



# Staff Survival Guide



Castledon School & College



## Philippa Holliday, Principal says....

I'm really pleased that you are considering working at Castledon.

### Complex needs

Castledon School works with pupils with very complex needs. Often they have found a mainstream larger environment too difficult to manage. Pupils' needs are really diverse and as such it makes the job of differentiation particularly complex.

### Make learning relevant

The Staff have the ability to self-reflect and find ways to make learning relevant to each young person and as real to life as possible are key to making the job a success. We are privileged to be able to make a real difference to the young people that we work with, alongside their families. The parent that can tell us that their son/daughter would not step foot outside, but now goes shopping with them; or the pupil that would not enter a classroom and would sit under the table who is now taking GCSE Art (Grade A predicted!) are what keep us going.

### Learn to live

Our mottos 'learn to live' for the school and 'unlocking potential for adulthood' for the college have set the ethos for every part of our work. We are passionate about developing independence and resilience in our young people and helping them find ways to help themselves.

### Proud

We are immensely proud of the fantastic progress that our young people make. For some that leads to academic qualifications and college placements; for others this will be more about their social and emotional progression.

### Curriculum

Our curriculum needs are quite diverse due to some pupils with us having more of an SLD profile, some ASC, some ADHD and some a global developmental delay. As such our curriculum is ever evolving which brings with it exciting opportunities but also continual change. We need people to come on board who can think outside the box and are just as happy taking the pupils to dig holes on the allotments as teaching them to write in complex sentences.

Our youngest pupils follow more of an EYFS type approach, but adapted to suit a more SLD profile. Other groups within primary, middle school (year 6 and 7) and secondary are more in line with the national curriculum but at a lower level and much slower rate. KS4 work on functional skills qualifications and as such we have moved to specialist teachers in our core subjects.

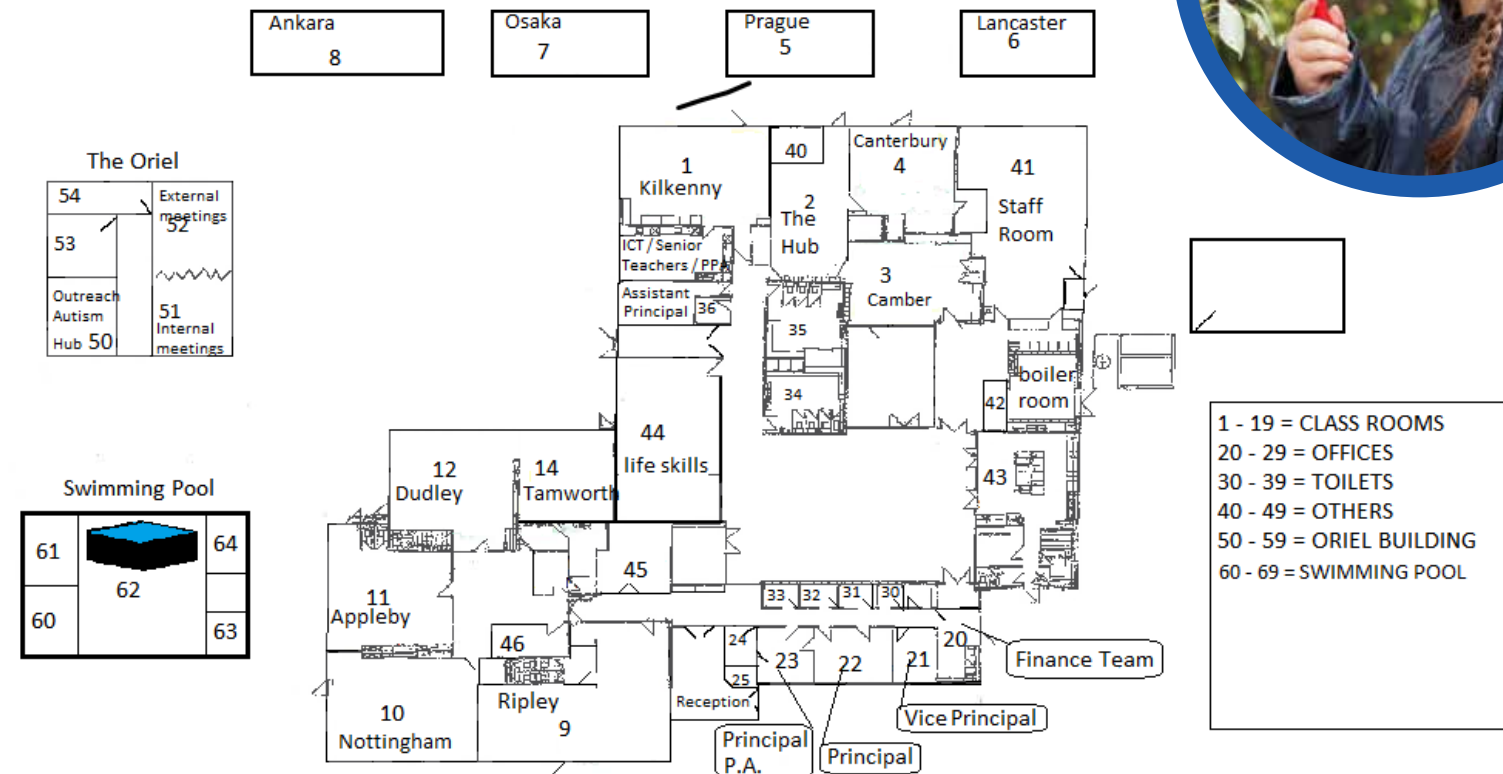
### College in 2017

Our college provision, opening September 2017, is an exciting extension to our work. More details are provided in this guide.

### Be a role model

So if you can be a good role model to our young people, are a 'cup half full' kind of person and love working as part of a team, we would love you to come and join us!

## Map of our school: how to find your way around



### Access

We have a fob and key system to access the building and specific rooms. These will be issued by the Principal's PA when you start.



## CPD Package and Support

We offer training for all staff in the following:

- Autism
- Essex Steps (de-escalation & restraint)
- Speech & Language support in the classroom
- OT support with sensory & physical needs
- RWI (phonics) two day initial training
- Safeguarding
- Weekly AfL briefings

Support for staff is also offered through:

- TA – peer mentors for the first term
- Teacher – mentor from SLT for the first term including observation feedback
- Teacher – coaching programme throughout the year

## Wellbeing/benefit package

- ✓ Payday breakfast!
- ✓ Bromfords gym and classes £15 a month and £20 a month for partners
- ✓ Childcare voucher scheme
- ✓ Running club
- ✓ Free hot drinks each day
- ✓ Laptop and iPad mini for teachers
- ✓ Teachers who work in lunch time able to receive free lunch
- ✓ Staff able to have deliveries sent to school reception in working hours
- ✓ TA's covering classes able to claim instructors rate for the time period
- ✓ Annual flu jab for free
- ✓ Stress counselling available as part of our wellbeing package
- ✓ 100% attendance (halftermly) thank you's
- ✓ Staff social events

## IT at Castledon School

### Access

We offer teachers 24 hour remote access, an iPad mini and a laptop. These can be taken home.

### Classrooms

All of our classes benefit from the latest technology including 55" Genie touch screens, new desktop PCs and visualisers. Our ICT provisions consist of two brand new ICT suites with the latest integrated desktop PCs for students, bookable laptops (all replaced this year) and iPads.

### Training

We offer training on all platforms and Microsoft products if required.

## A route into SEN

### Resilient and flexible

Our most successful employees at Castledon are those with a passion for pupils that typically find it difficult to engage. We believe that our pupil's deserve to be given the time and understanding to approach tasks in a variety of ways. Our staff are here first and foremost because they care and are able to be resilient and flexible.

Class based staff then need to have the ability to differentiate, use quality first teaching strategies and provide for a pupils statement provision. These are the basics of successful learning and development.

#### Training

The majority of staff join us from mainstream, however some come here as NQTs. We provide excellent training in behaviour, Makaton, AfL and autism. We also ensure all staff have up to date training on delivering Read, Write inc and numicon. Staff are also equipped over time with the skills to write and use social stories with pupils as well as a variety of other approaches to break down learning/ experiences and develop their repertoire of SEN strategies.

Staff are able to benefit from the childcare voucher scheme which supports with the expense of childcare. Wellbeing is a high priority and as such the school allows staff to benefit from Stress Counselling services.

## A route into SEN

### Facilities for staff

Our local secondary school has a gym that staff are able to use straight after school for a small fee. Once a week our school swimming pool is open for staff and their families to use for a minimal charge. In the winter months the school purchases the flu jab for staff.

### Our induction programme

We provide a programme to help staff feel equipped and empowered to have the greatest impact on the lives of our young people. This involves a range of more formalised sessions including safeguarding, our behaviour ethos and ICT use, as well as providing more personalised support on a day-by-day basis.

### Mentoring programme

All new teachers are also supported though their first term at Castledon by mentoring by a senior member of staff. Planning, lesson delivery and annual reviews are just some of the areas that a senior member of staff will support with to ensure that you feel comfortable with Castledon's systems and expectations. Teaching staff continue to receive support from their peers and senior staff through a fortnightly AfL session which allows current practise to be discussed and staff to share their ideas.

### Sixth Form

As the school looks to expand its provision for pupils with MLD/SEMH, MLD/ASC and to extend the age range to 19, we are looking for staff to develop their skills and take on distance learning in a variety of different areas of SEN including mindfulness, dyslexia and sensory needs.

### Castledon Sixth Form College

#### Ethos - Unlocking Potential for Adulthood

Castledon Sixth Form College is a new provision opening in September 2017. Whilst the College is an integral part of Castledon Academy it will be housed on separate facilities to the school and will have strong partnerships with mainstream and alternative provisions. Through these associations the College will offer bespoke

pathways to support learners in gaining employment and living independently. All students will undertake a community placement or work placement as part of their curriculum. There will be a strong emphasis on vocational learning leading to nationally recognised qualifications i.e. BTECs, GCSEs and Functional Skills. The College will also offer a curriculum which focuses on personal and social skills, employability and independent living for learners needing an educational program which is lifeskills based. This will include involvement in initiatives such as Young Enterprise and Travel Training.

### Staffing

Our team will be a blend of specialist subject teachers, vocational tutors, learning mentors and LSAs. Non-teaching staff will support with administration and exams. Within the three years we hope to have a team of teachers and tutors who can deliver Art, Young Enterprise, Home Cooking Skills, Employability, Lifeskills, English and Maths.

### A Vibrant Vocational Curriculum

The College will offer a Vocational Curriculum to complement the literacy and maths programme (GCSEs, Functional Skills, Entry Level Certificate, Gateway Certificate in English and Maths and Qualifications in Progression) with has an emphasis on skills for employment and life.

Our goal is to develop a vocational curriculum underpinned by qualifications like the Workskills BTEC, allowing learners to develop skills in areas such as horticulture, animal care, painting and decorating, bricklaying, Young Enterprise, community projects, cooking and art. The College has numerous links with alternative provisions, including Challenger Troop and Rally Motor Sports to address individual needs.

Lesson times and term dates have been designed to allow sufficient time within the year for staff to complete pre-course planning and assessment.

To encourage work/life balance lessons starts at 9.30am and finish at 2.50pm and will allow staff sufficient time for planning, set up and assessment (see term dates and non-pupil days).

Our term dates are designed to allow staff time to ensure pre-course documentation is thorough and supporting documentation for BTECs and other portfolio based courses can be completed. This will also enable teams to

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## A route into SEN

deliver qualifications in line with exam board expectations and give staff time to prepare courses to deliver a strong provision.

### Shared Values

Be a positive role model to our learners, parents and the wider community

- Resilience • Committed to excellence • Strong team player • Hands on approach • Dependable • Adaptable

### A Passion for Learning Beyond the Classroom

We are looking for a team who are passionate about being involved in residential activities both in the UK and abroad.

All our curriculum pathways have a focus on local visits to help anchor students learning to real life contexts and to enable them to gain an understanding of the wider community in which they live. Our Sports programme will be within the local community and aimed at developing an understanding of local facilities that can be used for fitness and leisure.

### Considering working at Castledon College - CPD

As a college we are committed to CPD to help understand the various areas of SEN, coaching and therapeutic behaviour. All staff will undertake a minibuss assessment to enable them to develop the curriculum in the local community and beyond.

- Lesson times 9.30am - 2.50pm
- Term dates

College term dates are different from the school to allow staff to prepare schemes of work for exam courses, undertake professional development and complete any pre and post-course paperwork. The dates can be viewed on the school website.

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## Tips from school based Staff



**Yasmin Barrett, TA in Primary, says:**

“I am a teaching assistant at Castledon School working with the Primary pupils. I support the teacher with the class, small groups or individuals and follow any care plans, risk management plans, individual timetables and interventions required to support the pupils' needs.

### Be organised

My top tip would be to be organised! I always have a list on the go as there is a lot to keep on top of.

### Rewarding

I feel that working at Castledon School is very rewarding. I was given the opportunity to complete a Specialist Apprenticeship in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools and received a huge amount of support from all of my colleagues throughout. I feel that my colleagues always make time for questions if I need help and will go out of their way to help each other.”



**Katie White, TA in Upper School, says:**

“Working at Castledon is very challenging but greatly rewarding, there are plenty of opportunities to learn new skills and always a member of the team available to ask advice when needed so don't be afraid to ask for help as there is always someone who has been in that situation before.

### Resilient

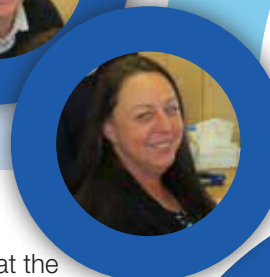
You need to be resilient and not take things to heart, our kids can be brutally honest!

### Consistent

It is very important as a team you are all consistent in dealing with sensory and behaviour so that the children know what their expectations are.”

## Tips from school based Staff

### Family Inclusion & Transition Team - Louise Cusiter and Sheri Powell say:



“Our role at Castledon is very diverse and no two days are ever the same – and to be honest, we wouldn't want it any other way! We leave our egos at the door each morning as everything we think we know will be challenged by our young people. Our class sizes are far smaller than mainstream, however, each pupil has a very unique set of needs that must be catered for in all areas of the school and much is done to help them transfer new skills into the wider community and, as our motto suggests, Learn to Live.

### Supporting teachers

We are the scaffolding, supporting teachers so that they can do what they do best, teach. The team create a link between school and home and external services, ensuring that our young people are treated holistically and needs and concerns are addressed in a timely manner, whether it be providing parents with the resources they need to address behaviours at home consistently or referring our young people to medical services.

Whilst we feel this is the core structure of our role, it is non-exhaustive so don't be afraid to ask if we can help.”



**Deborah Watkins, TA in Upper School, says:**

“I believe at Castledon you need to have patience and time to listen to your pupils, get to know them and their specific needs, you will be surprised how much a listening ear and a shoulder to lean on can help.

### Pupil support

As TA's we are expected to interact and support our young people not only in class but also on the playground. We have structured areas on the playground and games are initiated by ourselves to teach the students how to socialise, interact and share.

### Ask your class team questions

Don't be afraid to discuss any concerns or behaviours with your class team, everyone has their own ideas and suggestions and because we are moved between classes most years there will always be a member of staff who has worked with that pupil before to help with strategies.”

## Term dates

### Autumn Term:

Friday 1st September 2017 – Wednesday 20th December 2017

### Half Term

23rd October – 1st November

### Spring Term:

Tuesday 2nd January 2018 – Thursday 29th March 2018

### Half Term

12th February – 16th February

### Summer Term:

Monday 16th April 2018 – Monday 23rd July 2018

### Half Term

28th May – 1st June and May bank holiday 7th

### Non pupil days:

Friday 1st September 2017 (Inset)

Thursday 2nd November 2017 (in lieu of twilights)

Friday 3rd November 2017 (in lieu of twilights)

Monday 23rd July 2018 (in lieu of twilights)

Friday 31st August 2018 (Inset)



## Hannah enjoys helping her young pupils learn life skills and become confident



**Hannah Mansfield-Smith is a teacher at Castledon School in Essex and loves seeing the children in her care gradually grow in confidence and achieve their full potential.**

### Varied days

‘Teaching at Castledon School is hard work and you have to be very dedicated, but it is really satisfying,’ Hannah says. ‘Every day is different and presents both challenges and rewards. You never know what you are going to be faced with in the classroom each day but it is always lovely watching the children developing skills to help them lead fuller, more independent lives.’

### Targeting lessons

Hannah has been a teacher at Castledon for three years and before that she was a Teaching Assistant and Higher Level Teaching assistant at the school. ‘I have a class of 12 children ranging between Year One and Year Five and my lessons have to be targeted at different levels to benefit them all because there is a wide range of abilities.’

### Teaching skills

Hannah teaches Literacy, Maths, ICT, Topics and Life Skills and the children have specialist teachers for PE, Swimming and Art. ‘We start the day with registration and then some of the children go off on a Gym Trail,

which helps them develop their motor skills. Some will run around the fields and others will stay in the class to read or work on personal targets.

### Practical help

‘We want the children to thrive, grow in confidence and become more independent so we give them life skills lessons in practical things such as going into a shop and buying something. Our school motto is ‘learn to live’. We like to focus on their strengths and as the children progress, if they are good at one particular subject, they might be able to go to a mainstream school to attend classes in that subject.’

### Involving parents

‘We try to support the children’s parents and establish good lines of communication with them. We don’t see parents every day because the children are transported to and from school, but we email or phone them if we need to let them know about something and they contact us with concerns. We also have an on line journal where we upload pictures throughout the week of what the children are doing so families can talk about school at home. We invite parents to coffee mornings and at Easter, Christmas and on sports day. We have two meetings for each pupil a year, an annual review and a progress meeting.’

### Training opportunities

While Hannah has been at Castledon she has been encouraged to develop her professional skills. ‘We have specialist trainers coming in on our inset days to help us gain different skills and experience,’ she says.

### Helping children

‘For me, the most rewarding thing is helping children who, when they start at Castledon, regularly go into crisis and are not able to take part in lessons. If you put in the time and effort, it is wonderful to see their knowledge of ASD, or strategies to support their self-regulation, progress. This allows them to take part in learning successfully.

### Seeing progress

‘I would tell anyone considering applying to Castledon that you need to be dedicated, hardworking and have the drive to help children to do the job successfully. I have this mind-set and love my job. It is fantastic when you see children develop key skills for life, socially, emotionally or academically, through learning opportunities you provide.’

## Terri loves teaching her class of teenagers to become more independent



**Terri Crowdy has been at Castledon School in Essex for 12 years. She has been a teacher for six years and relishes the challenges posed by her current class of teenage boys with varying needs.**

### Open to change

Terri loves teaching at Castledon because the children are all such individuals and have challenging requirements. ‘I enjoy my job because I have such a varied remit and the boys are a constant joy, but you have to be flexible and resilient and be ready to change things if they are not working.’

### Practical lessons

Terri has 12 teenage boys in her class, aged between 12 and 16, and she has help from three LSAs. ‘You have to work out strategies to make learning a positive experience for them. Most of the lessons are practical because they learn in a visual and kinaesthetic way. We go out a lot so they can meet people and experience different social situations and learn to be less anxious about leaving the safe environment of the school.’

### Developing specialities

Before joining Castledon as an LSA, Terri worked in a specialist behavioural school and with children with severe learning difficulties. ‘The school have been very supportive to me and helped me while I was doing my degree. I specialise in Autism, Anxiety and Stress and Intensive Interaction. I have now become regional coordinator for Intensive Interaction and have started to train other people and can disseminate what I have learnt to the other staff.’

### Preparing to learn

In the morning the boys have to have some easing in time before starting the school day. Terri says: ‘The children are all transported here and have to have settling down time after their journey. They do sensory activities and have movement time first thing before we do registration and our Phonics.

### Varied needs

‘All the boys are different. Some are quite able, some are less able. Some are more independent, others need constant support. One of the boys is a mute and everything has to be adapted to him so he can participate in the lessons. He communicates using symbols, a voice programme on the iPad and is learning sign language. Everything has to be accessible to him so he can take part in discussions but he is making good progress and gaining confidence.’

### Learning skills

Terri says the lessons are all about equipping the boys for everyday life. ‘For example, Literacy is about helping them understand certain signs mean danger and learning to fill in an application form, or to be able to extract the relevant information from an appointment letter. When we teach Maths we help them learn money skills and about the expenses you incur if you go into assisted living. We teach them how to prepare food, because in assisted living they will have to prepare their own snacks.

### Good relationships

‘For me, the highlight of the job is the relationships I have built up with them. I get so much back from them and enjoy watching them achieve their potential. I love teaching them new things and seeing their faces light up. To other teachers thinking of applying to Castledon, I would say: Be prepared for challenges and to be flexible and able to think outside the box, but you will find it very rewarding.’

## Top five attributes which makes Castledon a major attraction for teaching staff:

An individual, pupil centred, approach to learning where the targets set are challenging but achievable and will prepare pupils for each step of their educational pathway.

A collaborative approach to planning which allows teams to work effectively, share expertise and develop a differentiated, practical, real life approach in order to set challenging activities to assist all pupils in accessing the learning strategies and, in turn, fulfil their true potential.

A support based approach for the class team in developing interventions for pupils struggling to access the learning process. This is achieved through the Phase lead, Family Inclusion Team (F.I.T) and ASC team all providing support in writing a Risk Management Plan, which clearly identifies the issues faced by the pupil and can then be used to differentiate their learning. The Co-ordinated Therapy Services (CTS) team also provides support for the class team in to ensure that the execution of the interventions through language and visuals is effective for the pupil.

A therapeutic approach that identifies the point at which pupils are being successful and then celebrating that success with them, thus inspiring them to access their learning for intrinsic reward and not punitive extrinsic reward.

Membership of a tutor group gives the teacher and TAs time to develop an understanding of the pupils' needs; build relationships and trust between themselves. Thus creating an environment to celebrate success and discuss current topics affecting society. It also provides a platform for addressing safeguarding issues which may arise via the curriculum or personal experience inside and outside the classroom.

## Family Inclusion Team (F.I.T)

As a teacher within the school you will receive support from the “Families Inclusion Team” so that you can focus on your teaching responsibilities. We offer individualised support and interventions to ensure engagement and progress across all the various needs within your class. We are in constant communication with outside agencies and networks to ensure the individual child and family are supported. We advise you on any concerns regarding your students by tracking and monitoring attendance, behaviours, medical concerns, engagement, social and communication needs.



# Autistic Spectrum Support

We have a team that supports all students on the autistic spectrum. Due to the wide spectrum of autism we don't promise to have the answers but we do promise to find a solution by tapping into our support network of schools, HUBS and professionals. Support given will be in the form of aiding you in setting up a low arousal and calm class environment that promotes independent learning for all students. We will provide you with visual resources to decrease student anxieties, aid in social preparation and increase independence. You will be provided with training in the form of social stories, using InPrint, comic strip conversations as well as interventions such as attention autism.



## Notes

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## Learn to Live – School motto

We are here to help our young people develop and maximize their life chances, impacting positively on themselves, their families and the wider community.

- To provide a curriculum that is broad, balanced and appropriate.
- To provide pupils with the skills to learn at their own individual level and realise their potential.
- To promote independence.
- To have tolerance and consideration for others
- To provide an environment where pupils can take risks and develop good self esteem.
- To provide pupils with the skills to take their place in the community and become citizens of the future



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