

March 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

We have almost reached the end of half term and, although it has been a short one, it has been as busy as ever for staff and students. We will not be sending out a newsletter this half term due to the short period of time since we returned in February. However, we will ensure that the next edition of the newsletter is a bumper one.

I would, though, still like to take this opportunity to tell you about some of the wonderful events and activities students have been taking part in and provide some key information as we head into the summer term.

Red Nose Day

Thank you so much to everyone who got involved in our Red Nose Day fundraising on Friday 20 March 2026. Such was the fantastic take up and participation in events by students and staff, we are still counting funds raised and will provide you with an update once this has been completed.

Year 11 Countdown to GCSEs

Year 11 begin their GCSE examinations in just a few short weeks. Please ensure you check the Arbor app for your child's exam timetable. The full Year 11 exam timetable can be found on our website via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/mr4c8wc4>.

Students will continue to attend school throughout the exam period in this half term. Prior to each exam, we will also offer specific revision sessions to ensure that students are well prepared. We wish students the best of luck and know that the hard work and preparation they have undertaken in school and at home will stand them in good stead.

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 we focus on this because it is one of the most important factors affecting a child's progress, confidence, sense of belonging, and overall wellbeing in school.

We know that when children are in school regularly, they learn more consistently, build friendships, feel part of the school community, and generally make more progress. Regular attendance helps children *achieve*, feel that they *belong*, and ultimately *thrive*.

Good attendance isn't about ticking boxes — it is about opportunity. Even small amounts of missed time can make a big difference because:

- **Learning is sequential** – when a child misses a lesson, the next one can suddenly feel harder, which can knock their confidence and make it harder for them to achieve their best.
- **Friendships develop daily** – being away from school can make it harder for children socially. Feeling connected and included helps them develop that strong sense of belonging that every child needs.
- **Routine supports wellbeing** – children thrive on structure, and regular attendance helps reduce anxiety, build positive habits, and strengthen resilience — all the things that help them thrive both now and in the long term.
- **We want to help early** – if attendance dips, it is often a sign that a child or family needs support, so we raise it to offer help, not blame. Supporting attendance is part of helping children achieve, belong, and thrive.

Of course, one day on its own doesn't seem like much but over time it adds up. Five days of absence per term becomes twenty days a year, which is almost a full month of lost learning. Over weeks and months, these small gaps can affect a child's progress, friendships, and feeling of connection to school. We want to ensure that small things do not snowball and that your child doesn't miss out on the opportunities that help them move forward with confidence.

We do not focus on attendance because we are concerned about school statistics — we focus on it because we care about your child. We want them to achieve their potential, feel that they belong at Appleton, and thrive in every aspect of school life. If there is anything making attendance difficult for you and your child, please tell us. We are here to work with you, not against you, and to make sure your child has every chance to succeed.

Each half term we have a specific attendance campaign with the aim of highlighting the importance of good attendance whilst celebrating those who have excellent or improving attendance. Next half term our theme will be '**Commit for 6**'. We are asking students to commit to 6-weeks of good attendance. We will be focusing on those students with sporadic absence – those who have 'broken weeks' in that they do not manage to complete a full week in school.

End of Term

Friday will bring the end of our attendance challenge for this half term 'Let's drive for 25 days' and we have a range of ways in which we will be recognising good and improving attendance on the final day of half term. You can find out more via our Facebook page.

School will have an early finish at **2.00pm** for all secondary students on Friday. School re-opens on Monday 13 April 2026 at the usual time.

Key Dates.

As usual, we will write to parents/carers nearer the time about each separate event as it occurs. However, below are some key dates for your diaries:

Year 9 Options Evening – Wednesday 15 April 2026 4.30pm to 6.30pm
Year 11 GCSE language speaking tests - w/c Monday 20 April 2026
MMR vaccines and boosters – Tuesday 28 April 2026
May Day Bank Holiday – Monday 4 May 2026
Commencement of Year 11 GCSE Exams – Tuesday 5 May 2026
Years 8 & 9 Scholars Event – Wednesday 6 May 2026
VE Memorial Day Friday 8 May 2026

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and partnership in your child's education. I hope you have safe and restful Easter break.

Yours faithfully

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

Rachel Garlick
Head of Secondary