



APTCCO Independent School

18th December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

It only seems a few weeks ago that I last wrote to you, however we now approach the end of the first term at school and what a term! All the young people of APTCCO leave me amazed daily, their attitude and character are inspiring, and I have loved every moment with them this term.

I have tried to talk to you all this week to give you a brief overview of how your young person is doing at school and a brief update on what we are doing at school in these still testing times. We took the choice to stay open on the 18th December and offer a day of activity for our young people on the 21st December, as we appreciate the importance of remaining open to provide that very much needed support to families and social interaction and fun for the young people. The school will be open again to all learners on Monday 4th January 2021.

Reporting Covid through the Christmas Break

We have been advised by the DfE that we will need a reporting function in place for six days after our final day of school. This is to receive reports of Covid symptoms and positive test cases and feed this back to the DfE. During recent months we have been reporting back our attendance daily to the DfE and this is a further measure to ensure as much intelligence is gathered throughout the Christmas break as possible. Can I ask that if your young person or your household have Covid symptoms or have a positive Covid test that we are informed as soon as you can. I can be reached directly on **07880 715 612**.

Parent/Carer Voice

As I have mentioned to you before your feedback is very much appreciated and we are constantly looking at ways to improve what we do at the school. We are now looking to take this one step further by forming a school parent/carers forum which I would very much like you to consider being part of as an active forum. I plan to hold sessions, once a month, and to begin with this will be via a remote TEAMS meeting, in the future when allowed I would like to host them at one of our sites so you can see and feel the school for yourselves. If you are interested in joining the forum, please contact Leah Gorstridge, with your details in the first instance and I will organise the first meeting for after the Christmas break. Leah's email address is: leah.gorstridge@aptcco.org

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End of term reports

The teaching team have been focussing this term on working with every learner, in the first instance to reassure, providing the essential 'nurture' that the school prides itself on, which in turn then provides a sound foundation for the structured learning activities planned for the day. The team have been paying close attention to the young people and their progress with their learning and in the activities that they are taking part in, these reflections and observations are being shared with you in the form of an end of term report.

I am incredibly proud of every young person at the school, all of which have progressed immensely in one aspect or another of their development and learning. The reports aim to provide a baseline of where your young person is currently, recognising the distance that has been travelled so far and acknowledging the 'next steps' to continue the fantastic momentum we have seen to date.

Please find the end of term report for your young person enclosed, if you have any questions at all please do not hesitate in contacting me and I will be glad to talk to you further.

School Covid Practice

We continue to keep a close eye on local and regional developments and we still maintain a now fortnightly Covid Contingency meeting that involves senior managers and trustees. Our view remains the same and that is that we will continue to keep all our school sites open unless we must close a 'bubble', or we are mandated to close by the Government.

We continue to observe our 'bubbles' and our revised cleaning regime all of which are now part of our new 'norm' within school.

The teaching team are also maintaining the online learning platforms which have also now formed part of our routine educational week.

I have sent you the 'Should I send my child to school?' document again, just because it is a useful first reference to support you in your decision making when it comes to sending your young person into school or not. I would also like to mention that you can always call me or any other staff member for advice, as I know the guidance can be somewhat confusing at times.

We maintain that if you do have a Covid related reason for keeping your child off school that you inform us as soon as possible by phoning either myself during the Christmas break as mentioned above or the admin team when we return after Christmas through our main number 01623 629 902.

Forest School

We have been running Forest School sessions now for quite a few weeks, this initially was piloted, the intention for us as a school is to make the most of some of the natural resources we are blessed with in Budby and the Thoresby Estate. The benefits and changes to each young person have been overwhelming, largely due to the natural environment providing a safe platform for learning boundaries - physical, social and emotional. The young people have enjoyed the freedom to explore, express their feelings and learn more about the natural environment, they have become more self-aware, and grown in confidence, they are able to self-regulate and this has inspired their curiosity and desire for more.

Due to the overwhelming success, we feel APTCOO Forest School, now has a permanent place in the APTCOO portfolio, we will continue to keep you informed and invited to come along to enjoy the experience as a family.

Over the past weeks the young people have spent their time trying out various new experiences in the woodland. They have learnt different ways of solving problems and how to manage risks, they have particularly enjoyed fire lighting, learning how to start a fire safely using just flint and steel which as I am sure you will appreciate requires a degree of perseverance!

They have collected logs and branches to make natural dens, they have worked together happily with their peers and tutors forming close and safe friendships.

They have enjoyed different types of cooking on the campfire, roasting marshmallows, frying pancakes and discussing preferences of flavours and sharing stories. This time has been valued by the young people and staff alike and the associated benefits of learning in the great outdoors has been felt by all.

As the new term begins in January can I ask that the learners continue to bring a jacket with them, where possible I would also ask that a pair of outdoor boots or shoes come to school, these can be left in school.

Contact details

I just want to remind you of the contact details below, you can always reach a member of the team at the site that your young person attends, if in doubt please call the Botany land line as this is our main office location.

- **Botany Avenue:** 01623 629 902 **Mob:** 07907 302 206
- **North Farm House:** 01623 237 170 **Mob:** 07738 647 619
- **Cameleon Lodge:** 01623 232 282 **Mob:** 07793 472 465



Added to the above telephone numbers may I remind you you're able to communicate with the school quickly and confidentially using our texting service, the number is 07860 027 568. I am aware that parents have found the school texting service very useful for quick messages perhaps en route to school alerting the team of any concerns.

Thank You

All that remains is for me to thank you all for your ongoing support for the school, this has been a particularly testing term for all of us but from my perspective the school and the learners have not missed a beat, in fact they have excelled.

On behalf of the Trustees, Executive and APTCOO team we wish you and your families a very safe and merry Christmas and hope you have a good break and spend some quality time with those that are close to you.

Stay safe and I look forward to meeting or speaking with you in the new year.

If you have any questions regarding the contents of this letter or would like to chat generally please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours sincerely,



James Wilson
Head of APTCOO Independent School

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