

Open Academy Update 12 March 2021 For parents and students – please do discuss the contents with your child!

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to this week's newsletter.

And with a huge sigh of relief I cannot thank you enough for your patience and support as we have got the students back this week. Every day the academy feels that bit more normal and we are looking forward to Monday morning which, by break time, will see everyone back in and back to relative normality. In the end, over 97% of you opted to allow us to test your child, which means that almost everyone has been checked twice as they have returned and certainly gives some peace of mind. Indeed, almost all Years 10 to 13 have already had their third test and will be ready to be issued with self-test kits on Monday. All year groups have had two tests as they return, with just Year 9 to complete on Monday morning. An exhausting task for the wonderful testing team bolstered by a team of extras this week from our invigilators – I cannot thank them enough for their courage and hard work for this community.

Self-Test Kits:

As they have only just arrived today and we still have to check the training resources for what we need to share with the students and yourselves, all I will say for now is that once our students have successfully completed three tests, they will be issued with a home testing kit during next week. It appears these will contain three tests which, taken at five day intervals, should last up to Easter.

There will be a few simple steps to follow to register each test and to share the result, and we will be sending information home with the kits that clarify exactly what will be required.

The kits are for home testing for our pupils only, but Mr Hawkins has spotted that households/support bubbles of all pupils and staff can get home testing kits. It is really easy to do, and you can order online, or go to Postwick Park & Ride and collect them there. The link to the information is here:

Rapid Lateral Flow Testing Guidance

We will send the kits home with an information booklet and we will email you with any further instructions or helpful advice as we issue your child's year group with them. The advice is that if you have not agreed to testing in school, but would like a kit, ideally your child should have three tests supervised in school to ensure the test is completed properly. If this is problem please do get in touch with your child's head of year as I am sure we will be able to work something out.

Face coverings:

The other fantastic effort we are seeing is the uptake of students wearing face coverings. As this is advised until reviewed at Easter, we are delighted that the vast majority of students are wearing face coverings appropriately at all times, which is reassuring for both staff and students who have vulnerable family members.

I would like to thank you for your feedback and comments on this and one parent from the retail sector, who has much experience of mask wearing, has helped us shape our messaging to the students. I would like to re-assure you that we have taken your concerns seriously, and are doing all we can to ensure that the face coverings guidance is handled with both common sense, good hygiene and a calm sense of perspective.

We are constantly reminding students around the hygienic use of masks through reminders every day at form time, and many students already seem to have a good sense of which type of face covering works best for them for extended use. Where masks are lost, broken or where they become soggy or otherwise unusable, we have provided all staff with a box of 50 disposable type masks, which they will offer anyone who needs one. So if you could help by re-enforcing our key messages on face coverings, that would be most appreciated:



- Bring a couple in a sealable plastic bag so that you always have a spare.
- Sanitise your hands before touching your mask/face and sanitise frequently around the building.
- Try to get outside at break and lunch and make sure you wear an extra layer under your uniform as we are ventilating the building well and it can be quite cold.
- Change your mask if it becomes damp swap it for your spare.
- Cloth masks should be washed after each day's use.
- Ask any member of staff for a mask if yours has become unusable.
- Thank you for your efforts to keep this community safe.

Finally, I just wanted to say well done on the incredible amount of work that your children have done during lockdown 3. Mr Bradshaw was so impressed by the work of one of his form group, he has shared it with Mr ward and myself. It contained over 80 pieces of carefully completed handwritten work, colour coded by subject. It was so heartening to see and we know that the student will have gained so much from completing it. I will be writing a letter of commendation to this student as soon as I finish the newsletter!

It got me thinking that it would be fantastic to see any other examples of great work from the lockdown, so please do encourage your child to bring in work they are proud of and share it with their form tutor, they may be the next person to get a letter of commendation.

Jon Ford Principal

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1. Grading 2021

There is a great deal of discussion regarding the awarding of grades this summer. It is a real challenge for everyone to come up with a fair system for current students which is also not unfair to past or future students. As you may be aware the government have completed their consultation. Next is the technical consultation due in the coming weeks. This is where the crucial detail will be. The devil is as ever in the details. There are problems to be overcome with the results from the consultation which may not be obvious to everyone. There are many of the same problems that were discussed last year. We wrote to the government last year about those problems and advised several trusts on how to navigate the complex rules to get the fairest results for students. In general, Open Academy students felt that their awarded grade were fair and reasonable last year. The same will hopefully be true this year.

I have sent a PowerPoint presentation to Year 11 and 13 students. It acts a bit like an assembly to explain what we are thinking currently. If you want to view it please ask your son/daughter to log onto their Office 365 account to view it.

There is a proposed process that I have explained that I am consulting with staff on. This may be our approach. We may need to change the suggested process due to the outcome of the technical consultation with the exam boards. We may need to change the suggested process because there may be better ideas.



However, we felt it was really important to share with you our thinking so that you can be reassured that Open Academy has robust procedures ready for whatever comes our way.

Mr Ward Vice Principal

2. Year 7 News

It has been a delight to have the students back into the academy! Mrs Hewitt-Coleman and Mrs Lamb were so pleased to see them all back on Friday morning ready for learning and looking so smart. We are aware it has been difficult to obtain shoes etc, but we were proud to see how well turned out they all looked. Testing has been very successful and the Year 7 behaviour and attendance was a credit to the academy - well done Year 7.

We have 2 weeks until Easter and we want it to be the best two weeks back, so please let us know if any student is struggling with coming back into school, and we will endeavour to help and support as much as we can.

Speaking to students, they are worried about catching up, we would like to reassure them we will be supporting them in this also.

- Any school laptops still at home, please could you return them on Monday.
- Hoodies are not allowed in school as a jumper we have a small supply of jumpers if needed.
- Phones should be switched off and out of sight during lessons and social time.
- No shout out this week but they have all been fantastic so far.

Next week we will be launching a competition for Easter – details to follow.

We hope that the next two weeks are successful for all students as we get back into the academy and lessons and we are so glad to have them all back safely.

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

3. Year 8 News



A huge thank you to parents and students for making the testing process as smooth as possible this week. We are pleased to say that we had 99% attendance and look forward to welcoming back our year group on Monday morning, normal time, normal timetable.

Please could you ensure that your child is in full school uniform, which doesn't include leggings or trainers, that they have a reading book and have a full stationary kit ready to get back into learning. Don't forgot your masks as well!

Hub sessions for catch-up will be starting soon so please be aware that selected students will be asked to attend after school sessions – more on that in the coming days!

Finally, we would like to congratulate Adam Lowe for raising an incredible £405 for Teenage Cancer Trust! By dyeing his hair green, he has raised awareness in the community about this important cause and we couldn't be prouder – well done Adam!



4. Year 9 News

Hopefully this is the last time we are talking about home learning. We have a lot of thank yous this week. Firstly, we wanted to say thank you to all the students who had their first COVID test this Wednesday. We were impressed by their maturity and attitude towards being tested and we can't wait to see them all back in school on Monday. Well done to you all.

Secondly, we would like to say thank you to all the parents, carers, siblings etc who have helped with the home online working. You have been amazing supporting your child during these lockdowns. We know it could, at times, be difficult and we really appreciate your support. A huge thank you to all those key workers out there too.

Last but not least, we would like to thank all the staff and volunteers who are helping with the testing of our students. They have been outstanding with their efficiency and professionalism – thank you for keeping our community safe.

Arrangements for Monday:

Can the following tutor groups arrive at 8.40 am: I9BLU, R9AED, I9SMC The following tutor groups arrive at 10.30 am: C9TTH and D9ATH.

It will be the same procedures as last time (hopefully without the rain), but this time the students will wait in the hall for their results. They will then be released into their lessons as and when the results come through.

The students will need to:

- On arrival go straight to the tennis courts.
- Not travel to and from school in groups.
- Wear correct uniform if there are any problems then please supply them with a note (we know some are buying new blazers etc on Monday).
- Wear a mask.
- Bring a book to read/activity to do while waiting for their test results.
- Return their school laptops/Chromebooks.

Homework will still be set on Microsoft Teams. If this is an issue after returning your school device could you please let Mrs Roe know.

Congratulations to Lola Pauling and Hannah Jordan for their entries in the World Book Day Competition (full details in the library section of this newsletter).

Parents evening is Tuesday, 23 March. Please book your virtual appointments if you haven't done so already.

Year 9 options forms do not need to be back yet and there will be plenty of time in school for students to discuss their thoughts when they are back in school. There are paper copies in reception or alternatively in the Files section of the Year 9 channel.

Enjoy your weekend and we are looking forward to seeing everyone on Monday!

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





5. Year 9 Options

I have had 56 forms and 112 emails already regarding options. Thank you very much. A lot of the emails were saying very similar things. It looks like this year there is a lot of students who really need to have the blocks changed around a bit. I have looked and the proposed changes will make most of the students who have asked about it happier. None of the students who have handed in their forms will miss out on their choices. Therefore, I am going to consult on this adaptation. If there is general agreement amongst the student body, then I will change the staffing structure and timetable for next year to accommodate your wishes. However, if many students become disadvantaged due to the proposed change I will revert to the current structure. This will temporarily cause a little worry and upset. I do appreciate that. However, it is my mission to make as many people as happy as possible with the resources that we are given by the DFE. There will be plenty of opportunity to talk to Mr Lambert in SKL lessons and myself about options so there is no rush. This is why we take our time.

Please note that to change the structure is really difficult. To move one subject can mean that lots of students no longer can get their ideal preferences even though a few students may benefit. It is my job to try to balance the needs of all the students. We might find that it is impossible to get everyone totally happy. It is then a matter of doing as well as we can. Last year it worked really well. Everyone was clear on what they wanted and that helps. Please remember that we are funded by the government for only 4 of the 6 courses that we have offered in each block. That means the 4 least popular subjects will not run. Which subjects they are will be determined by the students.

There are plenty of copies of the Options Booklet available in reception.

I look forward to seeing you.

Proposed option block:

Name: _____

Tutor Group _____

All students will follow GCSE courses in English, English Literature, Maths, Double Science. The most able scientists will be allowed to take triple science (numbers permitting) afterschool. All students will also follow courses in RE, PSHEE and core PE.

Core Curriculum		Extended Core		OPTION 1		OPTION 2		OPTION 3	
English Language		Spanish		History	A	rt		Business	
English Literature		Or by invitation		Geography	PI	hotography		Drama	
Maths	PSHEE	IT / RE / SKL			C	omputer Sci		DT	
Core PE	Core RE	Youth	Cope		G	eography		Food	
Science (Double) Award					PI	E		Music	
Triple Science (HUB sessions)					R	E		Health and Social Care	

Only the most able students will thrive on computer science and triple science. Students need to be on track for grade 5+ to do well on these courses. A small minority of students will not do Spanish. Some may be selected for extra SKL, IT or RE and others for Youth Award / COPE. Please select your top 5 preferences in order 1,2,(3,4,5) from the 'Options' list. Those subjects with sufficient students will run. We are funded for 4 courses in each option block. Message for Mr Ward.

Signed _____

(Student)

Current option block:



Example Preference Form

(This may change slightly following student voice)

Name: _____

Tutor Group _____

All students will follow GCSE courses in English, English Literature, Maths, Double Science. The most able scientists will be allowed to take triple science (numbers permitting) afterschool. All students will also follow courses in RE, PSHEE and core PE.

Core Curriculum		Extended Core		OPTION 1		OPTION 2		OPTION 3	
English Language		Spanish		History		Art		Business	
English Literature		Or by invitation		Geography		Photography		Drama	
Maths	PSHEE	IT / RE / SKL				Computer Sci		DT	
Core PE	Core RE	Youth	Cope			Music		Food	
Science (Double) Award						PE		Geography	
Triple Science (HUB sessions)						RE		Health and Social Care	

Only the most able students will thrive on computer science and triple science. Students need to be on track for grade 5+ to do well on these courses. A small minority of students will not do Spanish. Some may be selected for extra SKL, IT or RE and others for Youth Award / COPE. Please select your top 5 preferences in order 1,2,(3,4,5) from the 'Options' list. Those subjects with sufficient students will run. We are funded for 4 courses in each option block. Message for Mr Ward.

Signed _____

(Student)

Mr Ward Vice Principal

6. Year 10 News

I'd like to start by thanking all the parents and carers for their help and support with getting all of our students back to school and tested where required. It has been wonderful to see all the students back in the school building and, more importantly, happy to be back! Their first week has gone well, they were so behaved during the testing and they all seem to have settled back to the school routine really well. I look forward to another really positive week next week.

I do have a couple of reminders please. I would be grateful if you could remind your child that hoodies and coats are not permitted in school and need to be stored in their bag or locker. If they are cold in class due to extra windows being open etc. due to COVID, then I would urge them to politely ask their teacher if they can put their coat on over their blazer and then remove it before leaving the classroom. It is at the teacher's discretion and would only ever be allowed if it was particularly cold in the room. A better option, if students think they are going to be cold, is wearing a white t-shirt/vest under their shirts to keep them warm. The weather is becoming warmer, so this should only be an issue for a short period of time anyway.

Shout outs for this week are:

For high engagement and Accelerated Reader quizzing success: Tom Walker For Accelerated Reader Quizzing Success: Katie Lambert-Sharp

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



7. Year 11 News

It has been absolutely fantastic to have Year 11 back in the building. Their attitude, behaviour and patience towards the testing was outstanding, they managed it all with such maturity.

The first lessons after students returned to the classroom were 'Curriculum Recovery' lessons and these included information about resilience, culture shock and a reminder of the LEARNT values that we expect for classroom behaviour and learning. These curriculum recovery lessons were designed to help settle students back into the school routine and way of working, but also to help them understand how they might be feeling after another big change and what support is available.

During lockdown staff had regular meetings and training about supporting our students back into school and how to ensure we will support them mentally, emotionally and educationally. Please contact myself or Mrs Middleton if you have any concerns about your child.

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

8. Sixth Form News

Well done to all of our Sixth Formers for a very successful first week back at the Academy. You will no doubt all be getting more used to the changes that have taken place in terms of use of masks and lateral flow tests. I am so happy to say that staff have had nothing but praise about the way that you have conducted yourselves around the Academy and in lessons. Huge pat on the back for you all!

Notice to parents of Year 13 students:

There has been no announcement on an official leave date for these students. As soon as we know more about this, we will let you all know.

NEACO Support and Guidance:



Our UEA NEACO champion wanted to let all students know that they will be continuing their **neaco individual support sessions** throughout the year to support them with their higher education next steps.



Using this booking link <u>https://tinyurl.com/yd9eh3gw</u> students can book a 20 minute online session with one of the Higher Education Champions. I urge students to book themselves into a support session if they have any questions or need any guidance about what their options are next year.

Ask an Advisor for Year 13 students who have made an application to UEA for 2021.

This service is a direct messaging service to help with any questions that students have about starting university this year, including student finance, accommodation and preparing for university. Students can ask an advisor <u>here</u>

East of England Virtual UCAS fair – 11 and 12 May:

Bookings are now open!

Now called a "discovery event" this will be hosted on 11 and 12 May. The event runs from 10am-6pm, and can be booked by individual students, teachers, advisers, parents and carers.

Attendees will be able to explore the platform themselves during the live days and also afterwards on demand.

The booking link and further info is here, so please get booking!

Foodie Friday - I realise I change the name of this section each week:

The wonderfully clever Emily whipped up this mega chocolaty gorgeous creation, not for herself.....oh no no no! But for her little (not so little) brother Freddie's birthday. How amazing does this look?! Get your orders in if your birthday is coming up... ③



This week my obsession with Jamie Oliver went one step further and I made his sausage and grape pizza:

https://www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/sausage-recipes/my-favourite-speedy-sausage-pizza/

Yes, at first my kids thought I was mad putting grapes on a pizza....but let me tell you.....it's a revelation! Go on. Give it a go! Then afterwards, because I'm so young and cool, I tried the TikTok nature's cereal trend. Well, let me tell you, this was unreal, healthy, super easy, and doesn't it look so pretty!





Royalty in OA6:

I always knew there was something special and regal about our wonderful Reuben – and now it has been confirmed!

So after extensive research, he has managed to trace his ancestors quite a way back. Reuben's Dad's great grandfather was a Howard and through ancestry along with many other sources, they have be able to find out that they directly descend from the Howard family, and more importantly the **Dukes of Norfolk**. In fact, Thomas Howard, the 4th Duke of Norfolk is Reuben's x16 great grandfather. And the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Dukes are also direct ancestors (even the current Duke of Norfolk would be a relative).

You may or may not know that the 3rd Duke is Anne Boleyn's uncle, making Anne Boleyn Reuben's 1st cousin x15 removed and more significantly, Queen Elizabeth 1st, his 2nd cousin x15 removed. Following the Duke of Norfolk's line going further back, it would take you to King Edward 1st, another direct ancestor, so he is then Reuben's x24 great grandfather, not forgetting his direct ancestors, King Henry III, King John who signed the magna Carter and King Henry II.

Yep. Take a moment and digest all of that! Absolutely amazing!

Have a great weekend everyone 😳

Mrs Molloy Head of 6th Form

9. Careers

- BBC Bitesize have developed an exciting new Careers page aimed at Young People. The page
 includes lots of careers news, real life stories and practical advice on how to find out more about
 courses, qualifications, getting ready for the world of work and further study. This week features a
 special insight on what it is like to work at the BBC and details of their Young reporter
 programme. Take a look at https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers
- Our Sector of the Month for March is Financial Services. This covers a range of careers including Accountancy, Insurance, Banking and Investment Management. Reading Sixth Formers' UCAS Personal Statements I have noticed a growing interest in this sector so I think it is worth highlighting. As usual a good place to start is Icanbea.org which provides a good basic explanation of what the sector is all about. <u>https://www.icanbea.org.uk/app/explore/industries/financial-services-29/</u> In addition, many of the large organisations in this sector, for example Aviva, provide lots of guidance on their websites around apprenticeships and how to go about applying for them. <u>https://careers.aviva.co.uk/students-graduates/apprentices-school-leavers/</u>
- Another mention for our fantastic Careers information and guidance platform Unifrog. Year 9 students who are thinking about their GCSE options should log in to Unifrog.org (using their Open Academy email address) and research where their subject interests might take them and how to succeed in reaching their goals.



 Speakers for Schools continue to provide a programme of talks online. A highlight of the list is a talk by motivational speaker and fitness trainer Patrick Hutchinson where there will be an opportunity to ask live questions. The link for this week's line-up is: <u>https://www.speakersforschools.org/inspiration/vtalks/upcoming-vtalks/</u>

Mrs Davies

Careers Facilitator and Assistant Head of Sixth Form

10. Library News

World Book Day Competition Winners:

Well done to Lola who won the 1st place prize of our World Book Day competition for her amazing Alice in Wonderland creations. A further congratulations to the runners up Xylia, Hannah and Sophie. Prizes will be awarded to these students next week.



Runners Up



Xylia Sparkes, C8SDD



Hannah Jordan, C9TTH



Sophie Smith, C10KMU

Library Clubs resume 22 March:

The library will be open after school next week for private study only. Clubs will resume the following week, the 22 March. Due to bubbling, the library is open to the following year groups on these days:

Year 7 - Tuesday and Friday Year 8 and 9 - Monday and Thursday Year 10 and 11 – Wednesday

If your child would like to attend, we ask that they please sign up in advance using this form. Thank you.

Library Books Click and Collect & Amnesty:

A reminder that we are running an online click and collect service to borrow library books at this time. Students can <u>log in here</u> to request a book. If they need any help using the website they should see the guide attached or contact me via Teams or by email.

We also have over 700 books on loan from last term (and longer in some cases.) We are running an amnesty to encourage students to return these over the next fortnight. All students who return any outstanding loans by Thursday, 25 March will be entered into a prize draw to win an Easter egg. Students can check their current loans using the library website above, or by contacting me. We would appreciate



your support in encouraging your child to look for any outstanding books and returning these as soon as possible.

ReadFit:

Next week we are launching a new reading challenge to get students back into the habit of reading. You may have heard of Couch to 5K; ReadFit is a similar programme, but designed to train your brain. Find out more by watching this introductory video. Students can sign up for the programme here.

Supporting Reading at Home: So you have a reluctant reader?

Small acts of daily reading are really important to helping students make good progress across all of their studies. It can also have a really positive impact on mental health and has been shown to be as effective as exercise or listening to music for relaxation.

As part of our recovery curriculum we are doing a big drive on reading - ensuring that students have a reading book as part of their equipment; encouraging them to read a little bit every day and having one-to-one conversations with students about reading as part of our tutor programme.

We would also like to offer support to parents and carers about how you can support reading at home. With this in mind we will be sharing resources over the coming weeks to help you talk to your child about reading and encourage them to read more. This week's guide gives tips and tricks for encouraging your reluctant reader to pick up a book.

Peter Pan:

This terms staff read-a-long is of Peter Pan by J M Barrie. Catch up with the full book, or listen to the latest chapters here: <u>https://bit.ly/3uy22L</u>

Miss Ling Librarian

11. Attendance

Just a reminder of our student absence email address to notify ourselves of any absences:

student.absence@open-academy.org.uk

Mrs Ganson Attendance Officer

12. Chaplain's Reflection

"The way to achieve your own success is to be willing to help somebody else get it first." Iyanla Vanzant

Although we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel with the pandemic, we still need to continue to look after each other. If you haven't heard from people in a while, or you notice they've been a little distant or upset, it might be a nice gesture to check in on how they're doing. Sometimes just knowing that someone is there for you can make all the difference.

I want to encourage you to:

Keep an eye out. It can be difficult to spot when someone is struggling, but a good friend will always keep an eye out for changes in behaviour. If you do spot something different in the way your friend or someone around you is acting, you may want to ask them if things are okay, or direct them to someone who can help. Sometimes we might need to persist at this to get the help that people need.

Send a message. A simple text, instant message or email to ask how a person is doing can really make a difference. The message is a sign that there are people who care for them and may lead them to express how they're feeling.



Call on your phone. Calling isn't always the easiest thing to do, but it allows you to connect with others in real time. A familiar voice is also soothing, so this may bring a real sense of comfort to the person you're calling. If you're unable to get hold of them for a call, you could always send them a voice note from WhatsApp or other platforms.

Make time. Life can often be very busy and it may be hard to catch up with people as often as you'd like. If you are reaching out to people, make sure that you make time to talk to them and to hear their story. Try not to rush the conversation. You could allocate time in your day or evening so both of you are free.

Try to understand others. Take a moment to walk in their shoes so to speak. Empathy goes a long way. Imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling. It can be so hard to imagine what others may be going through, but give it a try.

Do things together. It's so difficult to meet up due to this pandemic and lockdown rules. But there are still ways of meeting together so to speak. You could play games together online, have group Zoom calls or even have a Zoom games night with snacks. You can also meet up with one of your friends outside and have a chat which is a great thing to do.

All of this contributes to a happier life for the people around us. In closing the Bible talks about the above in saying, "Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too". Let's continue to look after each other, our community will be all the better for it.

God bless you.

Mark Pimlott Chaplain