



De La Salle School

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

30th November, '18

Dear Parent/Carer,

Half-Termly Letter

I had promised to start each half term with a letter and end the half term with a newsletter, so I apologise that this letter was delayed until now. The reason for the delay was to allow me to include for you the recent report from our Section 48 Inspection (inspection of the Catholic life and provision within the school). This letter is far too long so as usual I have broken the letter into headed sections for ease of reference.

The Big Ask

I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who took the time to share his or her views on the school in our first termly questionnaire. As we continue to improve the school, I cannot stress how important the feedback from each of you is towards informing our actions. We are looking at the responses from staff, students and parents and, in the end of term newsletter, I will give you more details of the results and any actions that we will take.

Homework

Initial feedback from the Big Ask has raised concerns regarding our move from Show My Homework (SMH) to Moodle/Edulink One. The move was both a cost saving action and an attempt to reduce the range of different logins and systems. We are currently looking at how we improve this and, if it cannot be done to the level we want, then possibly considering re-investing into SMH.

Section 48

We are delighted at the report for our Section 48 inspection, and the extremely positive feedback it has given us (of the 9 areas being judged, 3 were outstanding and the other 6 judged as good). I would urge you to take the time to read the attached report. As always, however, we are not complacent and already the work is underway to improve those areas where we are good, to become outstanding and those where we are outstanding, to improve even further. I am particularly pleased that the new mission and vision of the school, which parents, staff, students and governors contributed to, has become embedded so quickly.

Car Parking

Closing the car park at the end of the day has certainly improved safety within the school, but problems still exist on Mill Brow. Could I ask any parents collecting their child from Mill Brow or Alder Hey Road to please be considerate of our neighbours and other road users and not park in a dangerous manner? The students are more than able to walk a couple of hundred yards away from the school to be collected.

It has been suggested to us that we should close Mill Brow to students, but my concern is that this will make the already challenging situation at Alder Hey Road even worse. A little bit of consideration for others can go a long way to ease these problems.

Lunchtimes

We have had several parents in touch with various concerns regarding dinners and lunchtime arrangements. I think it would be useful to update you on the current arrangements and plans for the future:

Queues: these are an inevitable part of any school and I understand that nobody likes to have to wait. It comes up regularly in my weekly meetings with student groups but equally students can never suggest a better way of doing it. We operate a rota system across the week, which rotates the order that each group is admitted to lunch. The exception is for Year 11 students who are allowed the privilege of early entry (this is partly a recognition of their status as the oldest students but also, from a practical point of view, allows them to access any lunchtime revision sessions/classes/carry out their prefect roles).

Each year group effectively has a 10 minute slot for queuing so there is no requirement for students to queue until it is their year group's time, though I know some students simply prefer to stand and talk to friends in the queue. Alternatively some students prefer to come at about 1.45pm when there is no queue. The current rota is below.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1.10	7	8	9	10	7
1.20	8	9	10	7	8
1.30	9	10	7	8	9
1.40	10	7	8	9	10

Space: Though our canteen space is limited, we believe it is important for students to be able to sit and talk with their friends over lunch. We try to avoid rushing students when they are eating their meals, with the average length of time being about 10 to 15 minutes, though 6 students sitting around 1 muffin for 20 minutes after their lunch might be asked to move on!

Behaviour: in the queue this is usually very good and any students displaying silly behaviour in the queue will be sent to the back or told they will be last in the queue. On occasions, students might be included who have done nothing, this is of course regrettable but there is no time to carry out a full investigation each time this happens and, from experience, any pushing is never anybody's fault! **At no point at all would we ever stop any student from having their lunch**

Range and quality of food: this is something we have been working on with the catering team and a new menu has recently been put in place. It is very common for students to get into a routine and eat the same food day after day, so as the new foods are introduced, I have asked that tasters are shared with students to encourage a level of variety. This has proven popular with the students. Some of the new, 'home cooked' meals, such as the spaghetti bolognese, are now proving very popular.

Cutlery: I have mentioned previously about the amount of plastic cutlery we were getting through and the catering team had introduced a temporary solution of wooden cutlery. We will shortly be able to move to metal cutlery.

Extra-curricular

DoE

Our Duke of Edinburgh programme is now up and running with approx. 130 students from Year 10 completing their practice and training weekends. Feedback from the staff running the programme has been very positive about the behaviour and attitude of the students. We are also now exploring the possibility of delivering the silver award for some students.

Performing Arts

It has been a busy few weeks for the performing arts department with a wonderfully powerful performance of Private Peaceful at the Citadel to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War.

We also performed as part of the Shakespeare School Festival, with almost 30 students forming the cast of Macbeth. Once again, this was an opportunity for our students to perform in a professional theatre, The Capstone Theatre, in front of a large audience who were very appreciative of the power of the performance.

Sport

This has been an extremely busy half term for sporting activities with over 25 different teams competing in competitions or festivals including: boys and girls teams of football, rugby league and union, swimming, badminton, netball, hockey as well as our own sports leaders working with primary schools.

Most recent results have seen our girls' hockey beat Cowley (4-1) and St Cuthbert's (1-0) and Year 7 boys' football winning every game in the St Helens Festival. Meanwhile the Year 7 rugby team took part in an invitation event at Liverpool St Helens Rugby Union club organised by the RFU Development Team. After 3 sessions led by RDO Neil Ryan the boys played and trained under floodlights at LSH in a session led by National RDO (and former pupil) Phil Kearns, along with Cowley and Upholland HS. A great event followed by food and drinks with their parents.

You will be pleased to read that this is the end of my letter. Thank you for your continued support of the school and the students and for working with us to make the school a better place to work, learn, pray and play.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Rannard', enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

Andy Rannard
Headteacher