

18th June 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing today with some important information on a variety of matters.

Sports Day

As most of you are aware, in previous years we have used the Stray and the facilities at Harrogate Grammar School to hold our annual sports days for Early Years, and Key Stages 1 & 2. We weren't able to do this last summer, and unfortunately, are also unable to do so this year due to the continuing restrictions. However, we don't want the children to miss out entirely and each phase within the school will be organising its own competitive sports event but, sadly, without spectators. We will make sure that we share lots of pictures with you all so you get something of a flavour of the events!

Attendance

Of all the issues which a Headteacher deals with on a daily basis, attendance and leave of absence requests are amongst those which cause me significant concern and difficulties. I appreciate that the pandemic has had a significant impact on many families and has often resulted in much needed holidays being cancelled and then having to be rearranged and I have tried to take this into account where possible when dealing with leave of absence requests. However, it is important to understand that Headteacher's are not able to authorise holidays during term time, with the exception of some religious festivals, and I would urge parents and carers to avoid planning term-time holidays as far as they possibly can. If parents/carers do intend to take their child/ren out of school during term time, I would politely remind you that a leave of absence request must be completed in advance, in writing, using one the relevant forms which are available on the website or from the school office.

Regular attendance at school is extremely important for the continuity of a child's learning and for maximising educational opportunities and development. All learning, in every subject, is planned sequentially so when a pupil misses a group of lessons, this will have a significant impact on his or her ability to develop a good understanding of the concepts being taught. Obviously there are times - due to illness for example - when a child has to be absent from school and we will always work with families to provide some learning opportunities at home, where this absence is likely to be prolonged and this has been made much easier through the use of the iPad. However, I cannot expect my staff to provide learning for pupils who are on an unauthorised holiday and I am sure that all parents and carers will want to work with the school on this issue in the best interests of the children.



Apple Distinguished School

I am delighted to inform you all that Western will be sending our submission to the Apple World Team at the end of this month in our bid to become recognised as an Apple Distinguished School. This is what Apple have to say about ADS schools:

We believe Apple Distinguished Schools are some of the most innovative schools in the world. They're centres of leadership and educational excellence that demonstrate our vision of exemplary learning environments. They use Apple products to inspire student creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. Leadership in our recognised schools cultivate environments in which students are excited about learning, curiosity is fostered, and learning is a personal experience.

We will of course let you know the outcome of our bid as soon as we have news. In the meantime, if you would like to find out more about the Apple Distinguished School programme, please use the link below.

https://www.apple.com/euro/education/apple-distinguished-schools/pdf/Apple_Distinguished_Schools_Overview_2018-2020_IE.pdf

Letter to Parents from the Secretary of State for Education

Please use the link below to access this letter.

Today the Secretary of State for Education has written an [open letter to parents](#) encouraging continued regular testing, to support all the hard work schools and colleges have been doing to increase participation.

It just remains for me to wish everyone in the Western community a safe and enjoyable weekend,

Kind regards,

Tim Broad

Headteacher

