



De La Salle
School

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

Telephone: 01744 20511
Email: delasalle@sthelens.sch.uk

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

January 2019

Dear Parent / Carer,

Half-Termly Letter

I hope my first whole-school letter of 2019 finds you and your family relaxed and rested after the Christmas break and enjoying a positive start to the New Year and the new you, I know I have certainly grown as a person over the holidays, though not in a good way! It has been pleasing to see staff and students return refreshed after a very long first term and ready to face the challenges of this spring term.

Parent Charter

As I have mentioned in previous correspondence, we are keen to work effectively with our parents and offer guidance, support and partnership with them. There have been, however, rare occasions when parents have arrived at school, without an appointment, demanding to speak to an individual member of staff and then refusing to leave until they have seen them. Obviously this is not reasonable and leads to frustration and disappointment for those involved.

To help address this issue, manage expectations and ensure a strong working partnership, we have developed a draft **Parent Charter** which is attached. I would be interested to hear your views on the draft charter which you can send in via: delasalle@sthelens.org.uk

Admissions

We have had confirmation that, for the first time in 5 years, we will be oversubscribed for our new intake Year 7 in September. It is encouraging to see confidence in the school return and the demand for places at the school increase.

The demand for places has also been seen across the rest of the school as we have had an unprecedented level of demand for in-year applications to all year groups. Some year groups are now nearing capacity and I am pleased to say that nearly all of our new arrivals are settling in well.

Year 11 Provision

Our Year 11 students were recently given their mock GCSE results and are now beginning the final stages of their exam preparation. This includes targeted intervention from departments and the Year 11 Learning Hub, available after school every day from 3-15pm to 4-15pm.

Sponsorship

As I have mentioned previously, we are looking to have our various sports teams sponsored to assist with the costs of kit, transport etc. If you, or anybody you know, has plenty of spare money then please consider these opportunities! Details have now been finalised and will be sent out in the next few days.

Governors

I am delighted to say that, following the departure of a number of our long serving governors, that the vacancies have now been filled. The role of governance and holding the school to account are crucial in our school improvement journey. I would like to thank those governors who have served us over recent years for their dedication and commitment. I also wish our new governors well in their new role. Details of the governing body can be found here: <http://www.delasalle.st-helens.sch.uk/welcome/our-governors/>

Social Media

Recently we have been alerted to a new app called “Tellonym” which allows people to post things anonymously. Though it isn’t the purpose of the app, we are aware that, nationally, this has been the cause of bullying and harassment. The app is for young people aged 17+. Our advice to parents is to check your child’s phone and ensure the app is deleted.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Based upon your feedback in the Big Ask and in line with wanting to make further improvements to the way we target set, report and assess our students, I have been working with Mrs Mulhall and Ms Warburton on reviewing our existing practice, researching best practice and clarifying what would work well at DLS. I share the view of many of you that our current system, which bases progress on GCSE grades and a flightpath from Year 7, is neither helpful nor realistic. Indeed the whole concept of predicting GCSE grades for any students, even in Year 11, is both inaccurate and pointless – as the grades are decided after the GCSE papers have been marked. So scores that one year may have achieved a grade 4 could score a 5 or a 3 in different years.

Our work on this is progressing well and I am hopeful that we will be able to trial some of the changes over the next 2 terms. It will, however, require considerable additional planning and work from staff if we are to get it right for our students. To help facilitate some of this work, only students in Year 11 will attend school on **Monday 25th February**, all other students will not be in school that day, thereby extending the spring half term. Should this be problematic for any parents, then we are happy to accommodate students within the school on that day with advanced notice. Please contact your child’s pastoral support manager if that is the case.

School Trips

Since I arrived at the school, I have been keen for us to expand the number and variety of school trip experiences for our students. I have been delighted at the response of the staff and their eagerness to research and run the trips that are now on offer. Indeed, as I write this letter, I am mid-packing for the school ski trip, which departs on Sunday. I make no apology for allowing many of these trips to run in term time a) to keep the cost down for parents and b) as anyone who has been on a big school trip will know, they are genuinely developmental and educational experiences.

I do, however, understand that many of the trips can still be expensive and to help parents decide which trips their child might or might not attend I have listed our current trips and the year groups in which they take place (along with indicative costs). Our hope is to maintain these, though of course they are dependent upon staff running them and students wanting to go.

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
PGL Watersports Trip to France (£755)	History Battlefields tour/Belgium (£520)	Ski Trip to Andorra (£950 Pupils sign up in Year 8)	English Shakespeare’s Italy Trip (£625)	1719 Society visit to Rome (£250)
Bushcraft outward bound 4 day residential (£175)	Retreat to Kintbury (£141)	History Battlefields tour/Belgium (£520)	MFL Spanish study trip to Catalonia (£650)	
Retreat to Castlerigg (£120)		English trip to London (£190)	RE and Humanities trip to Poland (£450 pupils sign up in Year 9)	

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
		Retreat to Kintbury (£141)	Maths LIVE in Disneyland Paris (£380 pupils sign up in Year 9)	
		MFL Spanish study trip to Catalonia (£650)		

Request from the Local Authority

The Local Authority have asked me to pass on this message seeking volunteers to work and support young people who are looked after.

"Do you have spare time once a month? Are you able to make a long term commitment to a young person in care for a minimum of two years? NYAS are looking for adults of all ages and from all walks of life who relate well to young people to become a Volunteer Independent Visitor. No formal experience necessary as full training and induction provided including out of pocket expenses. Interested & would like more information? Please contact Di Watmough diane.watmough@nyas.net More details on NYAS website www.nyas.net. Thank you so much"

Key Dates (items in bold indicate changes to student attendance or finishing times)

- 20th January - Ski Trip (returns 27th January)
- 29th January - Year 9 Form Tutor Meetings
- 30 / 31st January - Year 11 Mock Interviews (appointments to be given)
- **6th February - Students finish at 1.30pm/Year 11 Parents' Evening, 2.00pm – 6.30pm (buses at 3.00pm)**
- 14th February - End of half term - school closes at 3.00pm as usual
- **15th February - Staff INSET Day (students do not attend)**
- **25th February - School Open to Year 11 only (Years 7-10 do not attend)**
- 25th February - Year 11 Mock Exams (until 8th March)
- 26th February - All students in school
- **7th March - Students finish at 1.30pm/Year 10 Parents' Evening, 2.00pm-6.30pm (buses at 3.00pm)**
- **18th March - Students finish at 1.30pm/Staff Training (buses at 3.00pm)**
- **26th March - Students finish at 1.30pm/Year 7 Parents' Evening, 2.00pm – 6.30pm (buses at 3.00pm)**
- 1st April - Year 9 Vaccinations
- 2nd April - Year 9 Vaccinations
- 2nd April - Shakespeare's Italy trip (returns 5th April)
- 5th April - End of term - school closes 3.00pm as usual

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,



Andy Rannard
Headteacher



De La Salle School

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

As a school we recognise the importance of a strong, honest and positive relationship between school and home in order to help us achieve our mission. Our Parent Charter seeks to help strengthen this relationship by clarifying roles, responsibilities and expectations.

As a Lasallian school:

- *We will work alongside you to achieve the best outcomes for your child.*
- *We will keep you informed of your child's progress in an open and respectful manner.*
- *We will listen to your views on how we can work more effectively, we will seek these regularly through the Big Ask.*
- *We will never turn you away: you will always be seen by a trained member of our staff.*
- *We will respond to any concerns within clear time frames (24 hours for the most serious issues and 48 hours for all issues).*

As Lasallian parents:

- *You will work alongside the school to achieve the best outcomes for your child.*
- *You will keep us informed of any relevant issues or information relating to your child.*
- *You will share your views with us in an open and respectful manner.*
- *You will understand your child's version of an event might not be the full story.*
- *You will understand our clear time frames for responding to concerns and you might not always be able to speak to a member of staff immediately.*