



De La Salle School

Mill Brow, Eccleston, St. Helens,
Merseyside WA10 4QH

Telephone: 01744 20511

Email: delasalle@delasalleschool.org.uk

Headteacher: Mr. A. Rannard BA (Hons) NPQH

16th October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Weekly Parental Update

Another busy week in the school with students and staff working hard in challenging circumstances. Our new marquee has arrived, ironically at the same time as the October heatwave, however I am sure the weather will turn again soon and it will provide much needed shelter for our Year 10 students as well as an additional space for PE.

New Information

Tier 3

As you will be well aware, the wider Liverpool City region has been placed into Tier 3 and is under tighter restrictions in an attempt to help reduce the spread of the virus. For school, it doesn't result in any significant changes but we would emphasise the following and ask you to also discuss these points with your child:

- Students **should have a mask with them at all times**, and in school these must be worn at all times when moving around the building indoors (exemptions should carry their pass/have their badge available).
- Students getting the buses or going into local shops must wear masks (Sainsburys have raised concerns that some students are not doing this)
- Students should make a note of who they travel to and from school with (including who they sit with on a bus) and spend break/lunchtime with (this helps us with our tracing system).

Current Situation

To update you on our current situation:

- Since the last update we have had 4 students test positive – siblings in Year 7 and Year 10, a pupil in Year 8 and another in Year 11, and we have had 2 members of staff, one from the Geography department and one member of SLT. One of the staff infections has been linked to an in-school transfer from a pupil but the other cases were unconnected and appear to be community transmission rather than school based.
- As a result, 34 students across various year groups have been required to self-isolate.
- So far since 1st September, we have had 20 of the school community test positive for COVID19.
- We currently have 120 students in self-isolation and 13 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).

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

Lunches – Money being taken

The catering team are now back and the kitchens fully opened. For the first two days when the kitchens were closed, we were unable to operate the tills and paper records were kept of the food taken by individuals. **This week and next, these meals are being entered into the tills and payment taken.** This will explain why your child may appear to have been charged for 2 meals in one day. This is the excuse I am also sticking to when Mrs Rannard checks my account.

GCSE Summer Exams

This week also saw an announcement from the government regarding the next round of GCSE exams in the summer of 2021. There is obviously much that might change between now and then but the key messages were:

- Exams will go ahead, but most will be delayed by about three weeks, taking place between 7 June and 2 July.
- One maths and one English GCSE exam will be held just before the May half-term, to give pupils affected by Covid a better chance of still sitting a paper in each of these subjects.
- Results days will be Tuesday 24 August for A and AS levels and Friday 27 August for GCSEs.
- Contingency measures will be developed, “in partnership with the sector”, to address “the range of scenarios which might impact students’ ability to sit exams”. Ofqual will spend the next six weeks consulting on what these contingency measures might look like, with more detail to be published “later in the Autumn”.
- No further subject-level changes to exams and assessments will be made, beyond those small adjustments already outlined by Ofqual.

We are obviously prepared for any eventuality with the exams and I will continue to keep you updated with any changes, as and when they are announced.

Stranger Danger

Just a reminder of the message we have been asked to send out by Merseyside Police regarding an individual who has been around schools recently:

We are aware of reports of a man behaving suspiciously near to schools in St Helens, and officers are making extensive enquiries.

Reports have suggested that the man has been seen outside Rainhill High School, De La Salle School, Bleak Hill Primary School, and Cowley International College, attempting to engage in conversations with children.

High-visibility patrols will be attending the schools to provide reassurance.

We’d encourage teachers and parents to be vigilant and report any concerns to police immediately, and not to speculate on social media. You can call 999 in an emergency or pass information via our social media desk @MerPolICC on Twitter or ‘Merseyside Police Contact Centre’ on Facebook, with log 184 of 15 October.

Obviously we cannot hold our usual assemblies but form tutors have been asked to remind students of the importance of stranger danger and we have sent an assembly message to students via Show My homework, reminding them of what to do and how to stay safe.

Parking

Most parents continue to park away from the school, however, yesterday I was on the receiving end of a tirade from one of the bus drivers who had been stuck behind a parental car for several minutes that refused to move. The gist of his comments were “*you need to get a grip of these parents, it’s a disgrace.*” In the moments he paused for breath, I did point out that the issue was from a very small minority of parents parking selfishly.

However, could I make yet another plea, to please park sensibly and away from the school. In particular avoid parking where the buses stop and, if you are in a position holding a bus up, please move.

Weekend Mobile Testing

A Mobile Testing Unit will be deployed to Clifton Street car park, near to St Helens Town Centre on Saturday 17 October. This is a walk and drive through facility but strictly by appointment only. Appointments can be made online at:

<https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/antigen/name>

or by calling NHS 119. Alternatively, residents can also book a test at Haydock Park Racecourse seven days a week via the above channels.

Parents

The past two weeks I have offered thanks to the students and staff, so I think it is long overdue to say thank you to all of you as parents and carers. In a difficult time for everyone, you have shown great understanding and support for the school and the actions we have been taking. This means a lot to all of us. I also make specific mention of those families who have acted rapidly to inform us of positive cases or who are managing the self-isolation of their children, often at quite short notice. Thank you.

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

I have attached the useful 2 page reminder of what you need to do in cases of COVID, and 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 you or they are awaiting a test or 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>

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/>

Finally

The changes and restrictions won't last forever and one day we will get to return to normality and remember all the ordinary things that affected our lives, rather than the extra-ordinary. Until then, all we can hope to do is our best for the students and for each other.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Rannard
Headteacher