

Principal's Bulletin – 24 April 2026

Dear Families,

I hope you and your families are enjoying the lighter evenings as we move further into the summer term. It has been a positive week at Open Academy and I have a couple of things I wanted to share with you.

A letter from our local MP

This week I was delighted to receive a personal letter from Alice Macdonald, Member of Parliament for Norwich North, congratulating Open Academy on being ranked in the *School Guide Top 10* for Norwich. It was a genuinely lovely thing to receive, and I was particularly struck by her words about what recognition like this really represents — not just results, but the dedication of staff, the commitment of our governors, and the atmosphere we work hard every day to create for your children.

I want to be honest with you, as I always try to be: we know we are on a journey and that there is still much work to do. But moments like this remind us that the progress being made here is real, and that it is noticed. I am proud of every member of our school community — staff, students, and families alike — and I hope you will take a moment this weekend to feel proud too. A letter from an MP is not something we receive every day, and it belongs to all of us.

Our Morning Offer — is your child making the most of it?

As a reminder, we offer a structured morning provision for all students, and I would encourage every family to make use of it. Starting the school day well — on time, settled, and ready to learn — makes a genuine difference to how young people feel and how they perform throughout the day.

Full details of our Morning Offer, including what is available each day from 8.05, can be found on our website:

www.open-academy.org.uk/parentcarers/morning-offer

If you have any questions about the provision, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support and partnership. Together, we are building something to be proud of.

With best wishes for the weekend.

Dan Bagshaw
Principal

Attendance

As part of our work alongside our colleagues at the Department for Education, the RISE team and Norfolk County Council, we have been exploring and evaluating our attendance processes. This has shown to be a very positive experience, and one in which has provided real clarity on our successful systems and policies.

One area we have been advised to develop is our response to student absence and the coding we enter for each occasion.

With this in mind and moving forward, all illnesses not deemed to be severe or does not constitute a reason for absence will be coded as unauthorised. This will include for coughs, colds, headaches, muscle pain (including period pains) and also for occasions where anxiety is listed. For specific information on anxiety, the NHS guidance is for young people to be in school to access the support and have opportunities to build resilience and confidence. If their worries are related to school, keeping them off might make those feelings worse in the long run.

As always, we are here to help and will continue to strive to ensure your child has the best support possible to boost their chances of success in their education. Please get in touch if you need us.

Mr Richardson
Assistant Principal

PE

Year 7 Rugby went away to Aylsham High for their end of season festival; drew with Charter Academy, lost to Aylsham, beat Notre Dame. Wilfred was Player of the Tournament for Open.

Shout out for the students below for taking part in the touch rugby tournament yesterday, they all showed great effort and perseverance throughout:

Amalie T, Sabine L, Ashanti G, Aureja A, Hattie-Rose A, Isaac H, Brogan M, Demarco W, Matthew O-R and Kaelan B.

Mr Wilkinson
Teacher

Year 9

Shout outs to:

Charlie SI and Stefan C for great effort in their Spanish speaking – Mrs McEvoy

Congratulations to 9I on doing very well in their Spanish assessment – Mrs Llorett Blackburn

Please praise Year 9 for their outstanding effort with preparing for their Year 9 maths test on Friday. All students have shown a 'can do' attitude and focused on how to use a method to answer a question showing their working out.

Year 11

With the formal start of GCSE exams next week, we want to take a moment to recognise the hard work, resilience, and commitment our Year 11 students have shown throughout their courses. The exam season begins with Art and Textiles, where students have already invested many hours refining their portfolios and preparing for their final pieces. We wish them the very best as they take this important first step.

This period can feel both exciting and demanding, and the support students receive at home makes a real difference. Encouraging a healthy, balanced routine is one of the most valuable ways to help. Ensuring your child gets enough sleep, eats regular nutritious meals, and stays hydrated can significantly improve focus and wellbeing. Gentle structure such as a clear revision timetable alongside time to relax, can also help students feel more in control.

Small, positive conversations go a long way. Taking an interest in what they are revising, offering reassurance, and keeping expectations realistic can help reduce pressure. It's also important that students take regular breaks, get some fresh air, and step away from screens when possible.

As we shared in this week's assembly, this is the final stretch, the last push towards the finish line. Now is the time for students to draw on all their hard work and preparation, moving forward with confidence and determination. We are proud of our Year 11 cohort and the effort they have put in to reach this point. With the right balance of preparation and wellbeing, they are well placed to succeed.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Mr Bradshaw and Mrs Hindry

Parent Coffee Morning – 13 May 2026


Open Academy Parent Coffee Morning

When: Wednesday 13th May, 9:15–10:30am
Where: Open Academy, Norwich, NR7 9DL

Come along for an informal chat, ask questions, and find out more about the services available to you and your child. We look forward to welcoming both current and future parents of children at Open Academy.

Services present:

Family Action -	SENDIASS
Autism / ADHD	Kids Norfolk Charity
Support Service	Open Academy's SENCO



Please scan the QR code to register your attendance to this event

We are delighted to invite you to our upcoming Parent Coffee Morning at Open Academy on Wednesday, 13 May, 9:15–10:30am. This is a great opportunity to meet other parents, chat with staff, and get a feel for our school community in a relaxed and friendly setting.

This event is open to:

- Parents of children currently attending Open Academy
- Parents of children in Year 5 or Year 6 who will be joining us in the future

Please sign up using the QR code on the poster. We look forward to welcoming you!

Mrs Halliday
Associate Assistant Principal

Chaplain's Reflection

I want to begin this week's reflection with a story. A man was walking through a circus and noticed something that puzzled him. He saw a fully grown elephant tied to a small rope that was barely able to restrain a puppy. The elephant did not even try to break free.

Out of curiosity, the man asked the trainer why the elephant did not escape. The trainer replied, "when they are young, we use the same size rope to hold them. As they grow, they are conditioned to believe that they cannot break free. They think that the rope can still hold them, so they never try." Often in our lives we can be conditioned or held back by past failures and hurts. This causes us to be tied up so to speak and we are afraid to break free or move on because of them.

I want to encourage you with this quote. "Strength doesn't come from what you can do, it comes from overcoming the things you once thought you couldn't".

Please know that whatever the rope may represent, it cannot hold you back any longer, you are stronger, you are amazing and you can break free.

In closing the Bible says these encouraging words in Psalm 118 verse 5. "Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me free."

He is only a prayer away. God bless, you are all in my thoughts and prayers.

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain

