



Castle Donington College

Principal: Mrs Julie Sheppard

Vice-Principal: Mr Nathan Barratt

Assistant Principal: Mr Ben Wilkinson

29th June 2020

Dear Castle Donington College Community,

As the final half term of this academic year draws to a close, we are finally starting to experience a greater sense of normality. With small groups of Year 10 pupils, children of key workers, vulnerable young people and more staff on site every day, the College is starting to feel more energetic and purposeful.

Over the next two weeks, we hope all our pupils will carry on to work remotely. It has been 100 days since we closed the College to the majority of pupils and encouraged them to engage with home learning. I continue to be amazed by some of the toil and creativity of our pupils. Our stock of red exercise books is depleting as pupils fill them and request replacements. We are looking forward to seeing the work produced very soon. We know this form of learning is not easy, especially after so many weeks. Try to keep going and do contact us if you need any further help or support.

It has been fantastic to see Year 10 pupils coming through the gates in their Castle Donington College uniform and I am very proud of and humbled by how they have engaged so well with the peculiar set up and engaged with learning. It is great to have them back. They have taken the return to College in their stride and we will continue to work hard to ensure that they are well prepared for Year 11 and ultimately their GCSE exams, in whatever form these take. You may be aware that one suggestion gathering impetus is that the final exams in 2021 will be moved back to later in the summer term to allow for additional teaching time. This would mean that the exam season takes place across June and July. We have no further details at present but my advice would be to ensure that if you have a child currently in Year 10, you should try to make sure you are available for the full academic year in 2020/2021.

For current Year 11, and this year's GCSE results, 20th August will remain our GCSE Results Day. Currently, we do not know if social gatherings will be allowed to happen in August. We are hoping that pupils will receive their exam certificates in person from College but this will be determined by Government advice. We will send further details closer to the time.

Our published last day of term is Friday 10th July. After this date, Castle Donington College will be closed to all pupils over the summer break. A number of staff have offered to provide a range of online work for pupils to access over summer if they want to continue with some form of learning. This will very much be down to individual pupils and their families.

A growing number of parents have enquired about our start date for the new term and if we will return before the Bank Holiday (August 31st). I am still waiting for confirmation of this. As a Leicestershire school, our return is usually the previous week (the week commencing 24th August). It is with growing frustration that the announcements regarding the opening of schools to all pupils in all years always state a September start date. I will of course, relay any change to our published term dates as soon as possible. We are planning for all pupils to return and are keen to get the College up and running again for the whole community.

I can confirm however, that we need an additional staff training day and that we have decided to dedicate the first full day of term solely to our new Year 7 pupils. We want them to be the only year group in the building, which will allow us to dedicate our full attention to them and deliver the important transition day they will have missed this term. Years 8 to 11 will return the following day. I have listed the key dates below based on the current situation.

Summer Term 2020

Monday 6 th - Friday 10 th July	Final week of Year 10 provision.
Friday 10 th July	End of term. College closes to all pupils Final day of provision for children of keyworkers and vulnerable pupils.
Thursday 20 th August	Year 11 GCSE Results Day

Autumn Term 2020

Current plans (and subject to change)

Monday 24 th August	Staff Training Day
Tuesday 25 th August	Staff Training Day (Change to published dates)
Wednesday 26 th August	Year 7 Induction Day (Change to published dates)
Thursday 27 th August	College Open to all Pupils (Change to published dates)

We are determined to get pupils back into the routine of College life as soon as possible. But this schedule is subject to dates being announced centrally and may change if the national/local situation alters but we hope that it helps families to plan to some extent. We will inform you of any changes.

My family and I have ventured 'out' more this weekend. Each outing strategically planned with military precision. The once pleasurable everyday experiences, remain stressful; queuing (in the rain); wondering if I really do need what I am queuing for; head down ; rushing around at break neck speed to complete ordinary, unremarkable tasks. The easing of lock down is still not affording the long awaited freedom I have been anticipating. I am perhaps over planning and I am definitely overthinking the family events coming up in the next few weeks. Haircuts for all, a day out, driving lessons and an 18th Birthday celebration. One thing I am not relishing is the restoration of 'Mum's Taxi' as my children plan their escape. The precious family time gained from lockdown is ebbing away.

I can't wait for Castle Donington College to return to the thriving hub of liveliness and industry it was before all of this. Continue to look after each other and to remain positive. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Best wishes

Julie Sheppard



Principal