

23 September 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Happy Birthday Appleton Academy**

Appleton is 10 years old this year. We are still very young as a school but we are very proud of what we have achieved so far. Not only have we doubled in size and moved into our new building, improved results and good behaviour means we are now increasingly recognised as being a good school. We have a hardworking, committed and strong group of staff who are dedicated to inspiring, supporting and developing Appleton's children and young people.

I'd like to thank our Appleton families for your continued support as we work together to ensure your children can be their best.

Over the course of the year, we will be organising a series of events and we hope families will join us in these celebrations.

### **Staffing**

As usual, the end of academic year bring changes in staffing. At the end of the last academic year, we saw eight teachers leave the Academy to further their careers in promoted positions; three members of staff to become deputy head teachers and others to become heads of subject. We wish the members of staff who left the Academy all the best in the future, whether they have moved on for further training opportunities, promotion, relocation or they have left teaching.

During the summer term, the Trust supported us in reviewing the leadership team structure at Appleton Academy with a view to making responsibilities easier to understand. From this year, the leadership of the Primary will be separated from the Secondary with a Head of School for each.

Miss Clayton is now the Head of Primary and Mrs Kelly is the Deputy Head of Primary. Mrs Garlick is now Head of Secondary with Mr Ayres and Mrs Whitehead both having roles as Deputy Heads of Secondary.

I will be responsible for Appleton as a whole in the role of Executive Headteacher.

We hope that this will make communication easier for families in the future.

Even though recruitment to teaching roles is a challenge nationally, I would like to assure parents that we now have a stronger staff than ever before.

### **Improvements**

The summer holidays are a very busy time at Appleton, the building gets a new coat of paint, a deep clean and any repairs are completed. This year, Exceed Academies Trust have provided Appleton with the funding to change the main entrance and office. This change is intended to make it easier for parents to have their queries answered when they visit the school. We also hope you like the new decorations too.

We also changed to a new phone provider and updated the phone system. Unfortunately, this was delayed until the start of the school year and we have since had a few problems with connectivity with our new phone company, our IT team are continuing to monitor this and work with them to solve issues then they occur. Unfortunately, the issues we are experiencing are caused by our line provider and not the new telephones themselves, which means the issues are out of our control. However, we do apologise for any inconvenience this has caused.

### **Parental Engagement**

Emily Chesterman, our new Parental Involvement Officer, has now started and many of you have met her already. She will be holding a MacMillan Coffee Morning shortly and welcoming parents into school. Please look out for additional events during the year as we would very much like to invite as many parents into the school as possible.

In a large school it is sometimes difficult to know who you need to speak to when you have queries or concerns about your child. Emily is on the Primary playground most mornings if you'd prefer to speak to her, however, Primary parents have the Class Teacher who can answer queries. Alternatively, you can call the main office or send a note in your child's book bag.

In Secondary, the Form Tutor, Assistant Head or a Head of Year are the first port of call for queries and they can speak to subject teachers, if required. Again you can call the main office or write a note in your child's planner if you would like to speak to somebody or pass on a message.

Please talk to us if you have any questions and concerns as we find that when we can work with our families, we can work through most challenges together. Our staff are very happy to work with parents to support their children's education, however, please be aware that you are likely to need to leave a message or ask for an appointment. Please don't come to the main office before school or during the day and expect to speak to somebody, as members of staff will be busily preparing for the day or teaching.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

It is well recognised that children and young people who have good attendance have well developed social skills, develop stronger friendships and have better outcomes and, therefore, more options when they leave school. Good attendance is attendance that is 96% and above. Attendance below this is unacceptable and damaging to your child's education.

There will be a renewed focus on improving attendance this year as attendance for too many pupils is below expectations. Whilst we will be celebrating those pupils who have very good attendance with a series of rewards throughout the year, we will be sending letters home and increasing the monitoring of children and young people who don't have good attendance.

Fines for non-attendance are processed by the local authorities and can be substantial. At the end of the last academic year quite a number of parents were fined for the poor attendance of their children with a number fined almost £1,000. We would of course like to work with you to improve your child's attendance and avoid such action.

We are also focusing on punctuality. Lessons start immediately each day and even missing the first few minutes can have an impact. This is particularly the case in Primary, where a child missing 5 or 10 minutes will be distressed at being late, disrupt the start of lessons for other children and will often miss vital learning such as phonics. This learning is difficult to catch up if missed.

There is an increase in the number of parents being late to collect their children at the end of the day, particularly in Primary. If you are late to collect on a number of occasions, you will receive a warning letter and we will then start charging child care costs for continued lateness to collect. Teaching staff go straight into meetings at the end of the day and it is therefore up to support staff to supervise your children, which is an additional cost.

### **School Meals**

School dinners are varied, nutritional and cost effective. As food costs increase for families, we would encourage families to find out whether their children are entitled to free school meals. Preparing a packed lunch can be costly when your child may be entitled to a free school meal. School dinners include hot options such as baked potatoes, roast dinner, fish and chips or a selection of sandwiches. Not only does applying for free school meals help families at a time of increasing costs but it also brings additional funding into school, which is used to subsidise school trips and provide teaching assistants in classes.

Entitlement to free school meals is quick to check by coming into the Academy. However, please be aware that we are unable to provide dinners for families who do not pay for a dinner when they are not entitled to a free school meal.

### **Parking**

If you drive your children to school, please be thoughtful and considerate when driving onto site and when parking. You should only park in designated bays, not in a disabled bay unless you have a disabled parking badge and you should be mindful that parents and their children will be walking onto site.

Please be aware that the road to the side of the school and across the road are for permit holders only. Please think about our neighbours and do not park in these areas.

### **School Closure Dates**

When the school year dates were issued in January, there were two closure dates to allocate. Further to the dates already provided, Friday 20 December 2019 and Monday 29 June 2020 will now also be a closure day. The Academy will be closed to all students on these date.

The government has also announced a change to the May Day Bank Holiday in 2020 to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day. The bank holiday will now be on Friday 8 May

2020, instead of Monday 4 May 2020. School will now be open on Monday 4 May 2020 and close on Friday 8 May 2020 instead.

Finally, for school dates, a reminder, that Monday 4 November 2019 is an INSET Day and the school will be closed to all students. We will re-open after the half term break on Tuesday 5 November 2019.

I have included an updated version of the term dates at the end of this letter.

### **Parent Surgery**

From Thursday 3 October 2019, members of the leadership team will be available every Thursday in the Community Room from 3.00pm until 4.00pm. This is an opportunity to come in and discuss your queries or concerns and will continue for as long as parents use the surgery.

### **Pupil Data Sheet**

When your child starts at Appleton, we collect essential information which includes allergies, contact numbers and other information we need to safeguard your child. This year we are reviewing this information with parents and asking you to complete GDPR permissions.

To support us in completing this task, we are running an incentive for the classes and form groups who are the first to have ensured that data collection forms have been handed in by all children and young people by Friday 11 October 2019. The first class to achieve this in Key Stage 1, Lower Key Stage 2, Upper Key Stage 2 and in each Secondary year group will enjoy a celebration afternoon. Completed forms should be returned to school with your child and handed to the Class Teacher or Form Tutor.

Please complete the parental questionnaire by following the link below:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?d=0VteuAAfpE2VgEa0-D3Zx01kvH5AfFOnjgAu0sC7nVUOVdjNkpMNEFFRjewTE9ZMkxRREpKuo5My4u>

Finally, I would like to thank parents, carers and families for your continued support.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen Jones".

Ms H Jones  
Principal

### **Appleton Academy Updated Term Dates 2019-2020**

#### **Autumn Term**

Open	Tuesday 3 September 2019
Half Term Close	Friday 25 October 2019
Re-open	Tuesday 5 November 2019
Close	Thursday 19 December 2019

#### **Spring Term**

Open	Monday 6 January 2020
Half Term Close	Friday 14 February 2020
Re-open	Monday 24 February 2020
Close	Friday 3 April 2020

#### **Summer Term**

Open	Monday 20 April 2020
<i>Bank Holiday</i>	<i>Friday 8 May 2020</i>
Half Term Close	Friday 22 May 2020
Re-open	Monday 1 June 2020
<i>INSET Day</i>	<i>Monday 29 June 2020 (Closed to All Students)</i>
Close	Friday 17 July 2020