



Castledon School

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Dear Parents/Carers

11th November 2020

Whilst Covid-19 continues to make the headlines, there are certainly lots of other positive things going on in school at the moment. Here are the other key messages I wish to share with you:

We are delighted to have received a £30,000 donation for our Vocational building project, which has begun over the half term break. £20,000 has been donated from The Baily Thomas Fund and £10,000 from The Garfield Western Foundation. We work closely with a professional fundraiser to help us access charitable foundations that want to support sectors such as education and Special Education Needs. These funds will help us progress our vocational buildings over the next few months.

I attach a copy of the term dates for this academic year (2020-2021). A slight change has been made to the date that our Year 11 and Year 14 learners will leave in the summer. Having spoken to some families and with the loss of learning over this summer it would benefit our learners to stay in education for a few more weeks. The final day for our Year 11 and Year 14 learners will now be Friday 18th June.

I would like to remind all families of the importance of taking holidays during the school holidays. Holidays are not permitted under any circumstances in term time. Requesting holidays because it is cheaper to go in term time, or celebrations abroad are not valid reasons and will be declined. All school absence is a serious matter, monitored closely by the Local Authority, Education Welfare department and Ofsted. Taking holidays in term time mean children quickly fall behind with their work and may require extra support to catch up. I thank you for your support in this matter.

I would like to thank parents/carers who completed the Parent Feedback Survey a few weeks ago. I am pleased to report that overall, the results were strong and positive. We will collate responses and share with you as soon as possible and as a Senior Leadership Team there are areas where improvements can be made and we will be working on this as a priority.

As communicated on our last weekly bulletin, we have been fortunate to secure a new minibus, due to a substantial donation from the Variety Club. The minibuses are paramount to us providing a rich 'learn to live' curriculum and with a couple of our older buses having to retire recently, this new addition certainly enables our learners to continue to access community learning.

A polite reminder that face coverings are to be worn (unless exempt) when collecting children from inside the building. This does not apply when dropping off and collecting your child outside where social distancing is being practised. Can we ask that for all non-urgent communication emails and telephone calls are used to minimise face to face contact.

I am pleased to advise that there has been a significant donation of food from our staff to support any Castledon families in need or at crisis point. I am always hearing in the news about families struggling and I want to make sure we do everything we can to ensure that they aren't families at Castledon. As well as food there are items of toiletries and household essentials. We recognise that asking for help isn't always easy, so we want to make this sensitive situation as stress-free and easily accessible as possible. If families of our learners get in touch (via reception – admin@castledon.org), we will make up parcels of essentials as well as providing details to access further support.

I am delighted to announce that two of our staff have secured new positions within the academy. Carly Gilbrook will be our new Job Coach, working with our Key Stage 4 and 5 students on preparing them for adulthood with essential skills for the workplace and work placements. Amy Ebdon who has been at Castledon a number of years will now be our Higher Level Teaching Assistant for the Early Years Provision in the Primary Phase. We also welcome Sarah Copeland to the Castledon team, who has joined us to teach a group of learners in Key Stage 4. All members of staff are hugely committed to providing the best education for our young people.

Please may I take this opportunity to thank all of our families for supporting all of the procedures we have in place, and also the children who are being so resilient and the staff, who are working above and beyond to provide the best education they can for all of the children in these continuing challenging circumstances.

Yours faithfully

S Holliday

Simon Holliday
Headteacher