



The
Appleton
School

Headteacher's Bulletin to Parents

March 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we approach the exam season can I remind parents that intervention sessions are well underway in all subjects for students in Years 11 & 13. Should you require any further details please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

As you will be aware, 2nd March was National Offer Day when primary students were notified of their secondary school places. We are delighted to inform you that once more the school will be full with 300 places offered, a large waiting list, and many student appeals.

Although a short term, we have still managed to pack in a rich variety of activities and seen our students excel on a county-wide and national level. From superb success in the National Maths Challenges to showcasing our wonderful student talents in our KS3 Dance Festival and our recent Performing Arts Awards Evening. In terms of our sporting successes Appleton has had an exceptionally strong season. This is shown by the achievements across a wide range of sports. In Football we were Year 7 Finalists and Year 10 District Champions, in Netball our Year 8 girls placed 3rd in the National Bowl Competition, in Trampolining and Gymnastics we were District champions in all categories, in Cross Country in the regional Inter-counties Year 7 Oliver Bard placed 3rd out of all Essex boys runners, in Rugby our Year 7 were semi-finalists of the Essex Schools Bowl competition and 4th in the Districts, in Year 9 we were semi-finalists in the Essex Schools 7s tournament and finally we were 3rd in Year 7 Boys and Girls District competitions for basketball.

Through all these events our students continue to show our school values of resilience, respect, community and aspiration to achieve excellence together, and demonstrate what it is to be an Appleton Student. A huge congratulations to all students that have been involved in all these opportunities this term.



I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate the success of over 900 students who have received a positive rewards letter in recognition of their achievements every day in the classroom this week. Well done to all students who have received these recognition of achievement letters.

We wish all of our students, parents, and staff a restful Easter break and look forward to welcoming everyone back after the Easter Monday Bank Holiday on Monday 13th April.

Ms S Cox

TRUST UPDATE

I am delighted to announce that we have received the winning logo for our school's new name. Following our student design workshops last half term, we had dozens of entries, ten of these were selected for art working into a stylised design by Cleverbox – these were shortlisted by a panel to three designs created by **Anya Hounsell, Finn Rushen and Sahaj Harji**. Students had to provide a rationale along with their design idea. Please see below the final overall winning design for Harris Academy Benfleet. Huge congratulations go to our winner, **Finn Rushen in Year 9!**

WINNING CONCEPT

Student Work

Year 9 Student

A stylised figure representing achievement and personal growth.

The star burst symbolises aspiration and the surrounding support of teachers, peers, and family.

The upward motion represents striving and the pursuit of excellence.

- Aspiration / Striving for goals
- Community / Support
- Achieving Excellence

Harris Academy Benfleet

MOBILE DEVICE POLICY UPDATE

Following the Department for Education's updated guidance that schools should be mobile-device-free-spaces, we are pleased to confirm that the new **Mobile Device Policy for The Appleton School is now finalised and will come into effect on Monday 13th April 2026**. Following feedback from parents/carers, students and staff it has been decided to **strengthen the current 'not seen, not heard' policy**.

What does this new policy look like?

This will mean that from Monday 13th April 2026, before a student enters school property, **all mobile devices must be switched off and placed in school bags until students exit from school property at the end of the day.** The policy takes immediate effect once students cross the boundary of Student Services reception (if entering via the pedestrian gate from Croft Road) or the back gate (from Merton Road), and applies to all areas of the school grounds both inside and outside the building as well as during all movement and social recreational times including before and after school, breaks and lunch times. **Students are not permitted to keep their device in their pockets.**

How will the rules be enforced?

If a **mobile device is seen, heard, or used (*)**, whilst on school property it will be confiscated and kept securely in the school safe, where it can be collected at the end of the school day by the student if a first offence. If there should be a second offence, it will be confiscated and collected by the student's parent/carer or nominated adult only. **If this should happen a third time, the device will be confiscated, and an outright ban will be in force for that student for the remainder of the academic year.** That student will also be subject to random screen scanning/ searching during the ban period. Screen scanning and searching will be carried out in line with our current policy. If any student refuses to hand over their device, then in addition to an outright ban they will also receive a sanction of a suspension. **If a student arrives to school without a bag, they will be scanned to ensure they do not have a mobile device in their pocket.**

What about Sixth Form Students?

Sixth Formers will be permitted to use their mobile devices in the Sixth Form Block only, or as directed by staff to support a learning opportunity in a lesson. Sixth Formers will be expected to follow policy at all other times as soon as they enter school property via the pedestrian or vehicle gates (Gate B).

What about students with medical needs?

Reasonable adjustments will be explored for any student who relies on their mobile device for medical tracking (i.e. for diabetes). This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Adjustments must be signed off by the Headteacher in advance and will then be recorded on Arbor and within the student's Health Care Plan.

How are students being told about these changes?

Each year group has had a presentation to update them on these new policy changes. This will be followed up by assemblies on Monday 13th April. Students can speak with their Head of Year or Assistant Head of Year if they have any questions.

What do we need from you?

Please ensure your child has a school appropriate bag to store items needed for lessons, and their mobile device. Also, please ensure your child is clear on this policy and its consequences.

The full mobile device policy can be found within the behaviour policy, by clicking [HERE](#). **FAQs can be found [HERE](#).**

Should you have any questions that are not covered via the links above please do not hesitate to contact the school via email at info@theappletonschool.org.uk.

We would like to thank you for your feedback in the designing of this new policy, and for your support in ensuring the school can continue to maintain a calm and safe environment for all students to learn and thrive.

() By 'used' this means if evidence comes to light that a student has used their phone (e.g. in messaging a parent/carer) but this may not have been witnessed by staff at the time.*

UNIFORM

We shared a letter from the Harris Federation with parents/carers on 2nd February. In that letter, they advised that there will be a new uniform from September 2026, to go with the new school name and logo. Over the last month large groups of students from different year groups have been meeting with staff to look at different uniform designs and give their student voice. Once we have further information to feedback about this, it will be shared with all parents and carers.

In the meantime, I wanted to share one of the initial proposals from these meetings. The proposal would be for trousers only as part of the new uniform from September. These would be an unbranded item but would need to be plain black tailored trousers, (no cords, skinny trousers, cropped trousers, leggings, studded or zipped pockets or shorts). It would also mean that not as much learning time will be taken up in school addressing uniform issues, mainly the length of some of the skirts that are being worn.

Uniform promotes our ethos, provides a sense of belonging and identity and sets an appropriate tone for education. I

want us all to be as proud of our school as I am, and this starts with our uniform.

Naturally I would welcome your views on this so please feel free to email any feedback to: TAS@theappletonschool.org

It would be helpful if any feedback is emailed by Tuesday 14th April, so that parental views can be considered before any final decisions on uniform are made.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Student Leadership at The Appleton School continues to flourish, with twenty-nine distinct roles offering students a wide range of opportunities to develop essential leadership skills. Through these roles, students build confidence in areas such as initiative, accountability, leading by example, maintaining a positive outlook, and adopting a proactive attitude. The Student Leadership Team is united by a genuine passion for making a meaningful contribution to the school community.

This year, we were delighted to welcome new members into a variety of roles, including Junior Prefects, Performing Arts Leaders, Sports Leaders, Form Captains, and Student Council Representatives. These students have already made a significant impact, actively supporting the school through key events such as open evenings, parents' evenings, performing arts productions, and numerous sporting fixtures.

Our Reading Leaders have played a vital role in supporting students across all year groups, providing targeted assistance during registration to those who benefit most from additional reading support. Meanwhile, Form Captains and Student Council members meet each half-term to share student voice, contributing thoughtful ideas on how school policies and procedures can be refined to further enhance the learning experience.

The Senior and Junior Prefect teams have also demonstrated outstanding commitment through their regular duties. These include supporting Year 7 students with reading during morning registration, conducting weekly equipment checks for Year 7 and Year 8 tutor groups, running lunchtime board games clubs, and helping supervise and support Year 7 students in the POD area as they settle into school life.

We were also extremely proud to host another successful Student Leadership Conference, attended by over 150 student leaders. The event featured valuable workshops, including a safeguarding session led by Assistant Headteacher Mr Stockdale, and an inspiring keynote on leadership from external speaker Jenny Nyarko, a Learning and Development Partner with the Metropolitan Police. Together, these experiences have further enriched our students'

understanding of leadership and their ability to make a positive difference within our school community.



The event was a great success, providing students with valuable opportunities to develop their leadership skills through a range of engaging workshops. These sessions enabled students to deepen their understanding of the core values and principles of student leadership, alongside the importance of safeguarding. Feedback from students was overwhelmingly positive, and many are already looking forward to attending the next Student Leadership Conference.

RECEPTION - EASTER HOLIDAYS



Please note that the school's Reception will be open on Tuesday 31st March from 10am to 12 midday and Thursday 9th April from 9am to 11am.

JACK PETCHEY/WHOLE SCHOOL REWARDS



Jack Petchey

The Jack Petchey Foundation was set up by Sir Jack Petchey CBE to inspire and celebrate young people. Since 1999, over £143 million has been invested in programmes to benefit young people aged 11-25 across London and Essex.

Each year we have the privilege of celebrating 9 of our lower school student's success and 3 of our sixth form alongside two of our faculty. This year it was amazing to have some of our Alumni attend the event with our students throughout each year group.

Jack Petchey is about recognising achievement from all our young people. If you are aware of any of our students that have done something inspiring in our local community, please contact us, as we would love parents, along with our teachers, to nominate our students who deserve that additional credit.

If you know of a student that has been outstanding and believe that they deserve to be awarded a Jack Petchey prize you can nominate using the below link.

<https://forms.gle/oEPqthvNKFhCWADp9>

School House System

Throughout this year our students in Years 7 up to 11 have been competing with one another in their Houses: Austin, Turing, Tull and Nightingale to be successful in achievement of the most points and participating in whole school events. Each term we have had Year winners and overall winners. Currently House Austen are leading the school going into our final term. The scores so far as follows:

31753	29525	35250	39268
POINTS	POINTS	POINTS	POINTS
Grand Total			135796

Subject Badges



It has been amazing to see so many students looking to achieve recognition from individual subjects, through being awarded Subject Badges. Subject Badges can be earned over an eight-week period and cards can be collected from student services. We currently have **1048 badges** that have been awarded through Years 7 – 11 and I would encourage all students to challenge themselves to earn one in their subjects.

Headteacher Badges



Finally, we are looking to reward our Key Stage 3, Years 7, 8 & 9 students with our Headteacher's Award. Students can achieve Bronze, Silver, Gold Crest awards respectively during the Summer Term. In order to achieve the Headteacher's crest students are required to meet certain criteria, such as outstanding attendance and punctuality. Students must also be a role model and their behaviour needs to be exemplary in all their lessons.

BTSA



Do you want to train to be a teacher?



Can you inspire the next generation?

Find out more about our leading teacher training programme with a tax-free training bursary or scholarship of up to £31,000

find out more at www.btsa.uk
or email mhoward@theappletonschool.org



SIXTH FORM NEWS

This term has been particularly busy for our Sixth Form, with a focus not only on planning for the next cohort but also on ensuring the continued success of our current students.

Sixth Form Applications & Guidance Interviews

This year, we again have had a record number of applications received to attend our Sixth Form. All prospective students that applied have completed a guidance interview with a member of the Sixth Form team to ensure they receive support and get all their necessary questions answered. All interviews have now been conducted and conditional offer letters have been sent out. We are now looking forward to our induction days that are being held in July later this year.

Sixth Form Charity Week & Volunteering

Our students continue to make a positive impact within the school community. The Sixth Form Student Council recently organised a highly successful charity week, which featured a variety of activities, including the popular 'sponge a teacher' event. The council chose the charity 'Gold Geese' as the beneficiary of their fundraising efforts, raising an impressive £689.56 for this worthy cause. As part of our work within the school community, a number of our Sixth Form students are actively involved in supporting the main school, particularly through mentoring programs aimed at raising achievement. One such initiative is the regular mentoring sessions with Year 7 students, which has proven to be particularly impactful.

Year 13 PPE Week

Year 13 have now fully completed their final PPE week in preparation for A-Level examinations, which officially starts on Thursday 7th May 2026. We wish all our students the very best during the forthcoming examination period and would like to congratulate them on their hard work, effort and determination so far. Intervention has been up and running since January and our Sixth Form counsellor is available upon request for drop-in sessions.

Post 18 Destinations

We are pleased to report that 97% of our students that have applied to university have received at least one offer across a broad range of courses. Our commitment to supporting our students in both their academic and personal development remains a priority. For instance, during the last week of the spring term we hosted an external company, who led our Year 12 students' Pathways to Employment Day, during which they received expert advice and had the opportunity to refine their interview skills.

CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Careers Guidance and Support

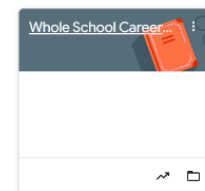


Our Year 11 & 13 students have now completed their personal careers guidance interviews, allowing them to fully focus on their GCSE/A-level revision during this important time

We know that planning next steps can still feel overwhelming, so please remember that support is always available. If you feel that your child would benefit from additional guidance, we are here to help. We would like to wish all Year 11 & 13 students the very best of luck in their upcoming exams and in taking their next steps beyond school – we are incredibly proud of them.

If your child would like any additional careers support, please contact Mrs Moyo via the school office or email: careers@theappletonschool.org

Whole School Careers Notice Board



Students now have access to the Whole School Careers Notice Board through Google Classroom - an excellent resource to help them explore opportunities beyond the classroom.

Updated weekly, it includes:

- Work experience opportunities
- Apprenticeships
- Taster days
- Competitions and enrichment activities

We encourage you to ask your child to check this regularly and take advantage of the many opportunities available. Students can join by accepting the invitation sent to their school email.

Unifrog



Thinking about the future isn't always easy, but Unifrog is a fantastic platform designed to support students every step of the way.

Used regularly in school, Unifrog gives students access to:

- Career ideas and pathways
- Up-to-date labour market information
- College, sixth form, and university options across the UK
- Apprenticeship opportunities
- Helpful videos, articles, and live webinars

Students can also shortlist options and begin planning their next steps with confidence. We strongly encourage regular use at home so you can explore options together.

If your child has trouble accessing their account, please contact Mrs Moyo for support.

Year 10 Mock Interview Day



We are delighted to share that our Year 10 Mock Interview Day was a huge success!

Employers were extremely impressed with the professionalism, confidence, and maturity shown by our students.

We were proud to welcome guests from organisations including Ford, Greater Anglia Railway, NatWest and HMRC.

Well done to all students involved—you represented the school brilliantly! Individual feedback is available on Unifrog, and we encourage you to review this together at home.

Year 12 Mock Interview Day



Our Year 12 students also had an incredible experience during their Mock Interview Day. Around 24 employers, including representatives from the NHS and NatWest, supported the event.

The day began with an engaging employability workshop, helping students build confidence and prepare for their interviews. Each student then took part in a 15-minute interview, giving them a valuable insight into real-world recruitment.

RED NOSE DAY / COMIC RELIEF



Well done to the Appleton School's Student Council Committee who organised a non-uniform day on Friday 27th March as part of the school's annual Charity Day.

The total monies raised on the day was £750 which will be donated to the Red Nose Charity.

SAFEGUARDING - CAPE

Thank you once again for all for your support in encouraging our young people to be their best selves. This is CAPE's first and foremost goal – to equip our young people with the skills and attributes to be their best selves ready for when they leave us and move onto their next steps.

Next half term will continue to build on the skills and attributes needed to be well rounded individuals with the following topics:

Year 7 will be looking at Politics and Parliament:

- Lesson 1 – Why is Politics important?
- Lesson 2 – How is our Country run
- Lesson 3 – The role of the Prime Minister
- Lesson 4 – The Monarchy and King Charles III
- Lesson 5 – Political debates and Parliament
- Lesson 6 – Elections and Campaigning

Year 8 will be looking at Physical health and Mental wellbeing:

- Lesson 1 – Health and wellbeing
- Lesson 2 – What is Mental Health
- Lesson 3 – Positive body image
- Lesson 4 – Child abuse
- Lesson 5 – Types of bullying
- Lesson 6 – Healthy eating and cholesterol

Year 9 will be looking at Body Confidence:

- Lesson 1 – How self-esteem changes
- Lesson 2 – What is a penis
- Lesson 3 – What is a vulva
- Lesson 4 – Bullying in all its forms
- Lesson 5 – Dealing with grief
- Lesson 6 – Media and airbrushing

Year 10 will be looking at Mental health and Wellbeing

- Lesson 1 – Child sexual abuse
- Lesson 2 – Screen time
- Lesson 3 – Mental Health illnesses
- Lesson 4 – Self harm
- Lesson 5 – Suicide (thoughts and feelings)
- Lesson 6 – Promoting emotional wellbeing

STUDENT COUNCIL

The Student Council has also made a significant contribution to the school community this year by organising and leading a number of fundraising initiatives for a variety of charities. Across four key events, they have raised an impressive £2400. In addition, a portion of the funds has been reinvested into the school to enhance students' experiences, including the purchase of new PE equipment such as basketball nets and table tennis resources.

Student Council members have once again demonstrated excellent leadership skills, working collaboratively and showing real commitment to supporting worthwhile causes. As Headteacher, I am extremely proud of their achievements and wish them continued success in their upcoming fundraising events for the remainder of the academic year.

CHILD PROTECTION

The safety and wellbeing of students is our paramount concern. As part of our curriculum we continue to focus on wellbeing in CAPE Lessons, bespoke programmes and in assemblies. This covers issues such as mental health, relationships and sex education as well as safeguarding concerns. This term Year 10 have had Essex Police deliver sessions on gangs, criminal exploitation and county lines. Year 8 will be continuing to complete some work with Risk Advert to support with mental health.

Any child protection concerns should be reported as soon as possible to the Designated Person for Child Protection or one of the deputies:-

Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Mr Stockdale
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Mrs Salisbury
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Miss Green
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Mrs Whitehead
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Miss Wright
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Mrs Jones

The school continues to have an online reporting system where students are able to anonymously report any concern they may have regarding themselves or other students.

Since last academic year there have been e-safety reminders/tips and advice for parents in the Parent Bulletin. Starting from March, the focus of the advice in the Parent Bulletin will be centred around Mental Health as well as e-safety. Approximately each half-term parents will continue to receive the school's Online Safety Bulletin and our termly Safeguarding Newsletter. These all provide parents/families

the relevant support and advice on a variety of Safeguarding topics. In each newsletter, the focus of the advice for parents will be centred around Mental Health and e-safety, as well as all other safeguarding topics.

YOUNG CARERS



March 11th 2026 was "National Young Carers Action Day" which is a day to raise awareness for those children across the country who are Young Carers.

We celebrated this day with a Social Media post to show our appreciation for all our Appleton Young Carers. They work hard on a daily basis to balance school work, homework and family caring responsibilities.

At Appleton we work in collaboration with Essex Young Carers, Carers Choices Thundersley and Kool Carers Basildon to support students who, at times, need a shoulder to lean on.

If you know that your child is a young carer and they could benefit from an adult checking in on them, please get in touch on our email address: info@theappletonschool.org and Mrs Jones our Young Carer lead will get in touch.

Here are some contact details for further information should you want to find out more:

Essex Young Carers website: <https://youth.essex.gov.uk/young-people/young-carers/>
Koolcarers (located in Basildon): <https://koolcarers.co.uk/>
Young Carers Club at the Whitehouse in Thundersley: <https://carerschoices.org>

PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL



On Thursday 26th March the Performing Arts department hosted our gold winners for our annual festival. Students audition in February their own work, whether a piece of choreography, instrumental arrangement or poem. This year we had 84 students represent The Appleton School as gold winners, a part of our Harmonics choir, Dance clubs and School Band. The evening was a true showcase of student talent, resilience and dedication. Throughout the evening a number of awards were presented to specific students who have shown incredible commitment and aspiration within the faculty.

Medals for: (permissions to be checked)

Outstanding achievement in Music - Miley Fitzgerald

Outstanding achievement in Dance - Chanel Bain

Outstanding achievement in Performing Arts – Myah Arnold

Trophies for:

Musician of the Year - Eloise Cottrell

Dancer of the Year - Mia Hicks

Performer of the Year - Emilia Dawney

The department are now working on rehearsals for our summer production, Frozen. We are always delighted to see such a sense of community amongst staff, families and local residents who come to support The Arts at The Appleton School. We look forward to welcoming another audience on Thursday 9th July, Friday 10th July and Saturday 11th July.

PE REPORT



This has been an extremely busy and highly successful half term for the Physical Education department, with a wide range of opportunities and achievements across multiple sports.

The half term began with the Year 7 Rugby Tour to Bath, which proved to be a fantastic experience for all involved. A group of 25 students travelled to Bath where they had the opportunity to compete against two local club sides, gaining valuable match experience and developing their skills in a competitive environment. The tour also included attending a professional rugby fixture. The Year 7 Rugby teams also performed

extremely well in the District Competition finishing in 4th place.

Our Trampoline and Gymnastics teams have both achieved outstanding success, being crowned District Champions. This is a testament to the students' dedication, hard work, and commitment.

In girls Football the U13 and U15 teams have continued to excel. Both teams have progressed to the sisters in Sport National Shield Finals Day, an impressive accomplishment at national level. We are very much looking forward to the finals event at Lilleshall in May.

Boys Football has also seen strong performances this half term. The Year 10 team reached the South East Essex Cup Final, finishing as runners-up after a competitive match. Meanwhile, both the Year 8 and Year 11 teams, reaching the semi-finals of their respective competitions.

In Handball, the U13 and U15 teams represented the school at the Essex Championships, finishing 4th and 3rd respectively. These results reflect continued growth and development in the sport. Additionally, the Year 7 basketball team enjoyed a successful run in the Essex Cup, reaching the quarter-finals.

We now look forward to a busy summer term with the national footballs finals days, athletics competitions, cricket and rounders.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PERSONAL DETAILS

Please could I remind parents/carers to advise the school by letter or email info@theappletonschool.org regarding any change of address, personal details, contact telephone numbers (including when there is a change to work telephone numbers) and email addresses.

IMPORTANT DATES

Friday, 27th March 2026	End of Term Years 7 – 13 dismissed at 13.25hrs
SPRING HOLIDAY Monday 30th March 2026 to Friday 10th April 2026	
Monday, 13th April 2026	Years 7 – 13 return 08.30hrs
Thursday, 16th April 2026	Year 11 & 13 group photographs
Thursday, 21st May 2026	Year 7 Consultative

Happy Easter
from
staff and students
at
The Appleton School