



## Greetings to all those who encourage and support a new University College Student Fresher!

I'm Wendy Powers and it's my great privilege to serve as the Principal of this fabulous learning community. All of us on the Castle team are excited to welcome your student in just a few short weeks, and we want to share a bit of information with you in the hope it will help you as you navigate this journey with them. Educating university students for more than 3 decades now, I am a firm believer that supporters make a big difference to each student's success.

So, there are a few things I'd like to share with you for awareness and consideration:

- Your student will likely use terminology or acronyms that make no sense to you. To highlight some of the most frequently used, our undergraduate community is called the **JCR (Junior Common Room)** and our postgraduate community is called the **MCR (Middle Common Room)** which are led by elected and selected student leaders. Students often refer to the college staff team as '**College Office**'. '**Porters**', based in the Gatehouse, help with many informal enquiries. The term '**Frep**' refers to student leaders who volunteer during Welcome and Orientation or '**Freshers' Week**' to assist new students with the transition to Durham University and help them find their feet. The student peer listening/support resource is called either '**the JCR Welfare Team**' or the '**MCR Welfare Officer**'. These trained student leaders listen and signpost peers who may be struggling.
- One of the best ways to assist your student is to encourage them to help themselves by reaching out to College and/or University Support Services if they need it. Part of the journey to independence is doing things for themselves, so **please resist the urge to call or email on their behalf unless it's an emergency**. We have a huge support framework in place here at Durham University, and all a student needs to do is reach for it.

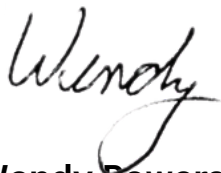


# FROM THE PRINCIPAL

- With due respect to your student's academic pursuits, research clearly demonstrates that **student involvement in college or university activities is also vital to their success**. At Durham, the opportunities are endless! From sports to performing arts, from volunteering to chapel or spiritual activities, from social activism to environmental or cultural groups and much more – choosing to participate in something beyond the classroom will help your student develop a sense of belonging in our community, will help them make friends, and will even be educational for them (sshh...don't let on student activities are educational too 😊). We hope you will encourage your student to attend College activities to meet people and attend their College and/or the Student's Union Freshers' Fair to explore the countless ways to get involved.
- Please know that **GDPR prevents us from sharing information with you about your student's experience** unless they provide us with express permission to do so. We appreciate for some that will be difficult to hear, but if your student is at least 18 years old we are bound by law to maintain their privacy.

Finally, your student is embarking on an exciting and sometimes frightening journey. They will enjoy many things about College and University, but challenges will also arise. Our college staff are here to listen and signpost, so please remind your student there are college and university resources, support them as they identify the relevant service, and encourage them to ask for help. Our Castle Student Support team can be their first port of call and details will be shared with all students as part of their welcome.

Sincerely,



**Professor Wendy Powers**, Principal and Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor  
University College, Durham University



**University College**  
Durham University

