



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

17th December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Weekly Parental Update

I am writing the final update of 2020 slightly earlier this week, as the final day or two of term can easily flash past us. Having just dealt with a positive Year 7 test, I am desperately hoping that we have no more positive tests, as the thought of informing families that they have to self-isolate over Christmas is heart-breaking.

On a more positive note, can I thank all the parents and families who have passed in messages, cards, gifts etc for the staff, and your lovely comments about how the term has gone so far. At the end of a very tiring term, they provide the perfect tonic for us all.

******Just as this was due to be sent, we are seeing mention in some of the media about schools having a staggered opening in January. We have not yet received full details, but will look to confirm any changes to normal arrangements as soon as we have them.******

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 one Year 7 student test positive.
- As a result 16 students have had to self-isolate.
- So far since 1st September, we have had 37 of the school community test positive for COVID19.
- We currently have 32 students in self-isolation and 14 staff absent from school, these are for a variety of reasons: advice from test and trace, family members with symptoms etc.
- Our current attendance (for the year) remains fairly stable at 93% across the whole school and 87% once students self-isolating are included (under government regulations, students in self-isolation are coded X and do not count as absences).

Rapid Testing in Schools

You may have seen in the news recently that from January the government intends to make rapid testing available in all secondary schools for staff and students. Unfortunately, yet not surprisingly, very little detail has been provided for schools on how we will manage this in January – the official guidance consists of not much more than 3 generic paragraphs.

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

I do, however, understand that the intention is to test staff once a week and then to test any close contacts of positive cases (staff and students) every day as an alternative to self-isolation. All testing will be voluntary and those choosing not to be tested can self-isolate instead. I will of course provide you with more information if we ever receive it.

Stranger Danger

We have been alerted by the local authority of incidents in St Helens where young people have been approached by strangers. Can we take this opportunity to remind families and students to ensure they avoid putting themselves at risk of stranger danger and to be safe in the community.

Standards

I realise we haven't even started the Christmas holidays yet, but over the holidays, Mr Hale will be writing to all parents to remind them of the standards we expect with students e.g. uniform, jewellery etc. If, between various re-incarnations of the Christmas turkey, you could take the time to read that and echo the messages to your child, that would be much appreciated.

End of Term Arrangements

At the end of term, I can confirm that the students will finish, as planned, with a staggered finish on Friday 18th December between 12.10 and 12.30pm.

12.10pm – Year 7 (Mill Brow Exit) and Year 11 (Alder Hey Road)

12.20pm – Year 10 (Alder Hey Road)

12.25pm – Year 9 (Alder Hey Road)

12.30pm – Year 8 (Alder Hey Road)

The usual arrangements apply, that students are free to wait for siblings in Iona House Base and there will be **no buses available at these times** and we will look to clear the school building of staff and students by 1:00pm to allow the cleaners full access.

Term Dates/INSET Days for 2021/22

With news of vaccinations and possible easing of restrictions from Easter onwards, many families may be considering holidays next year. In order to help you avoid accidentally booking holidays during term time, our term dates for the 2021/22 Academic Year can be found here:

<http://www.delasalle.st-helens.sch.uk/school-life/term-dates/>

And our INSET Days have been agreed as follows (students do not attend):

- Wednesday 1st September 2021
- Thursday 2nd September 2021 (students return on Fri 3rd Sept)
- Friday 3rd December 2021
- Tuesday 19th April 2022
- Friday 24th June 2022

LA Newsletter

I been asked to share the Local Authority Newsletter (attached).

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

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>

Further Information

Full updated details of the requirements for schools can be found here:

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/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term?utm_source=1%20December%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/>

And Finally...

Thank you once again for your support this term and for being so vigilant and acting quickly whenever any of our students have shown symptoms. This collective effort has ensured that, so far, the school has had relatively few cases and low levels of self-isolation have been required. For which we are all grateful.

On behalf of the staff and governors, can I wish you and your families a happy and holy Christmas and a more enjoyable New Year than this one!

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Rannard
Headteacher