

Open Academy Update 26 March 2021

For parents and students – please do discuss the contents with your child!

Dear Parents/Carers

So, after a short and sweet return, which I think most students found quite exhausting, we arrive at the Easter holidays.

At the end of last term, we were isolating Year 7 bubbles from lockdown 2, but expecting to be back as normal at the start of January. How wrong that proved to be as we entered the New Year into lockdown 3.

In the space of this one spring term, we have

- Delivered a half term of virtual school.
- Invented DARES (Directed Activities Related to Everyday Situations) along the way to ease the screen overload of a full taught curriculum online.
- We set up a COVID-19 testing facility and tested everyone twice weekly until the big return.
- We tested everyone twice as they came back in.
- We have then made a serious attempt at getting things back to normal schooling.

I do now hope for some normality and we can view the next couple of weeks as the Easter holiday, to enjoy time with our families and get rested ready for a far more normal summer term ahead.

That said, we are still asking for your vigilance, so please do note the following as you have a wonderful Easter break...

Track and Trace for the next few days:

We do still need you to help the community for the next few days. If your child develops any Covid symptoms during the 48 hours after term ends, i.e. up to 3.00pm on Sunday, 28 March, or has a positive, home administered, lateral flow device test, please get them tested at a local testing centre immediately and please let us know by emailing office@open-academy.org.uk. Then, please email their PCR test result to the same email address once you have it. We can then trace any close contacts quickly. If they test positive after symptoms that have developed after 3.00pm on Sunday, please follow advice from the NHS as the academy will not be involved in tracing contacts.

There is, therefore, a small chance that we may be in touch during the first few days of the holiday if your child has been a close contact of someone who tests positive.

Lateral Flow Testing during Easter Holidays:

A further supply of home testing kits has been issued to students to bring home this week. It is encouraged that all students continue to test twice a week during the Easter holidays and as a minimum the Sunday night or Monday morning before they return to school. This will continue to help keep everyone safe in our community.

After thanking you all for the amazing uptake of the in-school testing which saw over 97% of students tested as they returned, I must thank you again for your fantastic efforts with home testing. Our systems tell us that well over 80% are testing regularly, but we believe that figure is quite a bit higher as not everyone has logged their tests through us.

We are aware of a significant number of students who have been logging their results with the government site, but not through the school Test Register. It is important the school has records of tests carried out so please can you also log the result on testregister.co.uk/login. If you do this first, a link from here will

automatically take you to the government report Covid result site. So, taking this into account, it appears that well over 90% are testing regularly.

It is this sort of fantastic community response that has seen this community remain safe for the whole of this term, so I am delighted to say we have not had to isolate anyone at all this term.

For the increasing number that this applies to please note:

Free School Meals:

Free School Meal vouchers to cover the 2 week holiday period should be received in the usual way by Monday, 29 March.

So, please, enjoy the rest of the newsletter and more importantly, enjoy the break with your children. There is much to do on our return including assessments in all years and the restart of HUBs, so for now I hope you can all enjoy the break

Jon Ford
Principal

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1. Tutoring, HUBs, Assessments/Grades and Internship Program:

You may be aware of the national programme for tutoring has been announced by the government over the past few months. There were a small number of students who were eligible for extra support after school last term. We have found a number of problems with the programme namely:

- The IT systems at times were challenging for students and parents to navigate.
- The tutors were not able to relate to young people as well as we would hope.
- Emails from the tutors did not get to the students (they came from private companies rather than through our school).
- The printed materials to accompany the sessions that were due to arrive on 4 January arrived last week from one company, but have not come from the other company as yet.

It appears that these teething problems have occurred in other schools as well. It must be an enormous challenge to try to set up a multimillion pound tutoring company so rapidly. Unfortunately, the students and their families involved appear to have lost confidence with the national programme. One of the students told me how it had driven her to tears. Others are expressing frustration that they have heard nothing so far. Extra help should not make our students so upset, especially at this difficult time. We have come up with an alternative plan which will work. We will make sure that the 19 students involved in the original programme will not miss out. At the same time we do not want to overwhelm them. Currently in the school we have 3 extra academic mentors and 1 more online. They are working with more than 100 students. In

addition we are reinstating HUBs for students, which will add even more support for an additional 150+ students. Our plans are more ambitious than the original programme and will provide more hours of support overall. We regret that the promised programme did not quite live up to expectation.

HUBs:

HUB sessions for Years 7 to 13 are back up and running now. Year 11 are being invited to attend on an ad hoc class by class basis. This is to respond to need. We are trying to ensure that none of the Year 11s are overstretched whilst we collect the last pieces of evidence. We are now inviting large numbers of Year 7s for this additional support.

What are the hub sessions for?

The hub sessions are there to support students who need some help with homework or study. They also support the Year 11 revision programme. However, due to the lockdown we have repurposed them. Year 11 will still have a great programme – in fact more teachers than ever have volunteered their time to support the students. For other year groups it is essential that students who fell behind for whatever reason are not left behind. They will need to catch up otherwise the new content in class will be too difficult and the students will find the examinations much more difficult.

Why is my child in the hub sessions?

Nationally, lots of students did not do much, if any work, during lockdown. The government has made it clear that these students need to catch up. We are lucky that Open managed to get most students working well most of the time. Most students were able to continue to work with their teachers in a mixture of online learning and live lessons over the lockdown. Some students kept up to date by using the knowledge organisers and sending work in. Where work was not completed and learning was not happening then a gap opens up. It is not fair to the majority of students who did all the work to be held back by the minority who could not. If a student did not complete sufficient work during lockdown, then the sessions are to catch them up. It would also mean that there is a chance that there is not enough time to teach all of the content in Key Stage 3 or in the GCSE or A-level specifications. Therefore, we must help the students catch up.

Some students have more sessions than others. In order to catch up the missing work it will take some students 2 hours per week for the year. Other students it will be 1 hour. Some students only missed a little bit and they will be caught up quicker.

Where a student got sufficient work done during lockdown they are usually not in hub sessions. However, we will be offering some Engaged, Gifted and Talented after school slots for those pupils. They did very well. This programme will be relaunched in the summer term.

I could not get my child to work and they do not want to go to the hub.

At the end of the day we, as adults, recognise how important it is to have an education and be ready for life after school. The government has made it clear that they want schools to be fining for non-attendance in September. They have also made it clear that students need to catch up work that was not done during lockdown. The hub sessions will be part of the attendance register. As you know we have to send the government attendance data regularly. This is why we have sent the timetables out now so that everyone is ready and prepared. The sessions are not optional and they will be followed up as we would with any non-attendance.

If your child has a dentist appointment or similar then that of course would be fine. A note would be provided in the usual way.

On the day my child has a hub session I usually ask them to pick up a sibling.

The hub sessions have been carefully managed to ensure that every pupil has a computer to work at. That means we will not easily be able to swap days around. However, if there is a big issue then please write an

email to the Head of Year who will be able to consider requests in the first week back. If accommodations can be made then they will be.

My child is worried about getting a detention.

Most students do not get a detention ever. We usually have less than 1% of the student population in a detention over a week. Therefore, very few students would be involved. We can't stop great initiatives for such a minority at this time. It would be better if we had no students needing to have a detention. At the moment the proposal is that the detention would not be cancelled it will be deferred and would either take place between 4pm and 5pm after the hub or be moved to another day. We are not going to halt student learning or catching up. There was overwhelming parent and student support for this initiative last term.

I heard the government were promising catch-up money.

They have been very generous with ideas and support. The tutoring programme has not landed quite as well as we would like. It might be trickier to get it working perfectly in a small city like Norwich. The mentoring programme is working really well. By providing the HUBs and other tutoring opportunities we can ensure that all students are given the opportunity to catch up.

Assessments and grades:

All of the students were given the opportunity to do some online assessments as we came back. These were a great baseline to guide the curriculum on return. Now that the students are back we hope to examine the students thoroughly over the next term so that we can feedback progress to pupils and parents. In order to manage workload of staff there has been a bit of juggling of the timetable.

KS3 students will have more GL Assessments next half term. A report, just like the one sent before Christmas, will be produced and sent home so that you can see how your child is progressing.

Year 10 and 12 will do formal exams in the hall at the beginning of June to see progress in their GCSEs/A-levels. A report will follow.

Year 12s who do not achieve pass grades, or are missing target grades significantly, will have to have an interview with Mrs Molloy to discuss whether the student can continue into Year 13.

Year 11 and 13. We have to collect evidence as outlined by the presentation sent to all students last week. We will have three evidence windows, two in May where the majority of the evidence will be collected and a final one in June. It is fully anticipated that Year 11 and 13 will be available for classes until the deadline for evidence in mid-June. However, it is fully anticipated that some students may have provided sufficient evidence for their grades by half term. These students will not need to return. We are aware that some local schools are letting their students go before June. We do not believe it is not in all of the pupils' interests to do so. We will hold onto our students for as long as required until we have sufficient evidence for their grades.

Internship Programme:

Some Year 11 and 13 students have volunteered to work on an internship programme in July. We are currently studying the feasibility of this proposed project and feedback next half term.

Mr Ward
Vice Principal

2. PSHE and Skills for Life

As a part of your child's education at Open Academy we promote personal wellbeing and development through a comprehensive Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education programme called SKL (Skills for Life).

This is the curriculum subject that gives young people the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and practical skills to live safe, healthy, productive lives and meet their full potential. Over the next several weeks, starting after the Easter break your child's class will be taking part in lessons which will focus on the relationships and sex education (RSE) aspect of this programme. RSE lessons will include teaching about: healthy relationships, including friendships and intimate relationships; families; growing and changing, including puberty; personal hygiene; changing feelings; becoming more independent; keeping safe and consent; developing self-esteem and confidence.

Pupils will also have opportunities to ask questions that help prepare them for relationships of all kinds in the modern world. PSHE education is taught throughout the school in every year group and is monitored and reviewed regularly by the staff and governing body. Please visit the school's website:

<https://www.open-academy.org.uk/assets/Uploads/RHSE-Policy-Jun20-approved-Sept-2020.pdf>

for more detail about our PSHE curriculum. All PSHE teaching takes place in a safe learning environment and is underpinned by our school ethos and values.

We would also like to invite you to shape aspects of our curriculum and gain your feedback by completing the form:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=W8ZO2qGEd0-AYQqaPv6megkG6KEjhhCinVBUSDY0jIUOTlwOTRGNFJJTVRZSDdTREo5OVEyMFISVi4u>

As a school community, we are committed to working in partnership with parents. If you would like to find out more or discuss any concerns, please contact me by email at louise.wicks@open-academy.org.uk

Louise Wicks

Teacher of Business and subject lead for PSHE/SKL

3. Year 7 News

It's the end of the term. A big well done to all of Year 7 for coming back and giving it their best, we know it has been a challenge and a big readjustment. We are proud of the resilience you have shown and for the hard work you have all put in. Thank you to parents/carers for your support during this difficult term.

Haiku Competition:

The Year 7 team set a competition to write a Haiku Poem on the theme of Easter. A Haiku Poem is a short Japanese poem. Traditionally Japanese Haiku consists of three phrases that contain a kireji or "cutting" word, in a 5, 7, 5 pattern.

Congratulations to Isioma Onuchukwu who was the winner. We thought you might all like to read the winning entry!

"Even when I sin
Jesus gives me redemption
He died for us"

Second prize went to Lucy-Rose Brown, third prize went to Lillymae Holmes. Prizes also awarded to Zachary Craske and Harley Ringer.

Thank you and well done to all of you who entered, you will each be receiving 10 achievement points for extra-curricular activities.

Lateral Flow Testing:

Please can we remind you to continue to complete your lateral flow tests over Easter. Year 7 students should be doing two tests a week, one on a Monday and one on a Thursday. Please report your result to both the NHS and school, following the links that were emailed.

Student success stories:

Top 10. Well done to the following students who have received the most achievement points this academic year so far.

Asha Kandola, Hallie Chandler, Keeley Youngs, Layla Downes, Amy Toms, Megan Perriton, Brian Bolaney, Lola Blossom, Roseanne Gardner and Emilia Kerby.

The tutor group with the highest achievement points this week is D7 – Mr Walters. Congratulations.

Well done to Callum White for showing amazing friendship in supporting another student. Awesome job!

Uniform and mobile phones:

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the year group on their uniform. It is wonderful to see so many students wearing the correct uniform and wearing it with pride. Can we please remind you that hoodies are not part of the academy uniform, we do have a small supply of jumpers if needed. Please refer to the uniform policy before purchasing new items of uniform to ensure it meets the requirements.

Phones should be switched off and out of sight during both lessons and social time.

HUB sessions:

After the Easter holidays HUB sessions are going to resume. If your child is expected to attend these sessions you will receive a letter informing you what day and time. Please remember that these are sessions to support your child's learning and progress and therefore it is vital that they attend.

Have a great break! We would also like to wish you all a wonderful Easter break. We look forward to welcoming Year 7 back on Monday, 12 April.

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

4. Year 8 News

No update.

Miss Lines – Head of Year 8
Mrs Smith – Assistant Heads of Year 8

5. Year 9 News

It's been a busy week and I think we are all ready for an Easter break. Hopefully the weather will improve and it will be time to recharge and then enjoy a full term before the Summer holidays.

Our top achieving students this week are: Paige Berry, Lucy Birkett, James Hoyer, Luca Bush, George Colledge, Oliver King, Atanas Kyurkchiev, James Muzembe, Robbie Ruff and Corey Sorrento. Well done to you all.

Our praise club members this week are: George Colledge, Atanas Kyurkchiev, Josh Wilsea and Toby Thompson. Well done!

Learning HUBs after school will start again after Easter and your child will be informed of what nights they should attend to catch up on any work.

After a stop start year I'm looking forward to continuing the sports project with the sports leaders. The Kinball was delivered to us after Christmas and I can't wait to put it into practice after Easter.

We hope that you all have a relaxing, healthy Easter break. Thank you again for all your support this term at home and getting the students back to school. Please continue to test twice a week at home and please let us know if anyone does unfortunately test positive. Stay safe everyone and take care of yourselves and each other.

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

6. Year 10 News

Happy Easter! We have reached the end of the first three weeks back in school and I think it's safe to say the students are by and large happy to be back, but are feeling quite tired this week. I'm looking forward to welcoming them back for a positive last term of the academic year and the last before Year 11.

As we have a two week break in school I'd like to take this opportunity to remind parents of the school's appearance policy (which can be accessed via our website). I know due to lockdown some students found that things no longer fitted etc. when they returned, so I'd be grateful if parents could ensure their child has full and correct uniform for the start of the summer term please. If you are having any problems at all sourcing correct items, then please let the year office know and we will do our best to help.

The uniform is an Open Academy blazer, white shirt, tie, black skirt or trousers (leggings are not permitted) and black shoes, which can be polished (black trainers are not permitted). We have seen an increase in students wearing hoodies to school, this is not school uniform, so they need to be removed as they arrive to school please. Finally, may I clarify the expectations around jewellery – students are allowed to wear a watch and one pair of stud earrings and this is all. Facial, including tongue, and body piercings are not permitted in any circumstances whether visible or not. If students arrive to school wearing any items not permitted in the appearance policy, they will be asked to remove them.

Mrs Hewitt-Coleman asked me to celebrate her English class for their tireless efforts and engagement in lessons over the last few weeks. Ms Hatley has sent praise for Jack Morgan for his excellent participation in English this week.

Our top 5 students for achievements points this week are:

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Kasey Richards | 23 |
| Faith Berry | 23 |
| Alex Money | 15 |
| Dominique Bengé-Bante | 15 |
| Adrian Colcer | 15 |

Really well done – keep up the great work!

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

7. Year 11 News

Although a short half term in school, the last 3 weeks has been challenging for many of our students. The culture shock (again) has been difficult even though, in many cases, we have enjoyed seeing friends again.

I have found, from personal experience of my own children, that sitting with a cuppa and just having a chat/ listening to them spill out all their concerns or by doing something together, for example, cleaning up after dinner or washing the car, and then they start talking. Just let your child talk, you can ask prompt questions and share with them about how you feel too.

As teachers we are setting work, homework and assessments of different varieties. For example, there will be speaking and listening work, various written tasks and where appropriate practical assignments. This is so we can see your child at their best. Not every piece of work will be used and not all students will have the same pieces of work submitted. This means that if your child is consistently producing work of a certain grade and then in an assessment they achieve a much lower grade, this piece of work would not be used as it is not reflective of their ability.

We hope that you can have a relaxed Easter break, with time off from schooling, home or otherwise. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns about your child, so that we can work with you to support them:

ruth.pearsall@open-academy.org.uk and michele.middleton@open-academy.org.uk

Lesson visits:

Mr Ward has seen all the Year 11 science classes this week. He is delighted with how well the students in those classes are doing at the moment not just in science but in all subjects. There are so many hard working students at Open. Well done Year 11.

Mrs Pearsall – Head of Year 11

Mrs Middleton – Assistant Head of Year 11

8. Sixth Form News

Happy Easter! You have made it to the end of another crazy, but equally wonderful term. This term has seen us all embrace a lot of new things in our day to day lives including regular Covid tests, and the use of masks throughout the day. I am so proud of our Sixth Formers and how well they have adapted to all the changes. Please make sure that you take time this Easter to rest and replenish (and eat a whole heap of chocolate!), ready for your return for our final term of the academic year. I will also be back after Easter (yay!), and I know you have all missed me immensely 😊

Students signing out:

Please can students be aware that I have only authorised for a handful of students to sign out when they have blocks of private study time. No one else should be leaving the academy during the school day. Please make sure that you are arriving by 8:40am and leaving at the end of the day. It is essential for you to be in tutor every day. If you are going to be off sick for any reason, you must let the school and myself know by 8:30am, and it is then your responsibility to contact your teachers to catch up on any missed work for the day.

PPE2 exams:

As you are now probably aware, you will be sitting some PPE2 assessments starting in May. Please speak to your individual teachers so that they can discuss what might be involved and the dates that they will be setting them. We strongly feel that you should all take some time over Easter to relax and replenish after the recovery curriculum over the past few weeks back. However, you can start preparing for what revision you need to do after the Easter holidays. Please bear in mind that any Year 12 student that fails a subject

in their PPE2 exams may not be able to continue that subject on into Year 13. Which takes me smoothly onto....

TED Talk:

I love a TED Talk, and I particularly like this one about procrastination. I am a massive procrastinator at times, but I have learnt how to manage my time to get the most out of it. If you are one of those that can't seem to motivate yourself to use your private study time efficiently, maybe have a watch of this:

https://www.ted.com/talks/tim_urban_inside_the_mind_of_a_master_procrastinator

NEACO:

If any Year 12 students are interested in social sciences subjects, UEA are taking applications for their **Preparing for Social Sciences Programme**. This is a 16 month series of events for students with the aim to allow students to experience what it might be like to study one of the social sciences listed on the website. Eligibility criteria and further information can be found at:

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/study/information-for/young-people/events/preparing-for-social-science>.

The closing date for applications is 23 April.

Neaco are holding **parent and carer virtual introductions to HE**. The first session is Sunday, 18 April and the session will be repeated on Wednesday, 21 April. The event will introduce the world of HE to parents and carers in bite-sized presentations and videos. HECs, and Student and Parent Ambassadors will be present to answer questions. Please see attached 'save the date' flyer, with links for registration.

Shout outs to:

- Ellie Ruff for an outstanding effort on a piece of homework on SUVAT equations
- Josh Clarke for loud typing in business (trying to make us think he's working hard!)
- Lewis and Tyler for excellent work in computer science project work
- All of Mrs Molloy's psychology and biology students who have been logging in to virtual lessons and getting on with the tasks despite a million IT issues!
- A congratulations to Courtney the Corsa for her new owner/carers (Alex, Hugh, Josh, Lewis, Matt and Sam) who have invested a sixth share in a car to restore.



Foodie Friday:

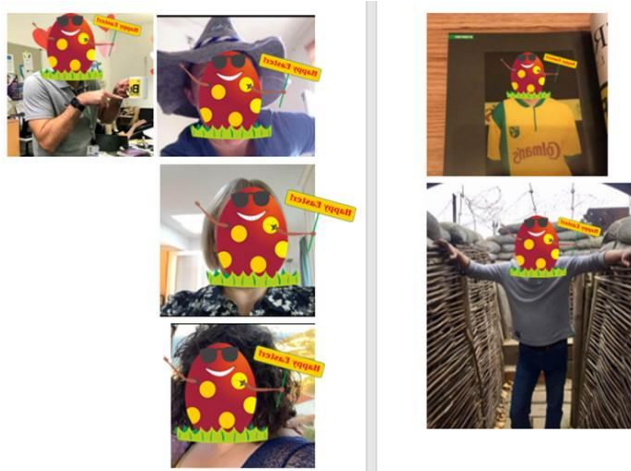
Unfortunately I have made nothing grid worthy this week. However, my daughter smashed out these amazing marshmallow and rice crispie choccy Easter cakes for her class. These take 5 mins to make and the ingredients are super cheap, but they are guaranteed to put a smile on someone's face this Easter.

So...for you budding bakers (and non bakers) these are so easy to make! Have a go at making some of these for someone in your life.



Easter egg heads:

And finally.....can you guess the teachers behind the egg heads?



Have a super Friday and an even better Easter break! And remember as always, just because we are on a break does not mean that we are not available if you need us. Send us a quick email if you need any help, reassurance, or just a chat! 😊

Mrs Molloy
Head of 6th Form

9. Careers

A final call for our March Sector of the Month - 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. 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/>

This month local accountancy firm Lovewell Blake are inviting applications for their apprenticeship programme starting in Summer 2021. Any students who are interested in applying, please follow the link:

<https://www.lovewell-blake.co.uk/careers/vacancies/aat-trainee2020>

Another mention for our fantastic careers information and guidance platform Unifrog. This is now being rolled out to the whole school making it possible for a student to research, plan and track their careers 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 special access code from me at caroline.davies@open-academy.org.uk

Ms Davies
Careers Facilitator and Assistant Head of Sixth Form

10. School Uniform

The Open Academy is currently in the process of setting up an online ordering system with our provider, Price & Buckland. Blazers, Ties and our new Open Academy PE polo shirt (more information about this in due course) will be available from June 2021.

The Open Academy will always hold a supply of ties should they need to be purchased at short notice. More information will follow via the website and Facebook page in the Summer term.

Mrs Rose
Cover Manager/Senior Administrator

11. 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

12. Library News

Continued library access over the holiday:

Students can continue to read and access library books over the school holidays via our eBook platform. Students can choose from over 1000 books and read on any device. Go to <https://openacademy.eplatform.co/> and log in with their Office 365 log in (the same they use for Teams) to start reading.

ReadFIT Reading Challenge:

If you need a little motivation, why not start our ReadFit programme over the Easter break. Starting with just 4 minutes of reading, you will gradually build up to reading for 20 minutes a day over a 6-week programme. You can find out more by watching this video [Click here to watch.](#)

I have attached the tracking sheets for Week 1 and 2. For a digital version that can be edited (or to request a printed version on our return to school) please [click here to register.](#)

Outstanding Library Book:

We still have a large number of library books on loan from before lockdown. Please take some time to check for these at home over Easter (they like to hide under beds and forgotten corners)! If books are still not returned after the Easter holiday we will begin sending individual letters home.

Reading Support for Parents:

Finally, if you missed them in the last few newsletters please see our resources for parents attached with ideas and tips to get your child reading. There will also be some new resources we are sharing in the new term, so watch this space for further updates.

Wishing all our students and their families a lovely Easter Break

Miss Ling
Librarian

13. Attendance

Attendance Lottery – A massive Well Done to Maisie Squires, tutor group: D10RHA who has won a £15 Amazon eVoucher for having 100% attendance for the week ending 19 March 2021.

Week ending 19.3.2021:

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| Year Group 12 | 92.76% |
| Year Group 13 | 91.87% |
| Year Group 7 | 96.52% |
| Year Group 8 | 94.85% |
| Year Group 9 | 94.25% |
| Year Group 10 | 95.50% |
| Year Group 11 | 89.25% |

Well done to Years 12 and Year 7 who have the highest attendance for week ending 19 March 2021.

Don't forget to use our student absence email address: student.absence@open-academy.org.uk to notify ourselves of your son/daughter's absence from the Open Academy or any appointments.

Many thanks for your support.

Mrs Ganson
Attendance Officer

14. Chaplain's Easter Reflection

In the next few weeks Easter will be here, a great time for chocolate lovers. It's also an extremely important time in the Christian calendar, a time that looks back at an act of complete sacrifice. Good Friday celebrates the day when Jesus died for our sins on the cross. I have often tried to imagine the agony and suffering He went through before He died and have often tried to understand why He did this willingly. The reason He died on that cross was because firstly He loved us, secondly, He sacrificed his life to forgive us our sins.

Christ's death on our behalf is the reason God can forgive us and bring us eternal life. The Bible talks about how we can measure the love of Jesus for us by saying "The greatest love is shown when a person lays down his life for his friends". The death of Jesus teaches us the depth and breadth of his love for us, but this same depth and breadth should be in our forgiveness of one another too.

I don't know about you, but when I have wronged someone, the feeling of relief and freedom that I feel when they forgive me is immense. Forgiveness is not easy, but it is powerful and beautiful. Forgiveness does not condone the hurt against you. Forgiveness acknowledges the very real hurt you have experienced and then seeks to let go of feelings of anger and revenge.

Holding on to anger, harbouring grudges, and wanting an offender to feel our hurt, can quickly consume our lives and trap us in bitterness and resentment. But when forgiving others, there is a freedom we can step into that is life changing. We maybe can't forget, but we can let go.

In closing, over this Easter period and because of what it represents, we might want to reflect on letting things go so to speak and to be free from the burden of them. Forgiveness will always bring freedom.

Have a wonderful Eastertime, you are all in my thoughts and prayers.

God bless you

Mark Pimlott
Chaplain