



APTCOO
Independent School

1st April 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,



How quickly these updates are coming around! As you can imagine spring has truly sprung here at APTCOO and we are making the absolute best of the improving weather at all our sites. Snow drops have now made way for daffodils and it must be that time of year again, for us to push back out and enjoy our outdoor spaces as we take learning outdoors wherever possible.

I have tried to catch up with each of you this week to give a quick update on school and ask after your young people, and of course update on the measures we have within school to ensure we are all as safe and prepared as we can be in what are still unpredictable times.

School will be closed from the end of the school day on Thursday 1st April to Monday 19th April 2021, we are as ever open for our young people and those in the local community to join us for our short break experiences, which I know are very well received and enjoyed by the young people.

Growth in the Education Team

During this last half term, we have grown our team, we are very excited to be able to announce the start of our newly appointed SENCO Michaela Ledsham:



Hello, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you as the newly appointed Special Needs Coordinator at APTCOO. I have had the pleasure of being in education for over 20 years, with seven of those years as a qualified SENCO. I have worked in a variety of mainstream primary school settings with a teaching responsibility across all key stages.

More recently I was the Early Years Lead for a multi academy trust where my role was to use my leadership skills to support a growing team, and to promote the best outcomes for pupils. During my time teaching I have developed a real passion for supporting and nurturing vulnerable learners. I have a keen interest in mental health, particularly mental health in young adults and supporting them through difficult times. I feel extremely lucky to have been welcomed into the team at APTCOO and I look forward to meeting you all in due course.

Have a great Easter, Michaela
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In School

I am as ever incredibly proud of the staff and the young people at APTCOO, I think it important that I share some of the activities at the school with you. Our young people have been engaging with sensory play and exploration they have been increasing their physical activity as the weather improves and we have been exploring healthy eating choices. The young people are also developing their independence and social acceptance from the roles and responsibilities associated with animal care at the Farm, they have been involved in preparing flower boxes and outdoor spaces for the coming season. The young people have demonstrated a pride in their work, for example demonstrating care and accuracy to the mathematical aspects of cooking and baking.

Recently staff have built on the young people's previous knowledge by planning and delivering some excellent scenario-based lessons. Drama, debate, and reasoning skills have been explored through '*Crime and Punishment*', involving a mock trial after evidence gathering through exploration and fact finding. The older learners have also been developing their personal independence through food preparation and kitchen-based skills, collaboration and social interaction are also being developed through active work on the site as well as work experience opportunities off site.

Forest School

Forest school continues to go from strength to strength, over the recent weeks the young people have spent their time trying out various new experiences in the woodland. We have seen the young people develop a resilience to 'trying things for the first time', allowing themselves to make mistakes and recover and improve in a safe learning environment. The young people are also demonstrating immense pride in their achievements in the woods, be it starting a fire from scratch to producing their own wooden mallets. Learners have been seen to flourish where additional responsibilities are given to them, learners are demonstrating a dedication to tasks from whittling wood to sawing for protracted periods to achieve their aim.

Parent/Carer Voice

In my last letter I mentioned that we are looking to form a parent/carers group for the school, this is to hear your feedback and thoughts on our provision and involve you in any decision-making process to move the school forward. If you are interested in joining the forum, could you please contact Michaela with your details in the first instance and we will organise the first meeting in the next few months.

Reporting Covid over the Easter Break

As was the case over the Christmas break, we have been asked once more to provide contact tracing regarding the close contacts of any pupil or staff members who test positive during the Easter period. As before this is for the six-day period after the 1st April, which takes us to the 7th April. This is for us to receive reports of Covid symptoms and positive test cases and feed this back to the DfE. We continue to report back our attendance daily to

the DfE and this is once more a measure to better inform the intelligence being gathered. 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 possible. I can be reached directly on **07880 715 612**.

Isolating after a positive Covid-19 test

Advice remains the same in relation to what action to take if you or your young person develop covid symptoms, isolation guidance should be followed, and a PCR test should be booked. I have included advice from Nottinghamshire County Council for schools, this gives further guidance and direction in relation to the action required in varying scenarios, we as the educational setting will also put our plans into place which are also covered in the attached guidance.

Asymptomatic Household Testing

Recommendations have been made for us to advise you to participate in home testing, this is for households with a school aged child, childcare bubble or support bubble of a member of school staff or a young person, you can now access twice weekly testing. The test kits can be accessed in a few ways, including through your workplace if they are offering this or you could order a home testing kit to be sent to your home.

Further details can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

Testing is voluntary however we strongly encourage people to access this testing that is made available to you to support us further in keeping everyone as safe as possible. We maintain that if you do have a Covid related reason for keeping your young person off school that you inform us as soon as possible by phoning either myself during the Easter break as mentioned above or the admin team when we return after Easter through our main number **01623 629 902**.

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

I hope as lockdown measures ease you will once again be able to be with those that you have not been able to be with, and that those periods of absence are soon forgotten and being in others company is enjoyed once more.

On behalf of myself, Carol and the whole team I wish to thank you for your ongoing support to the school and the young people that we have here, it is truly an absolute honour to be a part of daily.

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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