

## Principal's Bulletin – 19 December 2025

Dear Parents and Carers

As we come to the end of the Autumn term, I would like to thank families for the support you have shown Open Academy over the past few months.

This term has been my first as Principal, and I have been struck by the commitment of staff and the many positive moments that bring our school community together. Over the past fortnight, our carol concert, Christmas jumper day, the Year 7 Christmas disco, Midwinter Tales and our visit to St Francis' Church were important reminders that school is about more than academic success alone – it is also about belonging, confidence and shared values.

Alongside these moments, we have spent this term focused on strengthening the foundations that support success in school: good behaviour, strong attendance and positive routines. These are not optional extras – they are essential if young people are to learn well, feel safe and achieve their potential.

As we return after the Christmas break, it is vital that students are ready to learn from the very first day. This means arriving on time, attending every day unless genuinely unwell, wearing correct uniform, ensuring their phones are 'off and away', following staff instructions and conducting themselves in a way that allows everyone to learn without disruption.

Parents and carers play a crucial role in this. The partnership between home and school is one of the strongest influences on a child's success. Your support with routines, expectations, attendance and behaviour makes a real difference and allows us to work together in the best interests of your child.

I am confident that, by continuing to work together, we can ensure every student at Open Academy is given the best possible start in life. There is much to be proud of this term, and much to build on as we move into the new year.

Thank you again for your ongoing support. I wish you and your family a restful and enjoyable Christmas break, and I look forward to welcoming students back on Tuesday, 6 January.

With best wishes.

Dan Bagshaw  
Principal

### Attendance

Attendance to school is an essential part of a young person's life as they prepare for a successful future. When students are absent they will miss key learning opportunities, lose social connections with peers and often struggle to have the confidence to catch-up missed learning.

Whilst we aim for 100% attendance for every student, we know there may be times when a parent/carers wishes to take a student out of school for a short time, for example an exceptional family circumstance or bereavement. When students are ill, it is essential all parents contact the academy to inform us on the day of absence. For all other occasions which are not illness, a leave of absence form is required to be completed. Please see our website or contact us:

<https://www.open-academy.org.uk/parentcarers/attendance>

It is an essential form to complete for us to ensure we are aware of the situation and can support if required.

[open-academy-principals-bulletins](#)

Unauthorised absence will result in our attendance policy being initiated and attendance management processes involving the local authority may be used.

Please ensure all leave of absence requests are submitted in good time, using the request form online or in the academy.

Mr Richardson  
Assistant Principal

## Rewards

This week has seen us celebrate the wonderful achievements of lots of students. First, we celebrated students who have used the library the most so far, this academic year, whether that be to read, play board games, mentoring or to simply socialise with peers in a quiet space. We are very grateful to Bread Source who donated two tray bakes for students to enjoy and to Mrs Rogers for creating such a purposeful space.

We then celebrated students who haven't received any behaviour points this half term, where they all came together in the lecture theatre to watch Man Vs Baby. There were lots of laughs echoing through the room, so I think it is fair to say they enjoyed it.

And on the last day of term, we celebrated students who had achieved 100% attendance for this half term. All students were invited to have breakfast in the atrium with their pastoral teams to celebrate their achievement.

Congratulations to all students involved. We will continue to celebrate more successes next half term. For those who didn't meet the criteria this half term, it resets each half term, so you have another opportunity in Spring term.



Mrs Halliday  
Associate Assistant Principal - SEND and Whole School Rewards

## Panto

It was a pleasure to be able to take 29 Year 8 students to the panto on Tuesday. Norwich Theatre Royal did not disappoint and students were able to spot many of the key characteristics that they had been learning about in class.

There was plenty of opportunity for students to get involved which they did with enthusiasm!

Thank you to all the staff who enabled the trip to happen, especially our emergency drivers!



Mrs Ormosi  
Teacher

## Chaplain's Update

### Bear Grylls Visit to Soul Church



On Friday, 9 January at 5:30pm, Bear Grylls is coming to Soul Youth at Soul Church for a special after-school event — and he is excited to see you there. Expect real stories, big energy, and a chance to hear from someone who's taken on some of the toughest challenges on the planet, as well as how his faith and belief in Jesus have shaped his journey. It's totally free, and everyone's welcome. Just show up and get involved.

All parents and carers are invited to go too but will need to get a ticket from a link which will be given to me shortly by Soul Church. Students do not need a ticket and can just show up.

[open-academy-principals-bulletins](https://open-academy-principals-bulletins)





## Christmas Hampers 'Random Acts of Kindness'

Thank you to our parents, carers, and students for coming together to create **23 Random Acts of Kindness Christmas hampers**. Your generosity and community spirit truly capture the meaning of the season, and these hampers will make a positive difference for those who receive them.

God bless you all for all you have done in this.

## Year 7 Carol Service at St Francis Church



Our Year 7 Carol Service at St Francis Church was a truly joyful and uplifting time celebrating the Christmas story. St Francis church rang out with cheerful carols, hearty singing, wonderful readings and the infectious enthusiasm of our staff and students, creating a wonderful festive atmosphere.

It was a memorable occasion that beautifully captured the joy, togetherness, and true spirit of Christmas.

A big thank you goes out to Rev Julian Bryant and his team for hosting us for this special occasion.

## Reflection

### "Do not be afraid"

These are the first words spoken in nearly every part of the Christmas story.

[open-academy-principals-bulletins](https://open-academy-principals-bulletins)

It was said to the shepherds under a cold sky. "Do not be afraid."  
It was spoken to Mary in a moment that changed history. "Do not be afraid."  
Spoken to Joseph as he wrestled with uncertainty. "Do not be afraid."

At this moment we may be living with fear in our lives over certain things. Fear about the present, the future and even our loved ones. Maybe we have shared these fears with others, or they may even be unspoken and still remain in our hearts.

Just as in the Christmas story, before good news arrives, reassurance was given first. I want to encourage/reassure you today, don't be afraid.

When Jesus was born, one of his names was the prince of peace and I pray that all of our fears would be driven out by peace. The prince of peace is only a prayer away.

This season invites us to pause, breathe, and trust that even in our fearful nights and days, hope, light, and peace is still being born.

*Do not be afraid, be reassured, the light is on its way.*

On behalf of my family and I, we pray you and yours, a merry big Christmas, full of joy, happiness, light, and peace.

God bless you all.

Mark Pimlott  
Chaplain



**CHRISTMAS services**

**CAFÉ CHRISTMAS**  
Thursday 18 Dec - 10am

**CAROL SERVICE**  
Sunday 21 Dec - 4pm

**FAMILY NATIVITY SERVICE**  
Christmas Eve - 4pm

**MIDNIGHT MASS**  
Christmas Eve - 11:30pm

**CHRISTMAS DAY**  
Thursday 25 Dec - 10am

All welcome at St Francis Church  
96-98 Rider Haggard Rd, Heartsease NR7 9UQ

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

**JOY**