



Castle Donington College

Principal: Mrs Julie Sheppard

Vice Principal: Mr Nathan Barratt

Assistant Principal: Mr Ben Wilkinson

JS/LD/C18

8th February 2021

Dear Castle Donington College Community,

Today marks the start of our final week of the half term and our sixth week of Remote Learning. This lockdown has been just as exasperating and frustrating as the previous lockdowns. Let us hope it will be the last one. We can perhaps tentatively think about brighter times ahead; there is positive news about the pace of the vaccine roll out and we know Spring is on the way. In fact I hear, the sun is expected to make an appearance during the half term break.

At home this week, the Sheppard girls have resorted to beauty therapy. Nails have been painted; each day a different colour and hair has transformed through straight, curly, up, down plaited and tinted. They are both struggling to keep motivated with their schoolwork; bored, uninspired and missing their friends. A weekend walk with mum and dad just does not appeal to them. Each day is the same as the one before to them and their bedroom, once a happy sanctuary, is not as inviting; filled with reminders of what they are missing and school work. Parenting is hard!

You will have received a letter from Jane Moore, the Director of Children and Family Services yesterday. She speaks on behalf of all Leicestershire schools and her closing paragraph certainly echoes our sentiment. She writes;

Whilst it is important for children to keep engaged with learning, you are only expected to do your best and the most important thing at the moment is that children are safe, loved and cared for. Please don't let school work put any extra pressure on you when you are trying to do your jobs, earn a living and keep your children safe. Everyone's circumstances are different, and we appreciate that.

Please let us know if you are struggling at home. We are here to help.

We thank you for your feedback regarding Remote Learning. A summary of the responses can be found on our website. We will listen to what you have said and will continue to investigate how we can improve our provision. Several of you asked for more live lessons. The Department for Education (DfE) has no expectation that teachers should livestream or pre-record lessons and that Ofsted has found that live lessons are not always the best way to engage young people, however we are looking at ways we can increase interaction after half term. As always, we will consider the approaches that best suit the needs of our pupils and staff. Some parents suggested we are setting too much work. We remind all pupils that they should aim to work for no longer than a 'normal' school day. Pupils still need time for rest and recovery during lockdown and it is important that they do not fill their evenings and weekends completing school work. If you have any worries or concerns about children working at home please do not hesitate to get in touch with us by calling Reception or via postroom@cdcolleg.uk

Currently the 8th March has been stated as a potential return date for pupils. We have no further information on this but I think a staggered return is likely, identifying particular year groups as priority. We have continued to plan for a number of scenarios and we will share this with you when we receive direction from the Government. We know that we will have at least two weeks' notice, prior to pupils' return. This will assist a smooth transition and allow any Lateral Flow testing to be carried out. Please complete the consent form for your child as soon as possible using the link available [here](#) and on our website.

The DfE has updated its guidance for parents which states that the position on exams and assessments scheduled for April onwards, will be published later in February. We know our Year 11 pupils may be feeling anxious about how their results will be reached, but we will be doing all we can once we know what is required.

Remember, the College closes for half term break on Friday 12th February and will also be closed on Monday 22nd February for staff training. No lessons will be set on this day. Remote Learning resumes on Tuesday 23rd February. School will not be open to any pupils during the half term. I hope pupils, families and staff are able to enjoy this time and recharge.

Finally, I was saddened to hear of the passing of Sir Captain Tom last week. He was undoubtedly a remarkable gentleman who has provided so much hope during the last year. Rather than grieving his passing, I think that it has provided us all with an opportunity to reflect and to consider that many things are possible with a strong desire to achieve and to make a difference to others.

Whatever your plans for half term break, look after each other.



Julie Sheppard
Principal