



Castle Donington College

Principal: Mrs Julie Sheppard

Vice-Principal: Mr Nathan Barratt

Assistant Principal: Mr Ben Wilkinson

7th July 2020

Dear Castle Donington College Community,

It is a strange end to the College year. My non-teaching acquaintances recoil in horror when I declare that I work in a school with teenagers. I always reply and believe that teaching is the best job in the world. However, the last few months have been the most challenging of my 27 years in education. I know I am not alone. For many members of our community, life has turned upside down and even now, we face uncertainty and apprehension about the future.

I wrote to you yesterday to explain that we need time to work out the detail of our return in August. I look forward to welcoming back all our children to College but realise, as we work through our plans, that any return will be different from what we remember. Well-known routines will be altered, infiltrated by unfamiliar adjustments and new procedures. In wider society a new vocabulary has emerged; social distancing; furlough; shielding; sanitising; lockdown and in College; zones; bubbles and blended learning are now everyday parlance. I am certain though, what will not have changed is the care and kindness; the spirit and energy of our community. Many staff have observed that this crisis has brought us closer together. I hope the unity and power of our collective strength remain with us for a long time.

Staff Changes

It is usual at this time of year we say farewell to colleagues and welcome new staff. I am thrilled that Mr Nick Brown will be joining the Science team and Ms Jones returns from her maternity leave in the new term and delighted to announce that no staff are leaving the College this year. Our Heads of Year 8, 9 and 10, namely Mr Blood, Mr Nelson and Mr Purkiss, will take their year group and tutor teams through to Years 9, 10 and 11 respectively. Mrs Danes remains Head of Year 7 with Ms Forster and Mr Canavan who led Year 11 this year, is very excited to become Head of Year 8 from August.

Reporting

The circumstances of the last few months have limited our ability to be able to report accurately on your child. We know that some pupils have not received a Report and may have missed a Parent's Evening due to lockdown. We understand that pupils and parents value the feedback they receive, however, we feel any attempt to update progress data and grades now would not be constructive, accurate or reliable. We have therefore decided to defer our formal reporting until the autumn term. This will allow us time to assess each child, have a better understanding of how well they engaged with remote learning and be able to set meaningful targets. This term, to acknowledge pupils' response to the work set during lockdown, teachers have updated one element of the information in Go4Schools.

Use of the College Carpark

As more children join our roll we expect to have nearly 600 pupils entering and leaving the site at key times. In addition we need to avoid social gatherings and encourage social distancing.

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We therefore request that parents **DO NOT drive vehicles into the College carpark at the start and end of the school day**. This will ensure the safety of our pupils and other children on the site. The College gates will be closed to parents at peak times, if we feel it necessary and we ask that you find alternative parking arrangements when picking up and dropping off your child.

Important Dates

I can confirm that we will reopen the College to all pupils in all years in August. We have planned a special Induction Day for our new Year 7 pupils and so Year 8, 9, 10 and 11 pupils are **NOT** expected in College on Wednesday 26th August.

Monday 24 th August	Staff Training Day (College closed to all pupils)
Tuesday 25 th August	Staff Training Day (College closed to all pupils)
Wednesday 26 th August	Year 7 Induction Day (College open to Year 7 pupils only . Year 8, 9, 10 and 11 pupils are NOT in College)
Thursday 27 th August	College Open to All Pupils in All Years

As the school year draws to a close, my weekly correspondence to you also ends. Your children, our pupils are amazing, a credit to you and the College. I feel very privileged to serve such a warm and caring community. I am truly grateful for the support you have shown me and my staff. Thank you.

I will be in touch before our return and wish you a sunny summer break.

Best wishes,
Julie Sheppard



Principal