

Open Academy Update 11 September 2020
For parents and students – please do discuss the contents with your child!

Welcome to the first newsletter of the new term!

The first thing I must share is my thanks for your trust in returning your children to the academy. I am delighted to report that this week we have recorded our highest weekly attendance ever with 3 year groups hitting 100% on some days this week.

The next thing I must share is just how amazing your children have been. As you know, we have introduced a number of measures to stay safe including sanitising hands, reducing face to face contact with a one-way system and by maintaining year group bubbles and social distancing for all adults. The response from the students has been nothing short of miraculous. There has been such a lovely atmosphere in the academy this week, and yes, one or two have had the odd wobble, but I think we are all, staff and students, just delighted to be back together again.

Many of you will have questions around the changing national and local picture, so I am including a separate letter in which I clarify exactly what our local situation is with regards the virus, how we deal with any suspected cases and the crucial role that you must play in helping us to stay safe. The letter includes general COVID-19 advice and a specific help sheet on what you need to do if your child is unwell. This letter is essential reading for all given the variety of rumours, advice and hearsay out there. I am keen that everyone should get clear messages from us as an academy.

We are excited to be looking at starting our repair curriculum from next week. For Year 11 it will look very similar to the extra support program that we run every year – although we are starting it a half term earlier. For the rest of the academy, we hope they will have an enjoyable and productive time catching up with knowledge ideas and concepts they may have missed along with their classmates. I am including a repeat of the letter previously sent regarding these hub sessions from Mr Ward, Vice Principal. In it you will find a useful frequently asked questions section which should clarify most of the questions you may have regarding the program. Where students do not have identified hub sessions on their timetable, we hope to be sharing the enrichment activity program within the next week or so.

My final item this week is to congratulate Rebecca Shapcott and Isioma Onuchukwu as joint workers of the week. These two Year 7 students have completed amazing work in preparation for their start at Open Academy and they are to be congratulated on their efforts. We have tweeted their pictures with a well done this afternoon!

I hope you remain safe and well and look forward to the term ahead with excitement, I could not have wished for a better start.

Now read on for year specific news and useful general information.

Jon Ford
Principal

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1. Hub FAQs

As you are aware the Hubs start next week. There are two main types of hub at the moment.

- Firstly, the Year 11 revision programme. This is designed to support those students to get ready for their GCSEs.
- Secondly, the catch-up programme for Years 8, 9, 10 and 13. This is to help students who were not able to complete as much work during lockdown as others.

Hubs are part of the student timetables. To measure whether the students are making progress in the catch-up programme Key Stage 3 students will have online assessments over the coming weeks starting with Year 9. These assessments are by the internationally renowned company GL Assessments. They will benchmark students against their peers and help us find any gaps in knowledge. The assessments will be conducted in exam conditions on computers.

Mr Ward
Vice Principal

2. Teaching and Learning

We are really excited to welcome students back into the classroom. There will be changes to learning in some ways but the running of our Virtual Academy taught us some smart and better ways in which we can work safely with students whilst continuing to support their progress:

Marking, Homework and Assessment

- Students will complete lesson work in exercise books, but teachers will not mark these due to our COVID Health & Safety Policy.
- Teachers will use a range of formal assessment strategies to check understanding in the lesson such as targeted questioning, quizzes, spellings, labelling images from memory, gathering feedback at the end of lessons via post-its for example.
- Teachers will carry out periodic in-class assessed pieces of work to check knowledge and understanding as well as literacy and presentation skills. Teachers will mark this work using DNA and it will be kept in a progress folder. Any actions as part of the DNA task will be completed in the lesson and peer or self-assessed by students with clear guidance from teachers.

- Homework will be used as the main method to check and monitor understanding of classwork. This will be set by and marked by teachers on Microsoft Teams and rubrics using a 1 to 4 scale will function as the feedback. This feedback will show how well students have engaged and understood the classwork and provide a next step for improvement.
- Many students accessed Microsoft Teams confidently during lockdown and we will provide regular support to remind students of the system. A balanced homework timetable (please see attached) will be followed by all subjects and fair deadlines will be given so that students concerned about access to devices could use opportunities to complete homework in the library in the extended school day. Please note that homework will not be set in Year 7 until we have trained them in confident use of Microsoft Teams in their STEM lessons. We are aiming to start setting Year 7 homework from 21 September

Ms Wenlock
Assistant Principal

3. Year 7 News

We welcomed Year 7s into the academy on Monday and they have been amazing. It has been great to see so many students in the academy over the course of this week for their phased return into the academy. On the whole, the work ethic shown and attitude to learning has been excellent. We hope that the students have enjoyed settling into the academy so far.

Achievement points have been given out, students have been on time and attendance is good. What a fantastic start to the academic year:

C7 217
D7 340
I7 107
R7 9

Well done to D7 who have got the highest achievement points this week.

As the weeks progress we will also be sharing the achievements of individual students.

There are exciting opportunities for students this year, where they will be able to develop communication, leadership and teamwork skills, to name just a few. Please can parents/carers discuss with the students the leadership opportunities available in Year 7. All students are encouraged to apply for the roles, all they need to do is write a short note to their form tutor stating which role or roles they would like to apply for and why. The successful candidates will be announced in a couple of weeks. Applications need to be handed in to the form tutor by Friday, 18 September.

The roles available are:

Overall Year 7

- Head boy and head girl
- Deputy head boy and girl

Tutor roles

- Open Voice (School Council)
- Charity Lead
- Community/Environment Lead
- Anti-bullying Lead
- Ambassador

Just a couple of general reminders:

- If a student has dyed hair it should be of a natural hair colour only. We will not accept hair dyed an unnatural colour. If a student has hair that is dyed and not a natural colour the parents will be contacted and asked to get this changed.
- Please make sure your child looks after their locker key and card, we have had a few go missing or lost this week.
- Students should now know who they can go to if they have any concerns. They should speak to their form tutor, Mrs Lamb or Mrs Hewitt-Coleman

Thank you to the parents/carers support we are really excited to be working with you and the children.

Mrs Hewitt-Coleman - Head of Year 7

Mrs Lamb Assistant - Head of Year 7

4. Year 8 News

Welcome back to everyone in Year 8 and well done for following all the new guidelines.

From Monday at 8.25am, free toasted breakfast bagels will be served on the hard court if dry weather and in your designated areas if wet weather.

Miss Lines – Head of Year 8

Ms Moss and Mrs Smith – Assistant Heads of Year 8

5. Year 9 News

Myself and Mrs Roe are delighted to say welcome back to school! It's been a long time and it's been wonderful to see everyone back and eager to learn. We are extremely proud of the positive attitude of our Year 9 students this week. The students have shown great courage and determination in coming back to school and showing commitment to their learning.

Students and staff are following all the necessary and appropriate guidance and advice to enable us all to be back at school and this is very much appreciated. We are asking students to take more responsibility in keeping themselves and others safe. In this regard we are asking students to try and cope with minor illnesses, such as headaches and aches and pains, which is probably due to tiredness of being back at school, and we would appreciate your support with this by sending your child into school and having a conversation with them about COVID symptoms vs 'feeling under the weather'.

Now your child has settled back in school we will be enforcing the school's policy on uniform as of Monday as there has been a slip in standards this week.

From Monday at 8.25am breakfast bagels and fruit will be available on the tennis courts for all students.

We have put on Teams and SIMS Engagement the roles and responsibilities available to Year 9 students this year, from head boy/girl, prefects, charity lead, anti-bullying lead etc. Any student wanting to apply for any role must submit an application to us by Friday, 18 September preferably through teams or Email. We look forward to the applications.

There has been lots of achievement points earned this week. Our top 12 achieving students this week:

Daniel Smajda, Katie Scrivener, Alfie Kay, Gera Dergacovs, Paige Berry, Colm Snelling, Zac Skells, Bryn Norris, Lilly Measures, Ella Iftimie-Hau, Eadie Ambrozevich and Jude Abramson. Well done not just to our top 12 but to all those students that have worked hard this week.

Learning hubs begin next week at 3pm and your child should have these included in their timetables. These will be run by teaching staff. Any queries please contact either myself or Mrs Roe.

We hope you all have a relaxing weekend and thank you for all your efforts in helping your child settle back into school. We really do appreciate your support.

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

6. Year 10 News

Welcome back to all of Year 10! We had an amazing start to the term with great attendance and attention during class. I would like to remind students please that uniform should always include a blazer and that students should be wearing their blazers when moving around the academy. I would also like to welcome Mrs Roberts to the Year 10 team as our new Assistant Head of Year – we are very lucky to have her with us.

Achievement: An amazing start to the year with 196 achievement points across the year group in just the first three days!

I look forward to our first full week next week and another really positive one too!

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

7. Year 11 News

We are so pleased to welcome the Year 11 back to Open. They have settled in well and attendance has increased from before lockdown.

I am pleased to see such smart role models presenting themselves to our new Year 7 and have been impressed with their mature and sensible conduct around the building as well as their attitude to learning in the classroom.

Students have the opportunity to apply for leadership roles this year in the form of head/deputy girl and boy and prefects. Those wishing to apply for senior prefect positions should submit a letter of application, no more than one side of A4 and an application form for prefects has been emailed with paper copies also available. Applications should be returned to Mrs Pearsall or Mrs Middleton in person or by email by 3.30pm on Monday, 14 September.

Having a position of leadership and responsibility in school can be very rewarding and a great learning opportunity, full training will be given for all job roles. When applying for colleges, apprenticeships or possibly part time jobs, being able to list a leadership role will be an advantage.

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

8. Sixth Form News

Welcome back Sixth Form! It's been so lovely to see you all and easing back into your lessons. I for one have been really impressed with how focused students have been this week in the A level subjects that I teach.

Just a few points regarding the new term and some new procedures around the academy;

- Well done on following the signs and only walking left around the building. You have also done really well to remember to go down the south stairs and up the north stairs.
- we still encourage all students to wear a face mask when they are walking around the academy.
- we would like Sixth Formers to maintain social distancing between themselves as much as possible, even though you are technically in a bubble. This is mainly due to the fact that a large number of you have part time jobs outside of the academy, and this in turn increases your risk further.
- I am aware that there is no longer a 'Sixth Form' laptop trolley. As I have mentioned to most of you, you are welcome to bring your own personal laptops into school if you wish. I am in the process of trying to figure out if I can place some desktops in the Year 13 area. Year 12 should have plenty of computers to work on in the future area.
- Mr Ward and I are currently in the process of writing a proposal about private study and the possibility of giving students the option to stay at home if they have large chunks of the day allocated to private study. This is still a work in progress, so until a decision has been made I would really like all students to remain in school. Please come and see me or your teachers if you feel that you have no work to do - as this should never be the case!
- Year 12 will be off timetable all of next week to take part in the NCS programme. Please arrive in school as normal, get registered with your tutor, then make your way to the football block at 9am each day.

Have a wonderful weekend!

Mrs Molloy
Head of 6th Form

9. Library News

It has been lovely to start welcoming students back into the library this week. We do have a number of changes in place in the library this year to ensure the safety of all our users. This information is being shared with students during tutor time, but we have summarised the key changes below.

- Students are unable to come to the library to browse books at this time.
- We are offering a 'click and collect' service to students to allow them to continue to borrow library books. If a student would like to borrow a book, they can either:

- a. Reserve a book using our online library catalogue <https://u007886.microlibrarian.net/> (log in details and full instructions will be emailed to students and available in Teams.) Students can also use this website to check what books they have on loan or renew any current books they have on loan.
 - b. Fill in a request form to ask for a recommendation. This form asks students about their reading interests and the librarian will pick out a book or books that we think will interest them. This form can be accessed online: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=W8ZO2qGEd0-AYQqaPv6magdSosHkOpMo_aeWbTVKLNUNTdZVE5DUjJHVjBMMzEyTENHREQ4NDZHQS4u OR a paper copy is available for collection from the library.
- Returned books should be left in a returns box outside of the library. Returned books are quarantined for 72 hours before they are loaned out to anyone else.
 - Lunchtime access to the library is available to students every other day in their bubbles. A timetable of the days students can access the library is attached.
 - There is also a timetable in place for after school access (please see this attached.) **To allow us to anticipate the number of students using the library after school, we ask that students or their parents/carers fill in the following form to confirm their attendance:**
https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=W8ZO2qGEd0-AYQqaPv6magdSosHkOpMo_aeWbTVKLNUNQ01ZTkZLWkRGMExHQ0ZYODFGWk8xUkRBUi4u

Other library notices:

- Year 8-13 Library Book Return: It is likely many students in year 8-13 have books that they borrowed before school shut in March. We are asking for these books to be returned as soon as possible. All students who have returned their books from before this school year by 30 September will receive achievement points. Of course, if a student is still reading their book and would like to continue to borrow it, they can renew it using our online library catalogue (website above) or by speaking to the librarian.
- Summer Reading Challenge: Before the summer we set students a summer reading challenge in Teams to read 6 books over the holidays. Students who have completed this challenge should hand in their completed forms on Teams or in person to Miss Ling

If you have any questions about our new procedures, or if you would like any support with your child's reading, please get in touch with the librarian who will be happy to help.

Miss Ling
Librarian

10. Lost Property

There is a large amount of lost property being held on reception from the last academic year. If students have lost items then they should come to reception during break or lunchtime. All items will be disposed of after Friday 18th September.

Please ensure all items of clothing, water bottles etc are named so that lost items can be returned to students.

Mrs Wright & Miss Fisher
Reception

11. Attendance

Whole School (including 6th form) – 94.24%

Academy (excluding 6th form) – 94.02%

Year 7 – 95.50%

Year 8 – 93.58%

Year 9 – 92.45%

Year 10 – 95.96%

Year 11 – 92.73%

Mrs Ganson
Attendance Officer

12. Chaplain's Reflection

Over the past week I have been thinking a lot about a verse from the Bible which is very encouraging. It says that the word, direction or voice of God is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. At times in our lives when we are facing lots of things, or some of us may be at a crossroad, it can be difficult to see the path ahead or the direction we need to go in. Life can get confusing and the path ahead can seem very dark. My prayer for you for this new academic year is that your path throughout this season will always be well lit. That you would always know the right direction to go in when faced with difficult decisions. I also pray for those who are on a path that seems unfamiliar, strange and un-trodden, that your next step would be clear for you to see. I also pray for some of us who are on a path that has been forced upon us through no choice of our own, that God would give us the strength to persevere through and that He would provide light to brighten our way.

In closing, Jesus is described as being the light of the world, He is exactly that and is only a prayer away.

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

God bless you all

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain