

Parents group Generated Questions

At the Appleton school we are committed to working with parents to ensure that each of our students achieve the very best that they can in a supportive and caring environment; Often parents will have queries and questions that they wish to ask. We would always encourage you to do so, as, it is only by working in close partnership with you that we can maintain the high standards of excellent in all that we do. What follows are some questions generated by our parents group and answered by the Senior Leadership team.

Parents group meetings are held once every half term and focus on ways of maximising opportunities for your youngsters and ways of getting the very best from your school.

The dates of the meetings are 13th November 15th January, 26th February 4th June. Reminders are sent out a few days before via our text messaging service. Please let us know if you will be attending by contacting the school office.

Learning and standards

- ***How do I find out how well my child is doing?***

As a parent, you will receive three reports home a year, two being Progress Reports and one being a formal report. The Progress Report will provide information on the students Target Grade, the grade they are currently working at and the grade the subject teacher is forecasting them to achieve by the end of the year. These reports will provide information to you as parents because you can evaluate their Predicted Grade compared to their Target Grade.

If you are concerned about the Progress your child is making, you can contact your Year Manager to discuss the concerns. The most appropriate way forward will then be agreed. This may involve increased monitoring, being on report or carrying out catch up sessions or additional work at home.

If your youngster is placed on report this will monitor their attainment and work ethic in each lessons. This would be brought home each evening for you to read, sign, and discuss with your youngster.

- ***How does the school get such good examination results?***

The school is very proud of its examination success. The progress of every child is closely monitored in The Appleton School. We have clear targets for every single student in every subject taught. These targets are shared with students and parents and are reported on frequently. All work is marked against these targets, which allows us to identify under achievers and those who are doing particularly well. The necessary intervention strategies for those not performing as they should are then implemented.

- **What are DE tests?**

DE tests take place on induction day to our school. Children are set on the basis of year 6 SATs and DE tests. DE tests measure verbal and non verbal reasoning and are set out in a multiple choice format.

- **What is Making Good Progress?**

Making Good Progress is a pilot study by central government into whether or not the SAT tests should be replaced at the end of year nine with single level tests. The Appleton School is piloting this project for the Government and is a lead school nationally.

- **Do students have individual tuition in English and Mathematics?**

As part of the Making Good Progress pilot approximately ten per cent of our students have individual tuition in English and Mathematics.

- **What modern foreign languages (MFL) are taught in the school?**

All students in Year 7-9 study a Modern Foreign Language in either French or German. Parents are able to indicate a preference for French or German once their child has been offered a place. In addition, 25% of year will take a Fastrack GCSE course in languages in Year 9. At KS4 students can opt for MFL GCSE in German, French or Spanish.

How can I find out if my child is doing all of their homework?

The Student Planner is the quickest way to check that your child is recording and completing their homework. Tutors sign this every week. There is a space to leave messages making this a quick and easy way to communicate. It is also a good idea to check through the exercise books and read the comments that teachers have made in the books.

Does homework have to be handed in the next day?

When homework is set a hand in date is also given. This is recorded in the Planners. Usually homework is not required for the next day unless it is an integral part of their following lesson. If this causes a problem, write a note to the teacher in the planner explaining when it will be completed.

How long should students spend on homework?

In Key Stage 3, students will receive two or three homeworks per night and these should take a maximum of half an hour each. As students move through the Key Stage, this may increase especially prior to SATs exams and if they take early external examination courses.

In Key Stage 4, in addition to these short homework tasks, students will undertake longer research or coursework tasks that could extend over several weeks.

Students need to manage their time effectively to avoid this work building up as deadlines approach. Establishing a routine for homework would prevent a build up.

If you are concerned that your child is getting too little or too much homework, please contact their tutor in the first instance to discuss this.

Is a computer required at home?

Although students find it useful to have a computer at home it is not a requirement as the school has over 400 computers for student use.

Several of the computer suites are open to students wanting to do homework/internet research before school, after school and at lunchtime.

How does the school support students with special needs?

The school has a specialist team led by our SENCO, who inducts and support all students with special needs. Parents are regularly involved in meetings to update them on progress. If you feel your child may need additional support, please contact the tutor or the SENCO, to discuss this.

Do some lessons change during the course of the year in 7 – 9?

Some subjects are taught on a ‘carousel’ basis. This means they will work on a 10-week unit of work before changing to experience a different aspect of the subject. This particularly takes place in Technology and P.E.

When are the Key Stage 3 tests?

- *Statutory end of Key Stage test (SATs) take place every May for Year 9 students. Students are tested for English, Maths and Science and given a final National Curriculum level.*
- ***What is the subject Citizenship?***

Citizenship education in school is the process of helping young people learn how to become active, informed and responsible citizens that are members of a particular community.

Citizenship education concentrates on examining certain rights and responsibilities that are defined in law, such as the right to vote, the responsibility to pay tax and so on. It also looks at peoples’ involvement in public life. It can be applied to a wide range of activities – from standing for political office to taking an interest in politics and current affairs, including important issues which affect our daily lives. It refers not only to rights and responsibilities laid down in the law, but also to general forms of social and moral behaviour. Overall, it is about enabling young people to make their own decisions and to take responsibility for their own lives, their families and their communities.

In educational terms, Citizenship is both a distinct subject in the National Curriculum for 11 to 16 year olds and to a general area of study leading to an academic

qualification. At Appleton our students work towards the AQA Preparation for Working Life Certificate – the equivalent to a short course GCSE.

- **What is the difference between Key Stage 4 and GCSE's?**

GCSE's are a type of qualification that students can achieve, mostly at Key Stage 4. In this school, some students will have the opportunity to gain a GCSE'S in a Modern Foreign Language, ICT, PE, Science and Statistics at Key Stage 3.

When do the students pick their options for GCSE and other subjects?

The Option process is rigorous and commences early in the Spring term of Year 9. Students may participate in some taster sessions for the less well-known subjects and are provided with information through assemblies, career interviews Citizenship to help them make the appropriate selections that will meet their individual learning needs.

Specialist option information evenings are also arranged to explain to parents the option process and the distinct nature of the variety of subjects offered each year. Students are

Details specific to options, including a student friendly report describing the various options offered, can be found on the school website <http://www.theappletonschool.org/students/options>

Parents and students are encouraged, as part of the scheduled Year 9 Consultative Evenings, to take the opportunity to discuss possible options selections and receive advice from subject specialists.

Students begin their chosen option subjects in Year 10.

How are the students rewarded for good work?

The school rewards policy is described in the whole school behaviour policy to be found at www.theappletonschool.org/students/doc/behaviourpolicy/pdf. A recent addition to this has been the introduction of a £ 50 prize draw voucher for Key Stage 4 students who have received bronze, silver or gold certificates. This draw takes place once every half term.

What is the School's Behaviour Policy?

The school's sanctions are also outlined in the "Whole School Policy on Student Behaviour" at <http://www.theappletonschool.org/students/docs/behaviour-policy.pdf>

- **What is the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)?**

The VLE is essentially a website where each subject area can input lesson plans and resources online for students to access in a clear and organised structure. This facility is in the process of being developed across the school and will gradually be rolled out in the all subject areas.

Each student will have a personal login and password where they can log in at home or at school and view their own timetable and can access the work and resources relevant to their learning as well as being able to communicate with the member of staff. Students will eventually be able to do tests and complete homework online via the VLE and submit it to their teacher for marking.

A tutorial for the VLE can be viewed on:

hht://www.theappletonschool.org/vle/tutorial/index-files/frame/htm

- **When does work experience take place and how is it organised?**

All students in Year 10 go out on work experience at the beginning of the summer term (April/May). Work Experience is arranged by the Business and Enterprise office in conjunction with Trident who undertakes all the Health and Safety checks and Risk Assessments on the companies the students are going to. Preparation for Work Experience starts at the beginning of Year 10 with a Parents Information Evening in October and students then can select jobs they are interested in via the Trident online system or find their own placement if they wish.

A flowchart explaining the Work Experience process can be found on the school website:

www.theappletonschool.org/businessandenterprise/workexperience/we_flowchart.pdf

- **How can my child find out what clubs and activities are offered?**

The school offers a wide-ranging number of extra-curricular clubs and activities for students to take part in every week. The extra-curricular timetable changes every term and is placed on the school's website in addition to a copy displayed in every tutor group.

New clubs are also published in assemblies and on school noticeboards. All students are actively encouraged to get involved in extra-curricular activities.

Communication

- **What is the “Appleton School Partnership Agreement”?**

This is an agreement made between the School, the students and the parents in the following areas:

Punctuality; Communication; Conduct; Environment; Equipment; Homework; Learning and Uniform

The Agreement can be found at the front of the student's planner, it contains detailed information on the commitment each party makes to ensure the students gain as much benefit from their education at The Appleton School as possible. It also ensures that everyone is aware of the very high standards, which every one must aspire.

- **My child is not very good at bringing letters home, how can I find out what is going on?**

*Copies of all letters are put on the school website under:
www.theappletonschool.org/parents/letters*

If the school has an up-to-date mobile number for parents a text message is sent to parents prior to any event that may be relevant to your child.

- **If my youngster has any issues at school are they expected to find their own answers or should parents get involved?**

In the first instance, your child will have many questions, which can easily be solved by their own form tutor who they meet with each day. The school also encourages parents to communicate with the school if your child has problems or questions or if you have a view on how the school may benefit from improvements. We also welcome developmental feedback.

- **If I think there is an issue, how is it best to discuss this with the school?**

The subject teacher is the best person to talk to with any issues concerning academic progress in the various subject areas. With issues more of a general nature the form tutor will offer the best guidance, particularly given your child will have more initial contact and be more familiar with their tutor.

We offer a variety of methods of communicating with teachers and the school:

- On an informal scale, through the student planner.*
- Telephoning the main office and ask for the teacher concerned to return your call*
- Email the school, addressed to the teacher at the address info@appleton.essex.sch.com*
- Write a letter, addressed to the tutor concerned detailing any concerns or issues*

Teaching staff normally contact parents within 24 hours but please be mindful that most of the working day is with students in class.

- **If we suspect our child is being bullied, what should we do?**

Bullying involves persistent behaviour that deliberately tries to cause anxiety, fear or hurt. It can include being hit, pushed around teased threatened, called names or having money or possessions taken or damaged. At Appleton, persistent unkindness or comments will be called bullying if the perpetrator is in a more powerful position than the victim. (E.g. stronger, more confident, part of a group)

If you suspect that your child is being bullied it is most important that the school knows about it. Encourage your youngster to tell someone at school or tell us yourself. They could tell a friend, a peer listener, any teacher, a member of the support staff or the nurse.

Usually, however, the first point of contact would be the form tutor. All staff and the peer listeners receive training on how to deal effectively with incidents of bullying. The school would then follow the peer support method of responding to these situations, which is outlined in the school project Fairplay Anti Bullying Code.

www.theappletonschool.org/students

- **How does my child pay for school dinners, refreshments and school trips and visits?**

ParentPay is used to pay for food in school

- **What is ParentPay?**

ParentPay is a cashless way for students to buy food at school. Parents credit money to the Parent Pay account, normally one line. When making a purchase the students identify themselves to the vending machine with their biometric finger image, then their account is debited with the cost of their selection.

The following web page describes it in more detail and provides a link to the ParentPay website:

<http://www.theappletonschool.org/parents/parentpay>

General

- **How does the locker system operate?**

Every student is allocated a locker in which to keep books and personal possessions. These are usually located in the form room and the times that they may be accessed are agreed with the form tutor. There are two types of lockers. The more traditional type where students pay a deposit for their locker key of £ 2. The newer lockers where students can provide their own padlock or buy one from school at a cost of £3. Please note that it does sometimes take a little time to allocate the lockers at the beginning of the autumn term but we do this as quickly as we can.

- **What is the School rebuilding programme?**

It is planned that the school will be either completely or partially rebuilt during the next few years without a single lesson being missed. One of the plans is to build a new school on the school field before demolishing the existing school. We will keep you fully informed of any developments or new information when we have it.

- **Is it possible to pre-order school meals?**

It is possible to order meals at break time or before school and pay at the same time. These are then available from the common room at lunchtime with the name of the student on the box. This allows students to quickly collect lunchtime food before going to lunchtime clubs.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact the school by Email on info@appleton.essex.sch.com