

April 2025

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 we have provided for our young people to enjoy. In this letter, I wanted to share some key reminders with you as we prepare for what will be the final term of the year once we return from the break.

First though, we would like to let you know of three wonderful pieces of news regarding events that have taken place over the last term. The Academy was extremely pleased to be nominated and shortlisted for the Telegraph and Argus Bradford Secondary School of the Year Award. The ceremony took place on Thursday 3 April 2025 and we are delighted to inform you that Appleton Academy won the award! An article with more information about the award will be included in a special supplement that will be in the Telegraph and Argus on 10 April 2025.

We have also recently been awarded the Artsmark Gold Award in recognition of our commitment to embedding arts culture and creativity across the Academy, which is fantastic recognition of our creative arts team and the hard work of students too. Finally, we have also been nominated for a Bradford School Sports Award in the 'Active Schools' category. This award celebrates Bradford schools who help to provide opportunities for their students and staff, which keep them active and we will find out in May if we are successful.

Year 9 Age of Wonder

The Bradford Age of Wonder team recently delivered an assembly to all Year 9 students about their research and the contribution students can make to this important project. Next term, the project team would like to take blood samples from children as part of their research into the health of young people in Bradford. Consent for this to take place is an opt-in process and parents of all Year 9 students have been sent an email about this stage of the project. More information can also be viewed on our website via this link: <https://appletonacademy.co.uk/secondary/year-9/> For parents who consent to this phase of the project, samples will be taken from students in school on Tuesday 13 May 2025.

Library books

Please could you remind students to return any library books they have borrowed on the first day of term.

Year 11

There are some revision sessions planned to take place in school during the Easter break in preparation for the English and maths exams. Mrs Derrington has already written to parents and the link to read this can be found here: <https://appletonacademy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Easter-Revision-Year-11-Letter-Easter.pdf>

When we return after Easter, there are only two school weeks before the formal exam period begins for Year 11. The first exam of the season actually takes place on Tuesday 6 May. Spanish and other language speaking examinations take place in the week prior to the formal exams. It is important that students attend school on time and every day in the final push before exams begin. We would also like to remind both parents and students that the Government removed any entitlement to 'Study Leave' for Year 11 many years ago. Therefore, all students are expected to be present in school and continuing to work hard when they are not participating in an examination. Students will not be allowed to leave school after examinations.

We do, however, make some changes to the school day to accommodate revision sessions prior to each exam and Mrs Derrington will share the schedule with students and parents after the Easter break.

The official school leaving date for Year 11 students is the last Friday in June, which this year is Friday 27 June 2025. While students may finish their formal exams on 17 June 2025, there is a built-in contingency date for exams to continue until 25 June 2025 should there be any unforeseen disruption to exams. It is, therefore, extremely important that students are available up to and including their official leaving date, in case any of their exams are pushed back to this later time. We would, therefore, respectfully request that parents do not book holidays or other events until after the Year 11 leaving date. If your child is not available for an exam, they cannot take this at a later time during this exam period and they will lose the opportunity to achieve the grade their hard work of the last year would have merited.

It may be possible for students to be excused from attending school once they have finished all of their exams (if this is before the contingency date), unless there is any outstanding coursework to complete for their vocational qualifications. We will let you know in advance should that be the case. If a student fails to attend an exam, the full cost of the entry will be charged to parents.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish your children well in their upcoming exams, they have worked extremely hard and we look forward to celebrating their success with them in August.

Uniform

A reminder that students should return after the Easter 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 so that we can speak with you about the support we would be happy to provide where possible.

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 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.

This term, we have been focusing on ensuring that you are regularly informed if we have concerns about the attendance of your child, including through letters, texts and meetings in school. This is intended to be a supportive measure to keep you informed that your child may be near to, or reaching, certain thresholds that may trigger further action to improve attendance. We will inform every parent when your child is nearing or has reached this threshold and detail the potential action that this may lead to, regardless of the reason for their absence or what has led to a drop in their attendance.

However, we would also like to reassure you that we will always look at each case individually before deciding which action to take to improve a student's attendance. We also look to work with parents to support improving attendance before taking a more punitive approach and we would ask that you contact us to discuss any concerns you may have. If you are invited to school to discuss our concerns, then it is important that you attend to avoid further action being taken.

Attendance Challenge for the Summer Term 1

School re-opens to students after the Easter break on Tuesday 22 April 2025, at the usual time of 8.45am for Years 7 to 10 and at 8.30am for Year 11.

We will be launching a new attendance challenge for the summer term, which we will write to you about before school re-opens and we hope will allow us to recognise and reward the achievements of far more students than has been the case with previous initiatives.

Holiday Support

School holidays 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 break, please see links to resources on our website here: <https://appletonacademy.co.uk/parents/mental-health-support/>

Newsletters

We are delighted to share our third newsletter of the year, which will give you a more detailed idea of all of the fantastic activities and events that have been happening at Appleton over the last half term. Our newsletter can be found on our website or via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/4cn7af7d>

Forthcoming Events

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

Tuesday 22 April 2025 – Year 9 Scholars Launch Evening
Thursday 24 April 2025 – Year 8 World War 1 Workshops with a Visiting Speaker
Monday 28 April 2025 – Year 9 Booster Vaccinations
Monday 5 May 2025 – School closed for the Bank Holiday
Tuesday 6 May 2025 – GCSE Examinations Commence
Wednesday 14 May 2025 – Year 9 Duke of Edinburgh Residential

I wish you and your family a restful and enjoyable Easter break. We look forward to welcoming students back to school on Tuesday 22 April 2025, refreshed and ready to work hard.

Yours faithfully

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

Rachel Garlick
Head of Secondary