

Open Academy Update 15 January 2021
For parents and students – please do discuss the contents with your child!

Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome to the newsletter this week.

I will start with a heartfelt thank you to all those of you who have taken the time to email in your feedback, praise and thanks for the work of the staff in trying to provide virtual schooling. It is so encouraging for us when you take the time. It really makes a difference so Thank You!

We desperately miss the students in person but we can see an end to the world revolving around the virus, so in the meantime, we are keen to do all we can to keep students learning.

Our systems indicate far better engagement with lessons and work than during the previous school lockdown. Many sessions at Key Stage 4 are seeing 80 or 90% attendance with Key Stage 3 not far behind, partly because I think students know that they will just have more to catch up if they leave it, but partly because we are hopefully providing a more consistent service.

Where some of you are struggling with technology and your children are working on paper, please make sure you highlight difficulties to the Assistant Heads of Year when they do their regular pastoral check phone calls and we will see what we can do – at the very least we can arrange to get work checked and returned.

Last week, I noted that there was so much to share it is overwhelming to try to cover everything so I thought it best to take a key issue at a time and share what we know. In that spirit this week, I will start with testing...

COVID-19 TESTING – LFD Testing at Open

We have set up a COVID-19 Lateral Flow Device (LFD) assisted testing centre in the Academy Gym as requested by the government. I will explain how the tests are to be completed and then highlight some thoughts and issues.

The idea was that there would be three phases to their introduction:

1. Mass testing on return. A staggered return to the Academy would see all students tested twice – 3-5 days apart. The second test would be their restart day for full time education. Students would come in on the invited day for an allocated time slot for the test and either return home immediately (test 1), or carry on into school assuming they tested negative (test 2)
2. Weekly testing of teachers. After the teachers have their initial 2 tests 3/5 days apart, they would be able to re-start teaching. They would then be tested weekly.
3. Close contact testing. Once everyone is back as before Christmas, if we hear of a confirmed case – instead of as before we round up potential close contacts and send them home for 10 days, the idea is that we test all the close contacts with the LFD tests – every morning for 7 days.

In practice...

The reality is that the national lockdown has at least temporarily halted 1 above. 2 above is underway as teachers are coming in on a rota basis to manage the critical worker and vulnerable student childcare, and 3 above appears to be controversial as to whether it is a safe enough approach and is the cause of much national debate.

Here, we are happy to fully engage as directed with the first 2 actions and we are indeed busily getting on with it. As far as the third strand, we will wait and see what advice and guidance comes out when a plan is formed to bring us back to in-person schooling, and we will risk assess the approach to mass testing again at that time.

Please be reassured that we will continue to do all we can to keep your child and our community safe.

So, what now?

If your child is in for critical worker childcare, chances are they have already had at least one of their 2 coming back tests as per 1 above. However, even though all results so far are negative, as per current advice, they will continue to socially distance, wear masks and sanitise on entry to any room.

So, nothing further to be done at the moment unless your child is in the Academy – if they are, please do read and sign the consent form so that we can test them as they return as it is another helpful step we can take to keep us virus free.

In itself, this kind of testing with its inaccuracies, is hard to see how it might help. However, along with all the other small steps we take, they all add up to a large effort to keep us safe. We are happy to do it as our approach throughout this whole pandemic has been to do everything we can to keep people safe. I hope that makes sense, despite all the confusion in the media.

Finally

Please do keep encouraging your child to stay in the learning habit. Many are doing fabulous work and really trying – it is well worth it!

Monday morning will see an assembly from Miss Wenlock who will be clarifying our expectations in terms of learning and lessons, and offering lots of helpful advice and guidance. Until then – enjoy the snow if it arrives tomorrow, have the best weekend you can and I will be in touch next week where I will try to shed light on another current concern.

Now, enjoy our newsletter – either skipping to the relevant Year information, or having a look through all the topics. Personally, I'd recommend Mark's reflection as a good starting point as he helps put it all into perspective!

Kindest regards

Jon Ford
Principal

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1. Activities for Families and Students

In our lesson planning, we occasionally come across ideas and activities for families and students to try to stave off boredom, addiction to phones and gaming, and in these strange times, stir-craziness.

This website has quite a few lockdown ideas for families with children of all ages:

<https://indoorexplorers.com>

2. Free School Meals

Parents in receipt of free school vouchers for their child, please be aware there may be a delay in receiving these again next week due to some changes to the Edenred voucher system. We will, in future, aim to send for receipt on a Monday, however, next week, delays may mean they are not received until Wednesday. Unfortunately, this is out of our control.

Mrs Appleby

3. Year 7 News

Dear Year 7

We hope you are all ok and that your families and you are all well.

Hopefully, you are all managing to get online for lessons. If not, we are here for you.

We have had some amazing feedback from teachers on work, helping teachers, helping other students and generally working together.

This is fantastic Year 7 and makes us really proud how you are all working together - please keep up the good work.

For anyone struggling with technology, there is help. Please let us know and we will do our best to support you.

Please send in your lockdown challenges that you taking part in - we really want to share this with everyone in school.

Tutor time will be every morning next week. Please be ready on TEAMS at 8.40 to start your day. There may be assemblies, quizzes, brain teasers and stories to read so well worth getting up for.

Once again, anyone who is struggling to access technology, please let us know. We are doing our best to make sure that everyone has a laptop or device.

Our contact details are:

debbie.lamb@open-academy.org.uk

sally-ann.hewitt@open-academy.org.uk

Year 7 mobile: 07949 455922

Shout outs go to:

Issie in Maths from Mr Fisher

Roman Taylor-Science

Amy Toms-Science

Lola Blossom- Science

Hallie Chandler, Emilia Kerby, Brian Bolaney, Leah-Marie Jones, (7H) Troy Notley, Lola Blossom - great effort in German. Been having some lovely work from these students!

Isi who made this instrument as part of a Music assignment



Mrs Hewitt-Coleman - Head of Year 7
Mrs Lamb - Assistant Head of Year 7

4. Year 8 News

Another great week for Year 8 attendance in their live lessons! We're seeing an increase in the number of students engaging with their online learning during this second lockdown which is very encouraging, and some fantastic work being produced. We would like to congratulate the following students for excellent work this week:

Elsie Auger, Lucy Waterfield and Lily Turner for their incredible eye-work in Art (from Mr Walters).

Ella Ramm, Joel Walker, Emmy Ramabulana, Harisan Martin and Norah White for some insightful reviews to jazz music.

Suzy Langley, Harvey Walters, Ara Rashid and Bailey Salter for great engagement in German! (Ms Stacey).



Please note that as with the previous lockdown, we will ask those students not engaging during virtual learning to attend hub sessions after school on our return in order to catch up on their academic work. If you are having technical issues, please contact IT Support or the Year 8 team.

We're also seeing great attendance and enthusiasm in the Game On Sessions and tutor time activities as well, and encourage all students to meet at their scheduled time on Wednesday morning for one-to-one mentoring – a great opportunity to catch-up, air concerns, and update your tutor on how things are going!

Parents' Evening

Year 8 Parents' Evening will take place on 26 January 2021. This will take place virtually and details will be sent to parents shortly detailing how it will work and how to book appointments etc.

Wishing you a wonderful weekend!

Miss Lines - Head of Year 8

Mrs Smith - Assistant Head of Year 8

5. Year 9 News

The Year 9 students have certainly risen to the challenge of online learning. Nearly full attendance in online lessons, we've seen some great examples of students engaging and helping each other online. We are immensely proud of you all.

The majority of Year 9 have been amazing and have quickly got into the routine of checking their calendars, participating in the live lessons and getting to grips with Class Notebook. It is a fine balance between working online and not sitting in front of a screen all day. It can be difficult to learn from home and we really appreciate the effort and commitment shown. We are still awaiting the laptops promised by the Government and know that some students are working on paper or sharing computers. Please keep up the good work.

The feedback from teachers about Year 9s in lessons has been awesome. Shout out to the following for attending lessons online – the near full attendance for each lesson contributes not only to their learning but towards the feel-good feeling that comes with learning, feeling connected and team spirit. Please don't fret if your name is not mentioned below, we know the reasons why and hopefully next week, we can add your name to these lists.

Class 9H - Kimora Alexander, Lucy Birkett, Isabel Bush, Hayden Cobbett, Luke Copping, Mia Crowe, Finley Davey, Kelsey Holman, James Hoye, Josh Humphrey, Kasia Jolly, Summer Maccormack, Isaac Newrick, Harry Robinson, Leefna Silva, Sophie Swatman, Sara Szarafinska, Ahmed Tsinev.

Class 9O - Lauren Aldous, Eadie Ambrozevich, Georgina Barnes, Paige Berry, Joshua Carter-Strike, George Colledge, Rhy-Lee Dawson, Freya Graysmark, Atanas Kyurkchiev, Ruby McCormack, Jayden Muzembe, James Self, Zac Skells, Corey Sorrento, Grace Swales, Joshua Tidd, Rose Wheatley, Josh Wilsea, Millie Woodhouse.

Class 9P - Jamil Ali, Torri Ashton, Klaudia Baranowicz, Angelos Chatzopoulos, Jess Fraser, Ella Iftimie-Hau, Hannah Jordan, Grace Moreton, William Orr, Lola Pauling, Mason Perriton, Dalia Rosca, Joe Sanderson, Alfie Skeritt, Charlie Slack, Tommy Taylor, Sade Woollard, Samuel Yellop.

Class 9E - Lilli Aldis, Tommy Bluett, Toby Cane, Bradley Copping, Gera Dergacovs, Katie Edge, Jake Folkes, Nathan Freeman, Isla Gardner, Faith George, Ryan Howes, Jonas Kieras, Lisa Kracewicz, Owen Middleton, Erin O'Neill, Ronan Orr, Charlie Palmer, Hayden Purvis, Seazyn Robins, Dylan Scott, Katie Scrivener, Daniel Smajda, Toby Thompson, Teyla Young.

Sometimes, Mrs Roe may text home if your child hasn't 'appeared' online. It's important for us to see your child online every day as we can't see their smiley faces in school at the moment. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like to have a chat about anything, or if your child would like any support, or just a chat. We are always happy to help.

Samih Ozkan has been busy perfecting his cooking skills. We think he may have to start his own home cooking delivery service during lockdown. These are some of his dishes and they look delicious.



Shout out from Miss Lines for great work in Music from Seazyn Robins, James Hoyer, Josh Wilsea and Toby Thompson for their work on semitones, intervals and chords.

Shout out from Mr Coyne to Georgina Barnes for improved confidence in lessons.

Shout out to Summer Maccormack for completing lots of work on paper as well as being online and dropping it into Reception this week.



Shout out from Mr Miller to Hannah Jordan for this stunning piece of art created during an RS lesson last Friday. Students were asked to create their own poem or piece of art depicting religious beliefs. I think Hannah spent several hours on this and it's incredible. She's called it, 'God is with us day and night'.

Shout outs to the following from Mr Stacey - (9P) Jamil Ali, Dalia Rosca, Angelos Chatzopoulos, Torri Ashton, Jessica Fraser, Alfie Skerritt, (9O) Eadie Ambrozevich, Joshua Carter-Strike, Zac Skells, Lauren Aldous - these students have been working especially hard. But really, all of 9O and 9P Spanish who have been attending, really deserve a big pat on the back for their efforts. I would like to single out Paige Berry who has been brilliant about not only being active in class, but has helped out other students with technical/Spanish-related questions and problems and has generally been wonderful.

Shout outs from Mr Miller to Nathan Freeman and Charlie Palmer for their engagement in RS on Thursday, and to Toby for being an absolute star always persevering with the work, no matter how many penguin emojis appear in the chat. A big thanks to 9O and 9P HIS who have made teaching them a real highlight of my week.

Due to lockdown, the Sport project that should have been up and running now has been put on hold. However, I have created a group on Microsoft Teams with those Year 9's taking part, so I can keep in touch and deliver some online sessions looking at the importance of leadership. This will give them some important knowledge on leadership for when we are back in the Academy and able to deliver the Kin-ball sessions.

Mr Lambert - Head of Year 9
Mrs Roe - Assistant Head of Year 9

6. Year 10 News

No update this week.

Mrs Clayton – Head of Year 10
Mrs Roberts – Assistant Head of Year 10

7. Year 11 News

No update this week.

Mrs Pearsall - Head of Year 11
Mrs Middleton - Assistant Head of Year 11

8. Sixth Form News

No update this week.

Mrs Molloy
Head of Sixth Form

9. Library News & Updates

Reading Resources for Remote Learning

We have compiled a number of resources to support students reading while they are at home. Please see the attached document 'Reading During Remote Learning' for more information and explore the various links with your child. If you would like any individual support or advice regarding reading please contact me and I will be happy to help.

Lockdown Book Bonanza and Reading Den Competition

Next Wednesday, we are planning a Lockdown Book Bonanza. This is an opportunity to have some fun and share the joys of reading. We will be running a Teams event after school (from 3:15-4:30pm) involving book discussion, games and a quiz. Students should keep an eye out for the invite in Teams.

We are also challenging students (and staff) to create a cosy reading den. Grab blankets, pillows and anything else you can think of to create the ultimate reading area. Send in photos of your reading den by Thursday 21 January 2021 and our favourites will be featured in next week's newsletter.

*If you would prefer that the image is not shared, please state this when you send in the photo.

Staff Read-a-Long

Our staff read-a-long has continued this week, with various teachers from across the Academy joining in. Today we will wrap up our reading of "The Call of the Wild" by Jack London and look forward to starting a new book next week. [You can listen to our read-a-long by clicking here.](#)

10. Career News

- Students in Years 9 to 13 should be registering on and accessing our fantastic 'Careers' platform **Unifrog**. The website offers students a wealth of information and guidance on future careers, courses, post 16 choices and universities. Students can set up their own profile, research their interests and save items which they want to keep for future reference. In these difficult times, when 'real life' careers events are off-limits it is a great way for students to find the motivation they need to pursue their dreams beyond the pandemic! To access Unifrog go to www.unifrog.org and sign in with your Open Academy password. Any problems please contact Ms Davies at caroline.davies@open-academy.org.uk

[Unifrog - The complete destinations platform.](#)

We help students compare every opportunity, then apply successfully. We also empower teachers and counselors to manage the progression process effectively.

www.unifrog.org

- Here is next week's schedule for 'Speakers for Schools' . Please take the time to have a look at some of the inspirational talks on offer, suitable for both adults and young people.
<https://www.speakersforschools.org/inspiration/vtalks/upcoming-vtalks/>

Ms Davies

11. Attendance

No update this week.

Mrs Ganson
Attendance Officer

12. Chaplain's Reflection

This week's reflection

<https://youtu.be/tXQH8nbPysl>

[Push Through 15/1/21](#)

Have the determination to push through your circumstances.

[youtu.be](https://youtu.be/tXQH8nbPysl)

Hello everyone and I hope you are well. This week I want to encourage you to keep pushing through all you are facing. We are in a time when we have to handle loads of stuff so to speak. It's being thrown at us left, right and centre and it's difficult to juggle it all and find a balance.

In similarity, I want to tell you a story from the Bible about a woman who was very ill. The Bible says she had spent all that she had on finding a cure. She had been to many doctors and specialists to see what was wrong, but nothing could be done. She had heard about Jesus and the rumour was that He could heal people, so she decided to go and see Him.

The problem was that, wherever Jesus was, there were always masses of people around him. It was hard to get close to him. The woman was desperate for a change in her life and began to push through the crowd to see Jesus. She was pushed to the ground, stood on, crushed and ridiculed. Eventually, through her determination, she got close enough to Jesus to grab hold of the hem of his clothes. Jesus recognized her faith and determination and healed her in an instant.

Let's keep a determination in us to keep pushing forward, don't give up on your dreams, happiness or hope for the future.

As I finish today, I want to say a prayer for the year ahead.

May God make your year a happy one! Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain, but by strengthening you to bear it as it comes; Not by making your path easy, but by making you sturdy to travel any path; Not by taking hardships from you, but by taking fear from your heart; Not by granting you unbroken sunshine, but by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows; Not by making your life always pleasant, but by showing you when people and their causes need you most, and by making you anxious to be there to help.

God's love, peace, hope and joy to you for the year ahead.

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

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain

13. Community News

No items this week.