



De La Salle
School

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20th November 2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

Weekly Parental Update

This week I have been in several meetings (though felt more like group therapy) with headteachers in St Helens and also across the wider Archdiocese. A common theme was the increasingly challenging behaviour of some students since returning after half term.

I listened carefully to the various theories as to why this was: a natural anxiety about the current situation, young people being stuck in their houses, no weekend or evening sports or activities, increased use of social media, being kept within bubbles in school, limitations to their break and lunchtimes, no after school clubs and activities.

It is certainly something we have also noticed here in school, with several serious behaviour incidents in the past two weeks, more than we would usually have. Like the other headteachers, the team and I, are looking at the possible causes and how or where we can improve any school related causes.

In the short term, we have spoken to all of the students, increased our already higher levels of duty staffing, ensured staff are wearing their high-viz to be clear and visible, and tightened our in-school expectations amongst other actions. Your help also in ensuring the students come to school in full uniform without make-up and jewellery also provide that little bit of extra support.

However, I suspect there are no simple answers and it is a combination of all of the factors mentioned earlier, therefore any longer term solutions will involve continued efforts from staff, parents and students and ultimately an end to COVID restrictions, though that may be some time away still.

As always, my update is in two parts: new information and regular reminders.

Part 1 - New Information

Current Situation

To update you on our current situation:

- Since the last update we have had 2 students test positive – both in Year 9.
- Both students were already isolating so no students across any year groups were required to self-isolate.
- So far since 1st September, we have had 31 of the school community test positive for COVID19.
- We currently have 36 students still 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.

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

- Our current attendance has increased to 94% across the whole school and 85% once students self-isolating are included (under government regulations, students in self-isolation are coded X and do not count as absences).

Safeguarding Reporting

I was reminded this week that it has been some time since I reminded parents that anyone in our community who has safeguarding concerns can report them in a variety of ways:

- Sharpe System and APP (this can be anonymous) which can be accessed and downloaded here: <https://delasalle.thesharpsystem.com/> (a link to this is also available from the menu on our school website) or the app store.
- You can also reach any member of the safeguarding team by emailing: safeguarding@delasalleschool.org.uk
- Obviously all of our other forms of communication are also available e.g. pastoral teams, reception etc.

Previously Looked After Children

We have very accurate records of all of our students who are currently classed as being Looked After. However, we are aware there may be students who were Previously Looked After either in primary school or at pre-school age. We are keen to support these students and families so if you believe your child should be supported as a Previously Looked After Child, then please contact Mrs De'Ath: deatha@delasalleschool.org.uk

Part 2 - 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 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>

Further Information

The guidance for schools: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november->

[2020?utm_source=5%20November%202020%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm_source=5%20November%202020%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19)

There is also a **guide for parents** (though at the time of writing this was still waiting to be updated): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm_source=30%20October%202020%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19

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

A big well done to our Year 11 students who completed their mocks last week. We have very high expectations of behaviour and effort for these formal exams and our Year 11 students exceeded these across the 2 weeks. So well done to them.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Rannard (Headteacher)