

Dear Parents

In preparation for our return to the Virtual Open Academy on Monday, I hope this finds you safe and well and that you have made the best of enjoying an Easter break in these most strange circumstances.

I thought I should cover a few bits of key information as we gear up to the start of the new term. **The Academy, as instructed by the government remains closed to all but the children of key workers and those who are vulnerable.**

As we are becoming used to the new ways of working, I am intending to go back to weekly communication as I'm sure you are being overwhelmed with information at this time - as always I will be pleased to hear your views on this over time

***NB If you are a key worker and wish to send you child in to the Academy, please phone the following number and arrange it with Mr Wilkinson...  
07799 715432 during the hours of 9.00 - 3.00  
so we can ensure we have the correct number of staff available***

1. Virtual school is back - Instructions and suggestions from the Virtual School team
2. Work pack collection arrangements from **this Monday** for those struggling with online learning
3. Free school meals term time arrangement - hamper collection times
4. New claimants for Free School Meals
5. The local authority safeguarding campaign - If you See Something, or Hear Something, Say Something - Call...
6. Government resources for home-schooling
6. Options Yr 9
7. Whole school project
8. Just One Norfolk Health advice

#### **1. Virtual school is back - Instructions and suggestions from the Virtual School team**

*We look forward to welcoming all students back to the virtual school on Monday the 20<sup>th</sup> April*

- We will do our best to deliver as full interesting and accessible curriculum at a distance as we can as we know that it is crucial that students do not lose the habits of studying over the coming few weeks.
- We have had so much feedback from parents, the majority of it really pleased with the approach we are taking despite the technological challenges we are all facing. We really appreciate it and we are doing our best to respond to your suggestions and thoughts as well as we can.
- On the Thursday before Easter we had a staff training day online where we looked at many new ideas. Here are the key principles that the staff were considering:
  - Work set will match as much as possible our in-school curriculum. That way our students do not fall behind
  - Tasks should be set roughly in line with the timetable. Giving a huge amount of work at once is overwhelming.
  - However we know that not all work will be completed by all pupils. There are times when this will not be possible.
  - Plenty of work should be set so no student has too little to do
  - Longer pieces of work will have checkpoints as you would in school
  - As it takes a lot longer to mark work online.
  - We will use online quizzes and tests and programme the computer to mark short answer questions if possible.

- In Key Stage 3 work should not diverge too far from the knowledge organisers or other printed materials so that pupils who have no computer access are not disadvantaged.
- Teachers will try to monitor what the students are doing. If students working on paper send or hand in work packages each week, we will try to look at the work produced and arrange feedback where we can
- Teachers will aim to have regular contact with students.

**We appreciate that it is nearly impossible to try to recreate school at home.** We know that the majority of parents are not able to suddenly become their children's teacher as well as manage the household and hold down their jobs at this challenging time. So we are trying to set work that allows the students to be working independently.

For some, we know that the online solution is impossible so below we detail how to access printed work if required.

## **2. Work packs for those struggling with online learning**

Printed materials are being made available from the Academy for the term ahead on **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April and Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April** for those students who are struggling to access work online - we know that the majority are able to engage online, however, if you can't that will not stop you now!

We ask that in order to ensure social distancing rules are reinforced we would like to stagger collection times by surname. ***Please make sure students do not congregate on the way to or from the academy***

- Students with surnames from A-G arrive between 10:00 and 10:30 to collect their year specific packs
- Students with surnames H-N arrive between 10:30 and 11:00 to collect their year specific packs
- Students with surnames O-Z arrive between 11:00 and 11:30 to collect their year specific packs

There will be separate tables for each year group outside reception - Key stage 3 students will be able to collect their next knowledge organiser for their year group for the term, some further activities, some stationary and resources - Key stage 4 students will be able to collect a range of printed resources

The intention is that these materials are used by the students over an extended period of time. If they complete batches of work and return them to the academy we will arrange for feedback on each work pack that we receive

NB

- If access to a computer is the only issue holding you back we may be able to help as we have a small number that we can loan - please speak to staff when you collect work packs or email the Head of Year/Assistant Head of Year
- If you cannot get to the Academy to collect the work, please email [office@open-academy.org.uk](mailto:office@open-academy.org.uk) and we will try to get one delivered / sent out

## **3. Free school meals term time arrangement - hamper collection times**

Lunch hampers and where required, Breakfast packs will be available for collection between **10 and 12pm on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April**. If this presents difficulties please email [office@open-academy.org.uk](mailto:office@open-academy.org.uk) and we will try to help

## **4. New claimants for Free School Meals**

We are aware that the current challenging situation may have meant changes to situations regarding employment and income. For some families, this may mean that an application for your child(ren) to access free school meals (FSM) is now relevant. If you believe this to be the case, FSM can be applied for through the following link:

<http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/school-meals-and-milk>

The web page states that the school will be emailed if your child is eligible for FSM. If your application is successful and if possible, we would appreciate you emailing the school directly ([office@open-academy.org.uk](mailto:office@open-academy.org.uk)) to let us know you have applied

If your current circumstances mean that you require more urgent support, Norfolk County Council does have an assistance scheme that you can access/apply for via the following link: <http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/support-for-living-independently/money-and-benefits/norfolk-assistance-scheme>

(NB Thanks to colleague at Hobart High for passing on this information)

### **5. The local authority safeguarding campaign - If you See Something, or Hear Something, Say Something Call...**

Over Easter, the Local authority have launched a radio, media and social media campaign with a call to action for the public to help keep all our children safe.

***If you See Something, or Hear Something, Say Something Call Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020.***

I am attaching a poster to this message to reinforce the campaign, as it is vital that we all do what we can to ensure all children are safe during this lockdown period.

We have trained designated safeguarding leads available to receive information too, so if you would prefer to contact someone you know, please in the first instance contact our nominated safeguarding lead - Mr Wilkinson on his school phone line

**07799 715432 during the hours of 9.00 - 3.00**

or by email on [Phillip.Wilkinson@open-academy.org.uk](mailto:Phillip.Wilkinson@open-academy.org.uk)

Please see the attached poster - I will be sending different versions out regularly to ensure all have the information and if you have any concerns please call - the Academy and the local authority have people trained and ready to respond

### **6. Government resources for home-schooling**

Resources have been identified by some of the country's leading educational experts and offer a wide range of support and resources for pupils of all ages.

The list includes subject-specific resources for:

- [English](#)
- [maths](#)
- [science](#)
- [PE](#)
- [wellbeing](#)
- [Special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\)](#)

They are currently being offered for free.

In the governments words: **Individual resources cannot replace a school's properly planned curriculum, and the resources in this list are not intended to do so, however these are a**

**great way of supporting your child** (and I would add...to keep working if there virtual work runs out or they want a different perspective.)

You will need to scroll to the key stage 3 and 4 sections for each subject

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education>

## 6. Options

The options process in Year 9 is going well so if you are one of the few who have not yet returned your forms then now is the time. We are working through the choices the pupils have made and the letters written. Don't worry if you have not sent it in yet but please email Mr Ward as soon as you can.

## 7. Whole school project - Open Book

These are unusual times. The pupils will be learning a lot of different things during this lockdown from society and from their parents. We think we should capture some of this. We also think it would provide a fantastic opportunity for the students to showcase their creativity and show that lockdown cannot stifle expression.

This term then, form tutors will be co-ordinating students to reflect on our 12 Christian values and asking students to share how they see them in action through these challenging times. Through their reflections we are aiming to produce an Open Book of their most creative and thoughtful responses!

We are going to create a book that everyone contributes to - and everyone can have a copy to keep.

In it we want to put a whole range of creative projects . Our bodies might be confined to our homes but we will not let our minds be confined by anything but the outer limits of our imaginations.

We would like to see: lockdown poems, stories, letters, art, photography, computer programmes, new recipes, grown vegetables and flowers, pictures of newly invented games played with siblings and the Quarantine Olympics and more.

Form tutors will start the ball rolling this week by asking people to think about our core values (sheet from mark attached to help) from their we are hoping that both staff and students will take the idea and run with it - to see what we can do as an Academy by the end of term

## 8 Just One Norfolk Health advice

It gives families a wealth of self-care information, supporting them to build **knowledge, skills and confidence** to take care of their families' health and wellbeing and seek further support or guidance when needed. Signposting them to both local and national services. There are some great free resources on the website to support and understand teenagers too! - please see the attached poster

**I think that is enough for now apart from to say - welcome back!**

Mr Ford