



17th January 2025

Dear Parent / Carer,

Parental Update 15

A sombre week this week, as we heard the news that one of our staff, Mrs Potter, sadly lost her long battle with illness and passed away at the weekend. Mrs Potter, was a truly, kind, caring, generous and wonderful person – she epitomised what it means to be a Lasallian. She will be greatly missed by us all and we keep her young family in our thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.

Elsewhere in school it felt a much more settled week, after last week's disruption due to snow. Our Year 11 mock exams started and our Year 9 assessment window opened. We have also had a Safeguarding Review, hosted the termly meeting of our new Laetare CMAT Directors, held a Shakespeare School Workshop and managed to get in several sports fixtures, despite the cold weather.

Looking ahead to next week – the Year 11 mocks and Year 9 assessments continue, it is formation week, we have a HAP study skills workshop and 46 of our Year 9 students head off to Andorra for the annual ski trip – we wish them a safe and enjoyable time.

Whole School Focus – Attendance Vs Achievement (please read!)

I know you will have had more than your fair share of reminders about attendance since the start of the term. I also know there may be some parents who think we push attendance just to make the school look good in some league table or for our own reasons – even to the point of thinking we fine parents to make the money off them (which of course we don't – we don't issue the fines, nor do we get the money!)

The main reason that we push for students to have high levels of attendance is for the students themselves. As well as the wider socialisation and holistic development that being in school can bring, good attendance has a very stark and direct impact upon student achievement and progress.

The figures below are from last year's Year 11 and our analysis of results, in particular by levels of attendance. I am comparing those with 97% attendance (what we would class as good or excellent attendance and is just over ¼ of the Year group last year) and those with 90% or below (which is classed as persistently absent and is also about ¼ of the year group last year).

	97%+	90% and below	National Avg	Explained
Attainment (Avg GCSE grade)	5.3	3.3	4.6	Those students with 97%+ achieved 2 grades higher on average than those with 90% or below and almost ¾ of a grade higher than students nationally.

Now you may be thinking “*well those high attendance students are the nice shiny clever ones*”, but if we look at the progress of students, this measures how far they have moved on from their starting point joining the school, so is a fairer measure regardless of prior ability, it is a similar picture.

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

	97%+	90% and below	National Avg	Explained
Progress	0.22	-1.15	0	Those students with 97%+ attendance a made almost a 1/4 of a grade more progress in our school than students nationally. Whilst those with 90% or below made over 1 grade less progress in our school than other students nationally.

I hope this illustrates the importance of regular high attendance on student outcomes. Students who attend our school regularly do very well, those that don't, do far less well.

Sport Results

In our fixtures this week:

- Y7 beat Merchant Taylors on penalties after a 2-2 draw (MoM: Lucas) in the Merseyside Cup
- Y7&8 Girls beat St Edwards 5v0 (PoM: Isla W & Erin J) in the National Cup

Looking ahead to next week, as well as our usual extra-curricular activity, we have:

- Tuesday: Y8 Football vs Cowley (A)
- Wednesday: Y8 Rugby CVL Cowley
- Thursday: Y7 Rugby CVL at Cowley

Sports Clubs

There are a limited number of places that have arisen for the following clubs: **Table Tennis** (Mondays after school) and **Judo** (Wednesdays after school). If your child would like to take the opportunity to sign-up and can commit to attending most weeks, please e-mail Mr Metcalf to sign your child up. Students in all years are welcome and there is no cost to either club. Clubs are funded until Easter. Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Trainers & Boots

If any families are having a post-Christmas sort-out and getting rid of trainers or boots, the PE department would welcome any donations of any footwear that no longer fits.

Year 11 Mock Interviews Information

The Year 11 Mock Interviews will take place in school between **3.30pm – 5.30pm on Wednesday 29th and Thursday 30th January 2025**. Students must wear school uniform and arrive at the main hall 10 minutes prior to their allocated interview time. The interviews need to take place after school to ensure we have enough volunteers for every year 11 student to be able to access this opportunity, our interviewers have kindly given their time around their work commitments. A very small cohort of students, including those students working towards Asdan Award, will have their mock interview during the school day on an alternative date.

Students will be given 1 weeks' notice of their exact interview date and time. Interview schedules will be displayed in form rooms, Student Services, outside the Year 11 Office and the Careers Room.

Safeguarding Review

Yesterday we had a Safeguarding Review of our school practices and culture – something our new CMAT has arranged for all the schools. It was by far the most rigorous review of Safeguarding that I have ever experienced – far more challenging than Ofsted. The review included evaluation of our systems, practices and process; accuracy and detail of our record keeping and checks; involvement of governors; alongside staff and student surveys (involving over 500 staff and students) and interviews with staff and students.

Though we await the final report, the verbal feedback was incredibly positive and recognised “a very strong culture of safeguarding across the school”. There were also some very helpful suggestions as we transition away from LA policies and procedures into new CMAT systems.

Laetare Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (CMAT) Updates

This week we hosted the termly meeting of our CMAT Directors and this was followed in the afternoon by the meeting of the Headteachers, CEO and CFO. Though we remain the only school actually in the CMAT, the other schools are now well advanced in their planned entry across the next 10 months. Plans are also now underway to advertise the permanent CEO position that Andy Bridson is currently continuing to undertake.

Though so far, it has involved very minimal change within school, we will start to see more change as we reach the end of the financial year (Mar/Apr) as our existing contracts and service level agreements for things such as payroll, HR, legal support etc come to an end and the new CMAT contracts begin. I will, of course, keep you updated on any that may affect parents.

St Helens Choir (message from Music Service)

We are delighted to inform you that St Helens Council Music Service is launching a new choir, *Vocal Youth*, on Monday, 27th January. This exciting new group is open to children and young people aged 8 and over, with rehearsals taking place fortnightly at St Helens Town Hall. The choir is fully funded by the Music Service and we warmly invite any child interested in singing and performing in concerts to join us.

The attached poster includes all the details about *Vocal Youth* and we would love to see children and young people from all across the Borough involved.

Term Dates (repeated item for info)

This is the time of the year that many families start to look at booking their holidays. Obviously, we are keen that students are not taken out of school for holidays. So, to help avoid this, I have provided our term dates for the rest of this year.

Please note that by having 21st and 22nd of July as Training days, this provides families with the opportunity to start any holidays from afternoon of Friday 18th July onwards, and potentially cheaper flights and offers.

Spring term

- School closes for pupils - Thursday 13th February
- **Staff Training Day - Friday 14th February**
- Re-opens - Monday 24th February
- School closes - Friday 4th April

Summer Term 2025

- Re-opens - Tuesday 22nd April
- **Bank Holiday - Monday 5th May**
- School closes - Friday 23rd May
- Re-opens - Monday 2nd June
- **Staff Training Day - Friday 27th June**
- School closes for pupils - Friday 18th July (12.10pm)
- **Staff Training Day - Monday 21st July**
- **Staff Training Day - Tuesday 22nd July**

Upcoming Events

Mon 13th – Fri 24th: Year 11 mock exams
Mon 13th – Fri 24th: Year 9 Assessment window
Sun 19th – sat 25th: Year 9 Ski Trip
Thu 23rd: Year 10 HAP Study Skills Workshop
Mon 27th – Wed 5th (Feb): Year 10 Retreat
Tue 28th: KS3 Writer’s Workshop

Wed 29th: Governors Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee (5pm)

Feb

Fri 7th: Year 10 travel and Tourism trip

Wed 12th: Governors' Catholic Life and Culture Committee (5pm)

Fri 14th: INSET Day (students do not attend)

Half Term

And finally...Can you have an anti-midlife crisis?

Throughout most of my life I have been actively involved in sport, in particular playing football right through to my late 40s. Of course, all of that activity catches up on you at some point: I have a damaged coccyx, left knee issues, both ankles hurt in cold weather and I have had a hip replacement.

For the past few years, I have tried to ignore these various aches and pains, hobbling around, getting up gingerly from seats etc. Now, however, I have decided to embrace my ageing issues – what I guess is the opposite of a mid-life crisis. My first investment has been a couple of special cushions for my office chair which have made a world of difference. I can now get up out of my seat in one go, rather than in painful instalments.

Even with the cushions though, sitting for lengthy periods is still painful, so I have also now invested in a spring-loaded unit that allows me to work standing up. Again, this has made a positive difference with the only downside being that to anyone passing and looking through my door window, it looks like I am about to deliver a TED talk/ lecture from my podium.

Mrs R was not happy at this additional expense from the family coffers but her point was kind of lost when a delivery of wall panelling, she had ordered, turned up, costing more than my cushions and standing desk. Though apparently, she said this expenditure was essential maintenance – I argued so was mine!

Have a good weekend,

Andrew Rannard

Headteacher

Catholic Life at De La Salle



1st Week of Ordinary Time



SVP YOUTH STUDENTS AT THE PENSIONERS' PARTY 2024

After a disjointed week last week it has been nice to have our first full week back! We have plenty of plans underway for exciting experiences for students to explore their faith! We spend a lot of time in Catholic Life speaking to our students and getting ideas of different ways that they would like to be involved in the spiritual formation we have to offer.

HOPE '24

We want to express our deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to our HOPE '24 campaign. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our families and the hugely kind donations from SVP, we raised an amazing £3,000 to use during the Christmas period. Your support made it possible for us to bring joy, comfort, and hope to so many during this special time of year. Thank you for making a difference and showing the true spirit of community and kindness!

We were able to send £1,400 to Mary's Meals which will make a difference to the lives of children across the world.

Remembering Mrs. Potter

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Mrs. Potter, a beloved member of our school community, who lost her courageous battle with illness last week. Mrs. Potter was a bright, joyous presence in our school, bringing warmth and positivity to everyone she met. Her kindness, dedication, and cheerful spirit touched the lives of so many, and she will be deeply missed by students, staff, and families alike.

We are remembering Mrs. Potter in a special way in Chapel, where students and staff can take a moment to reflect and honor her memory. We kindly ask our school community to keep Mrs. Potter and her family in their thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. Her legacy of joy and love will remain in our community.

Year 8 Retreats

Our Year 8 retreats last week were a fantastic opportunity for students to come together, reflect, and grow in faith. However, the poor weather caused some interruptions, meaning that form classes 8B, 8D, 8L, and 8S were unable to complete the second part of their retreat. We're happy to share that we're already working on finding a new date for these groups to continue their retreat experience soon. Thank you for your understanding, and we look forward to seeing these form classes complete their journey together!

Introducing Matt

We're excited to introduce Matt, who is joining us for work experience! Matt has a big dream of becoming a youth pastor, and he's spending time with us to learn more about the spiritual lives of young people today. During his time here, Matt will be getting involved in various activities, listening to students, and gaining insight into how faith can play a meaningful role in young people's lives. We're looking forward to seeing the energy and passion Matt brings to our school community—we're sure there will be plenty more updates regarding his time with us!

Coming Up...

We have a whole host of events and activities in the works. ParentMails will be coming out shortly with more information. This term we're looking forward with great excitement for our Catholic Life events including; DLS Choice Awards (Feb), FLAME (March), and our Scotland Pilgrimage to Carfin (March).

Our Next Theme

Next week is the second week of Ordinary Time. At this time of year we use the colour green within our displays and materials produced for times of prayer and liturgy. This colour is symbolic of growth and freshness. We use green to represent that our understanding of scripture, and our hope is always new, developing and fresh within our community.

The theme of our prayer and liturgy will be; **It's a Jubilee!** The theme celebrates the special significance of 2025 as the Year of Jubilee, a sacred time of renewal, restoration, and rejoicing in the Church. Rooted in biblical tradition, Jubilee is a moment to reflect on God's mercy, reset our relationships, and seek justice and peace in our lives and communities. It reminds us of the call to free ourselves from what burdens us, reconcile with one another, and care for the most vulnerable among us. Just as Jubilee is a time of liberation and new beginnings, "It's a Jubilee" inspires us to create a world where forgiveness, generosity, and hope take center stage

Formation Week

- Next week we have January Formation Week. As always, students from across the school will be welcomed into Chapel to take part in a workshop together.

Student Spotlight

The Student Spotlight is a key feature of our Catholic Life newsletter because it allows us to celebrate the amazing contributions, talents, and acts of kindness that our students bring to our school community. By highlighting individual achievements, whether in faith, service, or personal growth, we show how young people are living out the Lasallian values and making a difference in the world around them. The Student Spotlight reflects our belief that every student has a unique role in building a compassionate and faith-filled community.

Pray for us...

Loving Father,
through the baptism of Your Son,
You opened the heavens and
revealed Your love. May we walk
as Your beloved children, guided
by the light of Christ. Amen.

Catholic Life team



St Helens

Supported using public funding by
Department for Education
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Vocal Youth

Do you
love to sing?

Join our brand-new choir and

unleash your voice!



Launches

**Monday
27th
January**

Be part of an amazing group of children and young people from all across the Borough. Together, we'll harmonize, create incredible music, and perform in unforgettable concerts!

Ages 8+ | Rehearsals every 2 weeks in term time
Mondays 6:15pm till 7:30pm @ St Helens Town Hall

SCAN
to sign up



select **Vocal Youth**
for Ensemble Name

CAREERS NEWSLETTER



This newsletter is a collation of all the opportunities we have heard about from employers and universities. Please use the links included to read more information and apply to anything you are interested in. Links are underlined.

OPPORTUNITIES



Apprenticeship Insights - Hosted by BAE Systems is an online webinar taking place on 10th Feb at 530pm. You can gain find out about the amazing apprenticeship opportunities on offer. You can look forward to talks about our careers, interactive Q&A sessions, and the chance to meet current apprentices. They suggest that you come prepared with all of your best questions to make the most of the session.

The XMaS Scientist Experience is a nationwide opportunity for any female/female-identifying Year 12 UK Physics students to join us on an all-expenses-paid 4-day trip to the ESRF in Grenoble, France, at the end of June/beginning of July. Our aim is to encourage students to consider science careers, foster a sense of community, encourage self-belief. We don't need applicants to already excel at physics, but we do want students who are curious about the world around them, who are creative and keen to learn more about science and who are willing to share their enthusiasm. Deadline for Submission: Midnight on 27th February 2025. If you're not in Year 12 yet but this is of interest - remember it for the future! It is an AMAZING opportunity.



With the rise of AI and Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) in recruitment, ensuring you have an ATS friendly CV is essential for landing that interview. Many employers, including those in the charity sector, now rely on automated systems to filter through applications. To ensure you make it past the initial screening, follow these crucial tips on optimising your CV.



In this virtual Sociology session taking place on January 20 @ 11:10 - 11:55, Dr Pamela Odih from the Department of Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London will run an interactive talk for students on Race, Racism and Leisure - Black Youth Culture in Urban Spaces.

JOB OF THE WEEK



Astronomer

An astronomer is a scientist who studies the universe and the objects within it. They use equipment like telescopes and cameras to observe astronomical objects, such as stars, planets, moons, comets, and galaxies.

Watch the video to learn more about how much you could earn, working hours and pathways into the industry.

LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION FACT

Did you know that the average national salary in the UK is £40,311? Or that there are 747,106 current vacancies in the UK?

You can check these statistics any time using the Adzuna website! They update these statistics every week so you know you're getting the most up to date information available.

If you have any questions or need support, please contact moranh@delasalleschool.org.uk

CAREERS NEWSLETTER



OPPORTUNITIES



Join the University of Liverpool as they guide you through applying to university via UCAS, including key dates and top tips on how to make an effective application. This is part of an ongoing webinar series where the University of Liverpool offer free webinars to help you understand every element of the university application process. 23 January 2025 at 6pm.



If you are interested in art, design, media and architecture courses, join the University of Brighton to find out how to create a portfolio that will get you noticed and set you apart from other applicants. 29th January or 11th February at 5pm.



"If you're looking for a role with excitement, intrigue and something that really makes a difference then now is the time to join AWE. We are at the start of a once in a generation – possibly two generations – programme to design and produce a replacement warhead for the UK's continuous at sea deterrent. We will do this while continuing to deliver the Trident programme as well as managing ambitious state-of-the-art capital and construction projects – some of which have never been done before." Check out their current roles here.



"A 4 day residential held at the University of Reading for students to learn more about the vast range of careers available within the Real Estate industry and the different routes into them." If you'd like to do a Summer School with a University but Reading isn't the right institution for you, just search the name of the university you're interested in followed by "summer school" to find more information on what they offer. Many universities offer summer schools but often they are for specific year groups.



You may have heard the term "gender pay gap". This refers to the difference between what men and women are paid for the same job role. A new report has researched this topic to see what impact this is currently having. For example, "women are 36% more likely to be providing unpaid care than men, and are more likely to take a career break or a part-time role to fit around the children."

EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT

"We are at the forefront of nuclear technology and innovation – always delivering to keep our nation safe and secure. our workforce is 7,000-strong and brings together globally respected and exceptional professionals. We have been named as one of the top Best Big Companies to work for in the Sunday Times Best Companies Awards." Read more about AWE Careers here.

UNI SPOTLIGHT

"The University of Reading has been at the forefront of UK higher education for nearly a century. Over the decades we have become innovators and pioneers, pushing academic boundaries and leading social change. We strive to create a stronger, better University, building on our past to create an exceptional future." Read more about The University of Reading here.

If you have any questions or need support, please contact moranh@delasalleschool.org.uk