



De La Salle

Mill Brow, Eccleston, St. Helens,
Merseyside WA10 4QH

Telephone: 01744 20511

Email: delasalle@delasalleschool.org.uk

H

25th October 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

Parental Update 8

And so, the first half term of 2024/25 comes to an end. It has felt both long (8 weeks) but also it has passed so quickly. It has been great to finish it on a high with a wonderful Year 11 Parents' Evening last night and an inspirational visit from the Lasallian Brother Superior General (the worldwide boss) yesterday. This was on top of a week that included, formation for staff and students, National Porridge Day fundraising by our 1719 Society students, flu vaccinations, Year 11 rewards trip to Alton Towers, a wealth of sporting practises and fixtures and a Governors' Personnel Committee.

Ahead we have a week for staff and students to recharge their batteries (unless they are also parents!) before we return for an equally busy second half term running up to Christmas. I hope that, however you spend it, next week is time of enjoyment and fulfilment for you and your family.

Whole School Focus – Toilets

This is a tabloid favourite with regular stories around schools having draconian rules and denying students basic human rights and, understandably, people not involved in schools, thinking it unkind or uncaring for schools to have restrictions on toilet use.

I think it is important to be open and upfront with parents about the challenges we, like many other schools, have with students accessing the toilets. I also think it is important, that we are clear that at no point, ever, do we want to prevent a child, in real need, of accessing the toilets – that applies here, along with almost every other school I know.

However, the reality is that toilets can be the most unregulated spaces in a school. Before we had restrictions, the following could be a daily issue:

- Gatherings of 30 to 40 students in the toilet areas but not using the cubicles
- Up to 6 or 7 students in one cubicle whilst the other cubicles were not being used,
- Vaping or smoking taking place
- Damage and litter / blocking of toilets
- Students truanting alone or in groups
- Students coming down most, if not all lessons to sit in there
- Students arranging to meet up

These are not safe behaviours and the toilets didn't feel like somewhere that our younger students would feel safe to enter – something that they regularly told us, with some students saying they wouldn't go to the toilets in school – obviously that is not something any of us want.

So last year, to address the problems we were facing and to ensure students felt safer, we changed our approach and allowed students full access before and after school and then allocated blocks to different age groups at break and lunchtime. At other times i.e. lessons and lesson changeovers, toilets were not open to students unless they had a toilet pass (based on a medical need) or were genuinely in need of the toilet – in which case the teacher could give them a note. This has worked well over the past 6 months.

To facilitate this, however, requires a high level of staffing at the toilet entrances and, on occasions, staff are held up or unable to be there. When this happened, then very quickly, the problems I mentioned in the bullet points above, immediately start to happen again. This again becomes a safeguarding issue for us.

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

So over half term, we are looking at bringing in a more failsafe approach, by replacing the staff with shutters. These will go on the inner part of the toilets – effectively closing the main block of toilets off, whilst leaving access to radar key toilets at the entrance of the block. This not only saves the heavy staffing commitment but prevents the problem of someone not getting there on duty.

In terms of access to a toilet, this will remain the same as it has been for the past 6 months i.e. full access before and after school, break and lunchtime, and closed at other times except for students with toilet passes or in genuine need, with a note from their teacher. Students will gain access to the radar keys for the toilets via Student Services, in exchange for their phone as a 'deposit' this not only ensures the key is returned but also that students don't have any unnecessary distractions in the toilets. This will also allow us to have more accurate information on who is using the toilets during lesson times which we can share with parents if we have concerns.

Br Armin Visit

Yesterday we had a visit from the Lasallian Brother Superior General, Br Armin, alongside two of his team – Br Chris and Br Joel, and our District Visitor, Br Ben and his deputy, Br Michael. This was a really uplifting morning, with the brothers being given a tour of the school, popping into classes, meeting various student leadership groups: MVP, SVP and 1719 Society. Then the brothers agreed to be interviewed for a live recording of our Peer to Ear podcast, with our form captains and other student leaders as an invited audience. Finally, Br Armin officially opened our multi-faith prayer cabin. All of the brothers were deeply impressed with the staff and students at the school, and asked me to share their thanks to everyone for the work that they do.

Catholic Life at De La Salle (Update attached)

Following feedback from our Parent Forum, our chaplain, Sam, has started to produce a regular update on Catholic life within the school. It is hoped that this will help parents understand the chaplaincy and wider work that is taking place within school, the latest edition is attached with this update.

Homework Club

We will be starting a Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9) homework club after half term. This will take place weekly on a Tuesday from 3pm and will provide a calm space for students to complete any homework or additional studies that they have. The club will be based in the school library.

Easy Fundraising

As a school, we have 269 supporters raising free donations for our school every time they shop online, and you can join in too! Sign up to support us on #easyfundraising and over 8,000 retailers will make a donation on your behalf when you shop with them. All the big names like Sainsbury's, M&S, Argos, Just Eat and many more are ready to donate at no extra cost to you. Every donation will help us! Plus, join today and they could win us a £300 donation:

<https://join.easyfundraising.org.uk/delasalle/13KFGT/s2s/ZdU7Z020/SE878/facebook/>

Waterside Training Open Evening

As you would expect, we have all the main colleges and 6th forms come in to present to our Year 11 students, as they contemplate the next phase of their education. However, for some students an apprenticeship may be appropriate. If any students are interested in Electrical, Mechanical, Multi-skilled or Manufacturing Engineering apprenticeships, then Waterside Training are holding an open evening on Wed 11th Dec between 5 and 7pm. Further details can be found on their website at www.waterside-training.co.uk no appointments are needed.

Well Done Fletcher

It was great to see one of our Year 8 students, Fletcher Moorcroft and 3 of his friends in the local news as they responded to the news of Zoe's Place potentially being homeless. To help raise funds, the lads cycled around Taylor Park for 20km on 20th October. All in all, they managed to raise £300 to support the end-of-life hospice in Liverpool. Well done boys!

Parent Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA)

We are looking to resurrect our PTFA as a tool to providing additional funding opportunities and greater community engagement. The first PTFA meeting of the year will take place 5.30pm Thursday 7th November 2024 in school. At present, there is not really an active PTFA; this is something we would like to rectify. If you feel you could support the PTFA in any way please come along to the meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting but would like to offer your support/ideas for future events speak to Eve Wilcox or Lisa Jackson at the school.

Learn to Ride

One of the things schools are seeing is the large number of students who either cannot ride a bike, or are not confident in riding a bike. For any parents who want to develop their child's bike riding skills, there are 3 free Learn to Ride sessions on the 31st October. The location is Taylor Park St Helens and the sessions are run by Bike Right, free of charge.

If parents would like to sign their child up for this then sessions can be booked via this link: <https://www.bikeright.co.uk/courses/child-group/>

Annie

We are pleased to announce that our Christmas Musical Show will be the well-known and much-loved musical – Annie. The show will take place on **Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th December** (Starting at 6:30pm). Tickets are available at £5 and £3 for concessions.

The rehearsal schedule for those involved is below:

- Monday lunch – Band
- Tuesday lunch – Singers
- Wednesday after school Band (week A)
- Thursday lunch – full cast
- Thursday after school Band and full cast

I was able to witness some of the numbers as students performed them during the Open Evening, and they are brilliant – well worth coming along to.

Forthcoming Events (dates in **bold** indicate a change to normal finish times)

Mon 4th Nov: School re-opens (normal time)

Wed 6th: Parental Meeting for those going on Year 9 Ski Trip

Thu 7th: PTFA Meeting (5:30pm) – All welcome

Mon 11th – Fri 22nd: Assessment Window for Years 7 and 10

Wed 13th: Governors Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee (5:00pm)

Mon 18th – Fri 22nd: Formation Week 3

Tue 19th: Year 10 and 11 Theatre Trip

Thu 21st: Your Future Event (for Years 9, 10 and 11)

Thu 21st: GCSE Presentation Evening (for summer GCSEs)

Tue 26th: Year 11 Apprenticeship show visit

Wed 27th: Year 11 Geography Fieldtrip

Wed 27th: Governors Catholic Life and Culture Committee (5:00pm)

Thu 28th: Year 11 Parental Information Evening

Fri 29th: Anthony Walker Foundation Ambassador training (Year 8)

Wed 4th: Mount Carmel House Mass

Thu 5th: Year 8 Parents' Evening

Fri 6th: INSET DAY: School closed

And finally...Mamma Mia

Next week, Mrs R and I will be heading down to London with friends to experience the Abba Voyage show. I am not really sure what to expect – I have in mind 4 puppets being moved around to Abba songs, but I sense it will be a bit more technical than that.

Anyway, rather than drive, we will be travelling by train and, ever the prudent one, Mrs R has purchased a Two Together railcard to reduce the cost of our tickets. For those who don't know, this is a card, with our photos on, that provides us both with rail discount when travelling together. All good.

However, when Mrs R was purchasing the railcard, she seems to have only done half a job with the photos that she has used. To be fair, hers is a glorious photograph, taken at a recent wedding: her hair and makeup immaculate, the lighting perfect and I swear there was a wind machine gently blowing when it was taken.

However, I am not sure she spent the same amount of time on my photo, nor where she got it from. It looks like one taken of a nosy neighbour, close up, eyeballing a Ring Doorbell. Anyone looking at would say 'Mamma Mia!' as you feel like you need to step back a bit, I am that close to the camera!

Have a good half term break,

Andrew Rannard
Headteacher

Catholic Life at De La Salle



29th Week of Ordinary Time



SOME OF OUR 1719 WITH NEW FRIENDS IN ST CASSIAN'S

Thursday 17th - Sunday 20th October was spent in St Cassian's with Lasallian students, staff, and family to celebrate 50 years of Kintbury retreats! It was an incredible opportunity for our 1719 students who not only met Br Armin, but spent their retreat with him! There's no better place than a full St Cassian's to find out more about our Lasallian mission and the role we each play in maintaining it!

This week

This week was Formation Week again! Each month we spend a week running workshops and sessions to help staff and students in school to connect to their part and role within the Lasallian mission.

If we play around with the word 'formation' we can eventually get to a phrase that sounds just like it, which is 'forming for mission'.

Our ministry to the young people in our care is to try our best to reach their hearts. Our founder is clear in his message that touching hearts is how we see miracles happen in the world.

Formation Week means that all of the sessions we offer happen within a one week window, so as a community, we're being reminded, nourished and supported through our mission at the same time as each other, which we think is quite special.

One of our favourite sessions from the week was our Form Captain Formation! All Form Captains were gathered in their Key Stage and we had a real and honest conversation about the Prayer and Liturgy provision here in school. Luckily for us, the areas our students had pointed out, we were already working on so after half-term we will see a new format to our daily prayer life!

Form Captains have also been added to our Prayer and Liturgy rota and will join us in leading a year group through their first week of Advent!

Formation was put on pause on Thursday as we had a very special visit from the worldwide Lasallian family!

Lasallian Visit

Since Thursday 17th October, we've been nourished with Lasallian spirit by the bucket-load! Of course, our Lasallian faith is always at the heart of everything we do...but there is nothing quite like being surrounded by Lasallians from all over the world to really remind you that you are part of something much bigger!

We have found that through our visit to St Cassian's and hosting Brother (Br) Armin, Br Joel, Br Chris, Br Ben and Br Michael, our students have had their sense of mission ignited and we cannot wait to see where it leads them!

A particular highlight of ours this week was the live recording of our Peer-to-Ear podcast with the brothers joining us on the sofa!

Peer-to-Ear is a podcast designed by young people for young people. Our students take the lead on this project, planning, producing, recording and editing their episodes...before it of course goes through to final edit where it is listened to by staff and approved for publishing! Students use this platform to approach topics that mean a lot to them, from being servant leaders, to discussing racism...we always view our topics with love, compassion and consideration for those who may hear it.

Prayer Cabin

During our visit on Thursday, we had an official opening of our new prayer space in school. We know that we are an inclusive community and we are enriched by diversity...each person deserves to have a safe space to worship their God and so the prayer cabin was installed earlier this year to offer just that for all students!

Our Next Theme

When we get back to school after our half-term break we will be in the 31st week of Ordinary Time. The theme of our prayer and liturgy will be; **You are not far from the Kingdom of God** as we mark Remembrance. The History department will be leading us in our weekly Prayer and Liturgy, and we will be exploring the words from **Mark 12:28-34**.

Coming up in Catholic Life

Next half term we will launch several trips running through Catholic Life!

We're holding our first Catholic Life Conference! Respect Conference: Youth29 focusing our lens on Climate Change.

Student Spotlight

A member of our 1719 who attended St Cassian's has drafted a wonderful letter explaining his experience, please find our favourite line below:

We got to see the beauty of young Lasallians, the beauty of ourselves and the beauty of humanity without the worry of being judged.

Pray for us...

Loving Father, we place our trust in you. Please guide and protect us as we live hopefully in your presence. You knew us before we were born, you know the plans you have for us. May we be courageous enough to hear your call and follow it to help the brothers and sisters in our global family.

Catholic Life team