

**2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021**

**Confirmation of Autumn Term Details**

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you enjoyed a wonderful summer. As you know, staff are currently at school completing two INSET days before the students start again next week. The staff are all looking forward to welcoming students back to a more normal school free from most of last year's restrictions. Once again, I would like to thank you all for your patience and understanding over the adaptations we made last year.

If I can use this opportunity to confirm some details for the beginning of this year.

**First day of term**

Just a reminder that we are expecting all Year 7s and Year 11s to join us on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September followed by all other year groups on the Tuesday. We have updated the website with the term dates and INSET days for the year. This information can be found by following this link:

**<https://www.applemore.hants.sch.uk/page/?title=School+Term+and+Holiday+Dates&pid=44>**

**COVID update**

The regulations concerning COVID have now changed. Most restrictions have been lifted as we begin the new academic year:

- Students no longer need to isolate if they are in contact with someone who tests positive for COVID. However, they are advised to take daily tests to ensure they have not contracted the illness.
- The school no longer has the responsibility to act in a tracing capacity if a student tests positive. This will now be managed directly by NHS test and trace.
- There is no longer any need to wear face-coverings in school or on dedicated school transport. However, students are still encouraged to wear face-coverings on public transport as they will be in contact with people who they do not regularly come into contact with.

In school, the one-way systems have been removed. The times of the day return to their usual format of 8.30am start and 3.15pm finish although we have changed lesson timings to help us introduce 'Personal Development' as a subject in all years.



**Headteacher: Mr A Chipping**

Applemore College, Roman Road, Dibden Purlieu, Southampton SO45 4RQ  
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It is worth noting that if any school accumulates five or more positive cases of students and/or staff in a ten-day period we have a responsibility to consider which 'step-up' measures to introduce to stop a potential outbreak. These may include:

- Re-introducing pop-up testing in the school.
- Asking students to recommence wearing face-masks
- Cancelling events with large numbers of students eg. Assemblies

To ensure that we do not suffer another outbreak in the school, your support in monitoring the health of your child is much appreciated. Please do continue with the saliva testing weekly, and if your child develops symptoms, please keep them at home and carry out appropriate tests before returning them to school.

We really appreciate your support in ensuring two saliva tests are completed before your child returns to school. The second saliva test return will take place on Monday for Years 7 and 11 and Thursday for the other year groups. This helps us to ensure our community stays safe and reduces the chance of an outbreak occurring leading to the re-introduction of measures.

### **Vehicles on site at the end of the day**

Towards the end of last year, the number of vehicles on site at the end of the day continued to increase. Some of these vehicles were dedicated taxis and some were parents coming to pick up their children. The more cars that come on site at the end of the day, the more chance there is that an accident will occur. However often we remind the students to take care when leaving the site, they often forget to watch for traffic. Therefore, we are taking steps to reduce the chance of an accident:

- We have painted the equivalent of pedestrian crossings across the road access and will encourage students to use these when leaving the site.
- We have asked all taxis to park on the scout hut area at the end of the day, rather than the horseshoe. In fact, we are going to chain off the horseshoe area from 3.00pm every afternoon and encourage any traffic to park outside the scout huts. There will be a member of staff specifically detailed to monitor the entrance and exit of vehicles from the scout hut area at the end of each day.
- We are also going to chain off the vehicle entrance down to Arts and English block and once again encourage the parking of vehicles outside the scout hut



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- We will also be checking that all students who cycle into school are in possession and wear a cycle helmet when on their bikes.

We would really appreciate it if parents did not drive onto site at the end of the day to pick up their children.

### **Uniform**

Hopefully, all parents are clear about the uniform expectations for September. Can I remind you that our uniform code is available on the website via this link:

<https://www.applemore.hants.sch.uk/page/?title=Uniform&pid=69>

A number of parents have questioned aspects of the uniform and I am happy to review our uniform policy again this year. When this happens, we will ask your views concerning uniform. At the moment, I am awaiting the release of the Governments uniform review before asking for feedback from the students, staff and parents. If you require help with the cost of the uniform, then please contact Mrs Adams at the school. Mrs Adams can be contacted at: a.adams@applemore.hants.sch.uk

### **Mobile Phones**

At the end of last term, we spent time considering our current mobile phone policy and looking at whether we needed to amend it. Finding the right balance is proving quite tricky. On one hand the staff believe that we have a responsibility in educating students on how to use their mobile phones appropriately within a work setting. On the other hand, we are acutely aware that a number of issues we face on a day-to-day basis would be resolved if we considered a mobile phone ban. The overuse of mobile phones distracts learning and it becomes a barrier to developing effective social interactions. Many local schools have introduced a mobile phone ban and the Government is edging towards directing schools to do so. The Schools' Governors are keen to ensure we make the right decision here and take a balanced view on this issue. Therefore, we will publish a short parental survey next week in advance of the Governors' meeting later in the month. At present these are the rules concerning mobiles phones:

- Students are allowed to have mobile phones on them, but in lessons and inside the building they should either be off or on silent and in their bags.
- Students will not need them for any lesson – we have confirmed this with staff. Although students have their timetable on their phone, we are issuing planners again this year and they can use their planner to access their timetable.
- We do not want to see mobile phones at all inside the buildings including the corridors. Students will be allowed to use their phones for appropriate purposes outside.



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- If you need to urgently contact your child at the school, the best way to communicate with them is via school reception rather than trying to contact them directly. You would be surprised how many lessons are disrupted by students answering a call from home.

A further reason behind this possible change of policy relates to recent Ofsted guidance on sexual abuse in schools which I am sure you will recall was in the media during the summer term. There is clear evidence that mobile phone misuse is one way in which peer-on-peer abuse can occur in schools. We have a responsibility to look at ways to respond to this guidance.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to get in touch, otherwise I hope you have an enjoyable weekend. I look forward to welcoming all the students back next week.

Yours sincerely



**Mr Alan Chipping**  
**Headteacher**



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