

December 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

It has been a very busy term for secondary students and staff and our latest newsletter will give you an insight into some of the wonderful opportunities our young people have been able to participate in and enjoy. In my end of term letter, I want to share with you a few brief highlights and some key information in readiness for next term.

Year 11

The Year 11 Prom Committee have been extremely busy this half term, raising funds for their end of year prom. They have sold candy canes with special messages, held a bake sale and the Attendance Team put together a hamper that was raffled to raise over £600. A polite reminder that attending the prom is a privilege and not an entitlement. Students have been set criteria around attendance, uniform, behaviour and attitudes and this will be used to decide who is eligible to attend the prom. We will provide you with regular updates on whether your child is on track to achieve this or not. If you are worried about buying a prom dress or suit for your child nearer the time, then please get in touch now so that we are aware and can start to contact potential donors.

Spring term will be a busy one for Year 11 students, as they start to prepare for their next set of mock examinations in February. In order to support this, Period 6 lessons for all students will begin again on Monday 8 January 2024.

Students have had visits from all our local college providers this term and attended a very successful taster day at Bradford College at the end of the last half term. From January 2024, colleges and Sixth Form providers will begin to accept applications for places, therefore, it is important that your child starts the application process for their chosen courses as soon as possible. If they or you need any help in completing application forms, please let us know or contact our careers team led by Sophie Hayward: Sophie.hayward@appletonacademy.co.uk

Opportunities and Events

We have been fortunate enough to have been able to provide a range of opportunities for our young people this half term, many of which are covered in our newsletter and have included:

- 30 Year 10 students joined the Speakers Trust for the day
- Year 7 enjoyed a road safety presentation
- Year 9 had a 'positive choices' day focused around making the right choices when exposed to influences such as drugs, knives and gangs
- Over 200 students across all year groups entered a national creative writing competition
- A number of students across all year groups performed in the end of year Performing Arts Showcase attended by parents
- 91 Year 11 students visited Yorkshire Sculpture Park as part of their GCSE course

PTO

Uniform

A reminder that students should return after the Christmas break in full school uniform, including appropriate footwear and outdoor coats. 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. If you are struggling to afford uniform, shoes or other items for your child, please contact us at the Academy so that we can offer support.

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.

Attendance Challenges for the Spring Term

School re-opens to students on **Thursday 4 January 2024**, and, in order to ensure a good start and help students build good attendance habits, we are offering a **free lunch meal deal** (worth £2.45) for all those students who are in school on the Thursday and Friday of the first week after the Christmas break. All students who attend on both Thursday 4 and Friday 5 January 2024 are eligible for this award – it is not a prize draw but will be credited immediately to those students who have achieved this.

Our Attendance Team are also delighted to be launching a brand-new initiative starting in the New Year. The 'Perfect 10' will see every student's attendance monitored every 2 weeks:

10 school days (2 weeks) @ 100% attendance = 'Perfect 10'

Every student who achieves their 'Perfect 10' will be entered into a fortnightly draw to win prizes that recognise their effort to build good attendance habits. The Attendance Team will also have a focus on those students whose attendance falls between 87% and 92%, in order to challenge them to get back to good attendance. We will share more details with parents in the New Year. Finally, all parents should expect to receive a letter after the break, giving them an overview of their child's attendance for the year to date.

Holiday Support

Christmas can be a difficult time of year for some of our students and their families. If you feel that you or your child need support over the Christmas break, please see our website link here: <https://appletonacademy.co.uk/parents/mental-health-support/> for a range of services that may be able to help.

Newsletters

We are delighted to share the third edition of our secondary newsletter, which provides more information about all of the exciting events and initiatives that have been happening at the Academy over this half term. The newsletter also contains a special section called 'Appleton Ambition', which highlights the work undertaken by our Careers Team. Our newsletter can be found on our website and via this link: <https://shorturl.at/aulS6>



Forthcoming Events

The next half term is a slightly shorter, yet equally busy, half term. As ever, full details of events will be circulated closer to each one taking place and will also be available via our website. However, please find a list of some of these upcoming events below:

Thursday 4 January – Return to school for all students

Friday 5 January – Free lunch for students who attend both days of the first week back

Tuesday 9 January – Apprenticeship Evening for students and parents (Years 7 to 11)

Thursday 18 January – Year 11 Mock Exams Results Day

Monday 5 February – Year 11 Mock Exams begin

Thursday 8 February – Year 9 Parents' Evening

Christmas Card

We have been fortunate enough to have Chris Mould, a renowned illustrator of books such as Iron Man, and a former student at our predecessor school, Wyke Manor, working with us at school as our artist in residence this year. Chris has kindly donated an image from his own collection for us to use on our Christmas card, which we have sent to every child in secondary.

Finally, it only remains for me to say that I hope you all have a restful and enjoyable Christmas break and we look forward to welcoming students back in January 2024, refreshed and ready to work hard next year.

Yours faithfully

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

Rachel Garlick
Head of Secondary