



12th March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Parental Update: Week ending 12th February

It is great to now have all year groups back in and the school feels alive again. There is no doubting that the falling infections rates, rapid roll out of the vaccines combined with being back at school, improving weather and shorter nights are helping to contribute to a growing sense of optimism for the future. Of course we are not out of the woods yet and it is important that we remain vigilant and continue to observe the restrictions in place.

Part 1 – COVID Related Information

1. Testing

We are now on to the second set of COVID tests for students, and they have been going very well. Students who have undergone the 3 in-school tests will be issued with home testing kits to allow them to continue with their testing up until Easter.

Several parents have asked if a student tests positive do they need to have a confirmatory PCR test and if that is negative can they return to school. The answer to both these questions came from the DfE this week:

If the **test was done in school**:

- Then there is no need to do a confirmatory PCR test and all members of the household should self-isolate. If you did take a PCR test and it was negative the policy remains the same and you must continue to self-isolate.

If the **test was done at home**:

- You do need to take a confirmatory PCR test. The household should self-isolate whilst you await the results. If negative, then this overrides the home test and the student can return to school.

2. Parent and Family Testing

Undertaking regular, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing helps reduce transmission of the virus. Parents and other adults in households with children at school or college, who do not have symptoms, can now access regular, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing. This includes childcare and support bubbles.

Tests are fast, easy and completely free. There are [different ways](#) for a household, childcare or support bubble to collect their test to take at home, twice-weekly:

- through your employer, if they offer testing to employees

- by collecting a home test kit from a local test site – anyone aged 18 or over can collect 2 packs of 7 tests
- by ordering a home test kit online – please do not order online if you can access testing through other routes, this frees up home delivery for those who need it most

If you have any queries about the tests, and you live in England, please call 119 (free from mobiles and landlines). Lines are open every day from 7am to 11pm. Children of primary school age (and below) without symptoms are not being asked to take a test.

Testing is voluntary, but strongly recommended to all who are eligible. Alongside the vaccine, washing hands, wearing face coverings, and maintaining social distancing, rapid testing plays a vital role in reducing transmission rates. Getting into the habit of regular testing as part of our everyday lives will help us all to play our part and do what we can to protect each other.

3. Face Coverings

It is pleasing to see the vast majority of students arriving with their face coverings on every morning. We do have a considerable stock of single use face coverings that we are happy to provide students free of charge.

Sadly, the use of coverings in lessons is lower than we would like, with the majority of older students choosing not to wear face coverings in class. It is strongly recommended that they are worn but not mandatory. We have emphasised the important role they play in keeping students, staff and families safe, however, you may wish to discuss the matter further with your child.

Part 2 – Non-COVID

1. Too Good to Go

I have been asked to share information regarding a scheme called **Too Good To Go**. Essentially it is a scheme that has (a) an environmental focus (b) focus on those experiencing financial difficulty (or those that just like a bargain). It is an APP based service where you can search for a range of retailers (SPAR, Morrisons, Costa etc) who offer packs of food and drink at the end of the day if it hasn't been sold, at greatly reduced prices. Those interested can find more information here:

[Join our Food Waste Movement | Too Good To Go](#)

2. Paracetamol

To comply with new guidance, we will no longer be able to give out paracetamol to students in school. If required, we can contact parents to bring the paracetamol in or parents can bring it in to reception, for a specific condition, to be given to the student for a time limited period. Students should not bring personal stocks of any medication into school.

3. Year 11 GCSEs

Though we are still awaiting additional information and guidance from individual exam boards, our plans for ensuring fair and accurate awarding of GCSEs are now in place. A video explaining the process can be accessed here: <http://www.delasalle.st-helens.sch.uk/parents/year-11-information/>

And finally . . .

Now we are back in school, our attention is moving towards the future. Much work is already underway building upon the intervention and catch-up that we were already

doing. Beyond the immediate, however, we are now drawing up our plans for the future of the school. We are ambitious to continue to drive the improvements across the school and these plans will focus upon the actions we need to take over the next 3 years to make us a school of excellence in all areas.

Your views, of course are a key element of forming these plans, and information from past and future Big Asks, along with other feedback you have provided, plays an important part in helping us decide what changes are needed. I will, of course, keep you updated on these plans as they are developed.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Rannard
Headteacher