



De La Salle  
School

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

Telephone: 01744 20511

Email: [delasalle@delasalleschool.org.uk](mailto:delasalle@delasalleschool.org.uk)

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

21<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Dear Parent / Carer,

### Parental Update 23

After the previous week of being out at a range of meetings and conferences, it was lovely to be in school most of this week (CEO interviews aside). What a beautiful week this week was, it even saw me break the skipping ropes out at lunchtime! Elsewhere, we had trips to see Blood Brothers, Visit Aspire Liverpool and one going today up to Carfin in Glasgow. We also have our DofE taking place over the weekend. All this, along with the usual practices, rehearsals and events.

Next week, we have our community Lenten Service (see flyer and invite), the termly meeting of the local governing board, a 'walk to the peripheries' retreat and a careers visit, as well as all the usual rehearsals and practices.

With today's update there is:

- Weekly Careers newsletter
- Chaplaincy newsletter (issue 15)
- Invitation to:
  - Quiz Night
  - Afternoon Tea
  - Lenten Service

### Whole School Focus – COVID: Year 11 Reflecting on the Impact

It is 5 years ago this week since COVID led to the national lockdown – a period of great disruption to all aspects of life and particularly for our young people. I think it is easy to think that this is all now in the past, but those working in education are very aware that the legacy lives on. So I wanted to share a small case study of the legacy impact for our Year 11 students (who joined us as Year 7 in September 2020). I want to be really clear that none of this below is about 'blaming' anyone, it is me reflecting back on the impact the pandemic had on a specific year group.

The pandemic came at a crucial time for this cohort of students and I don't think we fully understood the impact this had on the year group. Yes of course we worked hard to replace in-person events with online events, we worked hard to make them feel welcomed and to try to help them settle in, but there is no doubt they missed key experiences in that first year – most of which was spent in bubbles and isolated from others.

The most obvious impact of this was low attendance. Pre-Covid we would expect a Year 7 attendance of about 97% across the year. Post-COVID we saw a considerable drop in attendance across the country but for that year group they were at 90.3% - well below the other years. Much of this will have been linked to self-isolation and testing, but this set a pattern that was to continue and lead to even lower attendance:

- By the end of their Year 8: 88.6% (lower than all the other year group)
- By Year 9, their attendance improved slightly but was still trailing 2% below the school average

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

- This pattern continued into Year 10 and now into Year 11 (it is currently more than 3% below the school average and that rises to almost 6% below for Pupil Premium students).

The second impact was behaviour. Again, this year group regularly received higher than would be expected behaviour points, suspensions and detentions. Combined with this was a significant increase in students refusing to go to lessons.

It was only natural that, with all of these factors at play, the third impact has been on their progress and development. This was less obvious in Key stage 3, but has become much starker as they progressed into Year 10 and now into Year 11. We were reporting to governors that, after several years of rising grades, we would see significant fall with this year group. This is compounded further by the high number of students, for mental health and other reasons, not sitting a full suite of exams:

- in 2019 we had 1 child sitting fewer than 7 GCSEs,
- post-COVID it averaged about 13 students per year
- for the current Year 11 it is likely to be 20+

Looking back, I obviously question did we do enough, had we done our best to try and address the issues. To an extent I think we did: we increased the amount of pastoral support, especially for the most vulnerable, we changed systems and approaches to improve attendance, we used that year group to trial the current C-System. For their time in Year 10 and 11 they have also had much greater access to additional sessions and interventions.

At the same time, I reflect that we could have done more. Certainly, whilst they were in their earlier years – we, like a lot of schools, were in new territory: optimistic maybe, that any impact would be short lived, but also tackling ever changing guidance: track and trace testing and isolation rules. Initially our resources of pastoral support weren't set up for the much greater challenges post-COVID.

Finally, I wonder did we place too much emphasis on the older students rather than the younger ones? Yes, I think we probably did however, we have, throughout this academic year, directed almost all of our attention and support at them to try to reduce any impact of the pandemic and help them move on to become positive citizens of our community.

As I said at the start, this is just an honest reflection; our Year 11s have probably suffered the most of any year group as a result of COVID, but they are a wonderful group of funny, caring, compassionate, intelligent and interesting young people. Indeed, the 1719 Society this year has been one of the best we have ever had. Despite the challenges they have faced, most will achieve great things this summer and go on to placements, colleges and apprenticeships.

### 3 Invitations

Alongside today's update, there are 3 invitations to parents. 2 of these are fundraising events and 1 for a service in school. They are:

- **DLS Quiz Night on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May 7pm start (adult only / bar open)**
- **Founder's Day Afternoon Tea on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2pm start**
- **Lenten Service on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 6pm start**

It would be wonderful if parents could support any of these events. Booking details are on the attached flyers.

### Laetare CMAT Updates

The interviews took place this week, with a very strong field of candidates and I understand that an appointment was made on Wednesday. I will share this with you once the formalities have been completed and the appointment confirmed.

We also had our half termly Leadership Group meeting (of the Headteachers, CFO and CEO). This took place at St Edwards and we were able to discuss a range of matters including school

improvement opportunities, agreeing our HR support and discussing potential staffing opportunities.

## **Sporting Updates**

Another busy week of fixtures and practices this week, but commiserations to our U14 girl footballers who lost out 3-2 in a tight Town Cup semi-final, POM: Spark. Our U13 girls missed out on a place in round 5 of the national cup last week. Drawing 4-4 with Ilkley Grammar, they lost 5-4 in extra time: POM Phoebe with 4 goals.

Our Year 9 boys took part in the CVL tournament. Our Year 8 Sport Coaching Leaders hosted a Year 1 and 2 multi-skill festival involving all of our local primary schools – who were very complimentary about our students.

Congratulations to Callum Holmes and Jacob Davies on an outstanding performance on Wednesday night, representing Wigan Scholarship against Saints Scholarship in the opening match of the season. A special mention to Callum on an impressive debut and to Jacob for an exceptional display, scoring four tries to help secure a well-earned 34-16 victory.

## **Year 9 Options Process**

As I mentioned last week, there have been some technical issues with Options Online due to our URN changing when we academised. We have extended the completion date until Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March. Nearly all students have managed to complete their option choices in school, but we are now awaiting parental approval.

Please try to access Options online but, if you are unable to do so, please send an email of your approved choices to [open@delasalleschool.org.uk](mailto:open@delasalleschool.org.uk) we will then be able to approve in school. No child will be disadvantaged by the issues we have had with the system.

## **Holiday Activity and Food Programme**

The Easter Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF) will be running from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025 to Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April for all eligible children, young people and families. The activity bookings links will go live on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March at 2.00pm for families to book their Easter activities. Please note that activity places are subject to availability.

The LA would like to ensure that as many eligible families take this offer up over the Easter to remove some of the financial burden to families who are already on the brink. Please see below the link to the HAF webpage with all of the information about the Easter programme.

<https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/4060/Holiday-activities-and-food-programme>

## **Bus Time Changes – 754 Morning Service**

A reminder that this service will operate 10 minutes earlier (arriving at De La Salle approx. 0803), effective from **Monday 24 March 2025**. Details of the new timetable can be found here: <https://www.stagecoachbus.com/service-updates/serviceupdatesarticle?SituationId=ID-20/03/2025-22:25:42:323>

## **Ofsted consultation (repeated item)**

Just a reminder from last week that Ofsted have put forward changes to the inspection framework. These proposed changes are currently under consultation, with Ofsted seeking feedback from parents, carers, professionals, and learners to refine and improve the inspection process. I would urge parents to engage with this consultation which can be done here: [Improving the way Ofsted inspects education - GOV.UK](#)

## **Year 7 Admissions (repeated item)**

The Year 6 into 7 school place allocations have now gone out, and I hope all those Year 6 families got the schools they wanted. This year and next couple of years sees a drop in the school

population across the borough (about 10% drop). As a result, we have a small number of places still available if you know of anyone that hasn't been allocated an appropriate school, they can contact Mr Hale on [halep@delasalleschool.org.uk](mailto:halep@delasalleschool.org.uk)

### **Lateness (repeated item)**

A reminder that since half term, that the **registers close at 9am and anyone arriving after 9 will get an unauthorised absence**. Previously they closed at 9.30 but this change brings us in line with national guidance.

### **Upcoming Events**

Wed 26<sup>th</sup>: Experience of the Workplace EV (yrs 8 and 9)

Wed 26<sup>th</sup>: Local Governing Board Meeting (5pm)

Mon 31<sup>st</sup> – Fri 4<sup>th</sup>: Big Lent Walk

Mon 31<sup>st</sup> – Fri 4<sup>th</sup>: Shakespeare's Italy EV (yr 10)

### **APRIL**

Tue 1<sup>st</sup> – Thu 3<sup>rd</sup>: Yr 8 Careers Insight Days

Thu 3<sup>rd</sup>: Peripatetic Music Concert

Fri 4<sup>th</sup>: School finishes for Easter (3pm)

### **And finally...The Queen's Birthday**

I think the world is divided into 2 groups: those who make a big thing of their birthday and those that don't. I am firmly in the latter category (so much so I couldn't remember how old I was when asked the other day – which was quite embarrassing). However, Mrs R is very much in the former group.

This week, on Wednesday, was indeed Mrs R's birthday, which she likes to celebrate across a whole week (or more if a big birthday). On my birthday, my 4 cards will sit in a pile ready for the recycling, next to the pair of socks the lads have bought me and the meal voucher Mrs R has got me to an expensive restaurant that she wants to visit. However, Mrs R likes to create what is almost an art installation of all her cards, arranged in some sort of order, alongside all the presents she has received from family, friends, pupils and staff at her school.

Last year, my apathy towards birthdays meant I actually forgot it was her birthday and so no card or present. I am sure you can appreciate how understanding Mrs R was of this. So this year, I couldn't let that happen again – except I almost did. I was driving home about 6pm Tuesday evening after the CEO interviews when I suddenly realised I hadn't got her anything. Fortunately, after a moment of panic, I saw a large Tesco Extra (other supermarkets are available) ahead. Phew! 30 mins later I had a nice card, bottle of Kylie's pink wine, a nice spa set and box of Ferrero Rocher – all in a lovely gift bag with pink tissue paper – I even impressed myself!

So next morning I handed these gifts over to Mrs R, with breakfast in bed, ready to bask in the warm glow of success – when she seemed quite surprised that I had got these gifts. It turns out, I had forgotten the expensive face mask machine and a Ninja blender I had bought the month before which she thought were her presents. Brownie points galore!

Have a good weekend.

**Andrew Rannard**

Headteacher

# CAREERS NEWSLETTER



 Listen to this 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

This week is Neurodiversity Celebration Week. Depending on how our brains are wired we think, move, process information and communicate in different ways. Many people in our community use neurodiversity as an umbrella term used to describe alternative thinking styles such as Dyslexia, DCD (Dyspraxia), Dyscalculia, Autism and ADHD. But regardless of labels, neurodiversity is about recognising those who think differently.

Approximately 15-20% of the population has a neurological difference. Instead of labelling people with deficits or disorders, when we use the term neurodiversity, we take a balanced view of an individual's unique strengths and challenges.



You can use this resource library to learn about different types of neurodiversity. The resources include employer guides, celebrity case studies and activities such as colouring sheets.



This year, there are more events and panel discussions than ever before, with inspirational speakers from a range of backgrounds and professions. The discussions will all be focussing on key neurodiversity topics, and aim to educate while inspiring conversations about neurodiversity.



If you can't make the times of the events, you can register to gain access to the events library. The 2024 recordings are currently listed and the 2025 ones will be added at the end of the week.



Green Careers with the Royal Agricultural Society's 'New Shoots'; This programme aims to introduce young people to the variety of careers available in the horticultural sector. Find out more about what it is like to work in areas including viticulture, creative and social media, landscape architecture, writing and editing, plant genetics, ecology, botanical art and many more. Careers in this sector, as with so many sectors, include people with specialisms in many different skills.

If you have any questions or need support, please contact [moranh@delasalleschool.org.uk](mailto:moranh@delasalleschool.org.uk)

## JOB OF THE WEEK



Arborist

An arborist, also known as an arboriculturist or tree surgeon, is a professional who manages and cares for trees. They are experts in the cultivation and study of trees, shrubs, and other woody plants.

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

## LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION FACT

According to recent data, the UK has seen a significant rise in green jobs, with over 270,000 green jobs reported in 2022, representing a 29% increase compared to 2015 levels; this growth is largely attributed to the expansion of low-carbon and renewable energy industries.


Source

# CAREERS NEWSLETTER





## OPPORTUNITIES

 Oxford Brookes [Virtual Subject Taster Sessions](#) are designed for an interactive exploration of a broad range of subjects. Have a go at filming a stop motion animation, explore dystopian themes in literature, or use a virtual lab to explore the human anatomy. The subjects on offer are: Art, Film, Digital Media and Photography, Built Environment, Business, English, Healthcare & History and Criminology.

 Evidence that sometimes, you just have to go for it; Andrew Mok known as [@yalocaloffgod](#) is a Hong Kong Fashion Designer who at the age of just 17 reached out to Adidas about designing for them in the future. Fast forward 3 years later and he and brother [@tate\\_mok](#) have just released their collaboration collection with the brand. [Read more here.](#)

 Join [this webinar](#), taking place on Mon 24th March at 4pm, to discover more about Tesco's Stronger Starts Retail Apprenticeship programme, now open for applications in stores across England for their September 2025 cohort.

 Destination STEM is a dedicated [STEM careers website](#) for 13-19-year-olds curious to explore exceptional opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, boost skills, and hear from industry experts. You can now easily apply to career support programmes such as Online Mentoring, Research Placements & Experiences, or browse information on STEM careers independently.

 UCAS have amended the personal statement format from one longer essay to three structured questions, the first major change since its founding in 1993. This will impact all students applying to a UK university from next year onward. Parents and students are invited to join INVESTIN for a [free, interactive webinar](#) to learn more about what this means for you and how to ensure your application stands out! Remember, if you cannot attend live, simply register to automatically receive the recording.

## EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT

"We are a dynamic, multi-cultural business which values the integrity, accountability, and can-do attitude of our people. It is that mind-set that powers us to fulfil our ambition to be the world's undisputed Number One consumer battery company.

On average, 63 Duracell products are sold every second."

Read more about [Duracell Careers here.](#)

## UNI SPOTLIGHT

"We stand for ambition, with our diverse community of staff and students committed to making a difference at regional, national and global level. Our education and research, will support social, economic, cultural, intellectual and public life in ways that will make us one of the leading civic universities."

Read more about [University of Kent's Courses here.](#)

If you have any questions or need support, please contact [moranh@delasalleschool.org.uk](mailto:moranh@delasalleschool.org.uk)

# Catholic Life at De La Salle



2nd Week of Lent



**BR CHRIS PATINO GREETING STUDENTS BEFORE FLAME 2025**

We have had another fruitful week this week, starting with our trip to FLAME 2025 in the OVO Arena Wembley on Saturday 15th March! Staff and students are still full of the joy and spirit that comes with such a wonderful experience and we have carried that joy into this month's Formation Week!

## **RFLAME 2025**

On Saturday, 15th March 2025, our Lasallian community embarked on an unforgettable journey to OVO Arena Wembley for FLAME 2025, an inspiring day filled with Fun, Faith, and Friendship. With an early 4:00 AM start and a late return at 11:00 PM, the 20 hours we spent together truly reflected the spirit of our community—living out faith in action.

FLAME 2025, themed "UNSTOPPABLE", brought together thousands of young people to celebrate their faith. Throughout the day, we were uplifted by powerful performances from artists like Guvna B and One Hope Project, and deeply moved by the words of guest speakers including Br Chris Patino and Bear Grylls. We were especially inspired by the testimonies of groups such as World Dance Project and SVP, who showed how faith can be lived out in powerful and practical ways.

During lunch, students explored the arena, discovering organisations committed to putting faith into action. Parents expressed their gratitude for the opportunity, with one saying, "We are so grateful to you all for giving the students the opportunity to attend and experience such a wonderful day." Another parent shared, "I just wanted to say a huge thank you for organising such a wonderful experience for the children, and to you and the other staff members for giving up your day off." For many students, this was a first school trip experience, and as one parent put it, "My daughter had an amazing time on her first proper school trip, and she's still talking about it now!"

A highlight for many was receiving a signed copy of Bear Grylls' new book, "The Greatest Story Ever Told", a reminder of the power of resilience and belief. And in a surprise moment, our very own Chaplain, Sam, had a chance encounter with Declan Donnelly!

*Throughout the day, students were inspired by the messages shared on stage. One student reflected, "Today I learned that YOU ARE LOVED! Whether by God, your friends, or your family, there is always someone who loves you. You are not alone." Another took away a lesson in kindness and perseverance, saying, "It doesn't matter where you began in life or the places you come from. We don't all necessarily come from the best places, but what matters is how much love and positivity you put into the world because that's what comes back to you, often in unexpected ways."*

*Even those who couldn't join us in person felt part of the experience, as one parent commented, "We are so grateful!!! We have loved watching the updates on your Instagram—thank you!!" FLAME 2025 reminded us that faith is a journey we take together, and as a Lasallian community, we are truly UNSTOPPABLE.*

## **Our Next Theme**

Next week we continue our Lenten journey. At this time of year we use the colour purple within our displays and materials produced for times of prayer and liturgy. When we use purple we do so to emphasize the "gloomy" and dark nature of the time within the liturgical year. We use this colour during Advent and Lent as they are seasons of penance and preparation for change in our lives. The theme of our prayer and liturgy will be; **The Annunciation**. Each year group will be lead through Prayer and Liturgy by their Head of Year next week.

*Catholic Life team*

## **Invites**

Tuesday 25th March  
Join us for our Lenten Service starting at 6pm. There will be refreshments available following the service.

Thursday 1st May  
This is our first DLS Quiz Night. Bring along some friends or family and create a team of quizzers, there will be great prizes, live entertainment and a bar! 7pm start!

Thursday 15th May  
Join us as we celebrate Founder's day in style with an afternoon tea from 2pm- 4pm

## **Student Spotlight**

We are blessed to have so many wonderful students in and around Chaplaincy in this school!

This week though, I think we must give a shoutout to the Year 11 students who have been a great support in guiding our younger students, whilst developing their own sense of faith and purpose...not to mention their continued commitment to creating a better school community in the midst of their own pressures of GCSEs and searching for understanding in their next steps of their school career. Elliot, Beth, Megan, Laila, James and Emily! Well done for all you do for our Catholic Life and Mission!

## **Pray for us...**

St Joseph, protector of the young. Guide us with your wisdom and strength. Help us to follow God's oath with courage, to work humbly, and to grow in faith and virtue. Pray with us in our struggles and dreams, that we may always trust in God's plan. May your example inspire us to live with love, kindness, and integrity, as we strive to become the people God created us to be. Amen.

RISE UP



COMMUNITY LENTEN SERVICE

# TO THE CROSS WITH HOPE

Please join us here at De La Salle for our community Lenten service, with a focus on the theme of the Year of Jubilee; Pilgrims of Hope.

25TH MARCH 2025

STARTING AT 6PM

**La Salle**  
Ireland Great Britain Malta

De La Salle School, Mill Brow  
WA10 4QH







# DLS Quiz Night



**THURSDAY**

1st May 2025



**START AT**

7pm



**TICKET PRICE**

£5 / Person



**BAR OPEN**

Great quizzes deserve great drinks!



**ENTERTAINMENT**

Expect a fun and relaxed community feel!



**PRIZES TO BE**

**WON**

De La Salle School, Mill Brow, WA10 4QH

👉 **SPACES ARE LIMITED - SCAN THE QR TO BOOK YOUR TEAM NOW!**



**PLEASE NOTE:  
THERE WILL BE A RAFFLE AT THIS EVENT.  
THIS IS AN ADULT ONLY EVENT!**



Tickets  
£10/person

We are happily inviting you!

# Founder's Day Afternoon Tea

Thursday 15th May

2pm - 4pm

De La Salle School, Mill Brow, WA10 4QH



## INDULGE

enjoy a delightful spread of cakes, sandwiches, pastries and perfectly brewed tea!



## LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

to help us celebrate our founder!



## RAFFLE

incredible prizes waiting to be won, supported by local business!

Limited spaces!  
Scan the QR now  
to reserve your  
tickets.

