



February 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

We have reached the end of Half Term 3 and it is amazing to think that we are now halfway through the academic year. It is set to be a busy but short half term when we return to school on Monday 23 February 2026, with only 5-weeks until Easter. Half Term 3 has been another wonderfully productive period, full of exciting opportunities for our students, as well as some fantastic achievements that you can read about in our newsletter here: <https://tinyurl.com/mtn78a3j>.

As usual, I would like to take this opportunity to offer a few reminders about school expectations, as well as provide you with some key dates for the half term ahead.

Year 11 Final Exam Preparations

Year 11 begin the final part of their exam preparations this term, with their last set of mock exams and a number of practical examinations taking place. It is important that students attend the externally set practical exams, as these cannot be retaken and form 60% of their GCSE grade. Students have been working very hard and we wish them every success as we enter the final phase of their time at Appleton Academy. Mrs Derrington and Mr Bellwood have written to parents separately outlining some key dates and other information as we approach this critical time of the school year.

Expectations at Appleton

As you are aware, we work hard to maintain high expectations of conduct and behaviour at Appleton Academy and we are proud of the feedback we have from visitors, which speaks of the warm, calm and focused environment in school. To maintain these high standards, we need your support to ensure that after the half term break students return in the correct uniform and footwear, including PE kit. We would like to acknowledge that the vast majority of our pupils arrive each day dressed smartly and in full correct uniform, and we truly appreciate the effort families put into supporting this. However, over recent weeks, we have noticed an increase in uniform issues for some pupils, particularly regarding jewellery, facial piercings and PE kit. We kindly ask all parents and carers to take the half term break to ensure that your child has the correct uniform and arrives in this each day.

Key reminders from the Uniform & Appearance Policy are covered below.

Jewellery

Only the following are permitted for secondary learners:

- One discreet stud in each ear
- One ring per hand
- A watch

Hoop earrings are not acceptable at any time and no facial piercings of any kind are allowed.

Footwear

- Pupils must wear plain black school shoes that are polishable
- Shoes should be suitable for the school environment and must not resemble sports footwear

PE Kit

- Pupils must wear plain navy blue or Appleton Academy–branded PE kit
- Leggings are not acceptable PE uniform
- Trainers must be appropriate for physical activity



The full Uniform and Appearance Policy can be found on our website by following this link: https://appletonacademy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Uniform-Appearance-Policy_Appleton-Academy-1.pdf

On our return to school, we will be carrying out uniform checks each morning. Where uniform does not meet expectations, pupils may be asked to remove prohibited items, borrow uniform, or we will contact home so that appropriate adjustments can be made.

Mobile Phones and other Electronic Devices

Our expectations around mobile phone use were established at the start of the year with the introduction of phone pouches. This approach has been highly successful and we would like to thank parents for their support in helping students recognise the value of being free from phones and distractions during the school day. As you may be aware, the government has now recommended that all schools move towards becoming phone-free environments, so we are pleased to have been ahead of the curve by implementing this early. This policy helps students stay focused on their learning and supports them in building positive, healthy relationships with their peers during social times. If your child has accidentally taken a phone pouch home, we would ask that this is returned to us at the start of next half term please.

Attendance

Improving attendance and punctuality continues to be a significant priority for all schools, as there are still too many children with poor and sporadic school attendance. We have worked hard this year to update parents regularly about their child's attendance and to support those who are struggling to attend. However, there is still work to be done.

We will continue to focus on ensuring that you are regularly informed if we have concerns about the attendance and punctuality of your child, including through letters, in-app messages and meetings in school. This is intended to be a supportive measure to keep you informed if your child may be near to, or reaching, certain thresholds that may trigger further action to improve attendance. Next week all parents will receive a letter outlining their child's attendance for the year to date. This is part of our standard attendance procedures and is for information purposes only.

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.

We also ask that you understand and follow these measures to support us further:

- Ensure that your child attends school on time at 8.40am every day (8.30am for Year 11 at present).
- If your child is going to be absent due to illness, contact the attendance team by calling or sending a text to 01274 421053, email attendance@appletonacademy.co.uk, or send a message through the Arbor app/portal on **every day** of the absence.
- Avoid booking appointments, e.g. dentist/doctors/opticians during the school day. Any appointments taken during the school day will need to be accompanied by evidence or they will be classified as unauthorised absences.

Your support with attendance expectations is greatly appreciated and will significantly contribute to your child's success. Should you wish to discuss attendance further, please contact the team by emailing attendance@appletonacademy.co.uk in the first instance.



Key Dates

We have a condensed half term when we return on Monday 23 February 2026 and I would like to provide advance notice of some key dates below. As always, we will write to parents nearer the time about each separate event as required.

Year 11 Mock Exams – Commence Monday 23 February 2026
Year 9 Scholars Visit to Huddersfield University – Tuesday 24 February 2026
Year 8 Scholars Visit to Wilberforce Museum Hull – Wednesday 25 February 2026
National Careers Week – Commences Monday 2 March 2026
Year 10 Families' Evening – Wednesday 4 March 2026
World Book Day – Thursday 5 March 2026
British Science Week – Commences Monday 9 March 2026
Careers Coffee Morning – Monday 9 March 2026
Years 8 & 9 Northern Ballet Art & Dance Workshop – Wednesday 11 March 2026
Years 8 & 9 Northern Ballet Trip to Gentleman Jack – Thursday 12 March 2026
Year 9 Age of Wonder Online Surveys – Commences Monday 16 March 2026
Year 8 Families' Evening – Wednesday 18 March 2026
Red Nose Day – Friday 20 March 2026
Year 10 Age of Wonder Surveys – Commences Monday 23 March 2026
Year 9 Go Present Campus Visit to University College London – Wednesday 25 March 2026
Year 7 Families' Evening – Wednesday 25 March 2026

By working together, we can create a positive learning environment where every student can reach their full potential. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in your child's education.

Yours faithfully

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

Rachel Garlick
Head of Secondary