



De La Salle
School

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28th March 2025

Dear Parent / Carer,

Parental Update 24

A slightly shorter update this week, as I am working on the end of term newsletter, so some of the regular updates such as sporting and P Arts updates, I will hold for next week. The coming weekend has two important days – Laetare Sunday (see Laetare CMAT updates) and of course, Mothering Sunday. So, a happy Mothers' Day to all of our wonderful mothers, grandmothers and great grandmothers – I hope you are looked after this Sunday.

I can't believe we are at the end of the Spring term already! This has been a very busy and productive term with a wealth of events, and opportunities for our students which I will try to capture and share next week.

With today's update there is:

- Weekly Careers newsletter
- Invitation to:
 - Quiz Night
 - Afternoon Tea

Whole School Focus: Year 11 Study Leave

Gone are the days when as a Year 11 student you would finish at Easter and have a couple of weeks sitting at home in preparation for your exams. For a while now, students have been expected to attend almost all the way through their GCSEs, with only a minimal amount of 'study leave'. As a school, it is therefore important that we make the most of the time from Easter through to the final GCSEs. Below is an outline of how this will work.

When our Year 11 students return after their Easter break their timetable will begin to look very different as we maximise the time spent in school. For the first couple of weeks back, this will mainly take the form of extended sessions in key subjects, however from Monday 12th May there will be extensive changes to the timetable to prioritise exams taking place each afternoon or the following day.

School breaks up on Friday 23rd May for the half term. This is 24 days before the GCSE physics exam on Monday 16th June which is the final exam that the whole cohort will take. A lot of work has been put into creating a timetable for the first week back after that May half term which will wrap around their exams that week and ensure students are focused on the remaining upcoming exams.

Year 11 students are therefore expected to be in school from 8.30am – 3.00pm up to and including Friday 6th June. Whilst "study leave" will then be in place, revision sessions will still be available in school for the remaining exams from 9-18th June.

Once exams start it is important that students are in school on time to begin their morning exam. We aim to finish most exams in time for students to access the school buses however, the exam board regulates that we only have a short window of time to download and print off each set of exams once the embargo on them is lifted. For this reason, we cannot guarantee exams starting at the published time. Students will need to factor this into their plans for their journey home.

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

We know already that the following exams will finish beyond 3.00pm:

- 13/5/25 biology for extra time students and triple science students
- 4/6/25 health and social students

Exam Clash

Fortunately, this year, there is only one big exam clash on the published timetable which affects 52 students taking Engineering. This is something beyond the control of school. JCQ has timetabled three exams to take place on Tuesday 13th May:

- 8.50am RE Catholic Christianity
- 8.50am engineering
- 1.15pm biology

When there is a clash, the JCQ stipulates that students must be kept under exam conditions in the transition phase from one exam to the next. This means all students will sit the RE exam and then the Engineering students will be kept under exam conditions in the venue to begin their Engineering exam. Students can only leave the venue for a comfort break. I appreciate this is far from ideal as they will, in effect, be under exam conditions from 8.50am until 12.25pm. They will then have to be ready to begin their biology exam at 1.30pm. It will be a very long day for these students. If there was anything we could have done about it to improve the situation for this group, please be assured we would have done it by now. Our hands are tied by JCQ regulations.

I hope that helps to give an early picture of what the coming weeks for Year 11 will look like, with specific details being shared after Easter.

Main Car Park

Can I remind parents that the main car park is not to be used by parents at all: both at the start and end of the school day? Other than students with proven mobility needs, all other students should be dropped off and picked up outside of the school grounds, not in the car park. Thank you for your support.

2 Invitations

Alongside today's update, there are 2 invitations for fundraising events in school. They are:

- **DLS Quiz Night on Thursday 1st May 7.00pm start (adult only /bar open)**
- **Founder's Day Afternoon Tea on Thursday 15th May 2.00pm start**

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

Laetare CMAT Updates

This Sunday is Laetare Sunday, which is the fourth Sunday in Lent and marks the halfway point on our Lenten journey, it is also our Trust's Feast Day. The word Laetare means joy and this Sunday is intended to be that event of joy and celebration within the austere Lenten journey. It is marked by a change in vestments within the mass from the Lenten violet to rose or pink vestments.

Andy Bridson, our CEO, was in school on Wednesday to meet with me and then attended our Local Governing Board meeting. During the meeting he emphasised the importance of the local governing board within our CMAT structure.

Behaviour Reset

This week we have had a reset of our behaviour expectations to try to ensure a consistency across the school. The main issues being phones which should be turned off and away: if seen, heard or used they are confiscated, jewellery and training shoes. This has gone well and, as always, the vast majority of our students play their positive part in maintaining our expectations.

Year 9 Options

We now have almost all the Year 9 option choices in and are beginning the process of allocating of choices. This takes a number of stages:

- Identifying initial numbers in each group
- Identifying which subjects will run and which don't have enough students to run (our minimum number of students for a subject to run is 15)
- Looking at second choices where necessary
- Identifying any oversubscribed subjects and assessing the suitability of choices.
- More generally starting to revisit some student choices which might not be in the child's best interests (this is done genuinely to ensure the child is making the right choice for them).

All of the above takes some time and will extend well after Easter, with lots of backward and forward discussions with students, departments and families.

Holiday Activity and Food Programme

The Easter Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF) will be running from Monday 7th April 2024 to Saturday 19th April for all eligible children, young people and families. The activity bookings links are live 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>

Upcoming Events

Mon 31st – Fri 4th: Big Lent Walk

Mon 31st – Fri 4th: Shakespeare's Italy EV (Year 10)

APRIL

Tue 1st – Thu 3rd: Year 8 Careers Insight Days

Thu 3rd: Peripatetic Music Concert

Fri 4th: School finishes for Easter (3.00pm)

Easter Holidays

Mon 21st: Bank Holiday

Tue 22nd: Year 10 Photography mock exam

Wed 23rd: Year 11 Art GCSEs begin (students are allocated days across the next week)

Thu 24th – Sun 27th: Chaplaincy trip to Rome

Thu 24th: Year 7 Parents' Evening

Fri 25th: Year 10 Rewards Day

Sat 26th – Sun 27th: DofE Expedition

Mon 28th – Fri 9th (May): Year 9 Assessment Window

Mon 28th: Year 10 Geography Fieldtrip 1

Mon 28th: GCSE PE Moderation Day

Mon 28th: Year 8 HPV Vaccinations

Thu 1st: Year 10 Geography Fieldtrip 2

Thu 1st: DLS Quiz Night (7pm start) tickets available

And finally... Happy

I think I have mentioned previously, that a few years ago, the St Helens Star ran a story about the school – I can't recall what it was about, but it wasn't a good news story. As part of the story, they used a library image of me that they had on file. For context I looked like the Fat Controller grinning away outside the front of the school. So, the juxtaposition of sad or negative story and my grinning chops led to a very relevant question in the comments from Agatha C "what has he got to be smiling at?" This was something that made me and Mrs R laugh and my family still say that to me whenever I laugh about something.

So, this week Mr Hale contacted me to say we had been in the St Helens Star again, as headteacher your heart sinks when you hear this. Fortunately, it was for positive reasons. The Sunday Times had been doing some national research identifying parental levels of happiness with schools. This was based on parental feedback in Ofsted's Parent View over the past 5 years.

The St Helens Star article was reporting that we were top of the St Helens schools' happiness index with 92% of parents saying their child was happy at the school. This was a lovely thing to see: partly as the first thing that I say to parents at the Year 6 Open Evening is that the most important thing parents say they want in a school is their child to be happy. Secondly, it is pleasing because it is from our parents and over a 5-year period: not a small snapshot or someone visiting just for a day.

My natural instinct, of course, is to think about the 8% who didn't say their child was happy and what we can do to change that, but Mrs R quite rightly suggested it is important also to take a moment and celebrate the hard work of the staff, students, governors and parents in making the school a place where so many feel happy. Agatha C – now I have something to smile at!

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

We're not sure who decided so many national and international celebrations should take place in March - it feels like there are multiple events happening every week! Here are two celebrations that we didn't have space to mention...

National Student Money week took place from 3rd-7th March. The theme for 2025 is Survive and Thrive: Building financial resilience.

World Engineering Day took place on 4th March. The theme of this year's celebration is "Unleashing the power of engineers to advance the Sustainable Development Goals".



Blackbullion is the ultimate destination for students to master money management. It's the place to learn about money, find extra money, and manage your money with confidence.



Save the Student has been the resource students trust to improve their finances. We now have over 1,000 regularly updated guides. This page is a live collection of all the handy tools and resources we've created for students, from understanding your specific loan repayments to finding the best phone contract.



In careers, one of the types of finance we talk about often is Student Finance. This is the loan you get from the UK Government to fund your university studies. A good place to begin research is by reading this Guide to Student Finance.



Amazing Apprenticeships have a series of upcoming webinars running from March-June. Each webinar lasts between 30 - 60 minutes and takes place on Zoom.



Are you passionate about beauty and dreaming of a career in the industry? Join this Virtual Work Experience from 15th-17th April with the British Beauty Council and Pelham to gain exclusive insights and kickstart your future in beauty!

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

JOB OF THE WEEK



Nuclear Engineer

A nuclear engineer designs, builds, operates, and maintains systems that utilise nuclear energy, encompassing power generation, research, medicine, and defense, while ensuring safety and environmental sustainability. Watch the video to learn more about how much you could earn, working hours and pathways into the industry.

LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION FACT

In the UK, about 19.2% of the workforce (6.3 million people) are employed in engineering and technology occupations, earning an average of £39,163 annually, and the engineering industry is considered a vital part of the UK's economy.

Source

CAREERS NEWSLETTER



OPPORTUNITIES

Unlock the doors to your future this summer and learn more about the exciting world of engineering. Developed by The Smallpeice Trust, [this course](#) invites students aged 12-14 to discover the future of engineering in the comfort of your own home. The dates of the course are 27 May - 30 May 2025. You will learn:



- Cyber Security
- Electrical Engineering
- Space Engineering

There is a cost but you can apply for a funded place if you meet the criteria outlined in [these FAQs](#).

Born to Engineer have compiled a list of some of the best [Engineering Competitions](#) available to students in the UK. As well as being a fun challenge, they look great on your university and/or apprenticeship applications (even if you don't win, you will gain lots of skills!).



The University of Manchester offers a [range of financial packages](#) that aim to support students from the most underrepresented backgrounds, to access, and succeed at University. If you want to know more about other university's financial support offers, search the name of the uni followed by "Bursaries and Scholarships" to find more information.



Make your mark by spending eight weeks this summer working with the UK's largest publisher. Penguin book's [paid summer internship roles](#) sit across 9 different teams in our London office, with opportunities to contribute to projects in one of our publishing houses or specialist group functions. *You have to be 18 for this opportunity, if you're not old enough yet, make a note of it for future years!*



If you're considering applying to Oxbridge, any Medical course or some Law courses, you will need to complete a university admission test. To learn more about them, you can read this guide; [University Admissions Tests: Everything you need to know right now!](#)



EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT

"Our apprentices are the change-makers of tomorrow. Diving straight into working on landmark projects at the heart of local communities, you'll discover that there's more to infrastructure than you expected. Earning while you learn, you'll gain practical skills and kickstart your career."

Read more about [Balfour Beatty Careers here](#).

UNI SPOTLIGHT

"At Plymouth you'll uncover new passions and dive deep into what you love. The city of Plymouth is enriched by its multinational student community, diverse University staff, and the millions of tourists who visit each year. Our undergraduate degrees are the perfect stepping stone to secure the future you deserve. It's your future. Make it count."

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

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



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.

