

# The *Open* Way

COURAGE IN EVERY STEP, FAITH IN EVERY JOURNEY

*“Take courage”*

MATTHEW 14:27

5 June 2026

Dear Open Academy Families

As we move into June and feel the momentum of the final stretch of this academic year, I wanted to take a moment to celebrate what our community has achieved, share some important information about the weeks ahead as we look forward to September.

## **Our fortnightly theme: respect**

This fortnight, our focus across Open Academy is on Respect, a virtue that sits at the very heart of who we are and how we treat one another.

As a school community grounded in Christian values, we believe that genuine respect for others is not simply a rule to follow, but a way of life to be lived. The scriptures speak to this with great clarity: “Give to everyone what you owe them... if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour.”

— Romans 13:7

When we truly live this value everything else follows: our young people feel safe and valued, our community grows stronger, and learning flourishes. We encourage you to have conversations at home this fortnight about what respect looks like in everyday life, and we thank you for modelling it so clearly in your partnership with us.

## **Mobile phone pouches — thank you**

Since launching our mobile phone pouch system at the start of this week, the response has been genuinely heartening. The vast majority of our students have embraced the change positively, and the difference in our learning environment has already been noticeable.

None of this would have been possible without your support. The conversations you have had with your children, and the kind messages many of you have shared with us, have made a real difference. When home and school work together, our young people thrive. This is a wonderful example of exactly that.

## **Silver Duke of Edinburgh expedition**

This week, a group of our students are out on their Silver Duke of Edinburgh expedition, a significant personal challenge that asks a great deal of them in terms of resilience, teamwork, and determination. These are exactly the qualities we aspire to nurture at Open Academy, and it is a privilege to see our young people rise to meet them.

I would like to extend my sincere and personal thanks to Mrs Pearsall, Mrs Halliday, and Mr Coyne for giving their time, expertise, and energy to make this expedition possible.

## **Year 11: GCSE exams and leavers' day**

GCSE examinations continue this week and next, with our Year 11 students demonstrating real focus and commitment in the exam hall. We are incredibly proud of how they have approached this season, and we ask that you continue to encourage and support them in these important final days.

Year 11's final day with us will be Friday 12 June — a day we look forward to celebrating with them in a manner that reflects everything they have given to Open Academy. More details will follow.

To all Year 11 families: thank you. This final chapter belongs to your young people, and they have earned it.

## **New timetable from Monday 22 June**

From Monday 22 June, we will be moving onto the timetable that will be in place for the 2026–27 academic year.

This is a deliberate and beneficial step. It gives students the opportunity to familiarise themselves with their new subjects and timetable before the summer break, begin to build relationships with teachers they may not have worked with before, and establish the routines that will serve them well from September. For staff, it provides valuable time to plan collaboratively and lay the groundwork for an excellent start to the new year.

Rather than simply marking time in the final weeks, we want the end of this year to feel like the beginning of the next.

## **Trialling our revised school day**

Alongside the new timetable, from Monday 22 June we will also be trialling our revised school day structure for September 2026. This gives us a valuable window to see how the new timings work in practice — for students, staff, and families — and to make any fine-tuning necessary before we return in September. For your reference, the day will run as follows:

8.30 – 8.35	<b>Form line ups and tutor check in</b>
8.35 – 9.40	<b>Period 1</b> First 5 minutes: kit check by class teacher
9.40 – 10.40	<b>Period 2</b>
10.40 – 11.00	<b>Break</b>
11.00 – 12.00	<b>Period 3</b>
12.00 – 1.30	<b>Period 4</b> Including a 30-minute lunch 12.00 – 12.30 (7, 9, 11) 1.00-1.30 (8, 10)
1.30 – 2.30	<b>Period 5</b>
2.30 – 2.40	<b>Collective Worship</b>
2.40 – 3.00	<b>Form Time</b>

One of the most significant changes is that students will now begin the school day directly with a lesson. Research and our own experience tell us that the start of the day is when young people are at their sharpest, and we want to make the most of that. By moving straight into learning from 8:35am, we maximise the quality time our students spend with their teachers and their subjects.

To reflect this, Collective Worship and Form Time have been moved to the end of the school day. Rather than being squeezed into the morning, when the focus is rightly on getting learning underway, these moments will now close the day with a sense of community, reflection, and purpose. We believe this creates a more meaningful rhythm: the day begins with endeavour and ends with belonging.

This evolution in our school day has been shaped, in part, by the ongoing work we have been doing alongside the Department for Education's local RISE team. Their support has challenged and encouraged us to think carefully about how the structure of our day best serves our students, and we are grateful for that partnership.

As always, if you have questions about any of these changes, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

### **Term dates 2026-27**

I am pleased to confirm our term dates for the forthcoming academic year below. These will also be published on the Open Academy website shortly.

Term	Dates
<b>Autumn Term 2026</b>	Tuesday 1 September – Friday 23 October 2026
<b>October Half-Term</b>	Monday 26 October – Friday 30 October 2026
<b>Autumn Term 2026 (cont.)</b>	Monday 2 November – Friday 18 December 2026
<b>Christmas Holiday</b>	Monday 21 December – Friday 1 January 2027
<b>Spring Term 2027</b>	Monday 4 January – Friday 12 February 2027
<b>February Half-Term</b>	Monday 15 February – Friday 19 February 2027
<b>Spring Term 2027 (cont.)</b>	Monday 22 February – Thursday 25 March 2027
<b>Easter Holiday</b>	Friday 26 March – Friday 9 April 2027
<b>Summer Term 2027</b>	Monday 12 April – Friday 28 May 2027*
<b>May Half-Term</b>	Monday 31 May – Friday 4 June 2027
<b>Summer Term 2027 (cont.)</b>	Monday 7 June – Wednesday 21 July 2027

\*Monday 3 May 2027 is a bank holiday.

### **Professional Development (PD) Days — School Closed to Students**

Tuesday 1 September 2026 | Wednesday 2 September 2026 | Friday 23 October 2026 | Monday 4 January 2027 | Monday 12 April 2027

**Years 7 and 11 return on Thursday 3 September; whole school return on Friday 4 September.**

### **October half-term: an update**

You will note that October half-term remains at one week for the 2026–27 academic year. We are genuinely grateful for the positive response received during our consultation earlier this year, and we remain fully committed to our ambition of extending this to two weeks.

This work continues, and we anticipate being in a position to implement the extended October half-term for the 2027–28 academic year. I will keep all families updated as our planning progresses; your feedback and patience mean a great deal.

As always, thank you for your continued partnership and support. It is a genuine privilege to serve this community.

With best wishes for the weekend

Dan Bagshaw

Principal

## Year 7

Year 7 have been soldering their circuit boards for their dinosaur tin can lamps this week. Mr Corfield's group kicked things off on Monday showing fantastic resilience and team work with some really fiddly bits to get right. 7R managed to get their lamps, resistors and switches all in place yesterday. They were brilliantly organised and quickly got to grips with the soldering process. Shoutouts to Mrs Wright's little team of Aoife, Leo and Jack for teamwork, Bella F and Zachary A for getting the hang of it so quickly and helping others. A great environment in the workshop – Ms Rednall



## Year 11

As we move into what is the final full week of the Year 11 exam season, there is a real sense of excitement building amongst our students. After months of hard work, revision sessions, interventions and exams, they are now entering the final stretch of their GCSE journey.

The upcoming week represents the last full week of examinations for the vast majority of students, and it is fantastic to see the finish line now firmly in sight. Whilst there is certainly excitement building as students approach the end of their time at Open Academy, it is vital that they remain fully focused right until the very end.

There are still some hugely significant examinations to come, including Mathematics Paper 3 and the remaining Biology, Chemistry and Physics examinations. These papers represent a substantial proportion of students' final GCSE grades and could make the difference between grade boundaries in several subjects. We would therefore encourage all students to continue approaching revision and preparation with the same determination they have shown throughout the exam season. The finish line is in sight, but there is still a huge opportunity to secure those final marks before they can fully enjoy their well-earned summer. See the timetable for the remaining exams below:

Exams	Morning	Afternoon
Monday 8th June	Biology Paper 2	Further Maths Paper 1
Tuesday 9th June	Childcare	History
Wednesday 10th June	Maths Paper 3	D&T
Thursday 11th June	Geography Paper 3	Food Preparation and Nutrition
Friday 12th June	Chemistry Paper 2	
Monday 15th June	Physics Paper 2	Further Maths Paper 2

## Leavers' Assembly – Friday 12th June

Our Year 11 Leavers' Assembly will take place on Friday 12 June and we are looking forward to celebrating the students' time at Open Academy.

The schedule for the day is as follows:

- Morning: Chemistry examination
- Break: As normal
- 11:30am – 12:00pm: Leavers' Assembly
- 12:00pm – 1:00pm: Time for students to say their goodbyes and sign shirts
- 1:00pm: Students leave site

Students should bring a second shirt for signing if they wish to get shirts signed.

## Prom – Final Payments

A reminder that any outstanding payments for the Year 11 Prom at Black Barn Farm must be made as soon as possible. Final numbers are now being confirmed with the venue and it is important that all payments are completed by the published deadline (12 June).

If you are unsure whether a payment remains outstanding, please contact the school office.

## Physics Examination – Monday 15 June

Although next Friday marks students' final full day in school. They all still have one important examination remaining:

Physics Paper 2 – Monday 15 June (morning)

Students must attend in full school uniform and arrive promptly for the exam as normal.

Following the completion of the Physics examination, students will be expected to leave site immediately unless they are entered for Further Mathematics, which takes place that afternoon. Students studying Further Mathematics have the option to remain on site between examinations.

We would strongly encourage students to continue revising over the weekend following the Leavers' Assembly. While the celebrations are important and well deserved, the work is not quite finished. Physics remains a significant GCSE examination and students have a real opportunity to secure valuable additional marks and potentially improve their final grade by maintaining their focus through to the very last exam.

## **Revision Guides**

As we begin to collect resources ready for next year, we would be grateful if students could return the revision guide they were all given earlier in the year. This will help us support future Year 11 students preparing for their examinations.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support throughout this exam season. We are incredibly proud of this year group and look forward to celebrating their achievements over the coming weeks.

## **Fashion Show**

Open academy fashion show to support The Hamlet Charity's life-changing work across Norfolk!

Students at Open Academy are inviting the Norfolk community to support a special Fashion Show, raising funds for The Hamlet Charity, a local organisation that has transformed the lives of people with disabilities for more than 50 years.

On 25 June 2026 from 6:00pm to 8:30pm, students at Open Academy, Norwich, in collaboration with the Hamlet Charity, will host a circus themed Fashion Show dedicated to supporting The Hamlet Charity and raising awareness of the incredible work it carries out across Norfolk.

Tickets now available on Arbor.

Unwanted clothes shout out - we need your help!

We are still in need of clothes that we can adapt and use during the fashion show. If you have any unwanted clothing items you are willing to donate for this excellent cause, please bring them into school next week and hand them in at the front desk. Thank you so much in advance for your support.



## Chaplain's Reflection

We all have periods of worry and fear in our lives, but sometimes it gets a bit intense and robs us of our peace and joy. The poem below encouraged me, and I hope it does the same for you.

Fear came softly in the night,  
A shadow dancing in the light.  
It spoke of storms not yet begun,  
Of battles lost and races run.  
It painted mountains in my way,  
And stole the peace of present day.  
Its voice grew loud, its warnings clear,  
Until my heart gave room to fear.  
But morning broke with gentle grace,  
And sunlight touched each darkened place.  
The giants fear had made so tall.  
Were not so great, or there at all.  
Then came a whisper, calm and true:  
You need not know what lies in view.  
Walk faithfully the path you see.  
The rest belongs to God, not thee.

Fear often borrows trouble from tomorrow and brings it into today. Wisdom is not found in fearing the future, but in trusting God and each other and taking the next step with courage. **We are not alone; all will be well.**

**John 14:27**, the words of Jesus. “Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid”.

God bless you; you are all in my thoughts and prayers.

Mark Pimlott  
Chaplain



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OF ENGLAND