

14th September 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

Further to my previous communication, I am writing to provide an update of our plans for next week. I would like to thank you for your ongoing patience and understanding. I appreciate that parents and carers have understandably asked me for a longer term plan, but at this stage, with all our extensive survey work being carried out across the site, the situation is so fast paced that I do not want to give incorrect information. However, the comments made verbally by surveyors appear encouraging.

My heartfelt thanks to the numerous parents and carers who have contacted the school to offer their assistance and send kind messages of thanks and support to the school during what has been an exceptional timeline of events since the late notification by the DfE on 31st August 2023. I would like to extend a special thank you to our school staff and a local electrical firm who assisted the school by working tirelessly all weekend to repurpose one of our general teaching rooms into an ICT suite, so we could support our students, when another contractor let us down on short notice. I would also like to congratulate our young people as a record number of achievement points have been awarded for their learning in the first few days of term – an impressive 8677 points across the school.

I am aware that there have been some misinformation communicated on social media groups speculatively commenting on the impact on the school until 2025. I would like to remind parents and carers that only the school's official social media channels and our school communications should be relied upon, as there is no suggestion that this is the case and comments of this nature only increase and add unnecessary anxiety.

As you are aware, the change of policy by the Department for Education (DfE) on Thursday 31st August, we immediately lost access to our North, South and Tower blocks and the resources inside them with no advance notice. This is a significant amount (over 60%) of our teaching space. Work is continuing on repurposing any available and appropriate space into additional teaching space. Some of this work can take place quickly and has already been completed, but other areas require more work to make the rooms suitable to teach in.

Our work with the Trust and DfE has continued to implement mitigations to offset areas currently closed. In addition to suppliers of temporary classrooms visiting our site in preparation for the arrival of temporary classrooms, whole site surveys have also taken place, of which we await the final report. As such, and

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despite our ongoing work, we do not have enough physical teaching spaces to accommodate any more students at this time. The situation is fast-moving and I will keep you informed throughout this process. I appreciate how difficult this is for everyone concerned **but this is a safety issue beyond our control**. We will continue to seek alternatives and mitigations to support all our students to receive face-to-face education, but we have to continue with an element of remote teaching due to the current lack of physical teaching spaces. We value all our students, but I trust that you can appreciate that in this initial phase we need to prioritise our examination cohorts, with all year groups in on rotation. Next week we have each year group in once and then have prioritised Year 11 and 13 as the exam years as we are currently limited to 21 classrooms.

There continues to be a full canteen service available and students will be dismissed from school at 3.00pm. On days where students are timetabled on site for PE they will need to wear their Appleton PE kit until further notice. Just a reminder that we have also made changes to our student entrances; from Croft Road students should use the new pedestrian Gate A entrance. The back gate will also be available at the start and end of the school day. With our visitor Gate A car park repurposed as the new pedestrian entrance and front reception areas still inaccessible, it is not possible to accommodate any visitors to our site at present. We have also informing the local Primaries that our Open Evening scheduled for next Thursday 21st September is now a virtual event.

The week beginning Monday 18th September **Week A** will operate as follows:

Monday 18th September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years 7, 12 and 13 will attend school for an 8.30am start. Year 7 and Sixth Form should make their way to their form rooms for morning registration. • Years 8, 9 and 11 will have live lessons set on Microsoft Teams. • Year 10 should attend school for a 2pm start. • Year 10 will have live lessons set on Microsoft Teams for periods 1-3 and assignments set for P4 to enable travel to school.
Tuesday 19th September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years 9 and 11 will attend school for an 8.30am start. Year 11 should make their way to the Sports Hall with Year 9 lining up on the lower playground. • Year 7, 8, 10 and Sixth Form will have live lessons set on Microsoft Teams.
Wednesday 20th September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years 10 and 11 will attend school for an 8.30am start. Year 11 should make their way to the Sports Hall with Year 10 lining up on the lower playground. • Years 7, 8, 9 and Sixth Form will have live lessons set on Microsoft Teams.
Thursday 21st September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years 8, 12 and 13 will attend school for an 8.30am start, Sixth Form making their way to their form rooms for morning registration and Year 8 making their way to the Sports Hall. • Years 7, 9, 10 and 11 will have live lessons set on Microsoft Teams.
Friday 22nd September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INSET day 2

On rare occasions, students may be directed to independent study assignment on Teams, but our aim is to always maximise face to face teaching for all our students either online or physically in the building during this time. Students will access remote learning via live lessons on Teams at the time of their scheduled lessons at school. Please be aware that students should also be attending their form sessions, which run Monday – Friday 8.30am – 8.45am via Teams. All students have been reminded of how to use Teams when they were in school, but should you require any help, please visit our website to access to these resources. These resources include a guide for parents and carers.

We understand remote learning creates challenges at home regarding access to resources. All remote learning will be via Microsoft Teams therefore any internet device can be used such as a tablet or mobile phone. If you require equipment to support remote learning, a reminder to contact Assistant Headteacher, Mr Stockdale via email sstockdale@theappletonschool.org in the first instance.

Additionally, I would like to make you aware that Teams can also be accessed via Xbox or PlayStation. Please see instructions for this below:

Xbox

1. Plug a keyboard into the Xbox USB slot (less than £10 from Amazon);
2. Go into my games and apps;
3. Find Microsoft Edge and select;
4. Type in office 365 and log in as you would in school;
5. You can then access your work and use key packages including: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, Emails;
6. To move around you use the Xbox controller or plug in a mouse.

PlayStation

1. Identify the PlayStation internet browser icon (it is WWW with dots around it);
2. Press the PlayStation logo on the controller;
3. Go to the library and find options for games and applications;
4. Go into applications and you will find the internet browser;
5. Type in Office 365 and log in as you would in school;
6. You can then access your work and use key packages including: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, and Emails.

Attendance at form time and live lessons is a requirement for all students who are learning from home. We expect all students to check in with their form tutor on the days they have remote learning between 8.30am and 8.45am. The checking in process also allows students to be supported with well-being issues or general concerns around remote learning. Such issues will be supported in confidence and in line with our safeguarding procedures. Students failing to attend form time and lessons will be marked absent on the register as they would for a normal school lesson; this will be monitored.

Please find below some helpful tips for parents/carers:

- Please ensure students log in on time;
- During lessons students will be required to have their camera switched off. They will also be required to be on mute unless the teacher unmutes to ask questions;
- Students will be set tasks to complete during lessons. These tasks could be in the form an assignment, activities to be completed on worksheets, answers to be typed up using the chat function or answers on a forms quiz. Please can you ensure that work is completed and uploaded as per instructions to enable teachers to monitor understanding and gaps in learning;
- Please ensure that students only speak and type on the chat when they are asked to by the teacher and do not say or write anything which does not relate to the learning.

All teachers will be reviewing students' engagement and awarding achievement points. Please expect contact from staff if they are concerned about your child's engagement. In the event that your child cannot access Teams please contact the school via remotlearning@theappletonschool.org in the first instance.

Our onsite provision for vulnerable students when they are due to be on remote learning will continue and students qualifying for free school meals will receive vouchers for the weeks they are on remote learning.

I can reassure you that we will continue to work to offer the best education that we can for every student. We will continue to strive to find solutions and will keep you updated.

Thank you for all your ongoing support at this difficult time, we would like to thank you for your patience and reiterate that students' learning, safety and welfare remain our key priority.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S Cox', written in a cursive style.

Ms S Cox
Headteacher