



25th February 2021

Dear parents and carers,

The period we've lived through during the last year has demonstrated just how important schools are to students, parents and society as a whole. I'm delighted that we can soon start to resume face-to-face lessons and my staff are busy planning so we can get things back to normal as soon as possible.

All of us have been affected by COVID-19. Sadly, in too many cases, our students and my colleagues have lost members of their family, friends and relatives. Some still have loved ones who are very ill. Families have had their employment affected with long periods of furlough and job losses in some cases. Managing remote education has been challenging for all of us and I'd like to thank you all for the ways you've supported your children, our students, during this last year.

Some of you may be anxious about the prospect of schools reopening. The government has prioritised reopening schools because it too knows how important education is to the life chances of young people. However, I know from the conversations we've had with you and our students that there is an overwhelming sense of excitement and relief that we can now start to get back to normal. I also know that the people of the town and the young people of our school are resilient, and I know we can count on you to help us.

I've asked my staff to think through very carefully how they will organise lessons over the next few weeks to recognise that students have had different experiences during the most recent period of lockdown. We know that, whilst many students have worked incredibly hard to complete their remote learning activities, other students have found this difficult. We also know that some families have struggled with resources and I'm grateful to my colleagues who have supported those families by lending out equipment.

We do need to put in place processes to keep everyone safe when we fully reopen. The government has advised that students do not resume face-to-face learning until they have had a lateral flow test which can detect Covid-19 even when no symptoms are present. Students will be required to take 3 tests in school, 3-5 days apart, before a programme of home testing begins. Further details will be issued shortly. We are contacting parents to seek their consent and I would ask you to complete the form quickly because we need to plan how to do this most effectively.

Additionally, government guidance has made clear that staff and pupils need to wear face coverings in lessons and moving around the school, although there will be obvious exceptions for certain activities such as PE lessons. Unless they are medically exempt, I need to make clear that students who do not wear a face covering will be isolated for the safety of other students and staff.

We are making some other changes to coincide with reopening. I want you to know much more regularly about the great work your children will be doing with us, and we will be communicating that through the new Arbor app using our new rewards system. You have been contacted with details of how to register so please make sure you have signed up. We will also use this method to let you know if your children are not getting it right and teachers have had to use sanctions. I'll be able to monitor all of this and will call some of you each day to congratulate your child on how well they are doing. We will be working with our students to establish how they can be rewarded as individuals and groups as soon as we can.

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The Castle Rock School, Meadow Lane, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4BR

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CEO Apollo Partnership Trust and Executive Secondary Headteacher - Mrs J Patrick

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I'll be writing to you again shortly to let you know the plan for the week commencing 8th March and to let parents of students in Years 11 and 13 know how we will approach awarding grades this year.

In the meantime, thank you all for the support you are giving to your children and our school.

With warm wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Baldwin', with a small flourish at the end.

Duncan Baldwin
Head of The Castle Rock School