

October 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach the end of our first half term, I thought it would be a good opportunity to share some of the highlights of the year so far, as well as providing some reminders and conveying information about upcoming events in the busy run up to Christmas.

Our new students

It has been our pleasure to welcome new students into Year 7. We are really pleased with how well they have settled into our school. It has also been lovely to see our older students being such excellent role models and supporting our new joiners to find their way around, as well as facilitating some of our extra-curricular activities. We know that there is always a lot of information to take in when starting at a new school so, to support our new students, we are holding a parents' evening **on Thursday 2 November 2023**, where you will have the chance to meet your child's tutor and teachers to discuss how they have settled into secondary school. More information regarding this event and how to book appointments has been sent out this week.

Year 6 Choices Evening

It was fantastic to see so many prospective students for September 2024 and their parents at our choices evening, which was held earlier this month. Feedback from the evening was excellent with some wonderful comments about our staff and students. Thank you to all of our current students who supported these events and made them so successful, they were a credit to you and the school.

Enrichment

Our enrichment programme is now well underway. We have had nineteen clubs taking place this half term, with students enjoying a wide range of options including mountain biking, singing, and drama among many other exciting activities. We would encourage students to play a full and active part in life at Appleton and enjoy everything we have to offer.

Careers Events

We are delighted to be continuing our careers programme for all year groups, with a particular focus this half term on Year 11 and their next steps. We have hosted visits in school with a number of Sixth Form and College providers coming in to speak to our students about what they can offer. We also held a mock results day and a revision workshop day for students, which was followed by a careers fair for students and parents at which a host of providers were in attendance. This was well received by parents and students. On Friday 20 October 2023, our Year 11 students will spend the day at Bradford College to experience a range of taster courses, which will give them a flavour of what life in Sixth Form could be like. We are also continuing to develop our links with a range of local companies and organisations. A number of our Year 11 students went to visit Solenis, the local manufacturing company, to find out what they do and how they support job opportunities within the local community. Our art students have been exploring their sketching skills with our artist in residence, Chris Mould, and our writers have been working with our writer in residence, Nik Perring, to develop their creative writing. In form time, all year groups have also been learning about a range of different careers. You can find out more about our careers programme in our first newsletter here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8wnhvd>

Uniform

Thank you for your support in ensuring that our uniform standards remain high. The overwhelming majority of our students look very smart and are a credit to you and the school. Unfortunately, we still have a small number of students who do not meet our uniform standards. Please can we remind you that hoodies and non-school jumpers are not permitted. Blazers are a mandatory item of uniform and the expectation is that these are worn at all times, unless otherwise directed by staff. Where students do not comply with our expectations, we will continue to impose sanctions, which will escalate if non-compliance persists.

Mobile Phones

We would like to remind you that we do have a policy of not allowing pupils to use their mobile phone at any time within the school building. Unfortunately, the issue of mobile phone use became a growing problem during the last academic year and continues to cause problems in the new term for a minority of students. Increasingly, schools are moving to systems that involve pupils handing in their phone at the start of the day before collecting them as they leave after school has finished. We would seek to avoid this at all costs, but we need to work together with parents and students to prevent us having to implement something similar at Appleton.

The expectation is that young people leave their phone in their pocket or bag all day, keeping it on silent or powered off. If they do not do so, their phone will be confiscated and can only be collected at the end of the day by a parent. We will be rigorously enforcing this expectation during this academic year and we are asking you to support this. All too often, parents call their child or accept a call from their child during the school day and this is not helpful. Please do not contact your child on their mobile phone during school hours and be respectful of staff who implement our rules. It is totally unnecessary to contact your child, as you can use the contact details on our website if you need to get a message to your child. We have included more avenues to do so this year due to how busy our phones can be, which includes emailing info@appletonacademy.co.uk in the first instance, as this email address will be permanently monitored. We have also improved the systems in our admin office for call management, which means staff are now able to answer more calls.

If you call your child or take a call from them during school hours, this then adds to the problems we have in school with use of phones and may mean that children face additional sanctions if they are caught using their phone. Thank you in advance for your support with this.

Attendance

Improving attendance is continuing to be a significant priority for us, as there are still too many children with poor and intermittent school attendance. Regular school attendance is essential for your children if they are to maintain and develop their friendship groups, and to leave school with good qualifications. It is unfortunately the case that if your child is not in school, they struggle to keep up with friendships when they return, which often leads to social problems. Poor attendance is a common factor in every case where parents raise concerns about their child and their social times. Please read the guidance on our website around attendance and support us in ensuring that your child attends school regularly and on time.

Catering



It is lovely to see so many of our students choosing to eat with us at break and lunch time. Please remember that students can access free chilled water in our dining room and we encourage students to bring a refillable bottle with them. As the cold weather arrives, please remind students to bring coats as some of their lunchtime will be spent outside.

Newsletters

We are delighted to share our first newsletter with you which gives an overview of the faculty areas of secondary. Please see the link here: <https://appletonacademy.co.uk/parents/newsletters/>

We will aim to share a newsletter twice per half term, which will provide insights into daily life at the Academy, along with good news stories about the wonderful opportunities our children have had over the term. As part of our newsletter, we would like to have an alumni feature where we share what students who have attended Appleton in the past are doing now and celebrate their achievements with them. If you know someone who attended Appleton Academy who would be interested in coming to visit school or share their story in our newsletter, please get in touch via info@appletonacademy.co.uk. We would love to hear from them.

Forthcoming Events

The second half term is always full of exciting events in the run up to Christmas. As ever, full details will be circulated closer to each event and details will also be found on our website. However, please find a list of some of these events below:

Partial non-uniform dates:

Friday 17 November 2023 – Children in Need – wear something yellow/spotty

Thursday 7 December 2023 – Christmas Jumper Day

Dates for parents' diaries:

Thursday 2 November 2023 – Year 7 parents' evening (face to face) 4.30pm to 6.30pm

Tuesday 7 November 2023 – Year 11 Post 16 application support workshop

Monday 13 November 2023 – Year 11 mocks begin for two weeks (mock timetable here: <https://tinyurl.com/3tvntpce>)

Friday 15 December 2023 – Last day of school term (normal finish time)

I hope you all have a restful and enjoyable break next week and we look forward to welcoming students back refreshed and ready to work hard over the next half term.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Garlick".

Rachel Garlick
Head of Secondary