



# Castle Donington College

Principal: Mrs Julie Sheppard

Vice Principal: Mr Nathan Barratt

Assistant Principal: Mr Ben Wilkinson

JS/LD/CDCollegeCommunity /12

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Dear Castle Donington College Community,

Sunshine and snow! It felt like we experienced four seasons of weather in five days last week. As always, this term has been incredibly busy. It certainly feels like we have been making up for lost time in the extra-curricular opportunities we have offered. We have run a residential trip to London, two theatre visits, an ambassador training day at the airport, sports fixtures, mock exams and Parents' Evenings. Last week saw the relaunch of Awards Assemblies where we were able to celebrate, with each year group, awards for Achievement Progress, Attendance and Citizenship. To end the term on a high, I have just had the pleasure of watching some of our pupils perform Merchant of Venice to Year 10 and 11. Fantastic!

## Living with Covid Guidance

The Department for Education communicated its 'living with Covid' plans to schools 24 hours before this significant change takes place. The advice confirms the scrapping of free Covid tests. This comes at a time when there are still significant levels of staff and pupil absence in schools caused by Covid. The key points of the guidance are as follows:

- Children who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people. They can go back to school when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough to attend.
- Children with a positive Covid-19 test result should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for three days. (for adults, this is five days)
- Regular asymptomatic testing is no longer recommended in any education setting; therefore, schools will no longer be able to order test kits.
- Schools are being asked not to hand out any test kits to staff, pupils, or students unless advised by your local health protection team, local authority or director of public health.
- Most of the specific Covid-19 guidance for education and childcare settings has been withdrawn from GOV.UK.

At the College pupil infection numbers have stabilised after rising over the last few weeks, currently around 1.9%. I hope the Easter holiday acts as a break to further transmission. This term, we have seen greater staff absence (due to Covid) than at any other time during the pandemic. It is likely with the removal of testing, that there will be more cases and more transmission in schools. So, I ask that you follow the guidance set out above and keep your child isolated, if they exhibit any symptoms.

## Longer School Day

You may also have seen in the media that in response to the Government's White Paper, schools will have to offer a minimum school week of 32.5 hours. This is equivalent to 08.45 to 15.15 each day. We will therefore be looking to extend our day by 15 minutes from the start of the Autumn term.

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### **Cost of Living**

With rising food and petrol costs and a surge in energy prices, we realise that the increase in the cost of living will be forcing many of our families to tighten their belts even further. We are all feeling the pinch. Energy costs at the College are set to rise by 70% with no additional funding. We are committed to ensuring that the high educational standards we set at the College are not affected, however being part of a larger trust may help to reduce the impact of these difficult times but it is increasingly difficult to operate as we would like.

### **Breakfast**

We are concerned about the growing number of children arriving at school without having breakfast. Some children are also not eating at lunchtime and so going without food for a significant period of time. We know that children who are hungry cannot learn as well as they might be able to and breakfast is key to setting children up for the school day. Please ensure your child's meal account is topped up (£2.55 per day/ £12.75 per week) If you think you may be eligible for Free School Meals you can check the guidance [here](#). If you are worried about your child skipping meals, please let us know.

### **Uniform**

We appreciate that school uniform adds to your costs but we expect pupils to be in the correct uniform every day. Please do not be fooled by your child when they tell you 'it's allowed' and 'everyone wears them'. We try to address uniform breaches consistently and systematically (but do not always reach every child on any given day). Our uniform is very clear. Leggings, joggers, trainers, false nails, eyelashes and nose piercings are **not** allowed. We ask that school skirts are of suitable length (no more than 15 cm above the knee) and that makeup, is not noticeable. We ask for your support in this. The standard of your child's uniform reflects your support of the College. If you are unsure about an item, please check with the College first, we are happy to advise and do let us know if your child will be out of uniform for a particular reason.

### **End of Term**

Finally, as we end the Spring Term, we say farewell to Mr Bird (teacher of English) and Ms Mar Gerrison (Teacher of MFL) both are leaving the teaching profession to embark on new careers and we wish them well. Ms King started her maternity leave a few weeks ago and will return in the Autumn term. We therefore welcome Ms Kaur and Ms Jenkins to the English department and Ms Fritschy-Haramburu to the Modern Foreign Languages department.

I remind you **we break up for Easter at 3.00pm on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April. College is closed on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April** to staff and pupils. We reopen on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April and look forward to greeting pupils when doors open at 08.35am.

I wish you all a lovely Easter break and hope you manage to enjoy a little bit of chocolate at some point.

With best wishes,

Julie Sheppard  
Principal