



# The Appleton School Parent Bulletin – Autumn Term

## Key Dates

- **WC 8th December Year 10 Assessment week**
- **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December Year 8 Rewards trip**
- **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December Year 9 Rewards trip**
- **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December Year 7 Rewards trip**
- **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December Christmas Jumper day**

## PE Fixtures

### Monday 15/12

Athletics Masterclass

U12 Essex Cup Girls Basketball v Shenfield (A)

### Tuesday 16/12

Year 8 Basketball v Westcliff High for Boys (H) Essex Cup

U12 Girls Basketball vs Redden Court (A)

### Wednesday 17/12

Year 7 Essex Cup Basketball v Chase (H)

### Thursday 18/12

U13 Essex Cup Basketball v Baddow

Week 3

## School Lunches

The Appleton School – Week 3 Menu January 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Chicken Korma With Rice	Roast of the Day	Sweet Chilli Chicken	Cottage Pie	Chicken / pork chow Mein
Macaroni Cheese	Vegetarian Quiche	Vegetable Chow Mein	Tomato & Basil Pasta Bake	Breaded Fish Fillet / Fish fingers
Parmentier Potatoes	Roast Potatoes, Cauliflower Cheese	Potato Wedges	Parmentier Potatoes	Wedges
Steamed Broccoli	Roast Parsnips, Carrots and Green Beans	Egg Fried Rice	Carrots & Broccoli	Sweetcorn
Jacket Potato with Beans, Cheese or Tuna Mayo	Jacket Potato with Beans, Cheese or Tuna Mayo	Jacket Potato with Beans, Cheese or Tuna Mayo	Jacket Potato with Beans, Cheese or Tuna Mayo	Jacket Potato with Beans, Cheese or Tuna Mayo
Dessert of the Day	Apple Crumble	Dessert of the day	Apple Crumble	Dessert of the day



## Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2025

What have we been up to?

Every week seems to be a busy week, however, this week we saw the Moon Rocks on loan from the US government come to the Appleton School to enrich our curriculum and opportunities for our students.

Our Year 11 had their results day following their PPE series and a celebration event to celebrate their efforts since September.

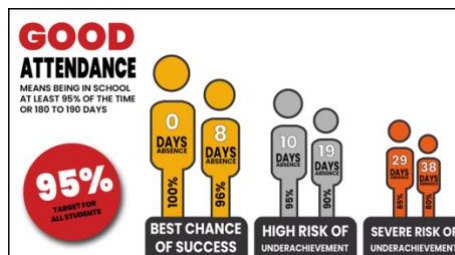
Finally, our Santa fun run after school Friday to raise funds for Havens Hospice, a charity that has done so much for those in our community.

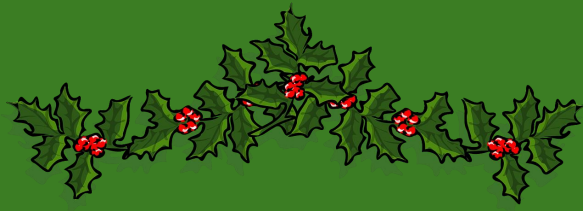
Next week, we look forward to our reward events, our Christmas Concert and the end of term, we wish all of our families a safe and enjoyable Christmas holiday.

## Attendance

Congratulations to the following form group for the best attendance this week:

705  
805  
907  
1002  
1105





Follow us on Social Media:



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**Instagram**

<https://www.instagram.com/theappletonschool?igsh=MXEzdzY2bnQ5bzI6Zw==>



At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](http://nationalcollege.com).

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI-GENERATED VIDEOS

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

AI-generated videos are increasingly difficult to spot and easy to share. From fake news clips to deepfake abuse, children and young people face new risks every day online. These videos can imitate real people, spread false narratives or even generate harmful content from scratch. Understanding these dangers is crucial for schools and families who want to protect children in a fast-evolving digital world.

### DEEPPAKE ABUSE CONTENT

Shockingly, artificial intelligence is now being exploited to create child sexual abuse material (CSAM). These synthetic images and videos are a form of digital abuse, often generated by manipulating real children's photos, including ones shared innocently online. Worryingly, the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) has identified a sharp rise in this disturbing trend. Whether real or AI-generated, this content causes lasting trauma – and its creation or possession remains a criminal offence under UK law.

### BLURRED REALITY

Regular exposure to fake content can erode a child's trust in real-world evidence. If everything can be faked, they may begin to question genuine videos – including actual abuse or injustice. This is known as the 'liar's dividend', where real harm is dismissed as fake news. It can discourage victims from coming forward or speaking up.

### USED FOR BULLYING

Deepfake technology is already being used by peers to create embarrassing or explicit clips of classmates. These videos can be edited to appear as though a child said or did something they never did. Once shared, they are almost impossible to delete completely. AI-generated bullying adds a new layer of harm that is deeply personal and difficult to prove.

### EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION

AI-generated videos can be used to provoke strong emotions, including fear, anger or guilt. False footage of crying children, injured animals or burning buildings may be created purely for clicks, donations or political influence. Children may feel upset or powerless, unaware that what they are watching has been digitally invented to manipulate their reaction.

### DISINFORMATION

AI-generated videos can spread fake news, making it harder for children to separate fact from fiction. False clips may include deepfake interviews, hoax disasters or fabricated health claims. AI is already being used to produce misleading or persuasive material that appears authentic. If they don't develop media literacy, children may accept false content as truth.

### IMPERSONATION AND SCAMS

With just a few photos or voice clips, AI tools can imitate someone's appearance or speech. This makes it easier for scammers or bullies to create fake videos of children, teachers or celebrities. These impersonations can be used for fraud, harassment or humiliation – and can spread quickly through social media or group chats, due to the viral potential of video, in particular, on social media.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### TEACH HOW IT WORKS

Explain to children that videos can be faked – and show them how. Demonstrating side-by-side examples of real vs AI-generated clips helps to build awareness. Discuss how faces, voices and even movements can be copied by machines. Understanding the technology reduces fear and builds confidence in navigating digital content safely.

### TALK ABOUT TRUST

Always keep lines of communication open. If a child sees something upsetting or unbelievable, they should feel safe discussing it without judgement. Create an environment where they know they will not get in trouble for asking questions. This also helps you step in quickly if harmful content has been shared; trust is vital and needs to be nurtured.

### ENCOURAGE CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Help children question what they watch. Who made this? Why was it made? Is it trying to persuade me? These habits encourage digital thinking, especially when videos seem too shocking or convenient. Reinforce that not everything shared by friends or influencers is true, even if it looks convincing at first, and that the initial approach should always be one of speculation.

### STRENGTHEN PRIVACY SETTINGS

Advise children not to share voice notes, selfies or personal videos on public platforms. AI tools often scrape content from social media to create deepfakes. Use privacy controls to limit who can see their content and turn off facial recognition where possible. Fewer public images means fewer opportunities for misuse.

### Meet Our Expert

Brendan O'Keefe is a headteacher and digital education consultant with over a decade of experience in education. As Director of Digital Strategy across multiple schools and an advisor to The National College, he specialises in digital safety, PREVENT, and pastoral care.



@wake\_up\_weds

/wuw.thenationalcollege

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@wake.up.weds

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# CAPE Curriculum Update

## CAPE topics next half term

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.

This half term we had the privilege of welcoming Essex Fire Safety and Rescue Services to our school who conducted a hate crime assembly for both year 8 and year 9.

This half term has also seen our CAPE students in year 7 begin to tackle the important topic of Puberty and the effects it can take on them. Year 8 have been looking at Equality and Diversity, in particular the 9 protected characteristics of the Equalities Act 2010. Year 9 have been focussing on Sex, the law and consent. Year 10 have been creating their CVs and application letters in order to be ready for Mock Interview Day next year and year 11 have been looking at Sexual health with a focus on contraception and STI's.

For year 11, the CAPE Scheme of work will now end to make way for the ASPIRE program.

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 Friends, Respect and Relationships:

- Lesson 1 – Consent and Boundaries
- Lesson 2 – Respect and Relationships
- Lesson 3 – What makes a good friend?
- Lesson 4 – Friendships and online relationships
  - Lesson 5 – Being Positive
- Lesson 6 – Road Safety Assembly with Essex Fire and Rescue Services

Year 8 will be looking at Identity and RSE:

- Lesson 1 – Relationships and Sex Education
- Lesson 2 – Being yourself and Self Love
- Lesson 3 – Healthy, respectful relationships
  - Lesson 4 – What is love?
  - Lesson 5 – Dealing with Conflict
- Lesson 6 – Periods and menstrual cycle

Year 9 will be looking at Contraception and STI's:

- Lesson 1 – What are STI's
- Lesson 2 – Treating STI's and the clinic
- Lesson 3 – Contraception explored
- Lesson 4 – Contraception explored part 2
- Lesson 5 – Contraception explored part 3
  - Lesson 6 – HIV and Aids

Year 10 will be looking at Risk, Relationships and Sex Education. There will be some sensitive yet important lessons:

- Lesson 1 – Pleasure and delaying sexual activity
- Lesson 2 – Campaigning against FGM
  - Lesson 3 – Sexting
  - Lesson 4 – Online pornography
- Lesson 5 – Pornography and its impact on society
- Lesson 6 – Unhealthy relationships and sexual abuse



# Book of the week



## The Appleton School Book of the week



**Title: Where the Rock Splits the Sky**  
**Author: Philip Webb**



Where Megan lives it's forever dusk: an endless indigo sky above a wounded land that's slowly dying. Ever since the 'visitors' came, the world has stopped turning. No one sleeps, everyone's afraid. But Megan wants to know what's coming. She'll stop at nothing to save those she loves. She'll ride across a forsaken wilderness to where the rock splits the sky to set the world spinning again - and discover what she's truly made of.





## Moon Rocks at Appleton 2025

This week we welcomed a very rare event, we were selected to have the Moon rocks for a whole week at the Appleton School. Our students in Y7 and Y8 got a special curriculum of Moon based lessons and the opportunity to see and hold the rocks and a selection of meteorites. The Moon rocks were returned from Apollo 15,16 and 17 are one of only five sets rotated across the UK on loan from the US government through the Science and Technology Facilities Council. Our Year 10 Astronomy class and Year 13 physicists also got to enjoy this incredible opportunity and the students enjoyed these special lessons and opportunity to hold something incredibly rare. We also thank all of the parents at Year 11 consultative that showed an interest and came to see the Moon rocks.



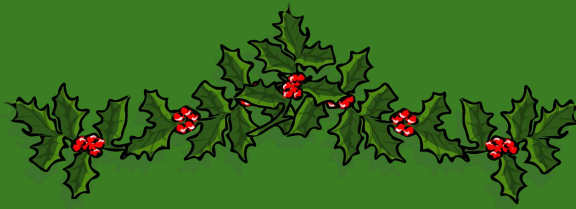


## Santa Fun Run

Thank you to all of our incredible staff and students that stayed after school to do a Santa fun run to raise funds for Havens Hospice, a charity that is very special to the Appleton School with a number of students and families in our community that they have supported.

A special shout out to our Christmas T-Rex that made another appearance and showed that even dinosaurs can enjoy a good run.





## Year 11 Celebration Event



On Wednesday we had a mock-results day for our Year 11 students following their PPEs. The students have already had feedback in lessons and activities to address areas to improve from the exams, but this event was the first time that students found out their grades, followed by the Parent Consultative the following evening.

This year we started our after school revision – Practice Makes Progress – started much earlier this academic year and the uptake from our students has been incredible to recognise their hard work and efforts we put on a donut and hot chocolate celebration for the students after collecting their results.

In new year the year group will have more activities to help the, to achieve their potential, including Walking Talking Mocks – where a subject expert will talk the students their thinking process and approach in answering exam questions.

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January, students will have a revision seminar day with external company Positively You to help add to their repertoire of revision skills, this will be followed by a parent session in the evening.





*The Appleton School*

# *Respect*

## *Competition*

LET'S PROMOTE, REMIND AND CELEBRATE OUR EXPECTATIONS FOR RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR.

**PRIZES TO BE WON!**

*How to Enter:*

GET CREATIVE TO HELP PROMOTE OUR RESPECT VALUE. IDEAS COULD INCLUDE:

- POSTER DESIGN
- POEM
- SLOGANS/PROMPTS TO BE DISPLAYED AROUND THE SCHOOL



ENTRIES TO BE RETURNED TO MS EVERETT BY FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER

*Achieving Excellence*



 Essex County Council  
Libraries

**10 January  
to 22 February  
2026**



# Winter Reading Challenge

Children across Essex are being challenged to read and get creative at their local library this winter!

Explore our Pawfessionals' amazing careers as you progress through the challenge.

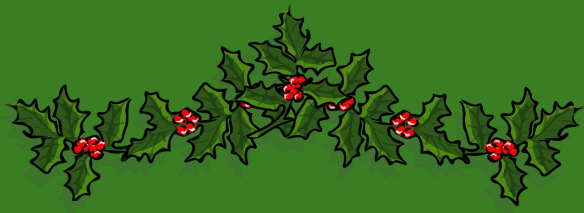
Choose from twelve fun activities to complete. For each one, you'll get a sticker! Complete six, and you'll receive a certificate and get to enter our prize draw for the chance to win some incredible goodies!

Plus, you can join in with themed events and activities at the library!



Find out more about how to take part in this free activity on our website: [libraries.essex.gov.uk](https://libraries.essex.gov.uk)

*Achieving Excellence*



# YOUR GAME

**FREE  
EVENT**



## **AN IMMERSIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP EVENT FOR 14-18 YEAR OLDS**

**WEDNESDAY 18TH FEBRUARY 2026**

**WHERE**

**FITZWIMARC SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM, RAYLEIGH**

**TIMES**

**9.30AM ARRIVAL  
EVENT 10AM - 4PM**

**CONNECT WITH YOUR FOOTBALL FUTURE AT YOUR GAME!**

Your Game is the perfect opportunity to explore all aspects of the football workforce and find your next step. With support from local experts who work at all levels of the game alongside the Essex FA Youth Forum, you'll be able to discover what opportunities are available to you and get advice on how to move forward.

**Practical workshops include refereeing, coaching, club administration & football social media.**

So if you are looking to start volunteering or working in the game, then this event is for you!

**ALL ACTIVITIES WILL BE INDOORS  
FREE EVENT APPLY VIA THE QR CODE LIMITED PLACES AVAILABLE  
CLOSING DATE FRIDAY 16TH JANUARY**



**BOOK YOURS  
HERE** →



For any queries please contact [isaac.rhodes@essexfa.com](mailto:isaac.rhodes@essexfa.com)



November 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

**Re: Lost Property**

Please be aware that any named items that are handed in to lost property are routinely returned to students. However, we have a large number of unnamed items that have built up, and we would like to reunite these with their owners if possible.

To help us with this, if your child has lost anything in school, please ask them to go to the Main Reception before or after school to check if their item is in lost property. The lost property boxes will be stored in Main Reception, if any parents/carers would like to check between 8.00am-4.00pm.

Please note if any lost property is unclaimed by Friday 19th December 2025 at 1.00pm, we will donate to the uniform recycler.

Thank you for your assistance with helping us reunite any items of lost property with their owners.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Cox  
Headteacher

Headteacher: Sarah Cox, BA (Hons)

Croft Road, Benfleet, Essex, SS7 5RN Tel: 01268 794215

Email: [info@theappletonschool.org](mailto:info@theappletonschool.org) Website: [www.theappletonschool.org](http://www.theappletonschool.org)



THE APPLETON  
SCHOOL



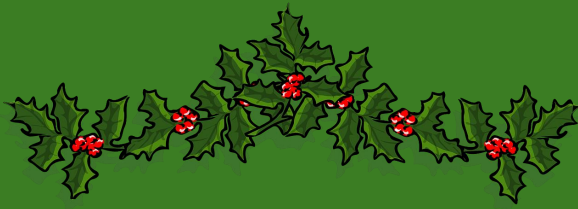
Healthy Schools

EDI  
QM



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# Essex Fire Museum Open Days

2025



Sunday 14th Of December

10:30AM To 4:00PM

Fire Station, Hogg Lane, Grays  
RM17 5QS



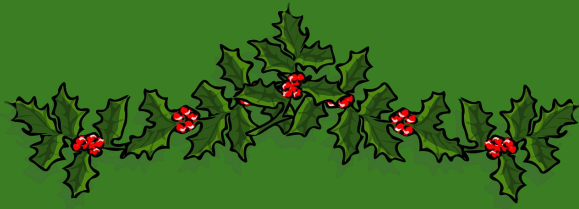
Book Now 



[Museum@essex-fire.gov.uk](mailto:Museum@essex-fire.gov.uk)



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## Free Online Courses to Support Parents

**ACL Essex is offering a range of FREE online Family Learning courses** designed to help and support parents in managing everyday challenges. These courses cover topics such as:

- Support your child to attend and enjoy school
- Family First Aid
- Managing Big Emotions
- Understanding and Managing Anger
- Understanding ADHD & ASD in Children
- SEND Support for Families
- Sleep Workshop
- Talking So Your Children Will Listen
- From Paycheck to Peace of Mind
- ...and many more!

You can view the full list and enrol here: [www.aclessex.com/community-family-learning](http://www.aclessex.com/community-family-learning)

### Key Details:

- ✓ All courses are **free** and delivered online.
- ✓ Prior enrolment via our website is **mandatory but free**.
- ✓ Some courses can also be delivered **in-house for up to 12 parents** (minimum of 6 parents required).



LINCOLNSHIRE  
TRAINING HUB  
Primary Care Education



## Future Doctor: Should I Become a Doctor? Webinar

*Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 6:30pm-8pm via MS Teams.*

This presentation run by medical students is designed to help Year 9-11 students decide whether 'Medicine', or becoming a doctor, is for them. It may also be helpful for anyone else seeking information about the process – including parents and teachers.

### The evening will include:

- How do I know medicine is right for me?
- The application process
- The medical degree / life as a medic
- Foundation years (post degree)

For further information and to apply for this **FREE** course please go to: <https://www.lincolnshiretraininghub.nhs.uk/training-and-events/futures-programme>

If you have any further questions, please contact Dr Molly Butcher at [molly.butcher@nhs.net](mailto:molly.butcher@nhs.net)

Thank you for the presentation, I found it very valuable as I am currently choosing my A-level options in year 11.

I particularly enjoyed looking at the ways I can get a medical degree and the roadmap/path in terms of exams, universities and work experience.

Email: [contact@lincolnshiretraininghub.nhs.uk](mailto:contact@lincolnshiretraininghub.nhs.uk)

Website: [www.lincolnshiretraininghub.nhs.uk](http://www.lincolnshiretraininghub.nhs.uk)

@HubLincolnshire @HubLincolnshire

@LincsFutures @lincsfutures

*Achieving Excellence*



We are delighted to share the excellent outcomes from this year's Bebras

# LOGO COMPETITION

**Yellow Door**

**Castle Point**  
NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD

## Be part of Canvey's transformation

Over the next 10 years, £20 million of investment will help transform Canvey Island — creating new opportunities and spaces shaped by local people. We're inviting young people aged 11–25 to design the official Canvey Neighbourhood Board logo.

### Your Challenge

- Create a logo using digital, hand-drawn, or mixed media.
- Include the words "Canvey Neighbourhood Board".
- Your design should reflect Canvey's identity, creativity, and community spirit.

### How to Enter

- Send or hand in your logo design to CYP Yellow Door, Yellow Door Youth Hub, Poplar Road, Canvey, SS8 7BN
- Digital: email to [alex@cyp-yellowdoor.org.uk](mailto:alex@cyp-yellowdoor.org.uk)
- Include your name and contact details (and parent/guardian contact if under 16).

**PRIZE: £100 AMAZON  
VOUCHER**

### COMPETITION RULES :

- Open to young people aged 11–25 who live, study, or spend time on Canvey Island.
- All entries must be original work created by the entrant.
- By entering, participants agree that the Canvey Neighbourhood Board may use, reproduce, and adapt their design for publicity, promotion, and official branding purposes.
- The winning design will become the official logo of the Board.
- If the entrant is under 16, a parent or guardian must provide consent.
- Entries must be submitted by Monday, 24th November 2025.
- The judging panel's decision is final.
- The winner will receive a £100 Amazon voucher and be publicly announced by the end of November 2025.

Get your designs to us by **Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November**

Computational Thinking Challenge, a national competition that assesses pupils'



## Bebras Challenge

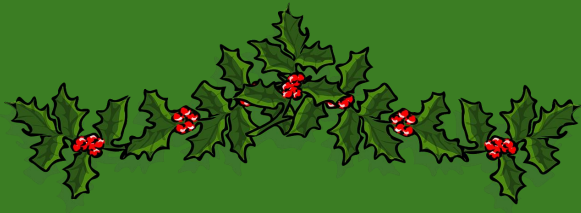
We are delighted to share the excellent outcomes from this year's Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge, a national competition that assesses pupils' problem-solving and logical thinking skills. This academic year marked our first participation in the challenge and the results are truly exceptional.

A total of 10 pupils achieved a Gold Award, placing them in the top 10% nationally, while an impressive 73 pupils were awarded a Distinction, placing them in the top 25% nationally. These achievements reflect an extremely high standard of performance when compared with pupils from schools across the country.

We are particularly proud that these results were achieved by our Year 7 pupils, highlighting the strength of their computational thinking, reasoning and analytical skills at such an early stage in their secondary education. This success demonstrates both the enthusiasm and ability of our pupils and the strong foundations being built within our Computer Science curriculum.

We would like to congratulate all pupils who took part in the Bebras Challenge and thank parents for their continued support. We look forward to developing this success further in the years ahead.

Mr Gillooly



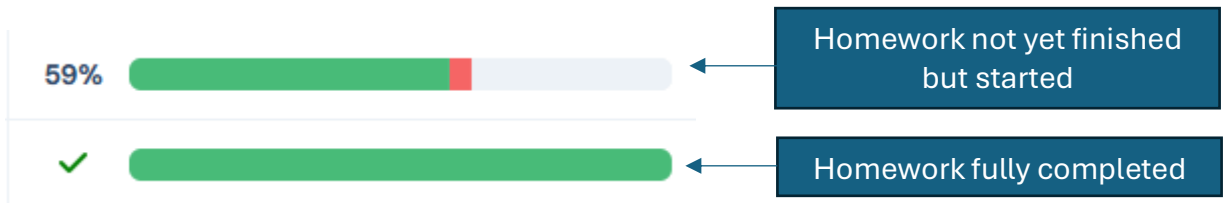
# Sparx Homework



As a school we have bought into the Sparx Learning package. For the last year we have been using SparxReader, SparxMaths, and this year we are introducing SparxScience.

Sparx is an intuitive piece of software that allows students to work through questions, with support when needed, and the questions adapt to a student's ability – the quicker they work through questions correctly then the system will then make the next questions more challenging and vice versa.

Along the way Sparx will also ask students about an answer to a previous question, this is because the system works best if students write down the answers in their exercise book alongside the online portal to help writing practice and retention. The homework percentage is a completion rate not a score.



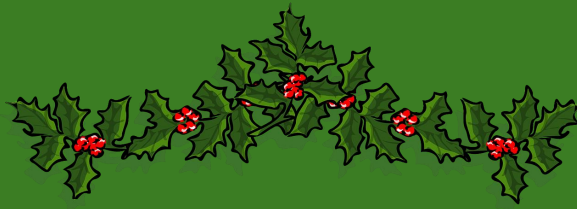
## FAQs

### Why are you using Sparx?

Sparx has been shown to improve student outcomes with regular use, the students with the highest grades last academic year were the ones with the highest Sparx use. It helps students to plug gaps and ensure they are challenged.

### How can I know when they've been set homework?

We still use the Satchel One platform for recording homework which all parents have access to. If you are unsure at all please contact the school [info@theappletonschool.org](mailto:info@theappletonschool.org)



### **Why is so much homework online?**

Online homework allows for immediate feedback to students to prevent the embedding of their progress.

### **My child spent so long on their homework but still did not complete 100%**

Please do not worry, this will flag to a teacher, they can see the amount completed and the time spent on the homework so will realise there is an issue and will intervene.

### **I suspect my child is doing the homework far too quickly, are they cheating?**

We suggest taking away their phone during their homework, there is a new tool on AI where they can film/take photos of the question and it will give them a solution. However, it also means they complete the homework quickly and that will be noticed by the teacher – although best to keep the phone away!

### **Do I get a notification about incomplete homework?**

Sparx automatically notifies parents on a Sunday about any outstanding homework and feedback on what has been completed.

## **Year 7 Homework**

### **Maths:**

Sparx homework is set on a Tuesday morning, due the following Monday at 5pm.

The expectation is that homework is completed at 90% or above. If the student is struggling with that week's topic and can't reach 90%, then we need to see at least an hour spent on the homework.

If students are struggling with a question, they can watch the video attached to each question, or see their class teacher before the deadline, or attend homework club in the resource centre, Mon-Thurs 3.00-3.45pm. Even though the homework is online, students are to show their working out in their exercise books. Sparx will do a "bookwork accuracy check" to make sure they are doing this.

Achievement points are given to those that complete the homework on time. Negative points are given to those that do not complete the homework on time. A second chance is given to students to do the homework, and if it still isn't done by the second deadline, then a teacher detention is set.

Failure to attend a teacher detention will mean a HOF detention.



**English:**

Students should be primarily being set SPARX Reader which is then checked in class by the teacher on a weekly basis for achievement points and an interactive leaderboard.

They also should have a reading journal which is checked by one of their teachers each week.

The more points they get will result in whole school reading rewards such as certificates, badges and books.

On top of this they should be getting spelling homework for weekly tests in class.

**Science -**

Science set Sparx homework on a Wednesday and is due in on a Tuesday. It is expected to be 100% completed.

Auto marking- students receive feedback immediately, algorithm adapts to students, provides opportunity to repeat questions which challenge students, set every Wednesday and due the following Tuesday.

Students need to score 100% for HW to be completed