

Open Academy Update 19 March 2021
For parents and students – please do discuss the contents with your child!

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to our newsletter this week, and how wonderful it has been to have the students back with us.

Whilst not quite back to normal, this week has felt like we are well and truly back on to the road to recovery.

It is clear the students are finding being back tiring and although before we know it, we will be breaking up for Easter, I'm hoping that it will feel more like a break than more lockdown, and we can then start looking towards a normal summer term.

Of course, we would not have been in such fine shape if you had not fully played your part in supporting our return efforts. So once more, I would like to thank you for your support, which has seen over 97% of students tested and a similar compliance rate for face coverings.

I realise the testing burden has now passed from us to you with the issuing of home test kits this week. Hopefully, the process is straightforward for you. Since moving to home testing for staff, I think our biggest difficulty has been remembering when to take a test. However, once you sign up to our Test Register software, you get reminders to submit the results.

The students have been amazing through the process. Their impeccable behaviour has meant that the testing team have been able to get through over two and a half thousand student tests over the last few weeks and not a single one positive! An amazing job everyone, delivered brilliantly by our staff volunteers of Mrs Joyce, Mrs Moy, Mr Childs and Mr Hawkins, along with the invigilators who stepped in to help during the return phase. I cannot thank them enough for the part they have played in our safe return.

Who would have thought that almost exactly one year on from when we went in to our first school closure with lockdown just around the corner, that within 12 months so much would have changed?

The fact that I sit here, as a 'fifty something', already vaccinated along with 25 million other people, and we have had our first week with everyone back in school since September with no one having to isolate, feels incredibly hopeful for the future. A future which can see us now reshape our plans and calendar a little more confidently. So, as we plan for the term ahead, please rest assured that we will be sharing revised plans for assessments, parents' evenings and other key activities which are long overdue.

One final thank you is for the excellent response to our parent feedback questionnaire. Your comments have been overwhelmingly positive and constructive, and it has been delightful to share with staff your nominations for those who have gone over and above for you and your children. Huge thanks to all who have completed it so far. Please note I will leave the form open until Easter, so you still have plenty of time to have your say, share your views, or nominate a staff member.

I hope you have had a great week and that your child being in school has allowed a little more normality for you too. Enjoy your weekend with the students, they may have more to talk about this week!

Jon Ford
Principal

Contents:

1. Covid Home Testing
2. Year 7 News
3. Year 8 News
4. Year 9 News
5. Year 10 News
6. Year 11 News
7. 6th Form News
8. Careers
9. Cleaner Vacancy
10. Library News
11. Lost Property
12. Attendance
13. Chaplain's Reflection

1. Covid Home Testing

Up to 1 in 3 people who have Covid have no symptoms and could be spreading it without knowing. Getting into a regular habit of testing twice a week will help stop the virus spreading, keeping your family and friends safer.

We have sent home Covid testing kits this week. Please make sure your child tests themselves twice a week (3-5 days apart) in the morning before school, if possible, or the evening before.

Your child should also continue testing twice a week, at home, throughout the Easter school holidays. We will be sending home extra kits for Easter holiday before term ends.

It is really important that results are reported online straight away, even if your child's result is negative or void. These are done in two places:

www.testregister.co.uk/login and www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result

TestRegister have updated the site so we are unable to send activation links. To register, just enter your email address and an access link email will be sent. Reminders will then be sent to you for the student who needs to do a test. From these notifications you should be able to register the test too.

If you have problems reporting results, please email office@open-academy.org.uk and we can enter the data for you.

Testing for parents, households and bubbles twice a week:

A reminder that regular rapid testing is now also available for parents, their households and support or childcare bubbles. The government is encouraging all families to participate in twice weekly testing to help stop the spread.

Parents and other adults in the household can access tests by:

- Ordering tests online www.gov.uk/order-school-household-tests
- Getting an assisted test at work, if it is available
- Attending a test site to get tested (where you will be able to see how to take the test) or pick up tests to do at home.

To find out more on school household testing visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff>

We continue to encourage everyone to take part in regular Covid testing.

Mrs Appleby
Business Manager

1. Year 7 News

A huge WELL DONE to all Year 7. The first full week back after lock down, they have made us proud. It is fabulous to see such a buzz around school as we welcome them back to face to face learning. Thank you to parents/carers for being supportive with the face coverings and at home testing. Students have adapted well with wearing face coverings.

Miss Whitwood is temporarily assisting the Year 7 team. This does not affect the running of the year group and parents/students will see little change. Miss Whitwood is a very experienced teacher and she has lots of brilliant skills to bring to the team, which the students will benefit from. Welcome on-board Miss Whitwood!!

A few general reminders:

Uniform - we are aware that some students have grown while in lockdown and shops aren't yet open. On line shopping can be delayed if you have ordered new uniform or shoes. Can parents please let us know if there is a problem with obtaining new uniform. It is expected that all students should be in correct uniform unless the year team have been contacted by parents/carers.

Mobile Phones - these should be stored out of sight and switched off while in school. There have been a few incidents regarding mobile phones recently across the year groups.

Laptops/Chrome Books - if your child was loaned a device during lockdown, this must be returned to school on Monday. All devices have been disabled.

Competition news:

There will be a competition running next week. Students are invited to submit a Haiku poem with the theme of Easter. The closing date is Friday, 26 March. The winning poem will receive a prize at the end of the day

Shout outs for this week:

Ella-Rose Key – Ella is a very talented young artist. She has been successful in securing a scholarship at Norwich Art school. She will be attending in her own time. This is a fantastic achievement, well done Ella.

Ruby Anderson – For being a supportive friend and helping others #bekind.

Mrs McEvoy/Mr Coyne - German - Kian Wright for fantastic work in German on his numbers up to 15.

Mr Walters – History – George Tozer Smith, Rebecca Shapcott and Steven Ellis for work in History.

Well Done to Mr Browns form I7 for receiving the highest number of achievement points this week.

Mrs Hewitt-Coleman - Head of Year 7
Mrs Lamb and Miss Whitwood – Assistant Heads of Year 7

3. Year 8 News

A fantastic return for Year 8 this week! On the whole, we have seen a very engaged and positive year group who are eager and ready to learn, and hope that that will continue into the final week of the spring term.

Congratulations to the following students for excellent work and effort this week:

Nathan Sharp, Mayling Thomas, Owen Mann and Bailey Salter for the highest amount of achievement points earnt this week!

To the entirety of 8O for their fantastic lessons in English with Ms Hatley.

Xylia Sparkes for her entry into the World Book Day Competition – see Miss Ling's section.

Harisan Martin, Gemma Smith, Sienna Brown and Leo Williams for multiple examples of excellence this week.

Jacob Cook, Hayden Brown, Tye Fitzgerald and Rosie Coman for excellent and speedy work in Music.

Another mention of uniform – we're seeing a number of regular students wearing leggings or trainers to school. We can only tackle this issue with your support, so please check your child is coming to school with the correct uniform, in order to encourage a positive mental attitude to learning.

Year 8 students have been taking part in a Handball competition in PE this past week, with tutor groups being pitted against one another – stay tuned for the winner in next week's newsletter!

And finally, we are doing a big push next week for students to make sure they have enough reading material over the Easter holidays. We will be encouraging them to 'book a book' online so that no matter what happens over the Easter break, there is always something to get stuck into.

Wishing you a wonderful weekend.

Miss Lines – Head of Year 8

Mrs Smith – Assistant Heads of Year 8

4. Year 9 News

Welcome back Year 9. We hope you haven't missed your children too much. It has been fantastic to see all the Year 9s happy and learning, it's been heart-warming to hear the laughter around the school again. Thank you for your efforts with uniform too, it has not gone unnoticed. Behaviour has been good too and the overall atmosphere has been 'it's been good to be back'. One more week to go before the Easter holidays. All the Covid testing in school has been completed this week and home self-testing kits will be sent home with your child today.

Our top achieving students in the first week back are:

Paige Berry, Jake Folkes, Freya Graysmark, Ryan Howes, Jonas Kieras, Atanas Kyurkchiev, James Self, Charlie Slack, Toby Thompson and Sade Woollard. Well done to you all.

It was good to have our praise club this morning again. This week tutors chose:

Lauren Aldous, Grace Moreton, Jamil Ali and Kimora Alexander to enjoy a Friday treat. Well done for being chosen.

Your child should be coming home today with home test kits and instructions. They are straight forward to follow, but if you have any problems please let Mrs Roe know.

Thank you to all those who have filled out their options form. During skills for life lessons they will go through the options booklet again. Also, if they haven't already, log onto Unifrog to have a look around this excellent website for ideas.

Parents evening online is next Tuesday, 23 March. There are a few appointments left if you would like to speak to any teachers.

A shout out to Dylan Scott for achieving a level 3 fitness diploma as a personal trainer and fitness instructor. Congratulations on this outstanding achievement.

A quick reminder for all students to ensure they bring a reading book into school each day. There are lots of opportunities in school to access library books. Please contact our librarian, Miss Ling, if there are any issues.

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

5. Year 10 News

No update.

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

6. Year 11 News

I would like to congratulate Year 11 on how settled and hard they are working in lessons. There is no doubt in my mind that of all the year groups they have had perhaps the toughest year. I am impressed with their resilience and commitment to showing their best work and helping us give them their best grade based on the evidence we have.

Hub sessions are running next week, but the focus is on completing the course requirements. Teachers will ask your child to stay for a Hub session if they feel they are at risk of not completing the course. Once we receive more specific information the focus of Hub sessions may be adapted.

On a lighter note, prom has been booked for Friday, 25 June 2021 at Sprowston Manor. More details to follow.

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

7. Sixth Form News

Hello everyone. I hope that you have all had a wonderful week back. It's crazy to think that we only have one more week of school before the Easter holidays!

Virtual Work Experience

Please find attached information about virtual work experiences currently available. These are well worth a look. Additional information about each opportunity together with application procedures can be found at each link on the schedule.

Private Study Time

As everyone is getting used to being back in the academy, I really would like students to all make sure that they are using their private study time effectively. This means that they should be sat down and working. Unfortunately, in this past week we have seen a small number of students using this time to play computer games rather than doing any work. Private study time is a real privilege that 6th Formers have

over the rest of the students in the academy, and it should be used as it is intended. Please speak to myself or Ms Davies if you have any questions regarding this.

HUB

After school hubs on Tuesdays and Thursdays will begin again after Easter. These one-hour sessions are designed to give students some extra support in particular subjects. Teachers will nominate which students need to be in the hub each week, based on if they feel they need extra support and are behind in any of their work. Realistically, given the number of private study sessions that each student has on their timetable, there really shouldn't be any student behind in their subjects, but of course we realise that everyone's circumstances are different and we are here to support you in these sessions.



Foodie Friday

Yep. me again. If anyone wants to send me anything you've made, please feel free to do so! Until then I will have to subject you all to my cooking until you get bored.

This week my favourite meal was these summer rolls. My children naturally were disgusted by it and thought I was weird for eating salad in cling film (it's not cling film), but ignore them. These were delicious.

The only slightly bizarre ingredient is rice paper wraps, I bought mine at the Asian stall on Norwich Market. And then you just fill with whatever you fancy, salad bits, fish, chicken, noodle. And that's it! Can't even technically call it cooking.

So if you fancy eating a weird salad dinner wrapped in cling film....give this a go!

Sixth Form Wellbeing

You've got three pieces of coursework to finish, exams coming up and pressure coming at you from every possible direction. Yep, Sixth Form can feel pretty stressful at times, but there are ways to better manage your stress. Here's some tips from Stephanie Varda, a life coach who specialises in stress management:

Know that a Little Bit of Stress is Normal

Stress is your body's way of preparing you to face something. So, when you notice work piling up, the adrenaline that's rushing through your system is what will motivate you to head to your laptop and get cracking. We all experience a little stress from time to time but if you know how to manage it, you can stop it becoming overwhelming and ever-present.

Release the Pressure

A lot of stress comes from the internal pressure we put on ourselves. Sure, getting certain grades to get to the university you want is important, but if you heap too much pressure on yourself you can start to panic. Be realistic in your expectations, and if you feel panic about your future starting to rise just take a moment and try the 4-7-8 technique:

Breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, then release through your mouth for 8 seconds. Then remind yourself that everything will be OK.

Find Some Balance

Finding balance between the things you need to do and the things you love to do can help you to manage stress. Say, you have coursework to complete, or a part-time job, and you also want time to see friends and chill out. Work out a schedule that allows you the time to do both. Being positive and proactive about managing your own wellbeing is essential for your stress levels.

Be Your Own Cheerleader

If you believe in yourself and your abilities, you're better able to manage stress. We can all be guilty of focusing too much on the negative at times, beating ourselves up for what we think we did wrong. Instead, keep a notebook where you jot down one thing you did well that day. Getting into the habit of positive self-praise and affirmations can do wonders for your self-esteem, and that will help you to look at stress differently.

Find Your 'Meditation'

It's really useful to have a go-to technique that you can use in times of stress. But don't be pressured into thinking you have to meditate, as stress is a really personal thing. It might be that a boxercise class helps to clear your head, or dancing in your room with music turned up loud or squishing a stress ball. There are lots of ways to manage stress that are good for your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. Try out some different stress beating techniques and you'll soon find one to call your own.

As always, the 6th Form team are all here if you ever need a chat 😊

Mrs Molloy
Head of 6th Form

8. Careers

- Our Sector of the Month for March is financial services. This covers a wide range of careers including accountancy, auditing, insurance, banking and investment management. Last year, one of our Year 13 students was successful in obtaining a prestigious Level 4 Business Analyst apprenticeship at Aviva and this year we have students applying for university courses in accountancy, business management and financial trading. A good place to start research is Icanbea.org which provides a good basic explanation of what the sector is all about and the main employers in this region:

<https://www.icanbea.org.uk/app/explore/industries/financial-services-29/>

In addition, for those students who are interested in applying for apprenticeships in this sector many of the large organisations, for example Aviva, provide lots of guidance on their own websites around how and when to go about applying for the opportunities they offer:

<https://careers.aviva.co.uk/students-graduates/apprentices-school-leavers/>

- Another mention for our fantastic careers information and guidance platform Unifrog. By Easter, this will be rolled out to the whole school making it possible for a student to research, plan and track their career interests at every stage as they progress through the school. This month, 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. Parents who are interested in accessing Unifrog themselves can request a code by emailing me at caroline.davies@open-academy.org.uk
- As mentioned during 'National Careers Week', 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. Take a look at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/careers>

Featured on the Home Page this week is an item giving 'Six Top Tips for Getting Virtual Work Experience'. In the continued absence of 'real' work experience placements this is an excellent way to gain new skills and insights into the world of work. The newsletter will feature the latest opportunities as they are made available - please see the attachment for this week's list.

Ms Davies
Careers Facilitator and Assistant Head of Sixth Form

9. Cleaner Vacancy

We are looking to appoint a cleaner to work 10 hours per week, Monday to Friday 3.00pm - 5.00pm, plus some hours in the holidays. If you are interested in applying for this vacancy please see our website for details:

<https://www.open-academy.org.uk/our-academy/vacancies/>

Mrs Appleby
Business Manager

10. Library News

After School Opening and Manga Club

The library will be open after school next week on the following days:

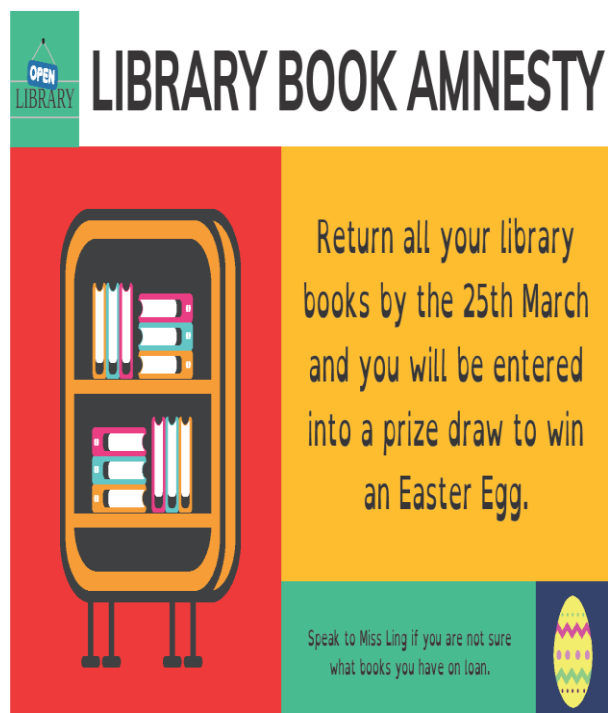
Year 7 - Tuesday and Friday

Year 8 and 9 - Monday and Thursday

Year 10 and 11 - Wednesday

Manga club will also be taking place on Monday for Year 8 and 9 and on Friday for Year 7.

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



LIBRARY BOOK AMNESTY

Return all your library books by the 25th March and you will be entered into a prize draw to win an Easter Egg.

Speak to Miss Ling if you are not sure what books you have on loan.

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 [log in here](#) to request a book. If they need any help using the website they should contact me via Teams or by email.

We have begun to see students returning books this week, but there are still over 500 library 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

This week we launched 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 we are resending our guides from the past fortnight in case you missed them to first time round. These offer advice for encouraging reluctant readers and how to start up a conversation about books with your child.

Peter Pan

We have now finished our most recent staff read-a-long of Peter Pan by J M Barrie. Catch up with the full book, or listen to the latest chapters here:

<https://bit.ly/3uy22Le>

Miss Ling
Librarian

11. Lost Property

There are a lot of items currently being held in lost property from last term as well as from before the summer holidays.

Currently we have coats, full PE kits, lunch bags, water bottles, keys and glasses to name just a few. Please ask your child to check at reception during break, lunch or after school if they think they have lost something in school.

It is really helpful if uniform, bags and anything else that your child brings to school has the student's name on please.

Mrs Wright
Receptionist

12. Attendance

Now that all year groups have returned following the staggered start, the Attendance Lottery will recommence from next week. All students who have achieved 100% for the week have the opportunity of winning a £5 Amazon Ecard.

Please do continue to encourage your son/daughter to have good attendance and punctuality and please remember to contact reception or email student.absence@open-academy.org.uk to inform us if they are absent from school. Should you wish to discuss your child's attendance further, please contact your son/daughter's Assistant Head of Year. Thank you for your support.

Mrs Ganson
Attendance Officer

13. Chaplain's Reflection

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?"

Martin Luther King Jr

I saw this quote this week and it really encouraged and challenged me. Martin Luther King Jr said *"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?"*. Encouragement is the greatest gift we can give to others in our community. It's not expensive or time consuming.

When we encourage, we lift the heart and soul and we can change a person's day. It's really effective. The simplest form of encouragement is a smile, there is so much power in it and shows you place value on others. Listening to others shows that you care, time spent doing this lets a person know that what they have to say is important. Again, this places value on them and will lift up the spirit.

Another way to encourage is when introducing people to others, say a few words about their strengths or achievements. This shows respect and honour. Encouragement is also a team and relationship builder. When encouragement is given, a transformation takes place.

Picture this, sometimes we don't know if someone is having a hard day or is going through tough times. One small sentence of encouragement can change their situation. Everyone from the most confident to those who have low self-esteem need encouragement. Let's be determined to encourage freely with whatever form that takes. It's so simple, but so effective.

Deuteronomy 31 verse 8. "God himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged".

God bless you

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain