



De La Salle
School

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

26th March 2021

Dear Parent / Carer,

Parental Update – Friday 26th March

As we end the penultimate week of the spring term, the school is a hive of activity with staff and students working hard to address the issues caused by the pandemic and look ahead to the opportunities and improvements we can make in the future. We will finish the term by coming together (virtually) as a community through Holy Week.

Today's update is in two parts a) general information and b) information regarding testing including a very short survey we have been asked to conduct for the Local Authority.

Part 1 – General Information

Shortened Day / Year 10 Parental Evening

Just a reminder that Monday 29th will be a shortened day to facilitate the Year 10 Parental Evening. Students will finish at **1.30pm**. Year 10 families should have received separate information regarding the arrangements for their appointments.

School Buses

We are aware there have been some changes in companies providing our school buses and have shared any concerns with Merseytravel, which they are looking into. They have asked us to share the updated bus information with you:
<https://merseytravel.adidocdn.dev/timetables/Bus/De-La-Salle.pdf>

Out of Hours Contact

The development of using TEAMS and Email with students and parents has been one of the positives to come out of the pandemic. However I thought it would be useful to clarify expectations:

- We would encourage students where possible to avoid sending messages before 8am and after 5pm
- Staff are not expected to check or respond to messages outside of school hours (though of course they may choose to.)
- Students should consider using the Sharpe System to raise any issues or concerns they have. The link to this <http://www.delasalle.st-helens.sch.uk/sharp-system/> this is checked regularly by our Safeguarding Team but please be aware this is not monitored 24hrs a day.

Year 8 Options

I have taken the decision to postpone the Year 8 options process for another 12 months as, owing to the impact of the pandemic, I do not believe the students are ready to undertake GCSEs in Year 9. Having battled so hard to justify our previous

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

approach, it has been a difficult decision, but ultimately the needs of the students must come first. I have written out separately to Year 8 parents to explain in detail my decision.

Though no decision is required now, I believe this may well be the case for our current Year 7 next year and even the Year 6 students who will be transferring over to us. I will, of course, ensure those parents are kept up to date.

Free School Meals Payments during Easter break

We have been informed that St Helens Local Authority will be making a £30 payment to families eligible for Free School Meals. Though details have not been confirmed, we expect that the payment will be made through the school, as was the case previously.

Year 11 Prom

As I am sure you will appreciate, we will not be able to hold a Year 11 Prom in the way we would normally do, however, we are keen to ensure that we run some sort of event for the Year 11 students which would take place onsite. Mr Leggett and Mr Hale will be exploring various possibilities and working with Year 11 on this over the coming months. Hopefully this will be able to combine the fun and excitement of a prom without the huge expense for parents!

Forthcoming Events

- Monday 29th March – Year 10 Parents' evening (online). As usual with parental evenings, **all students (yrs 7-11) will have a collapsed day and finish at 1.30pm**
- Thursday 1st April: school finishes for Easter at **3pm**
- Monday 19th April: School re-opens

Part 2 - Testing

Testing Survey

We have been asked by the local authority to collect information on the level of engagement with testing within the school. To do this, could I ask all families to complete the attached survey. It is only 5 questions and will take less than 1 minute to complete. The survey will close on Monday at 3:00pm.

<https://freeonlinesurveys.com/s/9a5Qv9vF>

Testing – Pupils Home Testing

Can we remind parents that testing should continue throughout Easter and school contacted with any positive cases (we do not need to be informed of negative tests).

Test and Trace support payment for parents

Parents and carers of children who have been advised to self-isolate by their education setting or by NHS Test and Trace are now able to apply for a [Test and Trace Support Payment](#) or discretionary payment of £500, if they meet the eligibility criteria. This change is intended to ensure that eligible parents receive financial support if they are unable to attend work due to childcare responsibilities. The eligibility criteria are listed in the link above.

Community Testing

About 1 in 3 people with coronavirus do not have symptoms but can still pass it on to others. Twice weekly symptom-free (rapid lateral flow) testing of people without coronavirus symptoms is important to help stop the virus from spreading and protect your loved ones.

Home testing kits can be collected from the following walk-in sites;

- St Marys Indoor Market, St Helens Town Centre, WA10 1AR - Monday to Friday, 8.30am–6pm and Saturday and Sunday, 10:00am–3:00pm.
- Fairclough Street Car Park, Earlestown, Newton-le-Willows WA12 9QR - open Monday to Friday, 1.30pm to 7:00pm.
- Haydock Park Racecourse, Newton-le-Willows WA12 0HQ – open Monday to Friday, 1.30pm to 7:00pm.

There is no need to make an appointment to collect a home test kit. Do not visit a collection site outside of opening hours, as they could be used to test people with coronavirus symptoms outside of these times. If you are 18 or over you can collect 2 packs of home test kits, each pack contains 7 tests. Secondary Schools and Colleges will continue to provide tests for students to complete twice weekly at home until further notice. All local residents can get tested by attending a [symptom-free testing site for a supervised Covid-19 test](#).

If you have any coronavirus symptoms – a new, continuous cough, a high temperature, or a loss of sense of smell or taste – it's vital that you do not attend a test site and instead book a test online at www.gov.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119.

For more information about testing locally, visit:

<https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-testing/>

And finally...

Work is well underway with the 3 Year Plan and we hope to have more concrete proposals before May half term. Having negotiated the planning for my wife's 50th birthday weekend, the 3 Year Plan seems a breeze.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Rannard
Headteacher