



5 February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope you are all looking after yourselves and your families during these difficult times. As we come to the end of the fifth week of term, I wanted to write to you to thank you for your continued support and the messages of thanks we have received which are hugely appreciated by the whole school community.

Year 10 and 11 Summer GCSE examinations

The consultation from the DfE and Ofqual on how GCSE grades should be awarded in summer 2021 closed on Friday 29 January. It will be interesting to see how the evidence base for awarding grades and the appeals process will work. I will, of course, update Year 10 and 11 parents and carers as soon as I know more. My advice to all students who should have been taking public examinations this year is to continue to enjoy and engage in their learning.

Remote learning and well-being

I am sure you share my concern about the amount of screen time we are all currently being exposed to. In some ways this is unavoidable and we are pleased that student attendance in lessons continues to be strong. You will be aware of our expectations with remote learning and we recognise that in reality students can be at their screens 5 hours a day for 5 days a week. As we move towards the spring, I hope during half term that students have more opportunities to have time away from a computer screen and, despite the lockdown still being in place, are able to enjoy the fresh air and perhaps some exercise.

As Mental Health Awareness Week comes to an end, we must all continue to look after each other. I am extremely proud of the commitment our staff have for your children; they have been truly inspiring and I know they all appreciate the support we have had from you.

If you and your child would like to access some support during this lockdown please visit the school website (<https://www.castleschool.co.uk/students/help-and-support.htm>) or follow the links at the end of this letter.

Enrichment

Whilst we are not able to offer the same amount of enrichment activities as we would usually, please do let your child know of the activities we are able to provide. Please find link to the enrichment poster here [online-enrichment-feb-21.pdf \(castleschool.co.uk\)](#)

Return to school

As you will know the government hopes to start reopening English schools on 8 March. At present, we have not been informed of the exact details of this return. I long for the day we can welcome all students back into school and as soon as I know more I will be in touch.

INSET Day Friday 12 February 2021

For your information this half term finishes on Thursday 11 February and the school will be closed to students both in school and remotely on Friday 12 February, as this is an INSET day. School will re-open following the half term break on Monday 22 February for vulnerable children and children of critical workers and remotely for all other students.

Yours sincerely



Mr Lamb
Headteacher

Helplines and websites:

Additional remote learning resources:

The Oak National Academy can be accessed here: <https://www.thenational.academy>

BBC Bitesize can be accessed here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

Support for parents of secondary age students online: <https://parentinfo.org/article/video-chatting-a-guide-for-parents-and-carers-of-secondary-school-age-children>

Pastoral support and help:

Out of hours and emergency numbers are also on the website front page -keep scrolling down. <https://www.castleschool.co.uk>.

Or on the help and support page on the website

<https://www.castleschool.co.uk/students/help-and-support.htm>

Help can also be found here:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications>

<http://www.sharesomerset.co.uk>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/worried-about-your-teenager/>