

March 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

It's been another short but incredibly 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 had this half term. In my end of term letter, I want to share with you a few brief highlights and some key information in readiness for the summer term.

### **Year 11**

Year 11 Period 6 sessions have begun again and the Easter revision session schedule can be found at the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/mtxarzxv>

GCSE examinations have already begun in some subjects and there are less than seven weeks until the exam season begins in earnest. Parents of Year 11 students will receive an update on their child's progress after half term, when we will send out a report detailing their final predicted grades for the summer exams following their recent mocks. Parents will also receive the next 'on track' letter informing them if their child is on track for the prom and the end of term trip. I would like to take this opportunity to remind parents that the prom and trip are not an automatic entitlement for students and it is a privilege reserved for those that have met and exceeded our expectations, which have been made clear all year.

### **Opportunities and Events**

We have been fortunate enough to have a range of opportunities for our young people this half term and details of these can be found in our newsletter. In my letter, I would like to focus on a few key events that have taken place during this half term.

### **National Careers Week**

Careers education at Appleton is an important part of our offer for young people. This half term it was National Careers Week and every department in the school planned a range of careers based activities, where students learnt about how their subjects could be applied in the real world. We also had a number of virtual workshops with providers such as the NHS, the National Space Agency and the British Army. The week was a resounding success with a whole host of activities taking place for students and some wonderful, thought-provoking discussions.

### **Red Nose Day**

This year's Red Nose Day event is the most successful we have had in a long time with a great range of activities for students to 'pay to play' and a thorough soaking of seven staff finished the day off nicely. Thanks to the generosity of our families and children we raised a final total of £880.12p for charitable causes and I would like to pass on our thanks to everyone who donated.

### **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 at the Academy so that we can offer support.

### **Mobile Phones**

We have had a very clear policy around the use of mobile phones in school since September and this has not changed. Mobile phones and other electronic devices, such as headphones, are not expected to be seen or used in the Academy at all during the school day. Students who are seen using their phone or electronic device will have it confiscated and this will need to be collected by parents at the end of the school day. Students will then be expected to hand their phone in daily to the pastoral team. Government guidance about the use of mobile phones in school is very clear and we would ask parents to support us in reinforcing this by not calling or texting their child during the school day.

### **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. You will receive a letter updating you about your child's attendance via email at the end of half term.

### **Attendance Challenge for the Summer Term**

Schools opens for students on Monday 8 April 2024. The Attendance Team are delighted with the success of the 'Perfect 10' attendance initiative, which sees student's attendance monitored every two weeks.

In order to continue to push good attendance habits, a new summer attendance challenge will begin on Monday 8 April 2024 and there will be two prize draws - one at the end of half term five and another at the end of the school year. For each 'Full 5' i.e. a full week that your child attends school, they will receive a prize draw entry for £50.00 worth of shopping vouchers. For each 'Perfect 10' they will receive a prize draw entry for £100 worth of shopping vouchers (in addition to the smaller prize draw already in place), and for each further week where they have 100% attendance, they will gain an entry into a prize draw for £150 worth of shopping vouchers. This is explained in more detail in our newsletter. Some students are also part of an attendance challenge called the '100 Club' and Miss Earl, our Attendance Lead, will write to you separately about this.

### **Class Charts Launch**

Towards the end of the last half term, we launched the parent's app for Class Charts, which allows parents to see the achievements and behaviour of their child in school as well as detentions and announcements. If you have not yet signed up, we would ask that you do so at your earliest convenience. If you are struggling to sign up please contact us.

### **Staff Leavers**

We have some staff who are leaving or have left us this term. Caroline Harris, an Assistant Head of Year, who worked with us since September 2001, retired during the February half term break and is looking forward to some time to relax. Caroline is the most patient person anyone could meet, which has made her a fantastic Assistant Head of Year. As someone who was in post in the predecessor school, and had been with Appleton as we improved, she has worked with some very challenging, upset and vulnerable young people (and parents). She approached each situation with a sense of calm and a reassuring smile. Caroline had put off retirement for three years and has finally taken the step. She is looking forward to long walks with her labradoodle, George.

Carol Pinder, one of our teaching assistants is retiring. Carol has worked at Appleton and it's predecessor school since 1998. Carol has been a valued member of the team of staff who support our young people with their education as they move through secondary and beyond. She has offered encouragement, support and challenge where needed to hundreds of children. As a result of her hard work, a warm smile and endless patience, young people with SEND have received the support they need to feel confident and successful. Carol is looking forward to enjoying a slower pace of life as she begins her retirement.

Janet Clavin, another of our teaching assistants retired in February after 35 years at Appleton. Janet is a very experienced and skilled teaching assistant who has worked with some of our most vulnerable young people, and probably some parents and even grandparents too. She has a warm, friendly manner with young people who have a range of learning needs. Janet's patience means she has been a valued support for young people who find their time in the classroom a challenge. Her expertise and manner have provided a great deal of confidence, and those she has worked with have gone onto successful futures. Unfortunately, Janet has not been well and will take the time to recover and enjoy her retirement.

Saima O'Reilly, Teacher of English is moving on to another school in Bradford after three years with us. Josh Carr, Teacher of DT has a new opportunity in a school in Calderdale and Will Tuckwell, Teacher of History is moving to the south of England for a new opportunity. We wish them all well for the future and thank them for their contribution to the school.

#### Newsletter

We are delighted to share our sixth newsletter of the year, which gives you an idea of what has been happening in the Academy over this half term. Our newsletter can be found on our website and using this link: [https://issuu.com/appleton\\_academy/docs/newsletter\\_6\\_22.03.24](https://issuu.com/appleton_academy/docs/newsletter_6_22.03.24)

#### Forthcoming Events

This next half term is a longer one, consisting of seven weeks and unbelievably we only have fourteen weeks of the school year remaining. This term will be one of the busiest for students as we have our GCSE examinations beginning in earnest for Year 11. I have provided a brief overview of the events happening this term and, 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 events below:

Monday 8 April - Return to school for all students  
Monday 8 April - An Inspector calls theatre performance for Years 10 and 11 students  
Monday 8 April - Year 8 Age of Wonder surveys  
Monday 15 April - GCSE Spanish speaking tests begin  
Monday 15 to Weds 7 April – Year 10 Geography field trip residential  
Monday 15 to Friday 19 April – Year 9 Age of Wonder surveys and health measures take place  
Monday 15 April - GCSE practical exams in textiles and photography  
Monday 22 April - Year 10 Age of Wonder surveys  
Monday 22 April - GCSE practical exam in art  
Monday 6 May - Year 11 GCSE exams begin  
Tuesday 7 May - Year 8 Parents' evening  
Friday 24 May - End of Half Term

I hope you all have a restful and enjoyable break and we look forward to welcoming students back refreshed and ready to work hard.

Yours faithfully

*Rachel Garlick*

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Head of Secondary