

February 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

It's been a short but busy half 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 had since we returned after Christmas. However, in this letter, I want to share with you some of the highlights and provide key information to you in readiness for the next half term.

Year 11

Year 11 have begun the final stages of their preparation for their end of year exams. They had their mock exam results back in January, following the papers they sat in December 2023, and have just started their final set of mock examinations, which will provide staff with an insight into the remaining revision topics students need to focus on before their GCSE exams in May. Students have also been attending February half term revision sessions in a range of subjects. There will be no Period 6 sessions for at least another three weeks, as staff use this time to mark mock exam papers and plan the next set of Period 6 sessions, which will be based on those results.

Opportunities and Events

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

- Years 9 and 10 Duke of Edinburgh students planted over 700 trees on the school site as part of their John Muir award
- All secondary students took part in our Apprenticeship Week activities during form time and lessons, with a different focus each day
- On Safer Internet Day, all students took a survey looking at their exposure to online harms and worked on ways of keeping themselves safe online as part of a pilot project that the school is taking part in alongside Step2
- Year 10 trip to York as part of their media coursework

Uniform

A reminder that students should return after the half term 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 in school so that we can provide 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 Spring Term 2

School re-opens for students on Monday 19 February 2024. The Attendance Team are delighted with the success of the 'Perfect 10' attendance initiative which sees every student's attendance monitored every 2 weeks:

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

Every student who achieved their 'Perfect 10' in the last half term was entered into a fortnightly draw to win small prizes to recognise their efforts to build good attendance habits. The draw is open to all students in secondary and is not linked in any way to behaviour or achievement in school, which is rewarded separately. The 'Perfect 10' initiative will continue this term.

Class Charts Launch

Towards the end of this half term, we launched the parent app for Class Charts, which allows parents to see the achievements and behaviour data for their child, as well as information about detentions and school announcements. Unfortunately, shortly after the launch and due to completely unforeseeable circumstances, Class Charts suffered with a number of technical issues which they needed to resolve. As a result of this, we were asked to suspend parental access to Class Charts. We would like to apologise for this decision having to be made so soon after access was launched. This caused as much frustration for us as I'm sure it did for you. I am confident that we will be able to relaunch Class Charts in the early part of the next half term and we will be in touch to let you know as soon as we are able to do so.

Year 9 Options Evening

Year 9 Options Evening will take place on Tuesday 5 March 2024, which follows the Year 9 parents' evening we held last half term. A copy of the options evening booklet will be available one week before the options evening takes place, which should allow parents and students to look at the options available and discuss these together before making decisions. There will be an options assembly for Year 9 students on the day of the options evening and there will be an opportunity at the options evening for parents and students to speak to staff to ask any questions they have.

Newsletters

We are delighted to share our fourth newsletter of the year, which gives you an idea of what has been happening at Appleton Academy. Our newsletter can be found on our website in the 'Newsletters' section.



Forthcoming Events

The next half term is another short, yet equally busy period. As ever, full details will be circulated closer to each event and details will be on our website. However, please find a list of some of these below:

- Monday 19 February – Return to school for all students
- Monday 19 February – Year 11 mocks continue for two weeks
- Tuesday 27 February – Year 8 Booster English and maths day
- Wednesday 28 February – Year 9 Booster Day for English and Maths
- Monday 4 March to Friday 8 March – National Careers Week
- Tuesday 5 March – Year 9 Options Evening
- Wednesday 6 March – Women of Wonder bus visit to school
- Thursday 7 March – World Book Day
- Friday 15 March – Red Nose Day
- Wednesday 20 March – Year 11 Drama, Wizard of Oz theatre trip
- Wednesday 20 March – Years 9 and 10 Scholars Programme launch evening

I hope you are all having a restful and enjoyable half term break and we look forward to welcoming students back refreshed and ready to work hard from Monday 19 February 2024.

Yours faithfully

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

Rachel Garlick
Head of Secondary