

17 June 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to inform you of an emergency change to the end of the academic year.

As many of you may be aware, we are now approaching 10 years since the opening of the Academy building. As those of us who remember the predecessor school sites know, our move to the fantastic facilities we now have in the heart of the community has undoubtedly contributed to the continuing improvements being made at Appleton Academy, which were rewarded with our Good Ofsted judgment in November 2021.

However, what is less well known is that, as with many large-scale building projects, we have to manage a number of residual defects. One such issue is the stability of the dining hall concrete sub floor. Over the years, this has shown signs of deterioration due to faults dating back to when the Academy was originally built, and the floor was laid.

Due to these faults, the Academy has had a programme of inspection and maintenance in place that has allowed us to manage the issue. However, we have also always continued dialogue with the original contractors and the Council, with a view to eventually replacing the sub floor in the dining hall to resolve this issue once and for all. Finding a permanent solution would prevent us having to continue to undertake regular, costly repairs, which are time and resource intensive.

These conversations have been complex and lengthy and have frustratingly taken almost 8 years to conclude. However, we are pleased to say that we have now reached an agreement with the flooring contractor and the Council for work to take place to remove the existing concrete sub floor and replace this, which will provide the permanent solution to the issues of deterioration we have been managing and assure us of the stability of the structure for the long-term.

This work will be extensive, and in its early stages involves digging up the existing floor and removing underfloor heating. The whole project will take 6 - 8 weeks to complete, which makes the summer break the obvious time to undertake this. At the beginning of the project, there will be contractors on site doing preparatory work, but we can work around this with relatively little disruption to school. However, after long discussion with the contractor, it has become clear that the scale of the demolition and construction work to remove the current floor could present a risk to the safety and wellbeing of pupils, due to the noise and dust that will be generated on site.

Therefore, I am writing to advise parents that we have reluctantly taken the decision, in agreement with our Local Advisory Board and colleagues at Exceed Academies Trust, to instigate an emergency early closure of the Academy to pupils from the end of the day on **Tuesday 19 July 2022**.

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Whilst there is a risk that this work could overrun during the summer (as there is with any large construction project), the last stage of the work involves relaying the vinyl flooring and removing construction equipment from site, which will not produce the noise and dust that will be generated at the start of the work. There are also contingency plans in place for an alternative dining area and to re-room teaching at the start of September 2022 should we need to. We expect, therefore, that the new academic year will start as planned on Tuesday 6 September 2022. We will, however, write to you again at the end of August to provide additional information about the start of the new school year.

We recognise that this decision to close the Academy to pupils for the summer earlier than was originally planned will cause inconvenience and concern to parents and carers, and we would like to sincerely apologise for this. However, due to the nature of the heavy works that need to take place on site, and the overall length of the project, the contractor has asked to start work on Wednesday 20 July 2022.

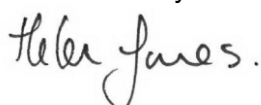
We are currently finalising plans to provide work and online learning for pupils for the three additional closure days from Wednesday 20 to Friday 22 July 2022, and this will include live, online teaching being delivered to pupils by teachers. We are also making provisions for parents of children who receive free school meals to receive additional support in the form of food vouchers to cover the additional closure days. More details of how these plans will work, timetables, resources and other important information will be shared with parents as soon as possible.

We are acutely aware of the disruption that has been caused to children's learning during the last couple of years, and we are sorry to add to this. However, we must prioritise the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff which, due to the nature of this work, makes this emergency closure unavoidable. The early closure of school to allow the project to commence will, though, ensure the least possible disruption to teaching and learning.

As with so many other things in the world currently, this project is subject to the contractor being able to ensure resources are in place for completion of the work. If there are any changes to the work schedule, we will ensure that parents are updated immediately.

We would like to thank you for your support and understanding in this matter, but if you do have any questions or concerns, please email these to [info@appletonacademy.co.uk](mailto:info@appletonacademy.co.uk) in the first instance, and we will arrange for staff to answer these or contact you to discuss them further.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Jones".

Ms Helen Jones  
Executive Headteacher