

December 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

It is time to reflect on a long but very successful term at Appleton Academy. There have been such a large number of fantastic events and achievements taking place across the school. The library has once again been an exciting place to be, with Mrs Parr organising visits from authors, including Bradford born George Layton and the illustrator of the Iron Man, Chris Mould. This was particularly exciting as we discovered Chris was a Wyke Manor old boy, who attended the school in the 1980s, and was really impressed with the new school and our students. Primary and Secondary children are also working to become published authors through the First Story project and we are looking forward to the book launch for Primary next term. As ever, Mrs Parr has made sure that reading is at the heart of our school.

Our Primary children recently enjoyed the Christmas Fair and they have performed at Christmas nativities and events, which have been attended by over 700 parents. There has also been a great deal of activity in Secondary, with our young people preparing for the Rosa Parks Symposium at Bradford University, enjoying a cultural visit from a group of Spanish policemen, a trip to Old Trafford and a visit from the BBC. In addition, we have had a term packed full of activity for the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and the Appleton choir singing in the community.

There are too many positive experiences to mention but I recommend that you join the Appleton Academy official Facebook page as there are regular stories and photographs of all the good work that goes on at the school every day.

Pastoral Support

This academic year we are focusing on supporting children and young people with their social skills. We investigate all reports of bullying and more often than not we find that friendship issues are at the heart of problems when our pupils find school a challenge. This term we have trained another group of Anti Bullying Ambassadors who will support children and young people. We have also trained a group of children to become 'Heroes' support their peers with positive conversations and all children from Years 3 to 10 have taken part in a workshop to encourage positive social behaviour. This focus on building successful friendships, positive thinking and communication and being kind to one another will continue for the remainder of the school year.

Parental Engagement

Thank you to those of you who have taken an active role in supporting the school community, working with us to ensure your children have a positive experience at Appleton Academy. It has been lovely to see so many of you attend parent evenings and events.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you need further information about your child's education, if you would like to know how to support at home or you have questions or concerns. It has been noticeable this year that, when we know there is an issue and can meet to discuss this, we can find a positive solution in nearly all cases.

You can contact Appleton by emailing us at info@appletonacademy.co.uk, via a letter delivered with your child or by calling the main office. Please ask to speak to the class teacher or Head of Year in the first instance. They will usually not be able to speak to you straight away but will call you back and/or arrange an appointment to meet with you.

If you have a complaint, there are procedures that all Exceed schools must follow and details are available in the Complaint Policy, which can be found in the 'Policies' section of the Appleton website. The first aim is ensuring an informal resolution can be reached but we do also follow the formal complaint process set out in the policy.

Please talk to us, we are happy to help.

Appleton Phone Line

We have moved to a new telephone provider over the course of this term and a cloud based system for the telephone infrastructure. The changeover has led to a number of difficulties, more than we had believed would be caused by the change. This has meant that, at times, parents have had difficulty getting through to the main office. We are continuing to work on this and have changed the way the phones work and added a queuing system, which will give you an idea of how long you will wait for your call to be answered. Our IT team will continue to monitor the phone systems and we are hopeful that many of the issues have been resolved. However, I thank you for your patience and offer my sincere apologies if you have had difficulties contacting us.

Illness and Attendance

The recent norovirus outbreak has been particularly challenging with a large number of children, and staff becoming ill. Unfortunately this is something that is affecting people across the country so we will continue to be vigilant. Our cleaning company continues to follow Public Health guidance on cleaning throughout this period and additional cleaning is taking place every day.

The recent outbreak has had an impact on attendance. Please ensure your child attends school whenever they are well enough to do so but do follow guidance on illnesses such as norovirus to ensure that they are well enough to do so. Children with attendance below 95% have an increased likelihood of not making the progress they should do and are more likely to experience friendship issues and so we are always grateful for your support in ensuring your child is in school when they are fit and well. We have recently re-launched the attendance challenges and after Christmas there will be a draw for supermarket shopping vouchers and other awards linked to attendance and behaviour.

We will continue to investigate poor attendance and contact parents when necessary. This may also result in monitoring by the local authority and, in some cases, fines.

Staff

We are saying a fond farewell to Ian Rowley who has worked at Wyke Manor and Appleton Academy for over 24 years as a member of site staff. Ian is usually the person who is here at 6.00am getting the building ready for the school day. He has been a fantastic member of the Appleton family and we wish him all the best as he enjoys a well-earned retirement.

Mrs Thompson, Mr Wandsworth and Miss Clough are also leaving at Christmas and, sadly, leaving teaching altogether. We wish them all the best in the future.

Both Mrs Garlick and Miss Clayton will be writing to you to introduce new members of staff but I am pleased that we are welcoming Mr Bennett to Appleton Academy in January. Mr Bennet is the new Assistant Headteacher for Attendance, Behaviour and Welfare. He is very experienced and looking forward to joining us.

Parking

The New Year is always a good time to walk to school as we seek to fulfil our resolutions. However, if you do have to drive, we would make a strong appeal to all parents and visitors to be more considerate and respectful of the school site and surrounding areas, including our neighbours on Woodside Road where permit parking is in force. Please do not park in disabled bays unless you need to use them and are permitted to do so. Please refrain from parking on footpaths, crossings and any other areas where parking is not allowed. Please be considerate of other drivers and most of all our children and our staff. Remember that this is a school and we are responsible for safeguarding YOUR children. Some of the examples of poor and, frankly, dangerous driving and parking we see on site make this extremely difficult and have led to a number of 'near misses' where accidents have had to be averted this term. If this situation does not improve, we will work more closely with the police and local authority to put in place effective solutions, which could include parking and highways enforcement, which we have started to look into further.

Reviews

As part of our drive to continue to improve the quality of education at Appleton Academy, we regularly have reviews undertaken by independent, external experts who report back to Exceed Academies Trust. I am pleased to say that the eight days of review this term have all been very positive and recognise that Appleton is increasingly a good school.

The external Primary review commented that we have the following strengths:

- *The Early Years provision remains outstanding.*
- *Leaders are well on their way to providing a coherently planned curriculum, which builds upon pupils' interests and ambitions, designed around pupils knowing more, remembering more and understanding more.*
- *Pupils confirm that their teachers explain topics well. Pupils are mature and able to reflect on the quality of teaching they receive.*
- *Pupils explained, "we enjoy reading and our guided reading lessons are good". Pupils are able to explain their favourite authors and say "we also have a number of authors coming into school to speak with us, which is really encouraging".*

The report from the external Behaviour reviewer stated "I was impressed by the behaviour of the pupils. Those I spoke to were polite, well-mannered and almost always positive about the school. The atmosphere in the canteen was good humoured and orderly, both in and out of lessons, I was frequently struck by how pleasant and amenable the overwhelming majority of pupils seemed to be".

The external Secondary review identified:

- *There is a good vision for careers in the curriculum, whereby the world of work is tied into existing units of work thereby giving the work done in school more relevancy to the real world.*
- *In all the lessons visited, behaviour was generally good. Pupils engaged well with the work.*
- *In assemblies and on corridors, pupils are mostly well behaved. Any behaviour that falls short of the Academy's high expectations is addressed promptly. As a result, pupils' conduct at lunchtime and break times and between lessons is good on the whole.*

While there is still work to be done to ensure Appleton Academy is securely good in all areas, the hard work of all those involved in improving the quality of education is having a positive impact, as evidenced during these visits from independent, external experts.

Christmas Closure

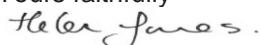
Appleton Academy closes for the Christmas break on Thursday 19 December 2019 and re-opens on Monday 6 January 2020.

2020-2021 Term Dates

A hard copy of the terms dates for next school year can be found at the end of this letter. These are also available on the Academy website.

Finally, it just remains for me to thank our children, young people, families and staff, who are working together to ensure Appleton Academy is a school to be proud of. I wish you all a Happy Christmas and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Helen Jones".

Ms H Jones
Executive Headteacher

Appleton Academy Term Dates 2020-2021

Autumn Term

Open	Monday 7 September 2020
Half Term Close	Friday 23 October 2020
Re-open	Monday 2 November 2020
Close	Thursday 17 December 2020

Spring Term

Open	Tuesday 5 January 2021
Half Term Close	Friday 12 February 2021
Re-open	Monday 22 February 2021
Close	Friday 26 March 2021

Summer Term

Open	Monday 12 April 2021
<i>Bank Holiday</i>	<i>Monday 3 May 2021</i>
Half Term Close	Friday 28 May 2021
Re-open	Monday 7 June 2021
Close	Wednesday 21 July 2021

(The 2021-2022 school year will commence for all students on Monday 6 September 2021)