



DE LA SALLE SCHOOL

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March, '18

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As we approach the end of the spring term and Lent gives way to our Easter celebrations, it is timely to update you on matters within the school. Once again, as it is a lengthy letter, I have broken it in to headings for you to dip in and out of as you see fit.

School Improvement

Improvements are continuing across the school and it was pleasing that these were recognised in our recent review by the Local Authority. More importantly, they agreed with the priorities and actions the school is taking to secure further improvement and are confident the school is heading in the right direction. This affirmation is welcome but I am very conscious that there is still a way to go and this is just another step on our journey towards becoming the outstanding school this community deserves.

Voluntary Contributions

I am a firm believer that education should be free to all; unfortunately, under the current levels of school funding this is becoming increasingly difficult. I am not seeking to make any political message here but simply to clarify the facts for De La Salle, and most other schools I have spoken to, that although the allocation of funds to schools has increased, it has not increased as much as the costs that schools face. This, in effect, has left schools with less money year on year. This is why, on many occasions, as a school, we ask for voluntary contributions towards activities or materials. Without your support through these contributions, many of the activities we would wish to run would not take place. So thank you and please continue to support us when these contributions are asked for.

Recruitment

You may recall in my previous letter I mentioned that we were about to undergo recruitment for several posts across the school. I am pleased to say that we have, so far, made some very promising appointments for September in English, maths, history, design technology and science. I am hopeful that the final few appointments will be equally successful.

Buses

Merseytravel have been carrying out a review of all of their bus services. As part of that review, I have received notification that, from 22nd April onwards, there will only be one bus running AM and PM for the 752. All other buses remain unchanged. If you have any queries please feel free to contact Merseytravel at comments@merseytravel.gov.uk

School Lunches

I recognise that several parents have expressed a variety of concerns over school lunches. This is an area where we can definitely do better and I am keen to see improvements for the students' experience, within the obvious restrictions we face such as the size of the dining room. Some of the key issues and actions are below:

- Queuing system: as with most schools, students are required to queue to enter for lunch. To make this as fair as possible they queue on a rota system. Students only need to queue when it is their year group's time.

- Dining space: our dining room is relatively small and we have applied for funding to enlarge it. Having said this, at both break and lunch we are able to get the students through within the allocated time. This does mean moving students on but, in most cases, only when they have finished their food.
- Breakfast service: I am pleased to say the breakfast service trial has been successful with good numbers of students taking advantage of the toast and hot drinks available. This will now continue.
- Cutlery: the cutlery now is metal rather than plastic and this is working very well with the students and creating far less plastic waste.
- Food choices: since February half term, there have been issues with the gas supply into the canteen and this has, on occasions, reduced the variety of food on offer. We are hopeful that these issues will soon be resolved.
- Drink choices: I have asked the caterers to review our current drinks provision. Although all of our drinks are school meal compliant, I am concerned at the level of sugar they contain and have asked them to look at healthier alternatives.
- Overall experience: I am keen to improve the student experience and have asked for the student councils at whole school and year level to identify the key issues for students with a view to improving the variety, labelling of food for those with intolerances, quality and availability of food throughout the service across lunch and break.

Break and Lunch Arrangements

In response to several emails from parents regarding students going out for break and lunchtime I feel it would be beneficial to clarify the school's practice. Obviously the supervision and safety of students is paramount hence some of the changes I have introduced.

- At break, students are required to exit the building. In reality, they are allowed 5 minutes at the start of break and end of break to go to their lockers. This leaves a maximum of 10 minutes for them to use the toilets, canteen or get some fresh air. In wet weather, there is sufficient shelter within the courtyard area and over the queue for the dining room.
- At lunchtime similar arrangements are in place with 5 minutes at the start and end of lunch to access lockers, most students queueing for 5 to 10 minutes for lunch, 10 to 15 minutes in the canteen leaving approximately 15 to 20 minutes to play or use the toilets.
- If the weather is very cold or wet, we open up the Sports Hall to provide an area of shelter if needed but many students still prefer to go out to use the tennis courts or MUGA pitches.

I am slightly concerned by the number of students who, even in the recent spell of cold weather, do not come in to school with a coat. As a parent of two boys, I fully understand that, like me, many working parents will already be on their way to work by the time their child leaves for school but I would urge that you try to encourage them to bring a coat.

Information for Parents

Following on from feedback in parental surveys, in which a minority of parents did not feel they were kept informed of their child's progress, I thought it would be useful to remind parents on how and where they access information on their child from the school.

- Parents' Evenings – all year groups have one per year for all subjects.
- Full Report – one per year with written comments and targets for all subjects.
- Monitoring Reports – two per year covering progress in all subjects
- Show My Homework – access to your child's homeworks
- Edulink1 – access to all your child's attendance and behaviour records

We collect data from each subject every term for each student and these feed in to the monitoring and full reports. If you do not have login details for Show My Homework or Edulink1 then please contact the school reception.

Student Numbers

It is pleasing to see that the recent decline in student numbers into the school has been addressed and for our new Year 7 intake for September we have started to see an increase again.

Attendance and Exclusions

I am also pleased that the whole school attendance has started to improve upon last year and thank you, as parents, for ensuring students attend regularly. Likewise, the behaviour of students has improved this year both in lessons and around the school. This is reflected in the fact that fewer behaviour points have been lost and the number of exclusions since September has come down considerably from last year, especially of boys. However, in both of these areas, I believe there is still more work to be done to get to the highest standards that we would all want.

School Car Park

Can we remind parents that the school car park is for staff and visitors only and not for dropping or collecting students.

End of Term Arrangements

The school will be holding liturgies for all year groups throughout Holy Week and students will finish at **12.10pm on Thursday 29th March**. School re-opens for students on **Monday 16th April** as usual.

Forthcoming Events

Please see below the list of forthcoming events:

22 nd March	GCSE Drama Moderation (until 23 rd March) Art Animation workshop
23 rd March	Year 10 Careers Trip
26 th & 27 th March	Year 9 Injections
29 th March	School closes at 12.10pm – half term
16 th April	School Re-opens GCSE Drama Moderation (until 17 th April) GCSE Art Exams (until 19 th April)
20 th April	DOE Bronze Practice 1
23 rd April	GCSE MFL Speaking Tests (until 4 th May)
25 th April	GCSE Photography Exams (until 26 th April)
27 th April	DOE Bronze Practice 2 (until 28 th April)
1 st May	PTFA Meeting, 6.15pm
11 th May	DOE Bronze Practice 3 (until 12 th May)
25 th May	DOE Bronze Practice 4/Qualifying 1 (until 26 th May) School closes for Half Term
4 th June	School Re-opens
5 th June	Spanish Exchange (returns 12 th June)
8 th June	DOE Bronze Qualifying 2
14 th June	Year 7 PGL trip to France (returns 22 nd June)
15 th June	Year 9 London Trip (returns 17 th June)
18 th June	Year 10 Mock exams (until 23 rd June)
26 th June	Slaters uniform event, 3.00pm to 7.00pm)
27 th June	Year 10 English trip to Italy (returns 30 th June)
3 rd July	PTFA Meeting, 6.15pm
4 th – 6 th July	Bugsy Malone Show
11 th July	Awards Evening/Art Exhibition
12 th July	New Intake Evening/Art Exhibition
13 th July	Year 10 English Trip to London (returns 15 th July)
18 th July	Trips Day
20 th July	School closes at 12.10pm – end of year.

Finally, can I thank you for your continued support for the school and wish you all a holy and restful Easter.

Yours sincerely,



Andy Rannard
Headteacher