



De La Salle School

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Dear Parent / Carer

Important Message Please Read Rising COVID Rates – Additional Controls

Last week I wrote to inform you that COVID rates in the town and the school were rising rapidly, I am sorry to write to say that this rapid rise has continued. To give you an indication of the scale of the issue in school, we have had considerably more in the 5 weeks of school than the whole of last year:

Timescale	Weeks	Number of Cases
1 st Sept 2020 to 9 th July 2021	47 Weeks	79
1 st Sept 2021 to 4 th Oct 2021	5 Weeks	109*

*64 of these cases have been within the last week.

Sadly, this picture is being mirrored in primary and secondary schools across the borough and it is important that, as a school community, we play our part in trying to reduce rates of infection.

New Controls

This is obviously a major concern for the school and all within our community. It also poses a significant challenge to try to ensure the education of our young people can continue, but in a safe and manageable way. I have met with Public Health Officials again and we have agreed to escalate our in-school controls further. These controls will include:

- **From Thursday 7th October - Compulsory wearing of face coverings** in school for all staff and students (though they may be removed in classrooms). This does not apply to those who are exempt, though I would encourage these students and families to weigh up the risks to health in the current outbreak.
- **Re-introduction of onsite lateral flow testing:** we will be re-opening our onsite testing to help try to identify and isolate positive cases within the school. As always, this applies to students where consent has been provided.
- **Cancellation** of all non-urgent activities including:
 - **Open Evening** (7th Oct – postponed until 21st October)
 - **Year 9 Geography trip** that was planned for 12th October
 - **Whole School Careers Fair** (was planned for 14th October)
 - **All sporting events** involving other schools (though we will continue in-school house events within year groups)

New Symptoms

Many young people are asymptomatic, but there are increasing cases of students displaying symptoms of vomiting and/or diarrhoea. Where this is the case they should stay

off school and follow the NHS advice: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diarrhoea-and-vomiting/>

Testing at Home / Symptoms

If your child does test positive after a symptom free lateral flow test, you **should not** send your child into school. You should also look to book a PCR test for your child to confirm the result. When booking online please state you have been advised by your local council to book the test.

If you suspect your child might have Covid-19 and are displaying any of the below symptoms, no matter how mild they are, you **MUST** book a PCR test to check if they are positive. PCR tests are more accurate than symptom free lateral flow tests which are only designed to be used on those without symptoms.

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- Vomiting or diarrhoea

You can book a PCR test online at www.gov.uk/coronavirus, or by calling 119.

Next Steps

Please help us to help keep everyone safe at school, especially by providing your child with a face covering and explaining the importance of wearing them. I am greatly saddened that we have had to take these steps, and I am very keen to avoid additional, stronger restrictions, such as a return to bubbles or even sending whole year groups home.

Thank you in anticipation of your usual support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Rannard
Headteacher