

June 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing to parents of secondary students to politely remind you about attendance procedures at Appleton Academy.

### **Appointments during the school day**

If your child needs to leave school for an appointment at any time during the school day, the Attendance Office must be provided with evidence of the reason for the appointment in advance. This can be a letter, email or confirmation text from the place where the appointment is taking place i.e. doctor, dentist, hospital or other organisation, showing the reason for the appointment and the date and time.

This evidence should be sent via email to [attendanceteam@appletonacademy.co.uk](mailto:attendanceteam@appletonacademy.co.uk) or can be sent as a screenshot via text message to 07860 095503. This should be sent prior to the appointment date, ideally with a number of days' notice so that staff can be informed.

Without evidence, your child's absence will not be authorised, and the Attendance Team will call you to confirm the reason for the appointment. Repeated, unauthorised absence for these reasons will lead to a fall in your child's overall attendance rate at school and could lead to further discussion with parents about next steps in the Academy's Attendance Policy and Procedures to address these concerns.

We understand that many organisations are under increasing pressure, particularly those in the NHS such as doctors, hospitals and health specialists, and so sometimes appointment waiting times can be long or the appointment offered is the only option available. However, we would encourage parents, wherever possible, to take advantage of the availability of appointments outside of school hours for GP or routine dental appointments especially. If this is not possible, appointments should be made at the beginning or end of the school day, when available, to minimise the disruption to your child's learning.

Students are expected to attend school both before and after an appointment. Full day absences for these types of appointments will not be authorised as, although this is very rarely necessary, we are finding an increasing number of children are being absented from school by parents for a full day simply to attend short, routine appointments. Unauthorised absence for these reasons will affect your child's overall attendance. Routine appointments that can be accessed outside of school hours (such as with an optician for example) will not be authorised.

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### **If a child falls ill during the school day**

We have robust policies for caring for children who become unwell while attending school, or who have accidents or illnesses that may require support from parents or medical professionals during the school day. This ensures that we keep our students as safe as possible while they are at school.

We would, therefore, ask for your support in ensuring that students follow the correct procedure if they begin to feel unwell at school. These policies and procedures are regularly reiterated with students in school and we would ask that you remind them at home that, if they feel unwell at school, they must follow the procedures we have in place to address this.

If a student becomes unwell at school, any decision to send them home will be made by a member of the pastoral team or the Academy's Healthcare & Wellbeing Officer. Students will be carefully assessed and a decision will be made as to whether a student can remain in school or needs to be sent home.

If your child is too unwell to remain in school, we will contact you by telephone to ensure that someone is available to collect them. Students who are ill will not be allowed to leave site and make their own way home due to the obvious risks this would present. Students will be expected to be collected by a parent or carer from the Academy's main office – we will not allow students to be sent out to a waiting car. This process must be adhered to.

Students should not be using their phones to call parents from school to say that they are unwell. This is a breach of the Academy's Mobile Phone/Device Policy and we adopt zero tolerance for their use other than at designated times in the day. This is also a failure to follow the Academy's process for managing and reporting illness and could lead to a delay in staff being made properly aware of a child who is feeling unwell, which could in turn delay care being provided to them. If a child reports to staff that they are feeling unwell, we will always contact parents to inform you. However, if Academy procedures are not adhered to, and you contact school to ask for your child to leave school following them getting in touch with you directly, you will be expected to come into school to collect them so that we can discuss the matter with you.

I would like to thank you for your continued support of the Academy, our policies and procedures and, most importantly, ensuring that your child is attending school to receive and access the learning that they are entitled to. Excellent attendance of school is proven to be key to the success of our children and we aim to ensure that all students at Appleton are able to attend school as much as possible.

Yours faithfully

Heidi France  
Attendance Leader