

Principal's Bulletin – 23 January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to begin by reflecting on a real highlight in our school calendar: our Key Stage 4 and 5 Rewards Evening, held on Tuesday.

Rewards Evening – Celebrating Success

It was a genuinely uplifting occasion and a fantastic reminder of what makes Open Academy such a special community. We were proud to recognise students for their achievements across subject areas, as well as for wider contributions to school life.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Mrs Halliday for the time, care and attention she put into organising the evening. Events like this do not happen without significant planning behind the scenes, and her work ensured the night ran smoothly and felt truly celebratory for our young people.

Congratulations to every student who received an award — your success represents not only your academic progress, but also your commitment, resilience and character. You should be very proud of yourselves.

Thank you also to all parents and carers who attended to support your child, and to the staff who gave their time to be there. Your presence matters, and it sends a powerful message to our students that their hard work is recognised and valued.

Rewards Evening was also a chance to reflect on the values that underpin our school culture. At Open Academy, we are committed to developing young people who are not only successful learners, but also thoughtful, respectful and ambitious individuals who contribute positively to the world around them.

Celebrating success as a whole community reinforces an important message: we achieve more when we work together. Whether it is students supporting one another, families backing routines and expectations at home, or staff working tirelessly to help pupils thrive, our shared commitment helps every child go further.

A Key Reminder: Mobile Phones and Contacting Home

I would like to reinforce an important message regarding mobile phone use during the school day. We are seeing increasing examples of students using mobile phones to contact home directly to say they feel unwell and need to be collected.

- If a student feels unwell, they must report to a member of staff immediately (for example, their teacher or the pastoral team).
- We will assess the situation and contact home if a student needs to be collected.
- Students should not be arranging collection themselves via their mobile phone.
- Any absence where a student is collected without school permission will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Equally, we ask that parents and carers do not contact their child directly during the school day via mobile phone. Phones are a significant distraction from learning, and messaging/calling during lessons undermines focus, routines and classroom expectations.

Our approach remains simple and consistent: phones must be off and away during the school day. This is in the best interests of learning, wellbeing, safeguarding, and the calm, purposeful environment we want every child to benefit from.

Thank you in advance for your continued support with this.

With best wishes

Dan Bagshaw
Principal

PE

The Year 8 rugby team played Attleborough in a friendly on Wednesday afternoon. After drawing 10-10 in a friendly at a tournament in October, the Year 8 team showed how much progress they have made by winning 55-10.

Tries scored by Mohammed, Elijah (3), Nemo (3), Anton, Sam and Jack. Sam was given player of the match for scoring his first ever try and playing very well. I could not have been more proud of the team and their outstanding rugby, with the Attleborough teacher also remarking on how good they were. Well done!

Mr Wilkinson
Teacher

Great effort from Callum J at the Norfolk Schools Cross Country Championships on Tuesday at Wymondham College, where he finished 48/100 runners. This race also included under 19s so his final position is still not known yet!



Mr Lambert
Teacher

Year 7 Parents Evening – Tuesday, 10 February

We are very excited to welcome all parents/carers to our Year 7 Parents Evening on Tuesday, 10 February. As we all know, building strong school/family connections is vital to the success of our students, and we therefore hope all can make it in to receive important updates/progress guidance from your children's class teachers and the pastoral team.

Please visit the Arbor app to get your appointments booked in, and feel free to contact the school if you are having any problems booking your appointments.

Mr Dilley
Teacher

Student Leadership

Congratulations to the Charity Committee

Huge congratulations to the Charity Committee for planning, organising and then supervising two key charity events before Christmas - a bake sale and non-uniform day. Together they raised £302 for the Hamlet Trust, who do a lot of brilliant work in our community providing services and support to people with a range of needs. We look forward to working with them more in the future.

Student Leader Training Programme

A massive thank you and congratulations to all Student Leaders who took part and completed the Student Leader Training Programme in December. A key part of the project is to offer Student Leaders the training they need to become the leaders they aspire to be and this is a key part of that offering! Certificates for those who excelled in the training and achieved over 80% will be rewarded in assemblies next week.

Holocaust Memorial Trip

15 Student Leader Ambassadors will be coming with myself and our Chaplain Mark, to the Holocaust Memorial service at St Peter Mancroft on Tuesday, 27 January. All invited students will need to return their forms by Monday, 26 January.

County Hall Trip

On Thursday, 29 January we will be taking 30 students on a trip to County Hall to explore the seat of local democracy and carry out an executive meeting in the main chamber. All invited students will need to return their forms by Monday, 26 January.

Mr Dilley
Teacher

Year 9

9C are now in full swing making their garden planters from reclaimed pallets. Today we have been learning and trialling box joints which fit together like a jigsaw! They worked confidently with tricky measuring and marking techniques and showed great resilience. Teamwork was fantastic working in their tables to make sure everyone was achieving the intended outcome. I look forward to seeing the planters come to life – Miss Rednall

Chaplain's Reflection

Just a bit of encouragement to help you through the blue days of January. I can remember when I was very young and at every Christmas time, we used to have the whole family come to stay with us. Every room in the house was needed so I was always relegated from my room to sleeping on a mattress in my mum and dad's room.

I can remember one particular night that we watched one of the early versions of the movie The Wizard of Oz, and I can remember feeling really scared of some of the characters in the film, especially the wicked witch of the west and her green face. Anyway, my mum put me to bed, and I fell asleep only to wake up in the middle of the night to see what looked like the wicked witch standing in front of me. I was frozen in terror and never slept the rest of the night because of what I could see. However as soon as dawn approached, the light came through the curtains, and I could see things for what they really were. The wicked witch turned out to be my mums dressing gown that she had hung on the hoover before she had got into bed.

All of that fear because of a dressing gown. The light shone in and my fears subsided.

I want to encourage you with this. When the light shines in on a situation, we see it differently to what it looks like in the dark. We can hide our problems and anxieties, keeping them in the dark so to speak and they can grow bigger, increasing our fears and worries.

The light can be shone on our situations just by speaking to others about them. The saying goes, "a problem shared is a problem halved."

Please be encouraged to find someone in your world to talk to, don't hold onto those fears a moment longer. Get those worries and anxieties out in the open and in the light. It's a life changer. In closing, Jesus Christ is described as the light of the world. He brings light and is only a prayer away.

Psalm 27:1

"The Lord is my light and my salvation—who shall I fear?"

God bless you all.

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain



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