



5 September 2023

Dear parents and carers,

I hope you have had a wonderful summer break with your families and that our students are looking forward to the start of the academic year. I wanted to write to update you with a few key things prior to your child returning to school this week; Year 7 and 11 are in school tomorrow, Wednesday 6 September as normal and then all years in school from Thursday 7 September.

ClassCharts

We use ClassCharts for a number of functions: awarding House points, logging behaviour concerns, setting sanctions, setting homework and recording attendance. Students can download the ClassCharts Student App on their devices and parents/carers can download the Parent App. Please contact the Main Office if you need a reminder of your code. New Year 7 students and parents will have codes given out during the first week. I would encourage you to download the apps allowing even better communication between home and school across the platform.

Rewards

Your child will be rewarded with House points for different positive interactions and behaviours demonstrated in school, that accumulate towards the House Trophy. You will be able to track these on the ClassCharts app. Milestones reached will generate certificates given out in assemblies. There is also a ClassCharts Store, where students have the opportunity to use their House points to 'purchase' something they would like.

Blackdown Education Partnership (BEP)

You will be aware that we have now formally merged with Uffculme Academy Trust from September. This is such a positive move for us as a school and we look forward to collaborating with colleagues across the Trust to enable our students to receive an even better education. Your child's email address will have changed, they will continue to access their Office 365 accounts by visiting **portal.office.com**. The first part of their email address remains unchanged, but the second part will now be **castle.bep.ac** (instead of **castle.somerset.sch.uk**) and their password is the same as before.

Curriculum maps and details of what is taught

One of the common issues families highlight in the parent/Carer surveys is not being told what your child is being taught. Please see the links below to our curriculum page on the website and half way down you will find the curriculum maps for each year group. These maps detail what your child will learn within each year group. I hope you find them useful. <https://www.castleschool.co.uk/school-info/curriculum.htm>

Attendance

We expect all students to attend school fully this term. If you have any specific worries or concerns about this, please do contact your child's tutor or Head of House, so we can work together to resolve problems. You will be able to track your child's attendance on ClassCharts. We aspire for all students to have a minimum 98% attendance and will work with you to ensure this expectation is in place for everyone.

Uniform

Our website states clearly the expectations with regard to uniform, to enable all students to look smart and be proud attending The Castle School. To ensure fairness and consistency, all staff will be supporting all students to meet expectations from their first day in school. We have spare items as needed to ensure no learning time is lost due to uniform, so please get in touch if there is anything we can do to support with this. We do not permit any piercings to be worn, other than one small stud in each ear. **Please ensure that any other piercings are removed before returning to school.** May I also please request that all students have hair that is a natural colour or tone. If you need to check any details that you are unsure of regarding uniform, please find the details on the website: [The Castle School, Taunton](#)

Behaviour and sanctions

ClassCharts will ensure that parents and carers are alerted to any lower-level behaviour logs as they happen. This also means you can see any detentions that your child has been set. It is vital that any sanctions that students are given are completed in a timely manner, so that there is impact. Therefore, if your child is given an afterschool detention, we will expect this to be completed on the date it is set, without negotiation. Parents and carers will not be able to contact us to rearrange a sanction, as this loses its impact and also implies to the student that there is flexibility in the behaviour system. Thank you for your understanding and support with ensuring that we can insist on high expectations for our students.

Enrichment and participation

As you know, participation in enrichment is a priority for us and we are determined to ensure we offer as many opportunities as we can for your child. Please keep an eye out for the enrichment calendars that will be circulated this week, so that every child is participating in the wider life of the school.

I'm sure you will have seen in the news recently that some schools across the country have been impacted due to issues with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete, more commonly known as RAAC. You will be pleased and reassured to know we have no such issues with our buildings.

We are really looking forward to having all of our students back in this September and cannot wait for the year ahead. Please do get in touch with your child's tutor or Head of House if you have any questions or would like to clarify any aspects of returning to school. If there have been welfare issues or personal circumstances that have affected your family recently, please do let us know so that we can support your child as best we can.

Yours sincerely



Mr J Lamb
Headteacher, The Castle School