



Castle Donington College

Principal: Mrs Julie Sheppard

Vice Principal: Mr Nathan Barratt

Assistant Principal: Mr Ben Wilkinson

JS/LD/C13

6th January 2021

Dear Castle Donington Community,

I hope that you are well and that you are coping with the impact of the announcement of a third, National Lockdown. There is no doubt that this news will have a significant impact on a number of our families and our community as a whole.

The next few months will certainly be a further challenge for all of us and it is essential that we support each other and work together during this time. Our children have never needed us more and we will be here to help them and you throughout.

I do not underestimate the impact of our children being out of school. My two daughters, both now in key exam years, are very confused and are already missing their friends. They have mixed feelings about the announcement and many questions about their future that I am unable to answer.

There are a number of aspects of College life that will be in place for the next six weeks and I write to outline some of these. The information below applies to all pupils at the College until Friday 12th February, unless we hear otherwise from the Department of Education.

We are expecting a further announcement about GCSE examinations later today and I will write to Year 11 pupils and their parents separately, once we know the situation.

College Opening

The College is open to children of key workers and vulnerable pupils (KWVP). Registration forms will be emailed out later this week, for places commencing 11th January. We ask that pupils are in College for full days and they will follow the same online work that all pupils are completing at home.

We have staff in College every day and our Reception and phone lines remain open from 08.00-16.00. We are also able to respond to your email correspondence via postroom@cdcolleg.uk

Remote Learning

All other pupils will complete learning at home.

The work teachers set will follow our normal timetable and planned curriculum. The expectation is that all pupils log on each day, complete the work and submit it by midday the following day. Teachers and ICT support are available during College hours to help with any further problems or queries about on-line work.

Work will be set via Satchel One. A link can be found on the 'quick links' tab on our website homepage. Satchel One is an app that can be accessed by parents too as a useful tool to keep track of your child's workload. Please make sure your child knows their College e-mail address and password to Satchel One. A Parent/Pupils Guide to SatchelOne is available on the SatchelOne 'Notice Board' and the College website.

Continued

Year 11

As you will have seen, the Government has stated that GCSE examinations will not go ahead as normal. This is all the detail we have at the moment and we do not know yet how GCSE grades will be calculated. We will continue to provide our Year 11 pupils with specific online work and support to ensure that they are able to put themselves in the strongest position to achieve the best set of GCSE grades possible. This means that all Year 11 pupils must continue to complete the work set to the best of their ability. Once the DfE have provided us with the necessary granular detail, we will inform you of our plans and the next steps. We are hoping for an announcement later today. Unfortunately school leaders do not get information in advance of the national briefings.

Free School Meal Provision

We are working with the Local Authority to cover the cost of and maintain the Free School Meals Voucher scheme throughout this third lockdown. At the moment this scheme is not funded by the Government. We have already contacted the relevant families by email regarding this.

If your circumstances have changed and you feel you might be eligible for Free School Meals, please complete the form on our website.

Pastoral Care

Our Pastoral Team will continue to work hard to provide support for pupils and families across our community. We hope that Form Tutors will contact all pupils through Satchel One to ensure that they have everything that they need to complete online learning and to support with any emerging issues. Heads of Year are also on hand to help. Individual support will also be provided to pupils through our Safeguarding and Learning Support Teams. If you have any concerns at all please get in touch.

Pupil Recognition

We know the importance of acknowledgement and reward during these strange times. Feedback is more important than ever and we have asked teaching staff to review work and feedback to their groups regularly. We have also asked staff to nominate pupils who have done exceptionally well and impressed them. Commendations will continue to be awarded through Go4Schools and count towards Form Awards, which we hope we can celebrate with pupils when they return.

Lateral Flow Testing in College

We have started to prepare our 'Test Centre' in the College hall for testing staff, KWVP and ultimately all pupils in College. This is no small undertaking but as always, we want to play our role in overcoming the virus and keep our amazing staff and pupils safe in school. I will continue to update you on this and ask that you to visit the College website for further information on testing as it emerges.

Finally, I have very few words that can make this situation better or to explain the frustration that we may be feeling. But I believe now is not the time to be melancholy. Vaccines are on the way and as we work through this tough winter period, we must believe that the spring and summer months will bring hope. My youngest daughter tells me 'It is what it is, mum. One day at a time'. Wise words from one, who like so many youngsters, has suffered so much upheaval and missed opportunities recently. As the Christmas decorations come down and we begin 2021, we must not forget that we are still part of a very special community, which will help get us through.

Take care of each other.



Julie Sheppard
Principal