



# Castle Donington College

Principal: Mrs Julie Sheppard

Vice Principal: Mr Nathan Barratt

Assistant Principal: Mr Ben Wilkinson

JS/LD/C17

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Dear Castle Donington College Community,

On Friday, I listened to an interview with young people on the radio. Our young people have become the Covid Generation. The introductory remarks to this interview resonate. The broadcaster said:

*'When you are young, a year can feel like a lifetime. So much happens. So much changes and so many memories are forged. The young may not feel the same fear their parents and grandparents do at the moment, but they are grieving experiences missed; hopes, dreams and opportunities lost; the optimism of youth quenched. None of this is captured in the daily graphs and charts'*

I am finding it hard to process the reality of the data we see on the news each day. However, listening to those interviewed on the radio, my own daughters and pupils I speak to in College, I am acutely aware of how tough life can be at the moment. It was therefore magical to see our keyworker pupils playing in the snow on our field on Tuesday. They left behind a line of snow people of different shapes and sizes, some which were still standing on Friday; smaller and a bit lop-sided but a lovely, reminder of happy times.

## Reopening College to all pupils

We now know children will not return to school before 8<sup>th</sup> March, and that we will have a two-week notice period to reopening. This notice period is intended to provide schools with time to test all pupils twice, before they return. We are ready to go and waiting! Our Test Centre will be open and pupils will be invited to take a Lateral Flow test, enabling us to get back to 'normal' as soon as we possibly can.

## Lateral Flow Testing

All staff including Kitchen, Cleaning staff and Midday Supervisors are being tested twice weekly. The process is pretty painless and has become an integral part of our 'to do' jobs list.

Before pupils can take a test, we need parental consent. Tests are voluntary, but we urge you to encourage your child to participate. This will help us to monitor transmission within our community and reduce the spread of the virus beyond the College. Information about testing pupils is on our website. You have been emailed the consent form which we ask you to complete at your earliest convenience. A booking form will be emailed to those who have provided consent as soon as we receive notice from the DfE of the date that the College will be reopening. More information is available on the College Youtube channel [https://youtu.be/4lQcs\\_NHQG8](https://youtu.be/4lQcs_NHQG8) and <https://youtu.be/RjX-mFWOHs8>.

## Free School Meals

During these difficult times, we are seeing an increase in food insecurity. The College is providing weekly Food Vouchers to all families eligible for Free School Meals and will continue to do so through school holidays, when the Government scheme is suspended. If your circumstances have changed recently, you may be eligible for this help. Information and a link to the application form, is available on our website page <https://www.cdcollege.uk/page/?title=Free+School+Meals&pid=24>. In addition, you may be able to access the Covid Winter Support Grant, details can be found here <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health/care-referrals/covid-winter-support-grant-2020-21>

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We also have a strong link with the local branch of the Trussel Trust Foodbank and are able to make confidential and discreet referrals. If you feel you need help, please get in touch via [postroom@cdcollege.uk](mailto:postroom@cdcollege.uk)

### **Laptops**

We have loaned out all of the laptops the government provided for the College and have now near exhausted our supply of school laptops. We are very grateful for a number of devices donated by members of the local community, which has enhanced our stock. A large number of our pupils are still accessing and submitting schoolwork through their mobile phone so if you, or someone you know has an unused device, that they are willing to donate to the College, please get in touch via [postroom@cdcollege.uk](mailto:postroom@cdcollege.uk) and we will ensure it gets put to good use.

### **Remote Learning**

There remains a happy, productive buzz in College this week. Key worker pupils are settled into a purposeful, harmonious routine. At home too, we know engagement with learning remains high. Our teaching staff and pastoral team are working incredibly hard to ensure pupils are progressing while away from the routines of College. Unlike a primary school setting, our staff teach up to 150 daily and they deliver to a different combination of pupils every day. They may receive up to 100 emails before 3 o'clock from individual pupils, which they try to respond to in a timely way, between setting work, teaching and preparing lessons. We appreciate your support and patience. As always, we endeavour to improve provision and thank all parents, carers and pupils who have responded to our Remote Learning survey that gives us an understanding of what we are doing well, and what we could be better.

The days are getting a little longer now as we leave January behind. The national vaccination programme is well underway. Let us hang on to these positive signs that we will eventually be able to resume everyday activities in the way we would like.

Take care of each other.



Julie Sheppard  
Principal