

May 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

We find ourselves at the end of what has been a longer half term and certainly a very busy one for secondary students and staff, which has included some wonderful opportunities for our young people to involve themselves in. In this letter, I will share with you some brief highlights, as well as key information in readiness for the final period of summer term.

Year 11

GCSE examinations are well underway and the conduct of students has been impeccable. By the end of this half term, students will have sat up to twelve exam papers each, with another twelve to go (for some) after half term. This can certainly create pressure on young people but I am proud of how well they are coping so far. If you or your child do require any support, please read the information on the 'Exams' tab on our website, or email info@ in the first instance and staff will contact you directly to discuss this.

Leavers' assembly will take place on Wednesday 24 June 2026 between 10.30am and 12.00pm. Students will be able to come with their school shirts to be signed to take away as a memento or dressed in their own clothes. We would kindly ask that, if possible, you donate any uniform items or revision guides that may no longer be needed, which we will ensure go on to other students who would appreciate these. If your child has a phone pouch they forgot to return, please also ensure these are returned as these are Appleton Academy property.

Opportunities and Events

We have been fortunate enough to offer a range of opportunities for our young people this half term, more details of which can be found in our newsletter, which will be with you just after the half term break. However, I will outline a few of the highlights in this letter and provide information of those still to come next half term.

The SMART Social Media Research Programme

We are delighted to be working with the Born in Bradford research team on a new project exploring the impact of social media on young people, particularly in regard to their mental health and anxiety levels. We featured on the BBC local and national news after they came to see us to discuss the project and the involvement of our students. Additional information can be found in this article if you would like to read more about this groundbreaking trial:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cdxpkxl5wqgq>

Combined Cadet Force

This term we launched our own Combined Cadet Force (CCF) Unit after a considerable amount of hard work behind the scenes from a dedicated group of staff led by Mr Bell. The CCF gives our young people access to fun, friendship, action and adventure. We inspire our cadets to aim high, while providing them with the skills, values and attitudes to go further in life.

The CCF is a national, voluntary, uniformed youth organisation. It offers challenging adventurous and educational activities, some with a military theme but all designed to help participants develop and thrive with skills for adult life. The CCF is sponsored by the British Army but is not part of it and there is no requirement on cadets to join any of the armed forces. Our cadet detachment had its first parade in April with the unit formed from Year 8 students, supported by staff volunteers and cadets from the community who attend school in Years 10 and 11. Please see our newsletter for more details.

National Thank a Teacher Day

National Thank a Teacher Day will be celebrated on Thursday 18 June 2026. We would love your help in celebrating all of the amazing teaching and support staff in our school - from the lunchtime helpers, classroom assistants, librarians through to our teachers. They deserve a day to be recognised for the incredibly hard work they do!

Do you want to make someone's day? If you know a special teacher, dedicated support staff member or even a whole school team, let them know how grateful you are by sending a free e-card at <https://thankateacher.co.uk/thank-a-teacher/thank-a-teacher-form/> or if you prefer you can fill in our form here: [National Thank a Teacher Day 17th June 2026 – Fill in form](#) and we will make sure your message is shared with the relevant staff members.

Uniform

A reminder that students should return after the half term break in full school uniform including appropriate footwear. We have noticed an increase in the number of students not wearing ties, or who are borrowing but not returning uniform items. Please can you ensure that your child has full school uniform. From next half term, if we loan an item to a child and it is not returned the following day, we reserve the right to add this as a charge to your Arbor Pay account.

Blazers are a mandatory item of uniform and the expectation is that these are worn at all times, unless otherwise directed by staff. 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.

Attendance

Improving attendance is continuing to be a significant priority for us and, with your help, we have made some real progress over the last few months but there is still more to be done. Too many children have sporadic absence, which is one or more days off every week. Regular school attendance is essential for your child 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.

As is usual, you will receive a letter updating you about your child's attendance via email at the beginning of next half term. Our final attendance challenge of the year will start on the first Monday back with our summer theme being the 'Summer Sprint.'

Newsletter

Our next newsletter will be published during week commencing Monday 1 June 2026.

Forthcoming Events

This last half term consists of 7-weeks and is, unbelievably, the final part of the school year – it has come around so fast! It will be one of the busiest periods for students, as GCSE examinations continue for Year 11, as well as mock exams for Year 10.

I have provided a brief overview of some of the events happening this term below and, as ever, full details will be circulated closer to each event and details will be on our website.

Monday 1 June 2026 – Return to school for all students
Monday 1 June 2026 – Year 10 mock exams begin
Thursday 5 June-Friday 6 June 2026 – Year 10 Duke of Edinburgh assessment
Monday 15 June – Year 9 Scholars visit to London
Thursday 18 June 2026 – Careers fair for students and parents from 3.30pm
Thursday 18 June 2026 – National Thank a Teacher Day
Tuesday 23 June 2026 – Year 7 RAF hydrogen challenge
Wednesday 24 June 2026 – Year 11 leavers' assembly
Friday 26 June 2026 – Year 11 Prom (Invitation Only)
Monday 30 June 2026 – Year 10 Tech 'She Can' workshops
Monday 6 July – Year 10A/B Geography field trip
Tuesday 7 July – Year 9 options taster day
Wednesday 8 July 2026 – Year 10C Geography field trip
Wednesday 8 July 2026 – Summer showcase Shakespeare festival
Friday 10 July 2026 – Secondary sports day
Thursday 16 July 2026 - End of the school year

I hope you all have a restful and enjoyable break and we look forward to welcoming students back refreshed and ready to work hard for the final half term of the year.

Yours faithfully

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

Rachel Garlick
Head of Secondary