test please include:

- Name of child
- DOB
- Contact number
- Date symptoms started
- Date of test
- Date of results

Of course during the school day you can also contact the school directly by phone.

Symptoms

Can I remind all parents and students to be vigilant for symptoms which include at least one of:

- a high temperature;
- a new continuous cough;
- a loss of or change to your sense of smell or taste.

Please do not send students in to school if they (or you) are awaiting a test and students should not be sent to school if they have symptoms.

Around this time of year, it is common for people to start to get coughs and colds. The following link to the BBC website provides a useful explanation of the differences between cold symptoms and COVID symptoms. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-54145299>

Face coverings

Please ensure your child comes to school with a face covering. Our temporary stocks have now disappeared. Others are on order, but these should only be for rare occurrences.

Finally

As suggestions of greater localised restrictions increase, we will continue to keep our risk assessments and controls under review. As always, I will update you if any of these need to change.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Rannard (Headteacher)