

APTCOO Independent School

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to firstly take this opportunity to introduce myself, my name is James Wilson and I have recently been appointed as Head of APTCOO Independent School. My experience of coaching, teaching and leading dates back some twenty years where I put these skills into practice as a serving Royal Marine and spent twelve years honing them in a military context. For the last twelve years I have taken those skills and experiences and built upon them in an education setting, having held several senior leadership posts within Further Education. For the last three years I have volunteered as a board member supporting APTCOO with becoming an Independent School and its progress to date. I am very much looking forward to this new role, in particular supporting your young person through their development and education and indeed meeting and talking with you and forming a strong partnership.

Uniforms

Our school is now established and listening to parents and young people we have decided that it would be a really positive move for us to have a sense of identity for the school and have a polo shirt and sweatshirt produced for the learners and the staff. Size details are included on the form enclosed with this letter, if you could indicate the size required, we will place the order once we have all the forms returned. We do realise that some children may be unhappy about wearing a uniform therefore it is optional, please indicate on the form if not required.

COVID-19 changes to school routines

After what has been a period of challenge for everyone and learning to live with the additional challenges Covid has brought with it, I would like to share with you what school will look and feel like and how we as partners with you and your child can remain as safe and happy as possible. We have remained open throughout the last period of the academic year; the team have been fantastic, and I have been incredibly moved by their dedication and care during this time. We have also had a variety of successful summer camps and sports days that some of our learners have been taking part in.

We will be open to all our learners on their agreed full timetabled days from Wednesday 2nd September 2020, and both myself and the whole APTCOO team will welcome everybody back. The plan is to have all sites open as usual, this will give the learners an opportunity to be in a comfortable and familiar surroundings with staff members they know and trust and also allow for the transition for those young people progressing between our sites. It will

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also give staff members who know them best the opportunity to support with their return and future learning plans. We will also be agreeing and sharing with you a timetable for your young person at the end of the first week.

The focus for the first week will be to re-establish friendships and socialisation, get used to the school routine again and support our young people with any anxiety or worries that they may have. I will work together with the team to establish where the young people are with their learning and begin to plan to progress that learning and development over the next term and beyond.

We are very much looking forward to having all of the young people back, things are going to be a bit different in school in order to keep the learners and the staff as safe as we can.

We will aim to minimise the risk in several ways, but these will primarily be reducing the amount of contact between the young people by having them at their base locations and keeping movement between the sites to a minimum, these will form the learners' 'bubbles' a term much used to describe the working and social groups of school pupils. We have the plans and resources in place and will be increasing the already comprehensive hygiene measures in line with the most recent government advice.

Our increased hygiene procedures include regular use of hand sanitisers with handwashing at regular intervals in addition to after toileting and before eating food. The team have been working hard over the last few weeks to make sure the resources are in place to ensure this can happen with minimum impact on the regular school day. The teaching staff will reiterate and deliver specific hygiene lessons throughout the week and ensure there is context to the activity and the protection of everyone involved. We have also instigated an increased cleaning regime at the beginning and end of each school day, this will include items and resources that have been used that day and those resources that will be used during the coming day. This cleaning routine at each site will also include all surfaces throughout, with particular detail being paid to those 'high contact' areas such as door handles, worktops and the communal areas.

To remain safe, parents and relatives will not be allowed into the school buildings unless by prior appointment, if you would like a quick catch up with me or the delivery team, we will join you outside the building. All learners will be expected to wash or sanitise their hands before entering the school premises, if your child has a phobia or would like to use their own product please let us know in advance. We have also made sure that everyone has their own pencil case and stationery including exercise books that only they will use whilst at school.

I would also like to remind you of the symptoms displayed with Covid-19 and when you are required to self-isolate or isolate family members:

The medical advice states, you must self-isolate if you have coronavirus symptoms or live in the same household as somebody who does. The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

If you have one or more of these symptoms, you must self-isolate straight away for 10 days, or longer if you still have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste.

If you live in the same household as someone with coronavirus symptoms, you must self-isolate straight away for 14 days; therefore your child will need to self-isolate for 14 days if you or a member of your household is feeling symptomatic, we do need to record your child's non-attendance please contact the office as a priority.

I also have a few administrative tasks to raise, one being the confirmation of the contact details we hold for each young person and a health questionnaire. I have included an information sheet for you to check and confirm that there is no change or amend where necessary, I would really appreciate these forms being returned to us as soon as possible in the self-addressed envelope I have included.

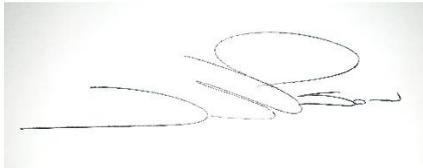
To communicate with the school quickly and confidentially please use our texting service the number is **07860 027 568**. I am aware that parents have found the school texting service very useful for quick messages perhaps en route to school alerting the team of any concerns.

We have many exciting plans and developments including new premises that we will share with you as part of a regular APTCOO newsletter. Your voice and our partnership is vital to the day to day and longer term planning of APTCOO school and our cherished Charity. APTCOO is now celebrating 30 years providing family support, after school and holiday clubs, befriending and much, much more. To keep up to date please look at our Facebook (www.facebook.com/aptcoo), Twitter (@aptcoo) and website (www.aptcoo.co.uk).

Finally, I want to thank you for your continued support and know that you will work with us to make the new term and academic year as successful as possible. I look forward to meeting with all parents and when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted we can host parent open days allowing you to visit and experience the APTCOO school environments.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Wilson', on a light-colored background.

James Wilson
Head of APTCOO Independent School