

29 December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I do hope you are enjoying the festive period, even in the difficult circumstances imposed by Covid-19 and I wish you a happy New Year.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce myself as the new Headteacher of The Castle School. I feel privileged to have been appointed by the Trust's Board of Directors and be entrusted with the job of leading such a fantastic school into the next phase of its development.

From my experience, I know that a successful and happy school depends on all of us working together. I will continue to work closely with Mrs Watson, in her role as CEO of the Trust, and am determined that The Castle School continues to flourish and maintains its position at the heart of our community and its well-deserved reputation regionally and nationally.

The Castle School has a history of excellence and I am committed to the ethos of Achieve, Belong, Participate. I have a fundamental belief that education should empower young people, giving them the knowledge to make sense of the world and grow into citizens who make a difference. I will maintain the high standards and expectations for which The Castle is well known and I am committed to the values of the school, having worked here previously. As with any new Headteacher, I will bring a fresh perspective on all aspects of school life. I am, however, looking forward to finding out more about the school since my time away, so that the changes I make in this new chapter are based on my own and the school's values. And that very much includes parents, who make an important contribution to children's achievements at school.

As Mrs Watson alluded to in her final letter to you as Headteacher, uniform is hugely important to keeping that sense of belonging, I also feel it encourages a sense of community, identity and pride. I know you will understand that for our uniform policy to be successful it must be implemented without exception. Please see the uniform policy for your information. Thank you for your support with this.

I value kindness, hard work and honesty, and expect everyone to behave according to those values. One aspect I admire most about The Castle School is its inclusive ethos and the development of empathy amongst students so that they are accepting of others and of differences. I am proud to be the Head of a School which helps students develop the power to think for themselves, shaped by what they need to know and understand in order to have happy, successful and prosperous lives. This is, of course, supported by excellent teaching, strong relationships with staff, and participation in enrichment. This is what belonging to The Castle School means.

With regards to the Government announcements at the end of term, we find ourselves in a position we did not seek. This is not the first time we have found ourselves in this situation, but with your support and the hard work of colleagues we can continue to ensure we meet these challenges together. I know the messages you have sent to Mrs Watson, not only to wish her well but to also show your gratitude, are greatly appreciated. Thank you.

We are awaiting further clarification from the Government on a number of complex issues: mass screening (testing) of students for the virus in school; testing of close contacts following a positive Covid-19 case in school and the staggered start to the school year. As it is likely that we will receive changes or additions to the Government guidance during this week, we feel it is prudent to wait for this further guidance before finalising our plans. I will be in touch with you again before the weekend.

Finally, I am delighted to be given the opportunity to lead such a prestigious school, one that I love, in a community that I am proud to represent. I hope that you and your families have been able to enjoy the Christmas break and I look forward to welcoming your children back to school in January.

Yours sincerely

Mr Lamb  
Headteacher